



Shaping the Future of Eglingham Parish

The Views and Thoughts of Residents



February 2016



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“It’s important to facilitate/encourage every possible means for communities to come together to share their individual skills/talents and to barter these throughout the area. This helps build thriving communities and utilises those skills and talents as a local resource, instead of relying on outside providers”

“The charm of this village is that it is quiet and surrounded by beautiful countryside and wildlife. It is a conservation area and the reason why I moved here. The Trust should focus on sustaining the demographic attracted here and improving its quality of life. I have met older people who have very reluctantly moved away because Eglingham could not support their needs, but they continue to come back to socialise because they miss the community. A great start would be a community shop and post office”

“I see lots of taxis running about here and feel that one community-owned bus could do the job and probably be cheaper to operate. I don’t use public transport, but improving public transport is a good idea for those that do. You shouldn’t have to move away if you can no longer drive”

“I would like to see examples of some small things the new Trust could do in the short term...to give residents confidence in its abilities to make a difference. Also, because we are a scattered Parish with a small population, some evidence of learning from others in similar situations as well as opportunities for sharing with neighbouring parishes which could help make some of the possible objectives more realistic”

“Young people are the future of our community and we disregard their needs at our peril! Providing for their recreational needs locally and also via transport to towns, and then providing opportunities through affordable housing for them to remain in the area when they grow up... are crucial!”

Eglingham Parish residents

Introducing the Research

In 2013, Eglington Parish Council presented the key issues facing the community, documenting the issues under 13 headings or 'strategic opportunities'. The intention was to focus on what is important and what needs to be achieved and to set out a series of aims for the Parish. The Parish Council use this document as guidance when taking the lead in helping the community to seek ways to respond to challenges.

This document was assembled by a Task Group of local people set up by the Parish Council and intended to be a living and evolving document designed to help with decision making and to focus attention upon the important issues now and into the future. A newly formed Parish Trust, together with the Parish Council, would now like to consider robust, independent and current feedback from local residents via a Parish survey, with which to inform future funding and development priorities.

The Aims of the Parish Survey

The aims of this research were thus:

1. Encouraging residents across Eglington Parish to confidentially participate in the survey, promoting and maximising their involvement using several good practice techniques.
2. Confidentially gathering, collating and thoroughly analysing robust data to fully understand in detail resident behaviour, attitudes, needs and demographics.
3. Producing a highly informative and readable report which presents detailed statistical and perceptual findings across the Parish, highlighting key messages and aiding subsequent decision making/funding applications by Eglington Parish Council.

The Research Methodology

Residents were interviewed in January 2016 on a face-to-face basis, using a structured questionnaire which was balanced, non-leading, and focused on the collection of a BAND of detailed information, collecting data about:

- BEHAVIOUR
- ATTITUDES
- NEEDS
- DEMOGRAPHICS.

The survey was publicised prior to going live, via a letter delivered to all of those sampled. This publicity crucially served to transparently highlight the clear *benefits* of survey participation, its scheduling and the means of participation.

To ensure ease of survey participation residents were offered the alternative ability to participate by telephone or online.

Parish Households and Respondents

104 adult residents took the opportunity to participate in the survey from 96 households. Whilst young people were encouraged to take part in the survey, none took the opportunity to do so. Figure 1 shows the number of occupied residential households identified in each of the three villages, together with the number of household respondents from each village.

Figure 1

Village	Number of occupied residential households identified	Number of household respondents*
Eglingham*	86	52
North Charlton	21	13
South Charlton	53	26
Anonymous	-	5
Total	160	96

* Including for the purposes of the survey, all of the Parish bar North Charlton and South Charlton. Note that in 8 households two people responded. Note that the number of occupied residential households identified varies slightly from that identified in the 2011 census, due to the time lapse and the issue of whether properties are occupied.

The Accuracy of the Data

Small populations generally require a high percentage interview rate to ensure statistical confidence. With a response from 96 of the 160 occupied households (60%) we can be sure that the findings are no more than 6.5% either side of those that would have been generated had someone from EVERY household participated.

How the Survey Data is Presented

Findings of the residents' survey are presented throughout this report, split by village, together with a number of analyses which consider how findings vary by respondent demographics. Charts show many findings graphically to illustrate key differences and similarities. To facilitate meaningful comparisons over time, the data is presented using statistics, accompanied by resident quotes – with residents quoted verbatim, but anonymously, to preserve confidentiality. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and may therefore not total exactly 100. The number of respondents to each question is indicated by 'n=x', where x is the total.

14 Key Messages

In considering the findings of the research undertaken throughout Eglington Parish, let us initially examine the validity of the data obtained, with four key factors.

1. The Value of the Information Collected

Firstly, the findings are current and focused. The data obtained is both fresh and new, harnessing the most up to date information available from residents – many of whom have years of experience on which to base their views.

Secondly, it is statistically robust. The survey information utilises the views of over 100 residents from 96 households. This sample allows us to be 95% certain that the top-line statistics generated are no more than 6.5% either side of those that would have been generated had someone from ALL households in the area participated.

Thirdly, it is clearly representative, ensuring the views of those of both genders, all adult ages and geographical residence across the Parish are well-represented.

Fourthly, it is impartial. The data was collated, analysed and presented by persons working for, but NOT employed within the framework of Eglington Parish Trust, maintaining a professional independence necessary for the execution of the research.

2. How the Research Should Be Used

This research should be used to consider residents' needs and aspirations, assisting the newly formed Parish Trust in making well-informed decisions, and exploring options for Parish enrichment which are most closely aligned to the wishes of residents.

So what do the findings of the research tell us? The answer is found in a number of key and clear messages.

3. Residents Have a Wealth of Ideas and Experiences Which Many are Keen to Share

The amount of detail and time which residents spent imparting their views should be noted and applauded, and grateful acknowledgements are extended to all those who gave their views. This is clearly a community in which many are keen to see the Parish improved and strengthened for the benefit of both current and future generations. The survey additionally generated enthusiastic interest, expressed by a number of residents, in becoming actively involved with the work of the newly formed Parish Trust.

4. This is an Intransient Parish with an Older Demographic than Many Parishes in Northumberland, and a High Level of Car Ownership

Around three-quarters of adults in the Parish are aged 45 plus, many are retired from full-time employment, over half have lived in the Parish for more than a decade, and there is a significantly high level of car ownership. This latter fact is of interest in considering one of the later key messages related to the perceived importance of public transport.

5. There is a Great Deal of Contentment Associated with Current Life in the Parish

Accompanying a very high level of satisfaction with quality of life, residents use an abundance of superlatives to describe Eglington, focusing on its tranquillity, friendliness, natural beauty and rural location. These are clearly valued qualities, held in high regard by residents, and an important pointer in terms of what residents would undoubtedly like to preserve in the Parish. Note that older, long-standing residents are those who are *most* satisfied.

6. Many Residents Feel that Quality of Life Has Remained Fairly Constant in the Parish

There are two opposing arguments which view this as either a positive or a negative. Some residents spotlight recent improvements, including improved community buildings, and enhanced communication, community spirit and social participation – with the view that this is driven by the work of the Parish Council and enthusiastic and proactive residents. However, these are counter-balanced by a number of closures of local facilities, together with lagging and patchy telecommunications, poor maintenance of roads, pavements, verges and drains, and inadequate public transport.

7. The Six Topics - Suggested by the Parish Trust as Being Potentially Worthy of Development - Proved to be Incisive and Insightful

Across the board, a majority of residents (54% - 81%) consider each of the topics to be individually important. These proved to be topics which inspired much debate, consideration and a wide spectrum of opinion – much in support of development, but with some significant objections to note.

8. Improving Community and Public Transport Emerged as the Topic Which Attracted the Greatest Level of Support

This is perhaps, at first sight, at odds with the context of a high level of current car ownership in the Parish. However, this is clearly seen as being of fundamental importance in enabling ageing residents to remain mobile in their rural, home locale. The current bus service is often viewed as sporadic and unreliable – in short, unable to support what is seen as need which is likely to increase as the age of the population increases, and is no longer able to drive. And whilst residents are largely unsure of the exact practicalities of *how* this situation could be improved, they are definite in their opinion that it is *essential* that it is improved to meet future need.

9. Young People – Though Not the Characteristic Demographic of the Parish – Are Seen as Worthy of Support by Many Residents

Again, the principle of this topic is viewed as extremely important in terms of the *collective* benefit of breathing new life into the Parish, broadening horizons and diversifying thinking and ideas, but also in terms of maximising the *individual* potential of young people. Residents put forward a number of suggestions which seek to increase the involvement of the Parish's young people in its decision making, and consider tailored funding with which to develop potential – removing transport difficulties along the way.

10. Providing More Education and Training Opportunities is Viewed as Key to Diversifying the Population's Age Profile and Strengthening Community Rapport

The idea of skills sharing appeals to residents, maximising and disseminating local talent, having initially established *what* residents are interested in and *who* can provide this. Residents suggest a myriad of possibilities – often with a focus on IT upskilling to further enhance communication and access to services – with the onus on both opportunity and sharing as a community.

11. The Notion of Affordable Housing in the Parish Attracts Slightly More Polarised Opinion

This is also regarded as important by a majority (two-thirds) of residents, who highlight what they feel is an effective means of enabling younger people to either stay in, or move into, the Parish, dovetailing with possible job creation. However, note that this attracts a relatively emotional response from some residents who are less convinced – with concerns which focus on a perceived lack of demand, difficult planning considerations and covenants, and the potential attraction of 'undesirables' into the area.

12. Likewise, the Topic of Job Creation Draws a Mixed Response

This is again a topic which highlights a recurring division of opinion among residents, between those who wish to see the Parish and its profile remain largely untouched/unspoiled/unchanged, and those who are more amenable to its development. Thus, in terms of job creation there is one mind-set which is anxious that this may result in the erosion of the prized attributes of peace and tranquillity within what is seen as a 'retirement village', and another which buzzes with the thought of potential conversion of currently unused buildings to encourage cottage type industry for the benefit of the whole community.

13. This Division of Opinion Extends also into the Realm of Improving and Developing Community Facilities

Thus, for some it is prudent to simply maintain what is already available, whilst for others there is a need to be more proactive – diversifying usage and driving a more unique, exciting and creative offer.

14. Build upon the Momentum of the First Eglington Parish Survey

The survey results represent both a baseline of information and a timely opportunity to build upon what has already been achieved. There is undoubtedly interest and optimism associated with the formation of the Parish Trust, and, whilst there is scope to engage more of the community even still, the process of opportunity, engagement and feedback is a key stepping stone for the continued development of the Parish.

Parish Characteristics

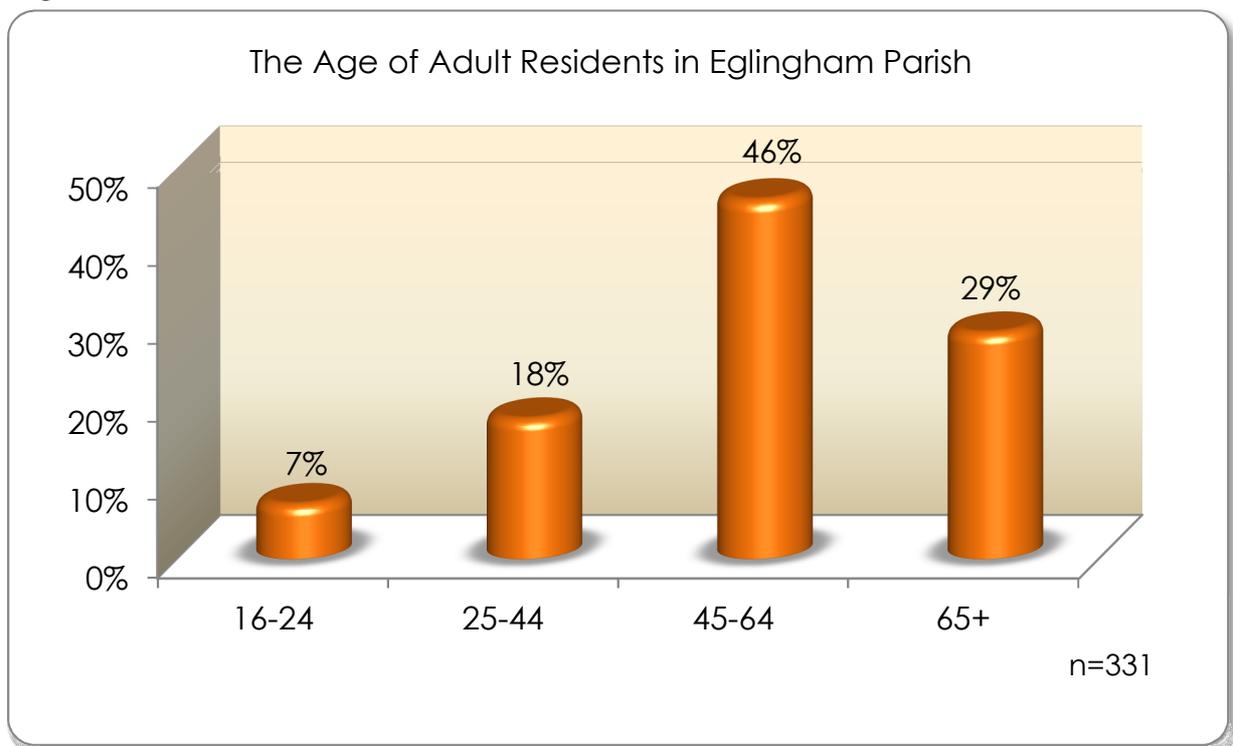
EGLINGHAM is a rural parish in Northumberland, situated in the ward of Longhoughton.

Key characteristics of the Parish – extracted from the 2011 Census - show:

- 385 residents in 161 households.
- An even gender split of 50% males and 50% females.
- 86% of residents are adults and just 14% (54) are children.

Figure 2 shows the actual age distribution of adult residents in the Parish.

Figure 2



The Census also informs us that:

- 98.4% of residents of the Parish are White British.
- The vast majority of households (97%) have access to a car or van.
- Two types of household are most prevalent in the Parish – married couples with no dependent children (46%) and one person households (25%).
- 20% of households include at least one person with a long-term health problem, illness or disability.
- Just over 40% of households are owned outright, with a further 25% owned with a loan or mortgage. 25% of households are privately rented.

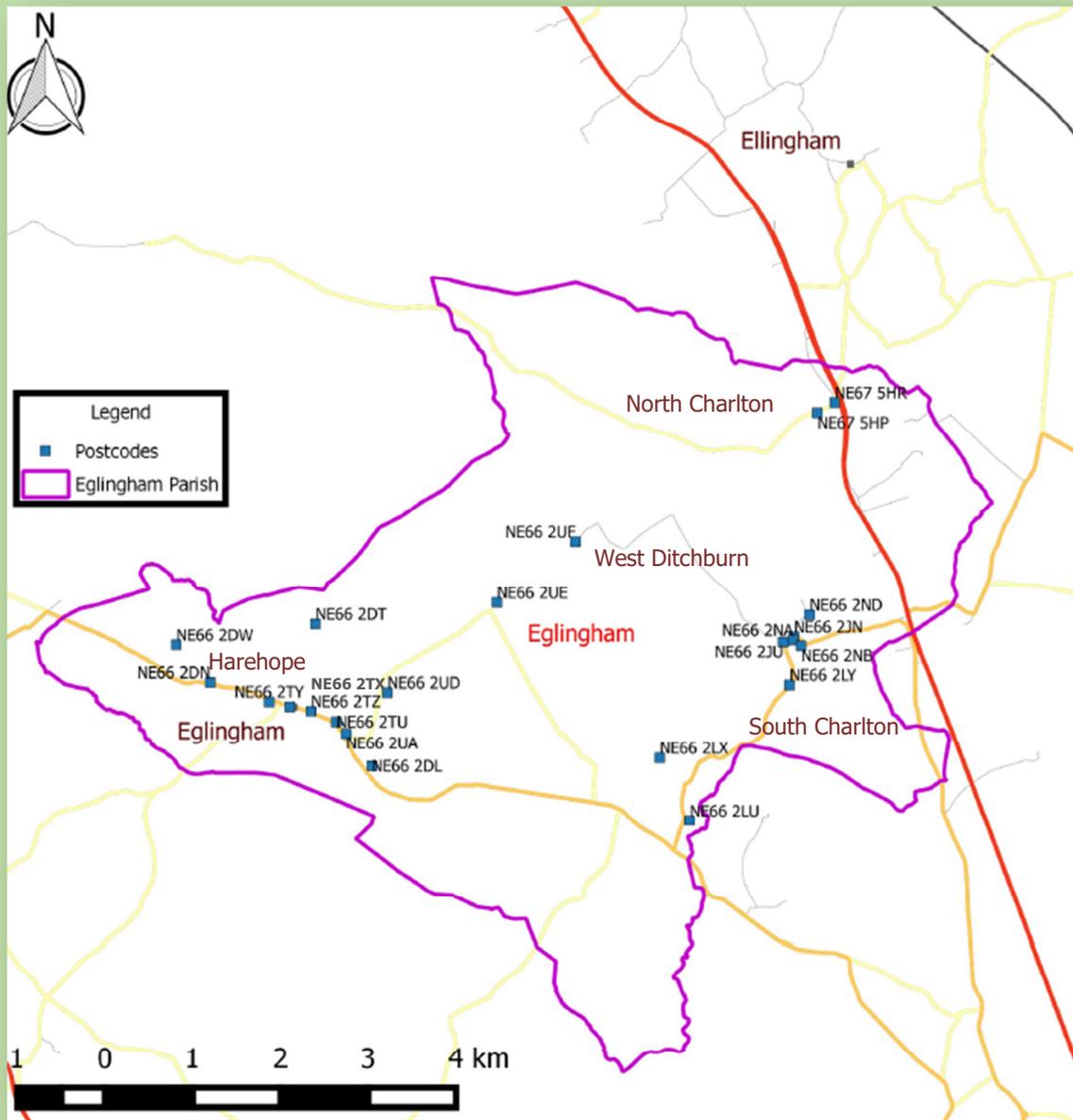
With the context of these facts, the survey results are now presented.

The Residence of Respondents Across Eglington Parish

Figure 3 shows the distribution of survey respondents across the area – highlighting a solid geographical coverage achieved by the survey. Blue pins represent postcodes of households where residents gave their views.

Note that in a concentrated geographical area such as this, more than one household often shares the same postcode.

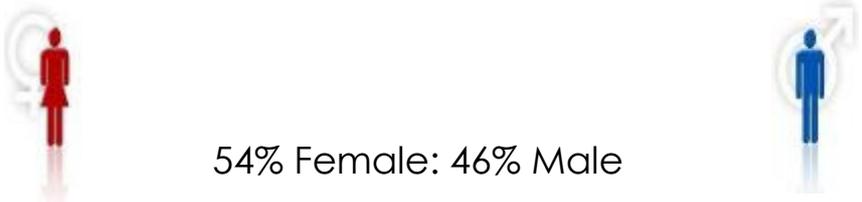
Figure 3



The Gender of Residents Who Participated in the Parish Survey

As shown in figure 4, the gender distribution of survey respondents incorporated slightly more females (54%) than males (46%). This is a frequent characteristic of social research of this type.

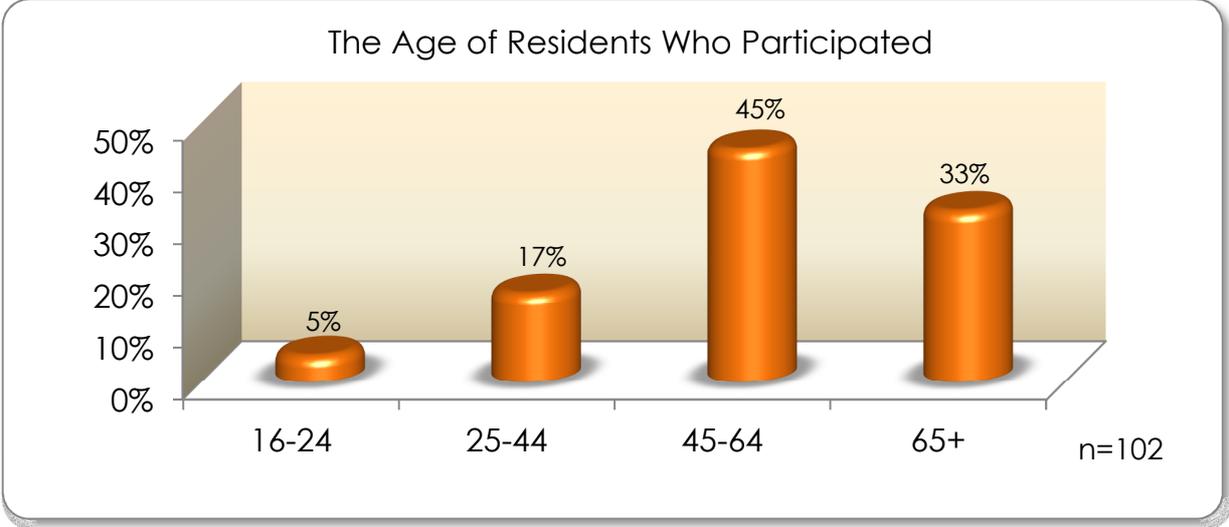
Figure 4



The Age of Residents Who Participated

Residents aged from 18 to 94 participated in the survey. Figure 5 shows the age of residents who participated. These respondents collectively represent an excellent match to the 2011 Census adult age profile of the Parish, ensuring that views collected are representative of the Parish as a whole.

Figure 5



Long-Term, Limiting Health Problems, Illness and Disabilities

14% of residents indicated that they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability – a figure slightly lower than the 20% recorded in the 2011 Census.

Household Type

64% of residents lived in an owned/mortgaged household (almost identical to the 65% 2011 Census figure), with 23% privately renting and the remainder in household types which included employment tied properties (farm/church/care home).

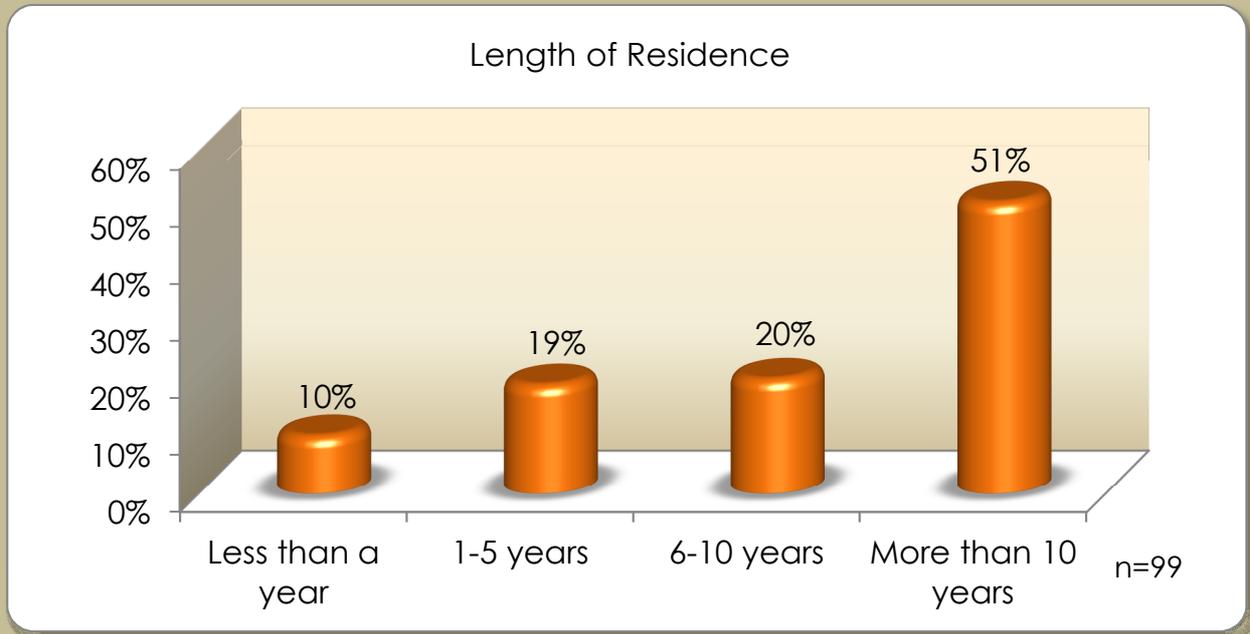
Access to a Car or Van

Also aligned to the 2011 Census is the 96% of residents whose household have access to a car or van.

Length of Residence in Eglington Parish

Residents had most frequently been living in Eglington Parish for more than ten years. For more than half of all residents this is the case. (See figure 6).

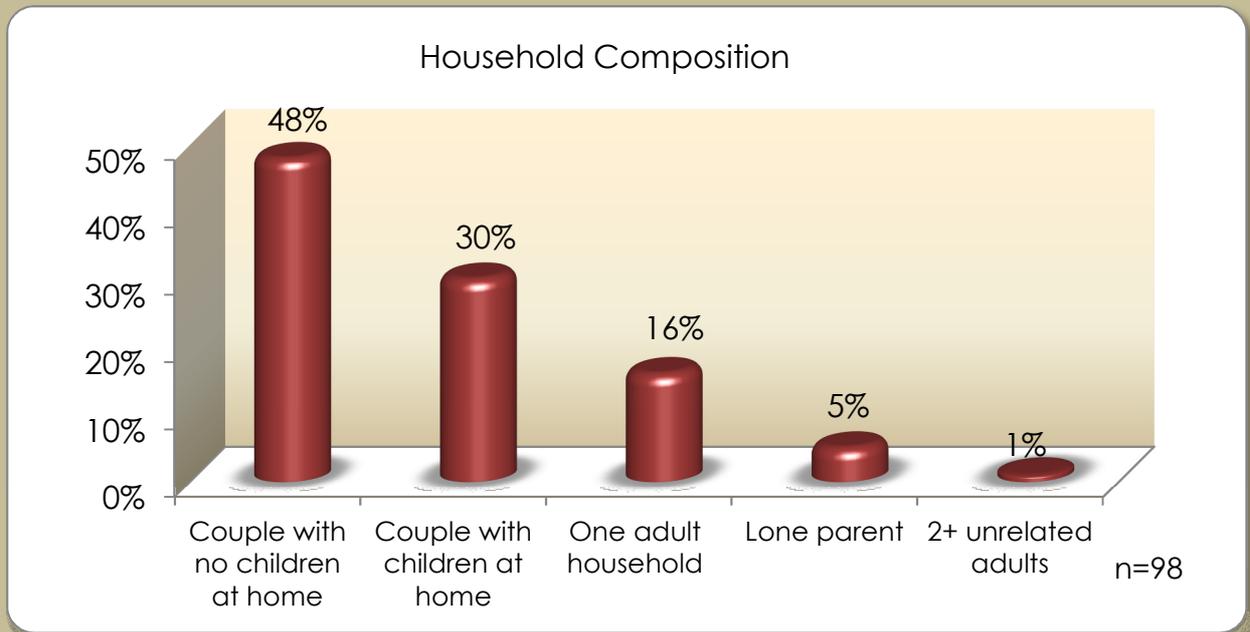
Figure 6



Household Composition

Residents were most frequently living as a couple with *no* children at home (48%) or a couple *with* children at home (30%). (See figure 7). Just over a third (35%) of all households included children. Again, these are percentages which reflect those collected in the 2011 Census, giving a high level of confidence in the survey findings.

Figure 7



Over-Arching Thoughts

Describing the Parish

Having considered the *demographics* of the Parish, it's useful to now consider the more *perceptual* findings of the survey in terms of the over-arching feelings of Parish residents. The top five descriptions of the Parish emerge as (up to three descriptions were applied by each respondent):

1. Peaceful (33%)
2. Friendly (31%)
3. Quiet (25%)
4. Beautiful (17%)
5. Rural (17%)

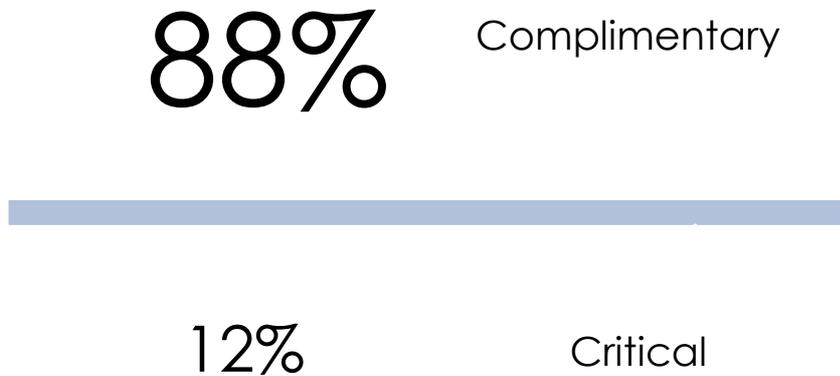
Shown in figure 8, these are descriptions which are found across the entire Parish – both geographically and across the many varying demographic characteristics of residents – painting a clear picture of considerable resident contentment.

Figure 8



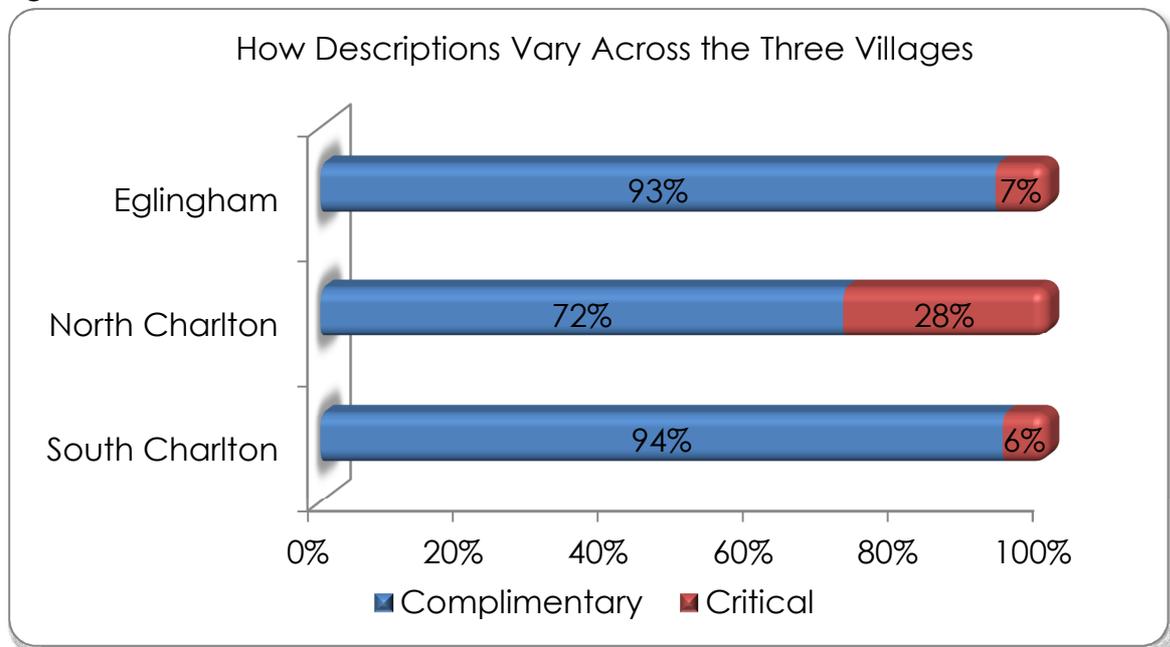
A Proportion of Complimentary Description Which Clearly Outweighs Criticism

It's also useful to note the overwhelming proportion of complimentary to critical descriptions of the Parish, which emerges as:



We can also see how this proportion varies by the three villages. Figure 9 shows that the most positive descriptions of the Parish are found in Eglingham and South Charlton. In contrast, descriptions applied by North Charlton residents are slightly more critical.

Figure 9

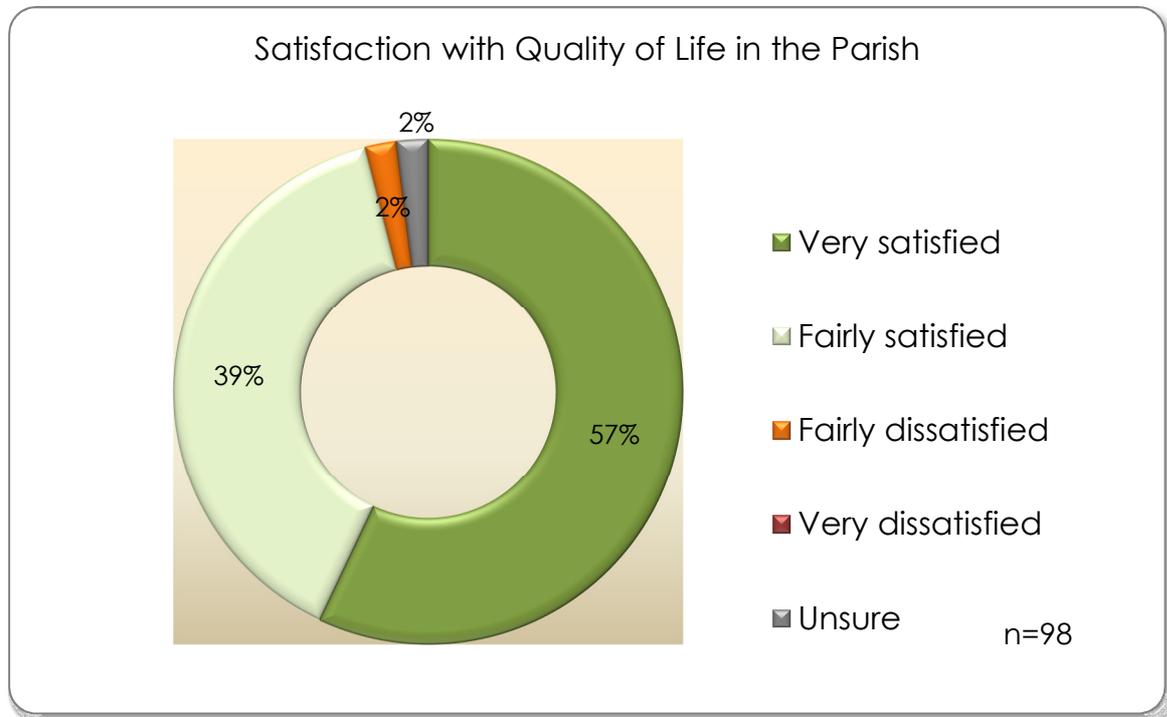


Where critical description is apparent (and note that this is very much the view of a minority of residents) this focuses on perceptions of isolation, unfriendliness, a community which is disparate, cliquy and under-funded.

Perceptions of the Current Quality of Life in Eglington Parish

As shown in figure 10, the vast majority (96%) of residents are satisfied with their quality of life in Eglington Parish.

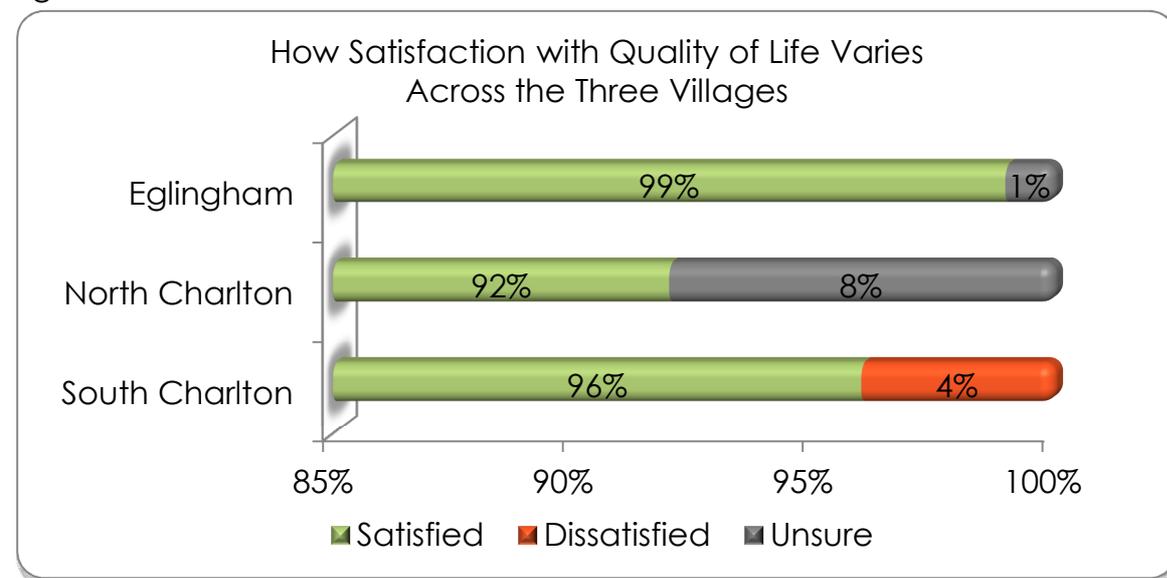
Figure 10



How Satisfaction Varies Across the Three Villages

Again, we can look at how this perception varies by each of the three villages. Whilst a majority of residents express satisfaction in each of the villages, this dips slightly in North Charlton. (See figure 11).

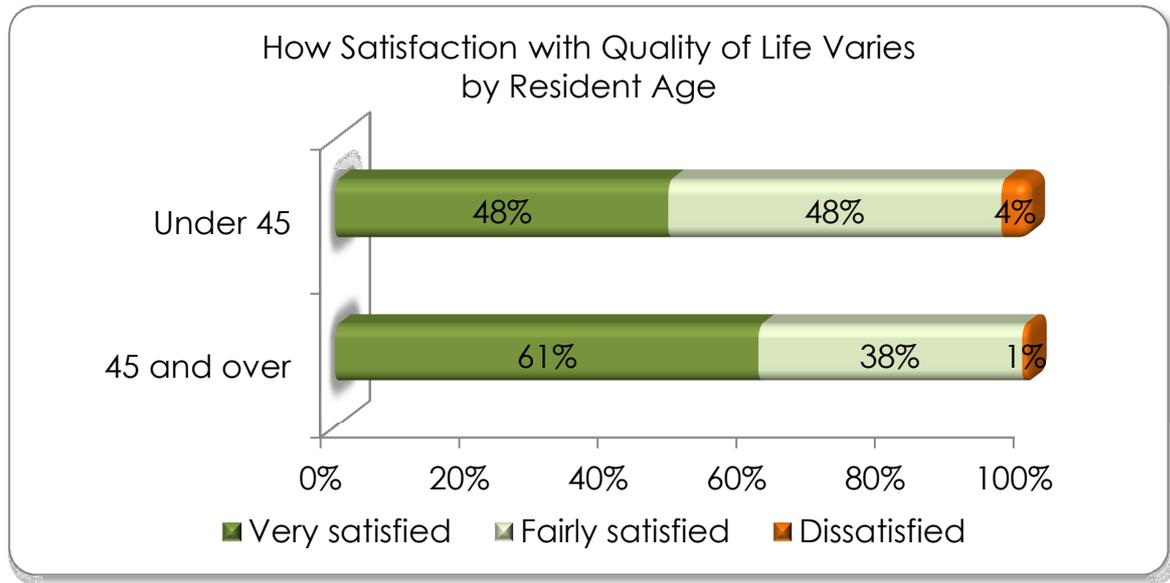
Figure 11



How Satisfaction Varies According to the Age of Residents

It's also interesting to see how this perception varies according to the age of residents. Whilst clearly the vast majority of residents under and over the age of 45 are satisfied with their quality of life in the Parish, note that older residents (also mainly retired) tend to express a higher degree of satisfaction. (See figure 12).

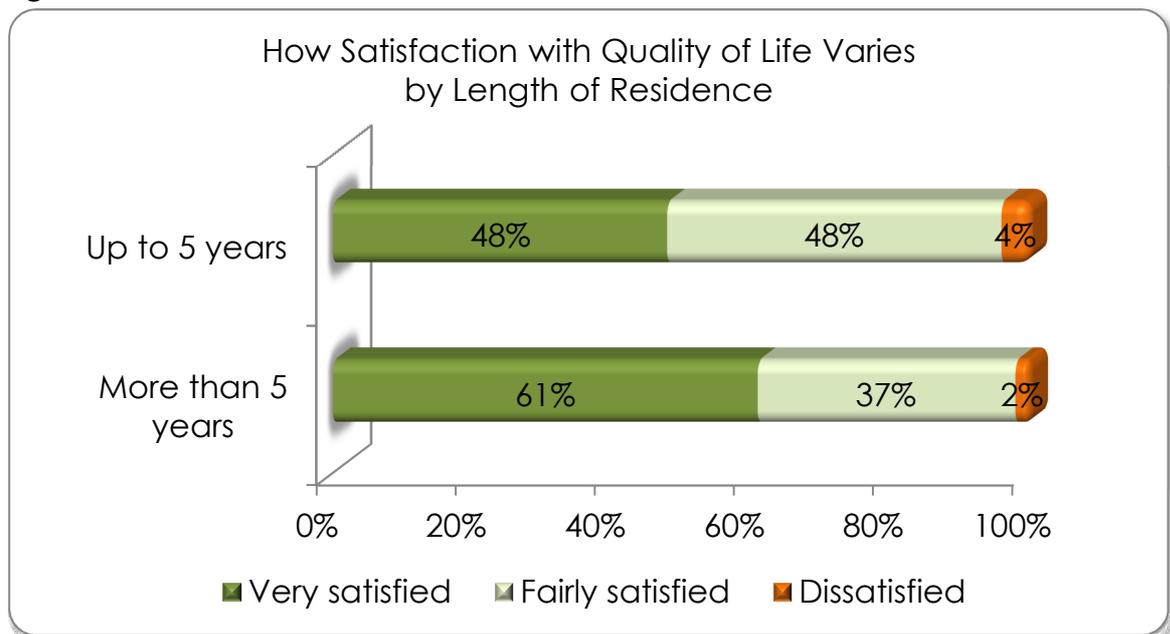
Figure 12



How Satisfaction Varies According to Length of Residence

It's also interesting to see how this perception varies according to length of residence. Again, whilst clearly the vast majority of newer and more long-standing residents are satisfied with their quality of life in the Parish, note that the latter group tend to express a higher degree of satisfaction. (See figure 13).

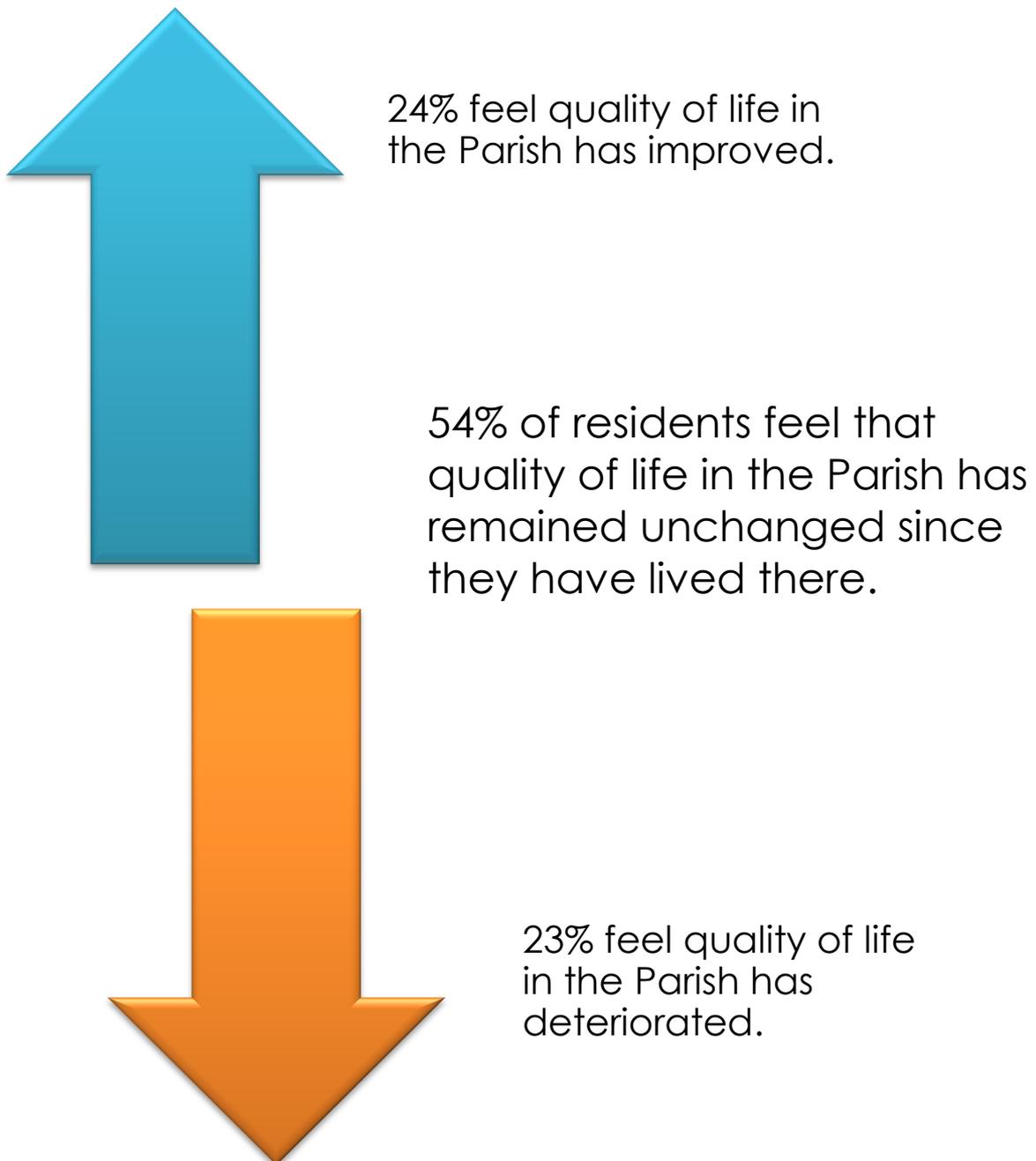
Figure 13



Which Direction is Eglingham Parish Travelling In...?

Opinion on the trend of quality of life in the Parish tended to focus on the view that little had changed. However, note that around a quarter (24%) of residents feel that life has improved since they have been living in the Parish – a figure almost identical to the percentage who feel that the quality of life has deteriorated (23%). (See figure 14).

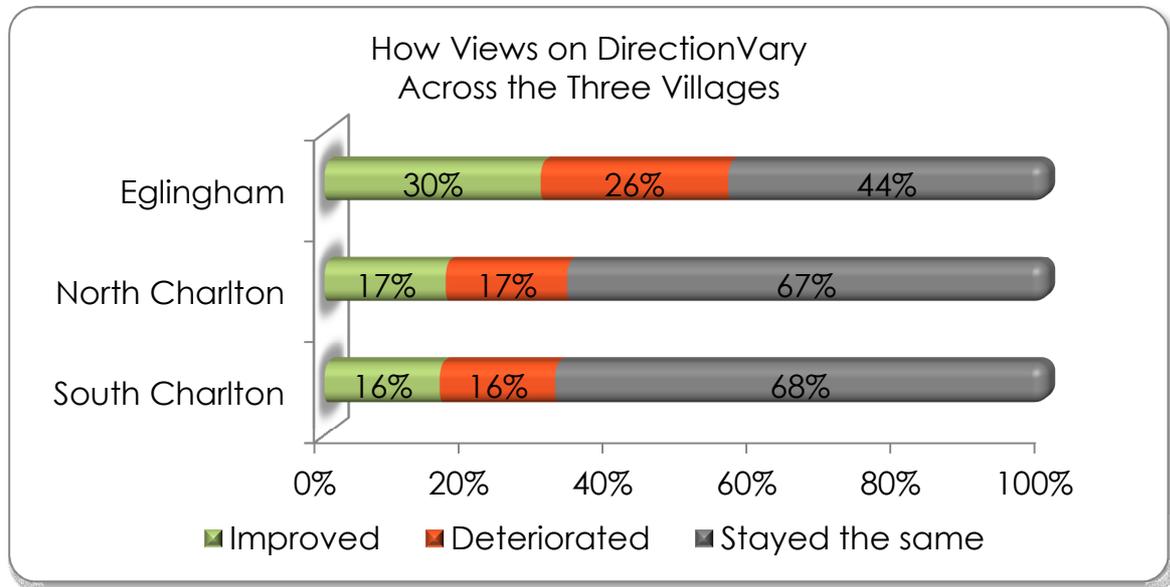
Figure 14



How Perception Varies Across the Three Villages

Again, we can look at how this perception varies by each of the three villages. Whilst a majority of residents express the view that there has been no change, note that over a quarter of Eglington residents perceive deterioration. (See figure 15).

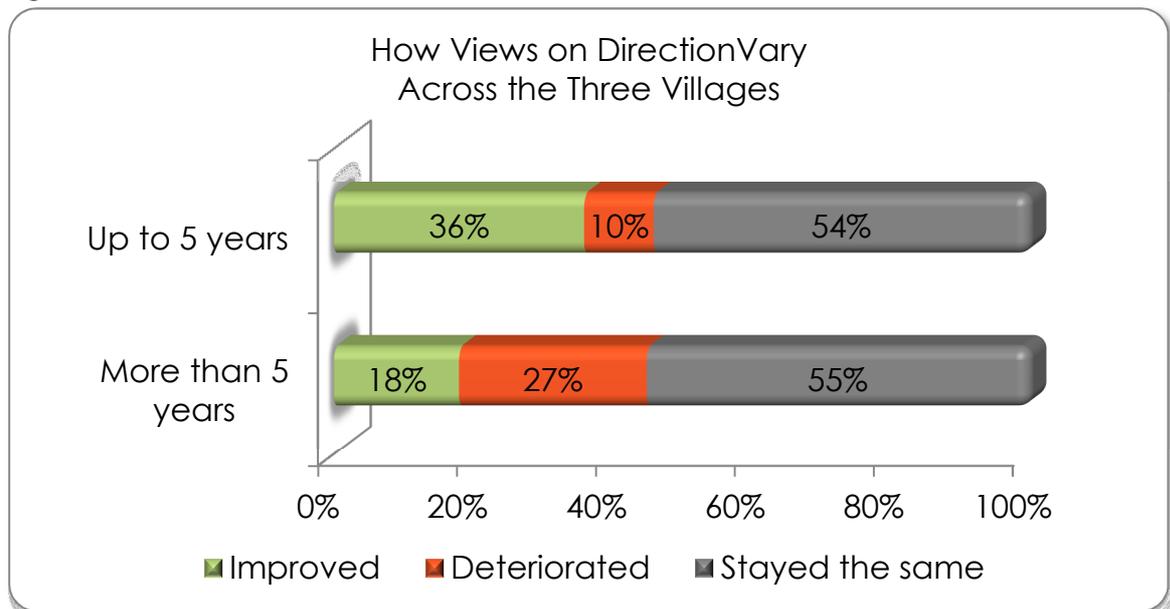
Figure 15



How Perception Varies According to the Length of Residence

It's also interesting to see how this perception varies by length of residence. Whilst again a majority of all residents express the view that there has been no change, note that newer residents are far more positive than their long-standing counterparts, with twice as many (36% compared to 18%) perceiving recent improvement. (See figure 16).

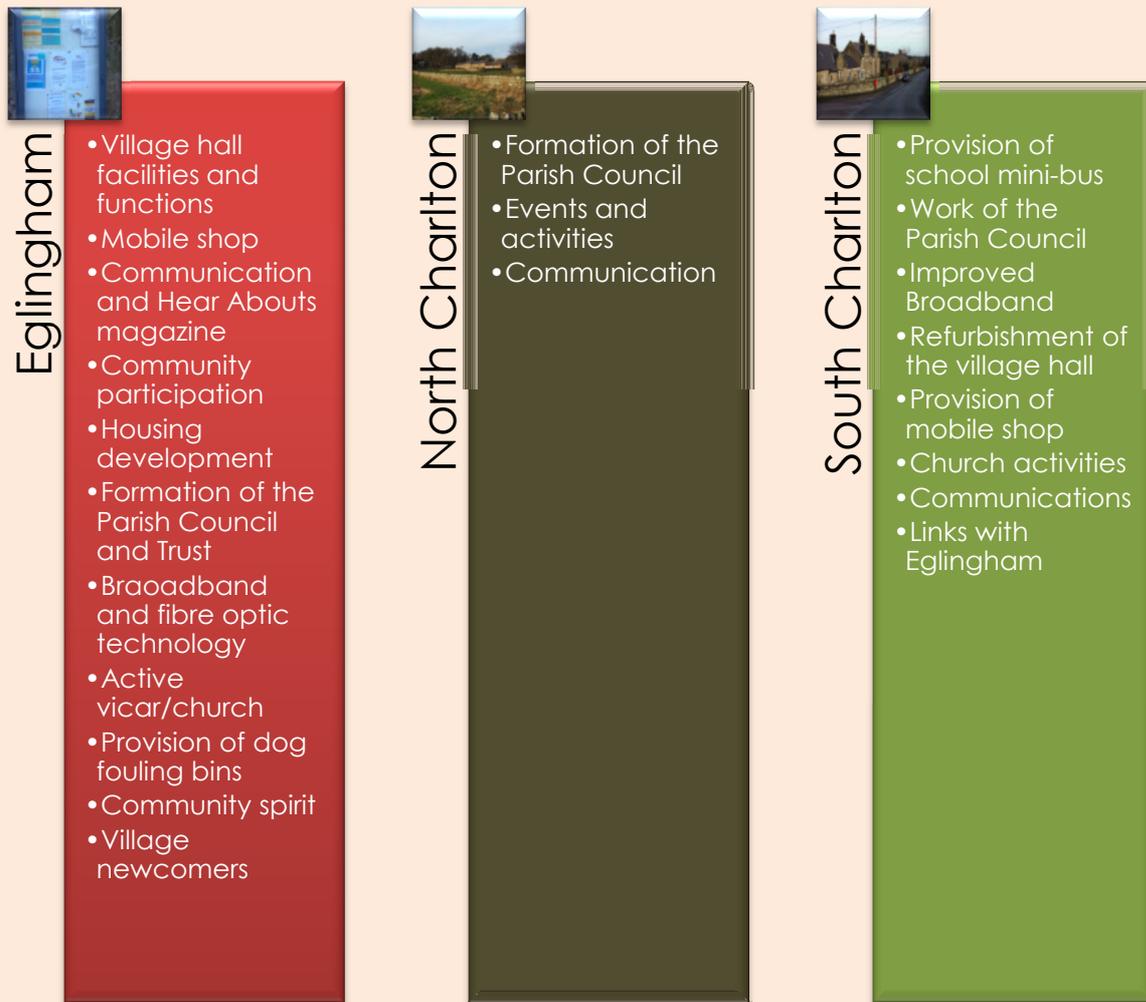
Figure 16



Perceived Improvements to the Parish

Across all three villages in the Parish, there are a number of perceived improvements which have taken place. Communication is now generally felt to be better, whilst the formation and work of both the Parish Council and Parish Trust are felt to have enhanced life. Note also that a number of residents refer to an increased number of community events and activities. (See figure 17).

Figure 17



These themes come to life in the following resident quotes:

“we now have a mobile butchers shop and a mobile fishmonger. Communication - by getting weekly emails from the board and residents - is good for selling things and offering help within the community. There seems to be more community spirit now...and residents are more active. Older people also seem to be more active and participating in all the events”

“community spirit has improved over the last four years, people are supporting each other more. Moving to Eglingham is the best thing we ever did!”

“since the new Parish Council was formed things seem to have improved as the new members are energetic and with professional backgrounds. The Leek Club is good and the craft fairs are also good”

“we now have a more vibrant community. We have had an influx of professional people with fresh ideas”

“we have a dedicated vicar...the church gets attended by more people now and is more accessible. Overall, community spirit is higher, people are more willing to work together to support the community. There is more communication between people now with having email and the online Hear Abouts. The community hall is used a lot more too”

“the setting up of the Parish Trust is a good move and seems to be looking to future needs. The nursery group at South Charlton hall is great for local kids. The community groups seem active enough”

“the Hear Abouts magazine has been key in driving change within the community. I found out about the Women’s Institute in the Hear Abouts magazine and have since joined. The magazine has also been a good driver in getting more people to attend events”

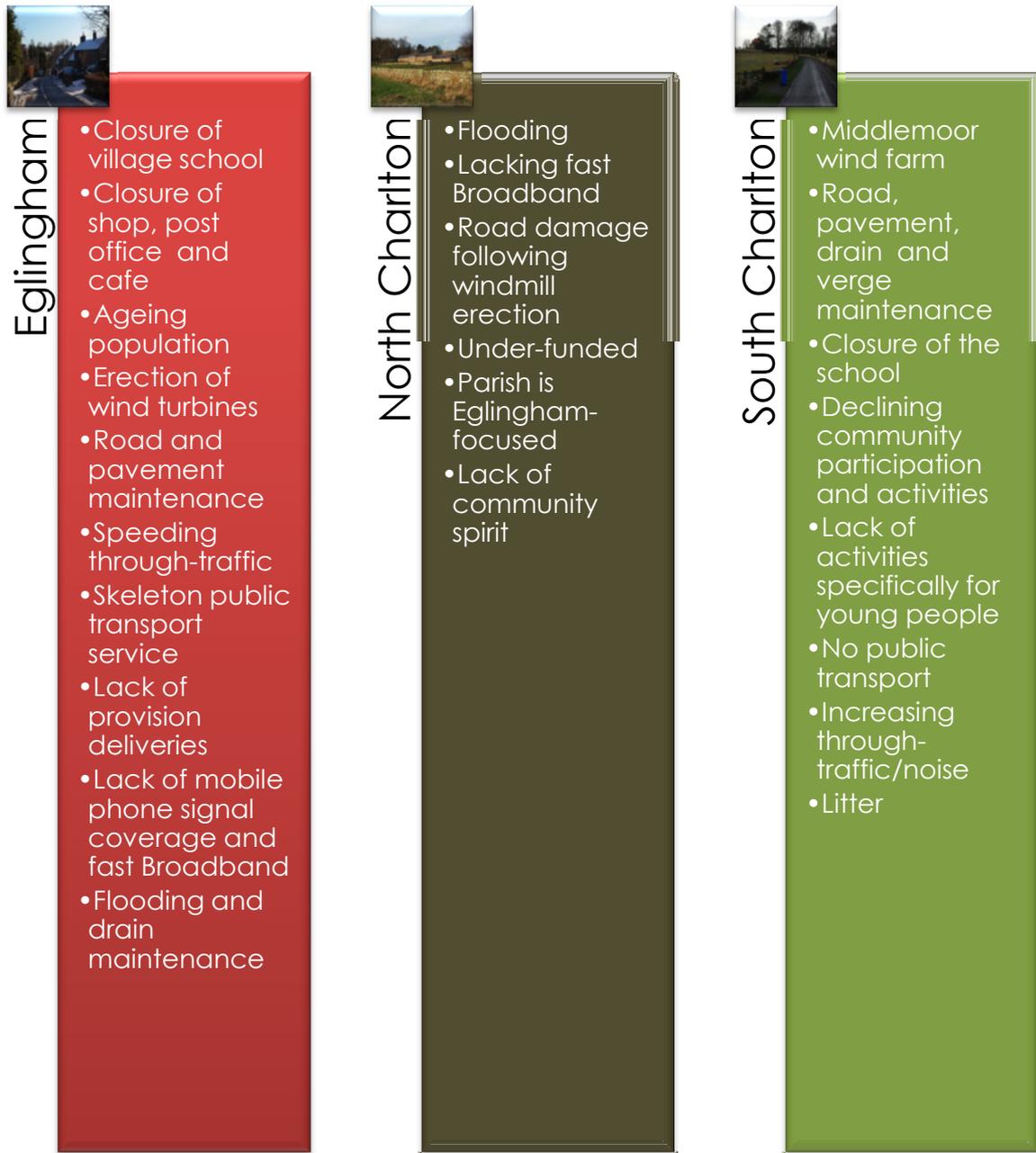
“we have a thriving village hall, pub and community spirit”

“South Charlton has better links with Eglingham now. We used to be quite distant, but this has become so with the church linking us. There is a different type of community spirit now...it’s changed with more newcomers who have a different outlook, bringing a new dimension”.

Perceived Deterioration within the Parish

In sharp contrast, where deterioration is felt to have occurred this tends to focus on the closure of facilities including Eglington School, the post office, shop and café, a feeling of declining community participation and spirit, lack of progress with communications technology (Broadband and mobile phone coverage) and the erection of wind turbines. (See figure 18).

Figure 18



Again, a flavour of the detail of this perceived deterioration is found in the following resident quotes:

“losing the post office, shop and school has been a burden on a lot of people”

“we have had flooding issues in the past and I am now again worried as to whether or not the defences are adequate and I feel we need more drains.

“the Broadband is nowhere near fast enough”

“there is very little for children to do in North Charlton”

“there is an inability to get a decent mobile signal and there is poor Broadband”

“South Charlton used to be the dominant village but is not as active now as Eglingham. Social life and activities have declined in South Charlton now people are getting older”

“damage to the road through North Charlton caused by wind farm traffic has still not been fully made good”

“the pavements are not maintained. A lot of old people trip on them”

“the windfarm has impacted good and bad in the area. It has caused some problems”

“the Middlemoor wind farm has severely blighted the environment and view from South Charlton. The ensuing trust fund “community bribe” has exposed divisions between different groups within the villages and the inevitable feeling of winners and losers. House prices have fallen and a number of properties are proving very difficult to sell. Older residents have died and their traditions of community involvement are lapsing”

“the state of road repairs through and around South Charlton has deteriorated dreadfully”.

Ideas & Opportunities

Prioritising the Most Important Topics on Which to Focus

Residents were asked for their thoughts on six key topics, currently being considered as areas of potential development by the newly formed Parish Trust. Residents commented on how *important* or *unimportant* they considered each of these to be. Figure 19 shows, in order of priority, collective opinion by Parish residents, using a net score rating where a response of 'very important' allocated 2 points, 'fairly important' allocated 1 point, 'not very important' subtracted 1 point, and 'not important at all' subtracted 2 points. This clearly shows that improving community and public transport is collectively considered to be the number one priority for the Parish.

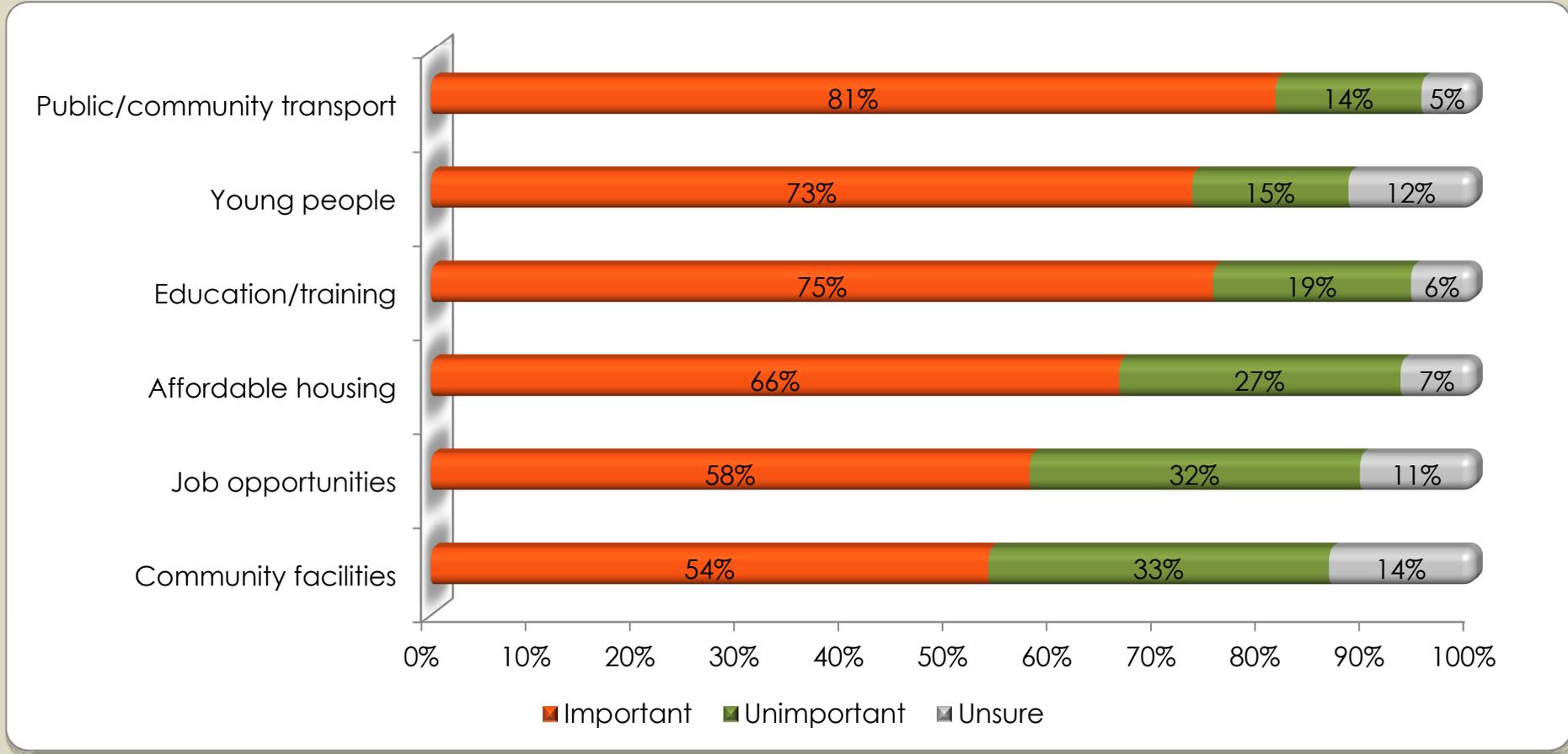
Figure 19



How the Importance of Each Potential Scores in Percentage Terms

Figure 20 shows the percentage of residents regarding each potential development topic as important or unimportant.

Figure 20



Having identified priorities, it's useful to move on to consider each topic in turn.

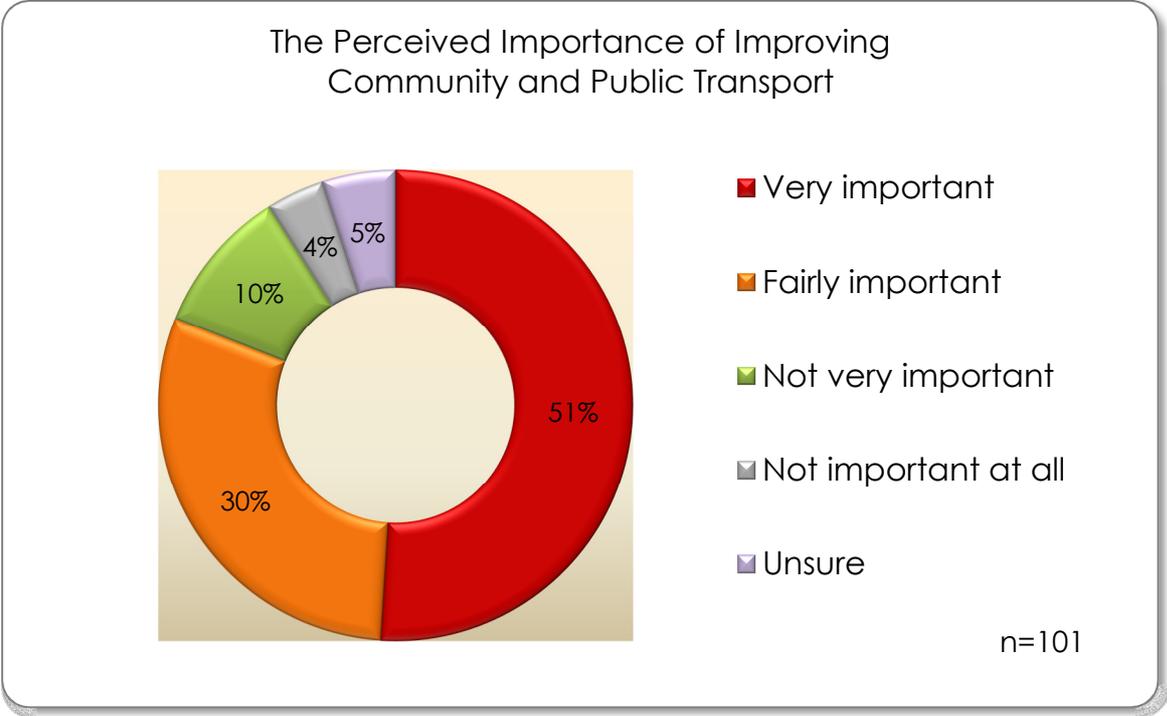
Thoughts on the Number 1 Ranked Topic of Improving Community and Public Transport

This could include:

- Ensuring people are able to travel without difficulty - both now and in the future - across the county to access services, education, employment and social activities/events.

As the most popular potential area of development, improving community and public transport attracted widespread support from residents – with over 80% regarding this as important, and over half regarding this as very important. (See figure 21). Interestingly this is in the context of 90% of respondents indicating that their current access to a car/van met their current transport needs.

Figure 21



Lying behind this notable level of perceived importance is the view that the Parish is home to an ageing population – a majority of whom currently have their own transport – but who are *increasingly likely* to become *more dependent* on public/community transport or face moving away, as they have to give up their driving licences for age/medical reasons. In the context of a Parish which is geographically rural, with a bus service which is often viewed as unreliable/sporadic, and a population that frequently needs to access Alnwick-based services, the idea of developing and improving community and public transport has significant appeal. These themes are summarised overleaf in figure 22, together with opposing views which highlight a currently mobile population with high levels of car ownership, the easy availability of taxis and a lack of demand to justify tailored transport schemes.

What Drives Resident Support for Improving Community and Public Transport

Undoubtedly driving the popularity of the Trust potentially focusing on improving and developing community and public transport are a number of views which spotlight an ageing population living in a rural community, with the implication that, whilst currently mobile and driving, many will at some point be more reliant on public transport or face moving away from the Parish. Note also concerns about a lack of provision in South Charlton. (See figure 22).

Figure 22



IMPORTANT

- A rural community
- An ageing population no longer being able to drive
- Ageing residents moving to Alnwick in the context of unmet transport needs
- Enabling access to medical provision
- Enabling access to food shopping
- Unreliable/sporadic bus service
- Community transport scheme potentially less expensive than taxis
- Enabling young people to access wider services/provision
- Lack of public transport in South Charlton



UNIMPORTANT

- Insufficient demand to justify potential schemes
- High level of car ownership
- Availability of taxis

These themes are very much reflected in the following comments from residents:

“a lot of people do use the current bus service and many older people are giving up their licences due to medication for illness, poor eyesight etc. and will need the bus service”

“a rural community with an ageing population will always need sustainable transport links”

“it is difficult for older people who have lived here to be supported by medical resources and to food shop if they don't drive. I have met several who have felt forced to move out of the area”

“we have an ageing population now who will lose their licences soon and a bus service is crucial for them. The current bus service is somewhat unreliable”

“there are more and more ageing people who will need a bus service to get about. My grandmother recently lost her driving licence due to poor eyesight”

“I see lots of taxis running about and feel that one community owned bus could do the job and probably be cheaper to operate. I don't use public transport but improving public transport is a good idea for those that do. You shouldn't have to move if you can no longer drive”.

Ideas for the Improvement and Development of Community and Public Transport in the Parish

Figure 23 presents resident ideas for the improvement of public transport. However, note that for many residents the fundamental idea was very important *in theory*, but was without accompanying suggestions for *actual practical improvement*.

Figure 23



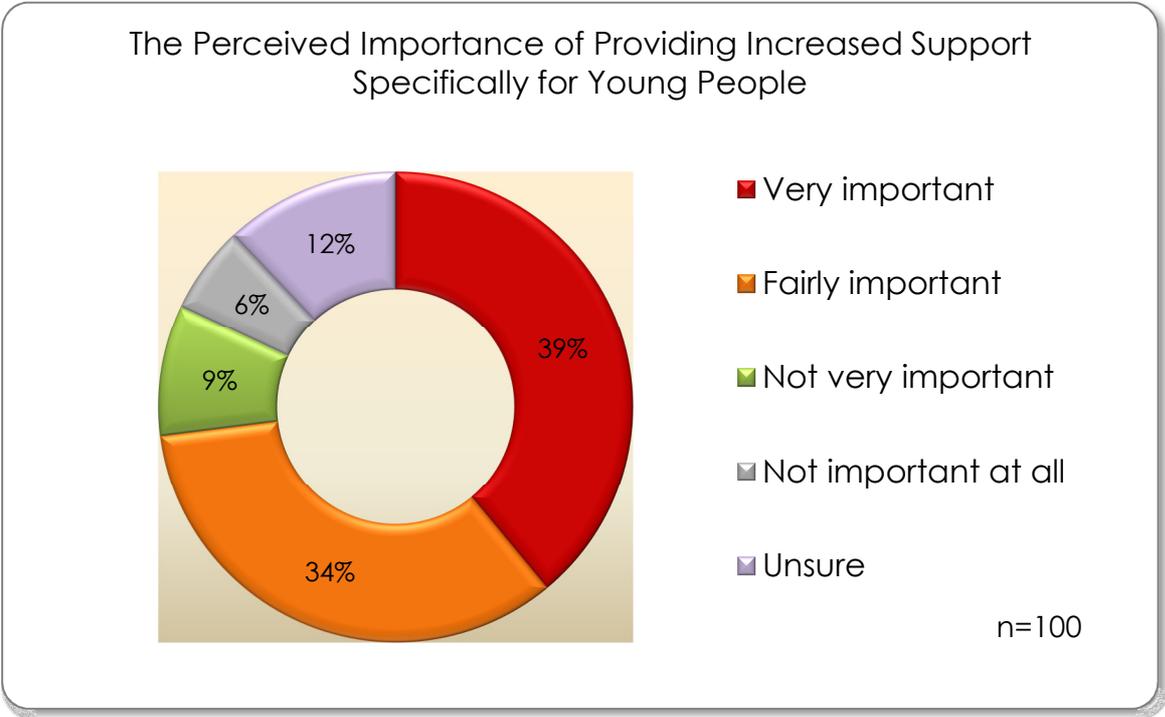
Thoughts on the Number 2 Ranked Topic of Providing Increased Support Specifically for Young People

This could include:

- Putting time and resources into helping young people to access educational, training, sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Giving young people a voice and encouraging them to express their needs and concerns.

As the second most popular potential area of development, providing increased support specifically for young people attracted widespread support from residents – with almost three-quarters (73%) of residents regarding this as important. (See figure 24).

Figure 24

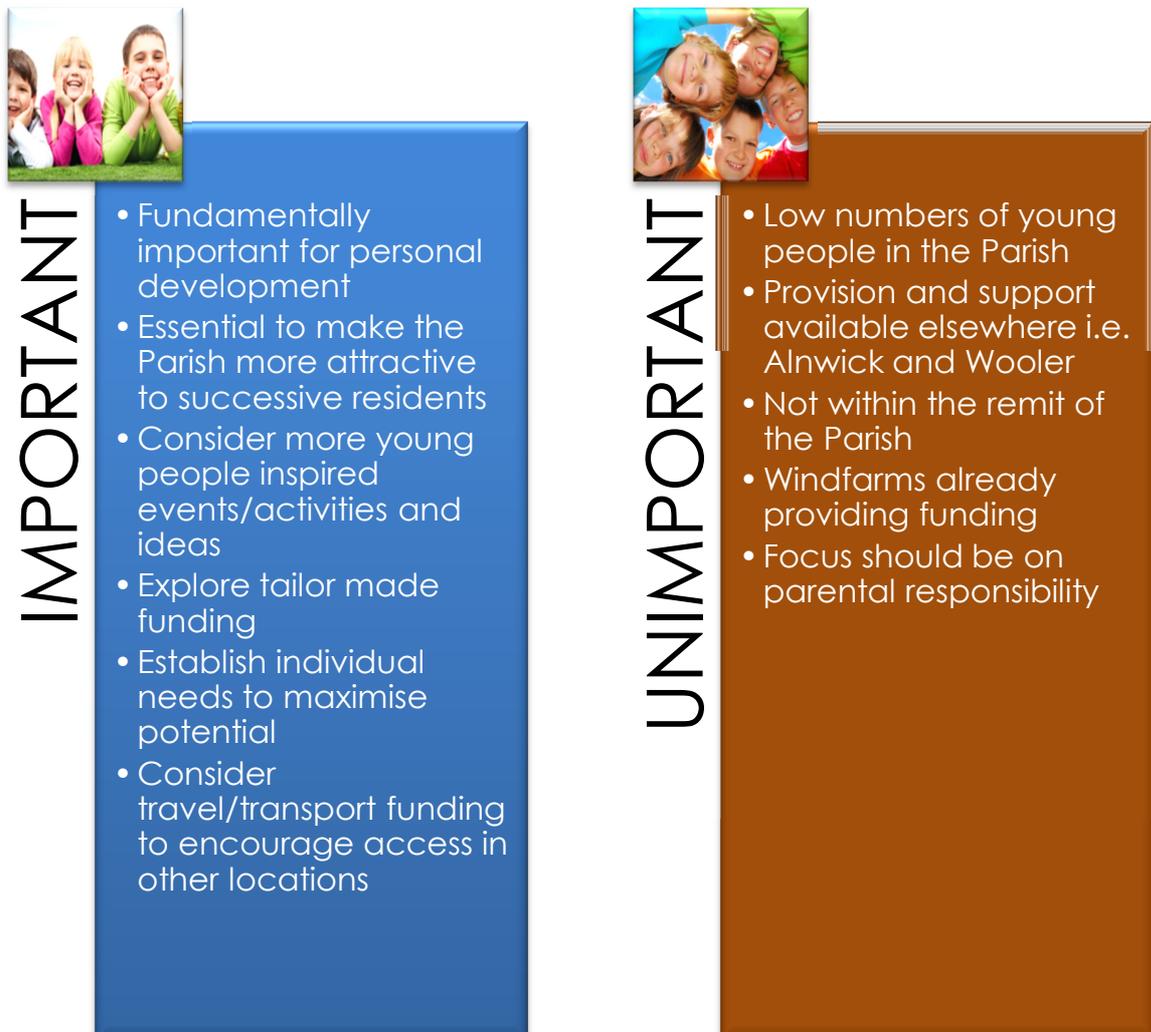


What Drives Resident Support for Increasing Support Specifically for Young People?

As the second most popular topic identified by residents, providing support specifically for young people was regarded as fundamentally important in terms of breathing life into the future of the Parish, broadening thinking and ideas and maximising individual potential.

In contrast, note opposing thoughts from residents, highlighting the low numbers of young people currently in the Parish, the perceived availability of provision at a local, rather than a doorstep level, and the feeling that this was down to parental responsibility, rather than that of the Trust. (See figure 25).

Figure 25



Residents who viewed this as important commented:

“we need to be thinking much more creatively about the role we help young people play within our community. From my own children's experiences I know the difference volunteering makes to a young person's horizons...they are valued and respected and become to value and respect themselves. Teenagers can make a valuable contribution to their communities... they have something unique to add to our schools and nurseries, sports clubs and care homes. They do not replace the work done by our highly skilled and valued professionals, but their energy and enthusiasm does complement the services provided”

“Kids must see an outcome/goal for whatever they do. They could set up their own think tank. Young people have fresh ideas whereas the mature locals can become cynical. More events created by Kids for all to partake are needed to develop community spirit”

“the Trust need to continue to forge links within the parish and externally, i.e. with Glendale Gateway. Giving young people a voice is crucial and so is giving them opportunities”

“if we don't make the area more attractive to young people then the next generation will not want to live here and the community spirit will be lost due to second home owners”

“it's particularly important to help those with significant abilities who are of weak financial standing. It would be legitimate for the Trust to help those people with small grants”

“people have to be more open-minded and take on board what young people say. Young people need a platform to express themselves, a website, or their own meetings and should be invited to all other meetings to share their ideas”

“the youth need to form their own Council as a platform for them to have important debates about the place they live and their needs”

“the lack of public transport is an issue for young people. School pupils who stay late after school to take part in school clubs and sporting activities have no independent means of travelling back home as the last public transport is the school bus leaving Alnwick at 3.45pm”

“there are a number of very gifted children in the Parish both gifted in sport/intelligence or other skilled activities. For most of the sports that the young are good at training is required at a distance - this is both costly in time and finances for those involved and supporting the training and participation”

“in the broader sense, younger voices on decision making bodies would be a big plus! Younger members of the Parish Council, a means of giving a 'youth voice' on the council so that the views of those relatively few children we still have in our community are heard, both of these would be very beneficial but how they would be achieved is the key question”

“we don't have any recreational facilities for young people in South Charlton”

“without young people in a Parish, the community simply dies. At one of the Trust meetings, it was refreshing to see a couple of people in their mid-twenties. Young people must get involved to sustain a vibrant community”.

In contrast, those less open to this idea commented:

“there are not many kids here and there is plenty in Alnwick. Go out and find things if you need them!”

“supporting young people is great, but how many are there in the parish? Shouldn't the Trust concentrate more on the particular needs of the majority who aren't so young?!”

“the reality is that there are rather few young people here. Those who are keen to access educational, training, sporting and recreational opportunities will already do so in the larger centres of Alnwick, Wooler or further afield. While desirable aims, they are the responsibility of agencies other than the Trust or the Parish Council”

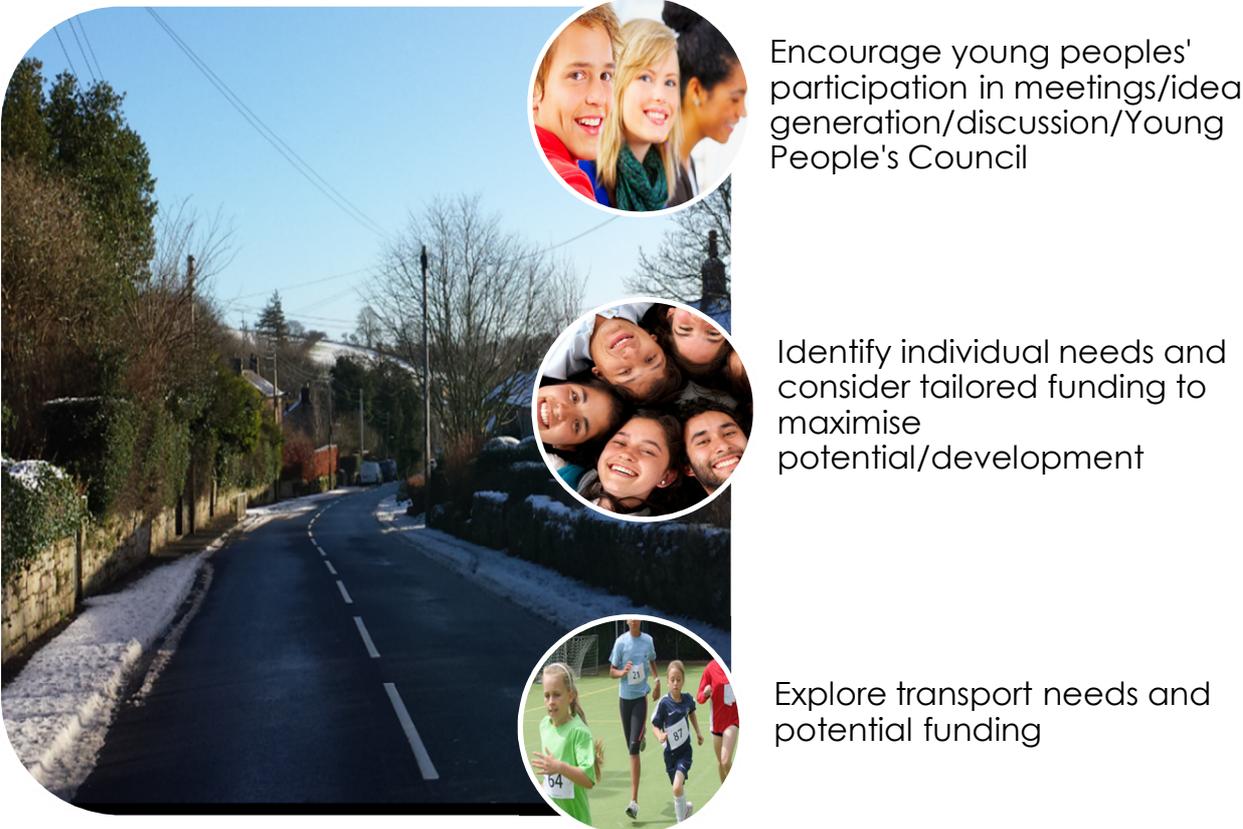
“schools and further education provide more than enough for young people’s needs”

“we have a lot of extremely talented young people in the Parish but it is also the responsibility of the parents to support their children and ensure they take up any opportunities given to them where funding has been raised and where facilities have been provided for them to excel”.

Ideas for Supporting Young People in the Parish

Figure 26 pulls together the three main themes of how residents feel that young people could potentially be supported in the Parish, focusing on their inclusion in decision making and think-tanking; identification of individual needs; and the exploration of improved access (whether it be financially or physically) to public transport to maximise participation.

Figure 26



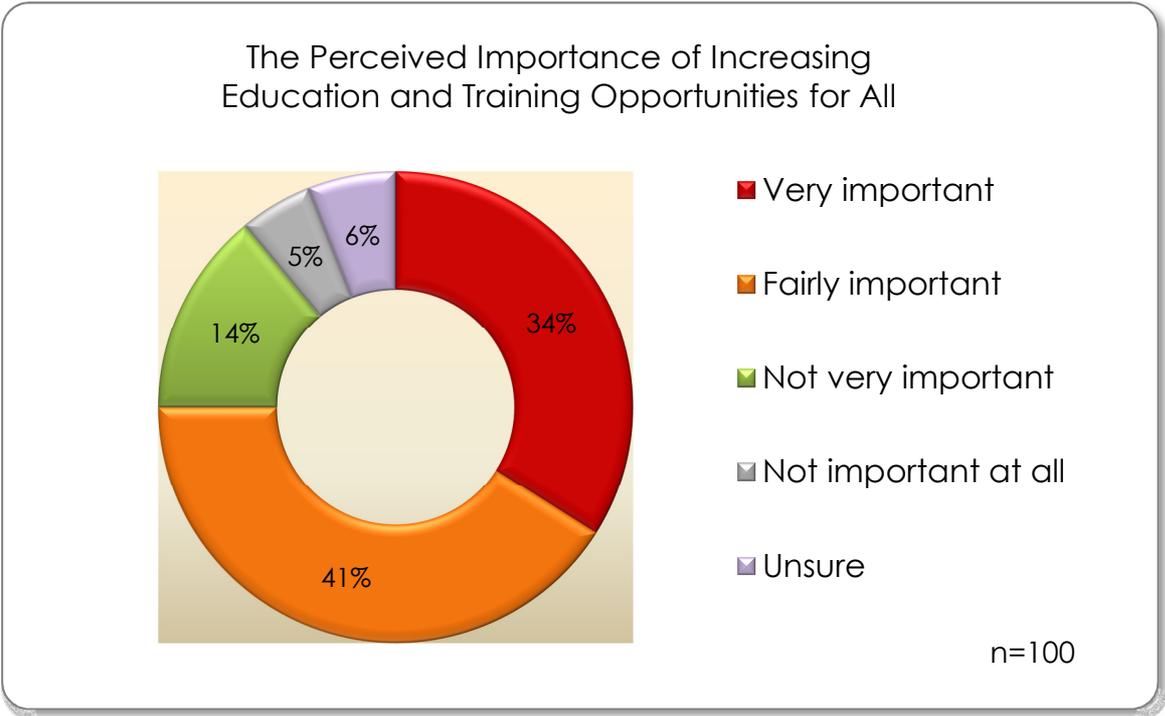
Thoughts on the Number 3 Ranked Topic of Providing Increased Education and Training Opportunities for All

This could include:

- Supporting people who would like to access and pursue education/training programmes, ensuring that barriers to these are removed.
- Giving young people better access to apprenticeship and vocational opportunities.
- Giving older people improved opportunities to retrain and learn new skills. Providing local venues and computers/tablets to help people to improve their IT skills.

As the third most popular potential area of development, increasing education and training opportunities for all attracted widespread support from residents – with three-quarters (75%) of residents regarding this as important. (See figure 27).

Figure 27



What Drives Resident Support for Increasing Education and Training Opportunities for All?

Lying behind the notion of providing increased education and training opportunities were a number of perceived benefits to both the Parish as a whole and to its individual residents. The ethos of sharing skills was welcomed by a number of residents, who felt that this was something which could be initially audited to establish the breadth of skills in the community. Diversifying the demographic profile of the population and helping both younger and older residents, whilst removing current difficulties with rural transport to existing provision were also identified. In contrast, the notion that Eglingham is a rural 'dormitory' Parish, with a community which is largely retired and therefore in no need of such opportunities, or able to access these opportunities elsewhere, was apparent. (See figure 28).

Figure 28



The following comments from residents provide some of the many examples of support for this potential area of focus:

“sharing skills is very important...we have a lot of people with a range of skills that others in the community would probably benefit from only if they knew they were there. We need to establish what skills are available and what people are prepared to share and what funding could be allocated to bring them to fruition”

“attracting youth/ investment to the village is key to population diversity/growth”

“due to health reasons I am now unemployed and I would like the opportunity to identify other work options for me, ideally locally, and be able to access training and achieve qualifications to get work that would fit my circumstances”

“education and training opens doors and gives people opportunities. The rural nature of our Parish and the distances people have to travel to obtain the same opportunities as people who live in larger conurbations is a real issue. A young person who lives in this Parish who wants to train in a specific vocational area would probably have to travel to Ashington or Newcastle to gain the appropriate professional qualifications”

“for those not computer literate, training or access to training would be useful - the technological age has taken over with online banking, shopping and communications. This might also assist those who are lonely to keep in contact with the outside world”

“I think encouraging skill sharing within the Parish is paramount. Everyone has skills to share and they need to be identified and every effort made to expose people's skills and for them to be given every chance to share them”

“my partner is struggling to find work and has degrees. It would be great if funding for professional careers advice was made available for her because the job centres give only general advice”

“in a rural community it is very difficult to provide the breadth and quality of support that these would require. It would be better to sponsor these programmes at a regional centre. The exception might be the provision of support for use of technology to give improved IT skills. Of course, this is unrealistic when portions of the parish have limited access to good quality broadband!”

“it is important that in rural areas everyone has the same technical capabilities and opportunities as those living in more urban areas when it comes to broadband, etc. Good computer skills and accessibility to equipment can be a lifeline for some people, i.e. for working from home, keeping in touch with family or friends, keeping up to date with the news and social media, job searching, shopping, making medical appointments, etc.”

“people need to keep active in body and mind. Providing essential communication links to the wider world will help to remove the risk of rural isolation and better improve the opportunities for our children”

“computer skills are becoming a fundamental part of education. The internet has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on society, and access to the internet is regarded as a utility so it is important to ensure that our rural communities have access to ICT, to promote independence and social and creative living, particularly for our ageing residents”

“rural transport is an issue for anyone wanting to improve educational skills. Opportunities are available in towns but not locally, so transport costs are a significant factor, whether or not people have their own means of transport. Providing some education/training locally would be a big advantage if it could be made viable”

“transport access to educational facilities for children is very challenging. The big towns and cities provide everything but it is not nice to live there and vice versa. Getting to activities is difficult so if training and educational facilities can be provided in the parish then great”

“there is a pipe band which has had to fund itself who could use funds to hold classes. There is a local photographer who has had to fund himself who could use funds to hold classes. There are lots of skilled individuals who could do with funding to share those skills in the community and teach others”

“there needs to be more evening classes, craft classes. I am interested in many things like flower arranging and cake decoration and would like to see classes for these things. There needs to be a committee set up to identify peoples’ individual skills in the community and provide platforms for them to be shared and utilised within the community”

“you should never stand still as a person - you will stagnate in mind and ultimately body. By learning new skills it could keep residents in the area, e.g. the ability to do weekly shopping online bearing in mind our hopeless public transport system”.

Figure 29 summarises possible opportunities for the development of this topic.

Figure 29



In contrast, note comments from residents for whom this is a less appealing and necessary prospect:

“Eglingham can only aspire to be a dormitory for younger families; once children are old enough for higher education the wider world should be their focus”

“I believe most people in the Parish already have access to these facilities”

“I do not see the role of the Parish as an educator”

“I feel if people have needs of this nature, they wouldn't live here. This responsibility lies elsewhere in large towns and cities”

“who would use any of this? It could be a waste of money. The parish are nearly all retired and well off people who would not require any of this. I feel if any of the measures mentioned in this topic were put in place there will only be 1 or 2 people might ever take them up”.

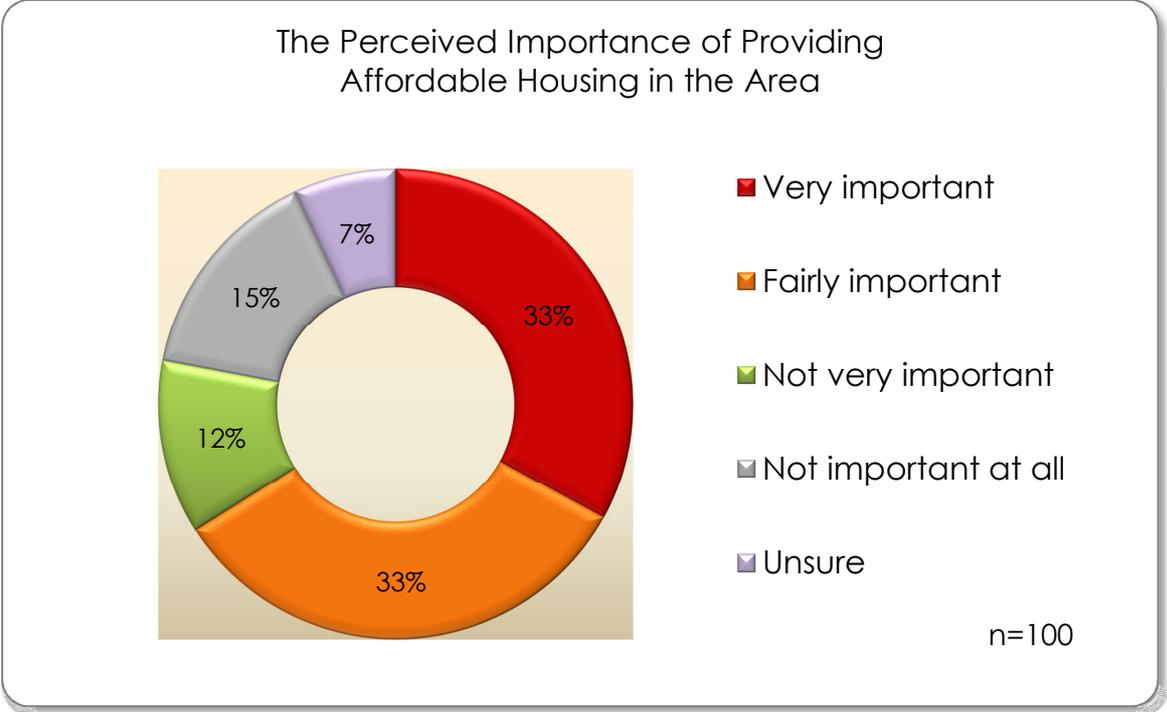
Thoughts on the Number 4 Ranked Topic of Providing Affordable Housing in the Area

This could include:

- Ensuring that there is a range of housing options in the Parish, giving people access to affordable properties such as shared ownership, housing co-operatives, social housing, etc.
- Ensuring also that this is in keeping with the traditional appearance of the built environment and area.

As the fourth most popular potential area of development, providing affordable housing in the area attracted support from many residents – with two-thirds (66%) of residents regarding this as important. (See figure 30).

Figure 30

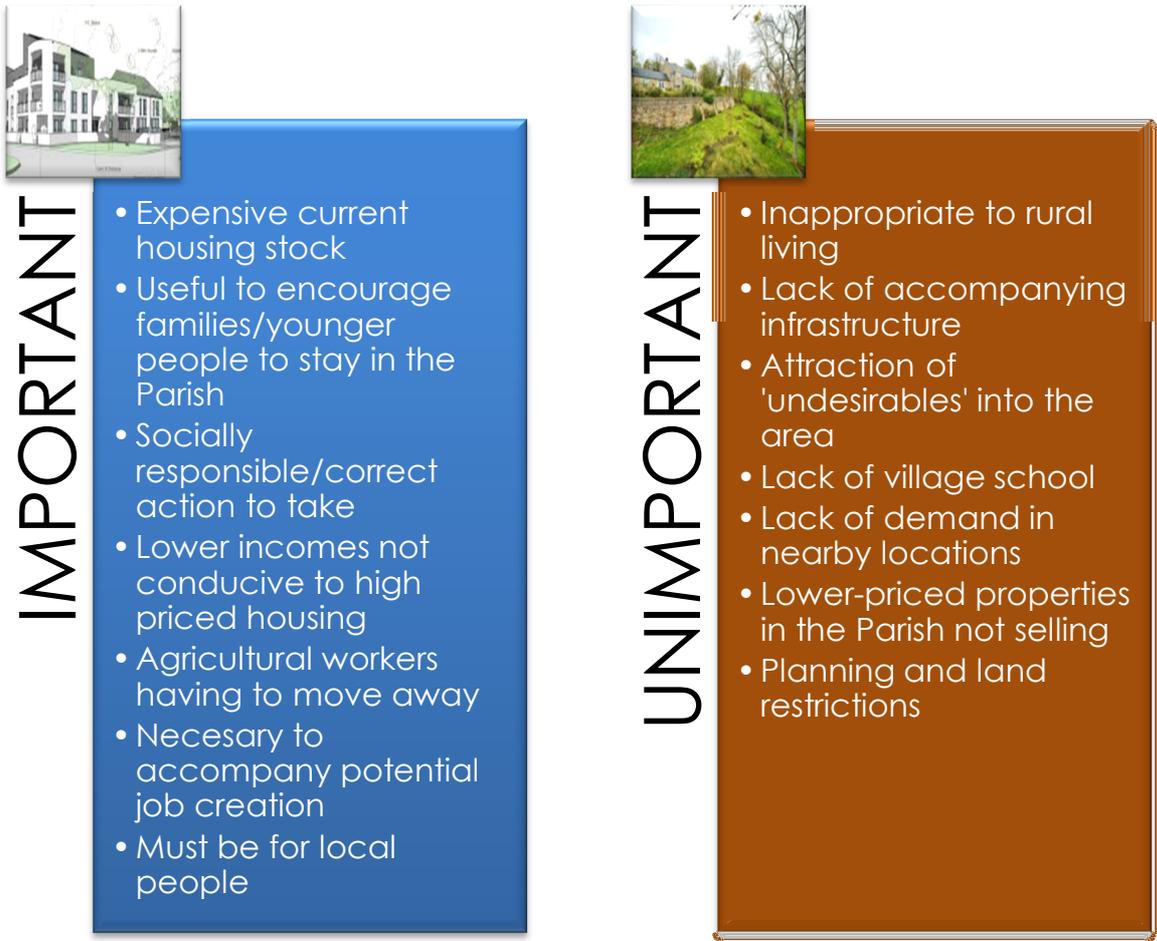


What Underpins Resident Thoughts on Providing Affordable Housing in the Area?

This was a subject which attracted very polarised opinion among residents. A number of residents view the provision of affordable housing as an effective means of enabling younger and retiring residents to remain living in the Parish, offering an alternative to what is seen as predominantly expensive current housing options and acting as an essential accompaniment to any job creation within the Parish.

However, this is a view countered by many others who question the suitability/fit of affordable housing in Eglingham, demand for affordable housing in the context of under-utilised housing of this type in nearby locations, unsold reasonable priced properties, the lack of a village school and a number of planning restrictions and land covenants making any such development difficult. (See figure 31).

Figure 31



The following comments from residents express the two most typical concerns:

“we already have a number of properties available to rent, and houses for sale”

“affordable housing can blight the value of equivalent nearby properties and change the mix of a community in unforeseen ways, so would need very careful and honest research”

“there are some houses reasonably priced already that haven't sold”

“there are a lot of covenants on the land that would prohibit building anyhow”

“there are not many young people about that would need it”

“there is already affordable housing in Alnwick that is not taken up”

“affordable housing into the village would possibly attract undesirable persons/criminals into the area and detract from the very nature of why Eglington was in the top fifty villages in the country. I strongly disagree with this notion”

“I am not a big fan of new builds in rural areas. I moved here because of what it is with limited housing. Any new housing would completely change the characteristics of the village. If kids want to live in the area they could find property in Alnwick and other alternatives elsewhere”

“my initial query is where would you build any? There are many conservation covenants here that would prohibit building. The Trust's role would be to undertake a feasibility study of this. A national housing association would have to be involved. It would not be legitimate for the Trust to bankroll any building development”.

However, note that there is still considerable support for this stream of potential Trust activity:

“more affordable housing is always needed for many reasons - downsizing, people moving out from their parents wishing to be independent and to stay in the community”

“we have an ageing population and most people are retired. The rents are not affordable for local people and young residents tend to move away. We need to encourage more people into the area to create a variety of age groups, so more affordable housing is needed”

“the young ones don't stand a chance with house prices and rents as high as they are. We need smaller homes for all sorts of reasons as well as starter homes for kids leaving home or coming back home after their education years so they can have their independence in the place they were raised”

“the school closing down in Eglington has put pressure on young families and I believe some have had to move away impacting on the diversity of age groups in the parish. Anything that either discourages people from having children or raising children or families wishing to move here is very wrong in rural areas as we will end up with a parish full of very old people ironically dependant on young people to help them. I have kids of my own in their 20's who want to have their own independent homes but to stay in the parish and there is nowhere for them that they could afford”

“this is definitely very important. I know lots of people who would love to live here who cannot afford to. People are forced to move away as they cannot afford to live here. I feel sorry for the young people who have been to college or university and have worked away realising they want to come back to where they were born and they cannot. We need more young families in the community”

“working in agriculture is a tough job and does not pay well. We will never be able to afford to buy our own home, so a different type of opportunity for getting onto the property ladder would be ideal. Many of the affluent homeowners in the surrounding area will perhaps not be so agreeable though - many have commented that social housing would bring down the value of their own homes and would somewhat demean the community. If we want younger generations and local families to stay in the area, then we must give them the chance to be able to afford to live somewhere locally. Having said that, we don't have any suggestions as to where any such housing would be, or could be built!”

“we must keep young people in the parish. The retired farmworkers must be housed where they have worked all their lives. Land could be bought...there is lots about, and a housing association could be brought in to build say ten houses at first, on condition they are for young families and retired local people. The trust could part own the development to ensure only local people can live there”

“this is a critical subject. Our school closed down as there were no children in the Parish. Younger people cannot afford to buy houses so leave the area. There is no social housing in the parish. There is a little private rentable accommodation available that latterly younger people have rented and hence we have a few children. It should be one of the Trust's top priorities to seek to provide rentable accommodation. There is also a need for rentable accommodation for workers living in farm cottages and looking to stay in the area when retiring”

“I am a farm worker and live in a tied cottage. When I retire or am unable to work, myself and my family will have to move out but up to now we would all want to stay in the parish. If that was now, we couldn't afford to buy or rent anything and would have to move away which we don't want to do. Like me, my father was also a shepherd all his life and is suffering a massive culture shock having to live in a town. We desperately need affordable housing in the area for everybody but particularly for local people retiring having worked on the farms all their lives”.

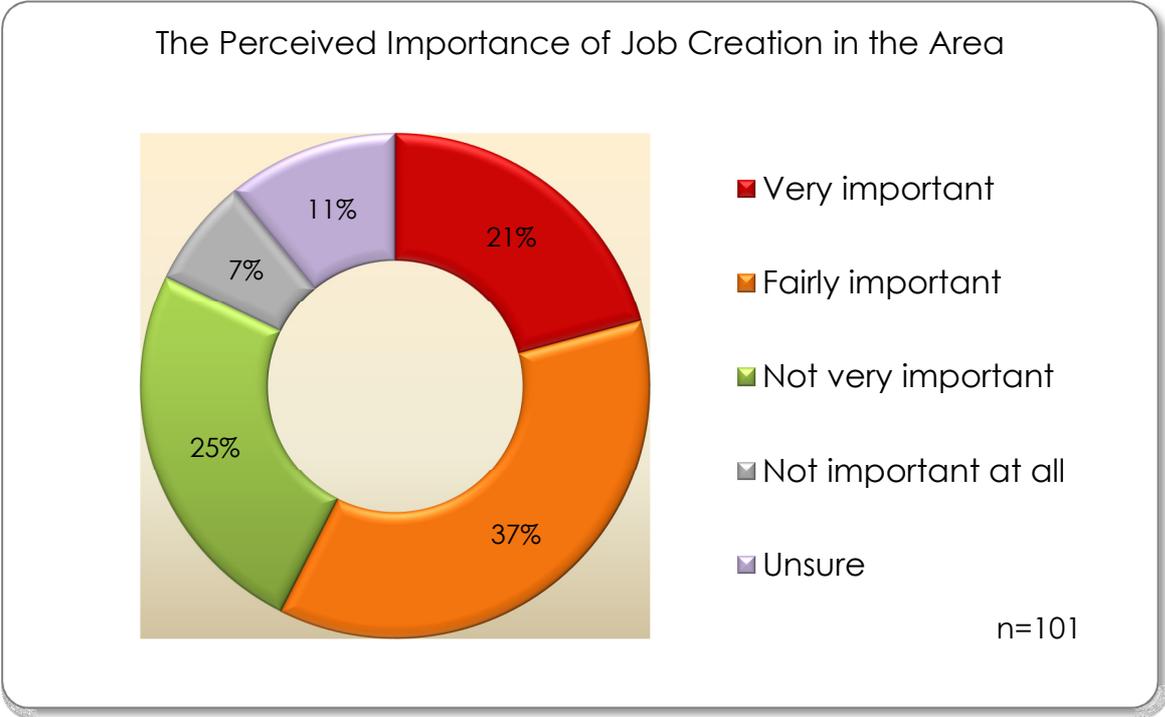
Thoughts on the Number 5 Ranked Topic of Creating Job Opportunities in the Area

This could include:

- Creating work spaces to encourage employers to come to the area - bringing job opportunities for local people.

As the second *least popular* potential area of development, creating job opportunities in the area attracted slightly less support from residents – though with 58% of residents still regarding this as important. (See figure 32).

Figure 32



What Underpins Resident Thoughts on Creating Job Opportunities in the Area?

A number of residents view this potential area of development for the Parish Trust as being important for the future vitality and preservation of the community. There is a mind-set which sees potential in the conversion of empty buildings, which, alongside the appropriate technological infrastructure could encourage small, cottage-type industry to prosper, attracting and retaining younger people to/in the Parish, whilst re-establishing services such as a village shop and café. In sharp contrast, a number of other residents are concerned about the potential erosion of what is currently seen as 'quiet, retirement life' in an unspoilt, rural environment largely unsuitable for extended business opportunity. They question the demand for such opportunity within an ageing population, are uncertain about the ability to physically accommodate businesses, and point also to the nearby centres of Alnwick and Wooler as more appropriate job creation hubs. (See figure 33).

Figure 33



IMPORTANT

- Business development conversion opportunities on existing buildings/land (i.e. the school and village hall)
- Requires upgrade of existing infrastructure (i.e. technology)
- Essential to sustain the community and encourage younger people to the Parish
- Encourage small workshop/cottage industry type enterprises
- Opportunity to re-establish a shop/cafe



UNIMPORTANT

- Maintaining a tranquil retirement ethos to the Parish
- Potential erosion of environment/conservation and house prices
- Already opportunity - lacking only in enterprise
- Lack of suitable locations
- Nature of agricultural work not conducive to people
- Would need to dovetail with affordable housing to encourage younger employees
- Lack of demand
- More appropriate locations for employment - Alnwick and Wooler

The following resident thoughts give an interesting insight into these themes. Those in support comment:

"I think more cottage industry should be encouraged, people selling home made goods from their door along with more B&B's in Eglington would be good to encourage tourists into the area and spend on local goods"

"I feel we could convert some of the existing buildings into small units for external SME's and local people. Art and craft workshops would be good"

"local jobs would be very good and would help to keep the community vibrant rather than becoming a dormitory or retirement area but I think the jobs would need to go hand in hand with improved opportunities for young people to live in the area instead of having to move away because of the high cost of housing"

"there needs to be a local independent employment service that can enlighten kids to make the right choices and to find employment that suits their abilities. Kids do not know what work is available that matches their skills nor what they need to get certain jobs; independent careers advice could be made available to them in the hall. There is a lady in the village who is a careers advice specialist"

"there are plenty of existing buildings that could be converted into office and business units. The school is a prime spot for internet connection and could be used for offices and/or even a village shop"

"we need a shop. We need a farm shop and café...these work very well in rural areas and create jobs for local people and bring tourists into the area. We need to encourage cottage industry, people selling things from the door"

"it would be great to see the school re-opened. A local shop and bakers would be great - run by local people and not a conglomerate. We need to keep young people in the area at all costs otherwise our diversity as a community will fail"

"convert existing buildings into business units. Look at what they have done at Kirkharle Farm outside Ponteland"

“it is very important to maintain or bring jobs to the local area, using wherever possible existing workspaces. We need to ensure that we invest in local services like shops, schools and transport. We need to put ourselves on the map to ensure that we draw interest and investment in our local community. A starting point is a thriving and well-used village hall!”

“there are a number of self-employed people living here who travel to offices in Newcastle and elsewhere, it would be nice to work in the village and not have to travel”.

Ideas for the Creation of Increased Job Opportunities in the Parish

Figure 34 summarises resident ideas by those in support of increasing job opportunities in the Parish.

Figure 34



In contrast, those with concerns about the possibility of job creation comment:

“Alnwick and Wooler are better employment hubs and each only seven miles away. Alnwick has lots of businesses that could provide employment”

“workplace development may upset the village harmony which has created the peaceful village life we share. Also, personal experience of advertising redundant agricultural buildings for conversion to workplace units and then subsidised set-up placements brought absolutely no response”

"if you want to live in the country you cannot expect to have what is available in the towns and cities. Rural values would diminish if you start making villages like towns and cities"

"Northumberland is bad for Broadband...this would be needed for businesses and the infrastructure would need to be improved"

"you could potentially invite businesses to set up in the area but we have very limited parking and the road is narrow in places as it is, additionally where are they going to get employees from? Everyone here is retired and why would employees travel here? They would have to have a car as the public transport system is very limited. Our roads are in a terrible state already, if we encouraged businesses to set up here we would have even more traffic to further damage the roads"

"it would be more appropriate to support such initiatives in Alnwick and look for ways to help people to travel to such spaces. It is more likely that new businesses would be attracted to larger conurbations"

"I do not want see more building and industrial development in this area. Jobs are important but conservation is also an issue"

"people are settled in what they do here...we don't want business developments in the area"

"this is not a vibrant working community but an area where people come to enjoy the countryside and coast-line, for peace and quiet, for dark skies and even for solitude. It worked for St Cuthbert and can still work for us. Dualing the A1 will make travel into Newcastle or to Edinburgh that much easier, but the consequential traffic disturbance and noise are likely to be far more damaging to our area than any inexplicable economic benefit"

"this is a small rural village with employers in agriculture, hospitality, care and domestic. Many of those services are sourced externally only because nobody in the village is offering those services. It is the enterprise that is missing, not employers".

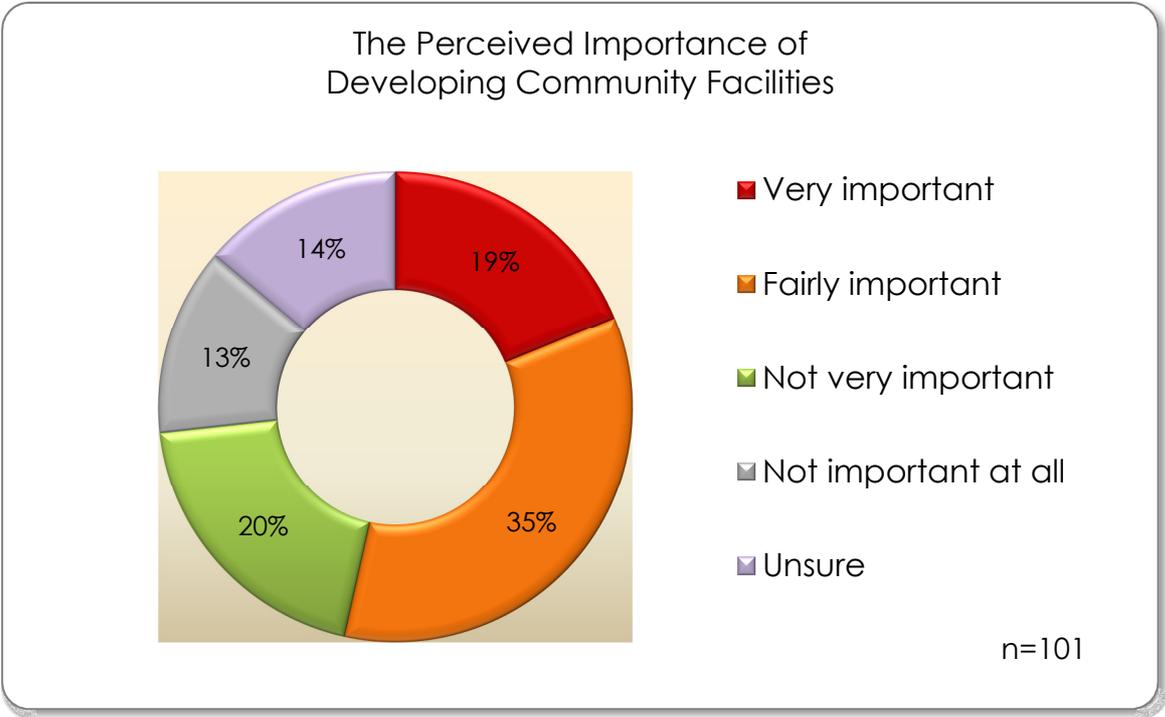
Thoughts on the Number 6 Ranked Topic of Developing Community Facilities

This could include:

- Acquiring and making improvements to local community buildings - including community centres, sports facilities, churches and other community spaces.
- Looking at the current capacity of these spaces to accommodate increased and diversified usage.

As the least popular potential area of development, developing community facilities attracted the lowest level of support from residents – though with 54% of residents regarding this as important this is still felt by many to be worthy of focus. (See figure 35).

Figure 35



What Underpins Resident Thoughts on Developing Community Facilities in the Area?

A number of residents noted what they felt was a sufficiency of current facilities and provision, with a lack of any additional demand for community facilities. However, others more proactively suggested a need for diversified usage, buildings, resources and creativity. (See figure 36).

Figure 36



IMPORTANT

- Invest in and maintain current community buildings
- Diversify provision to target younger people
- Think creatively to diversify use
- Seek new locations/buildings
- Encourage skills being highlighted



UNIMPORTANT

- A sufficiency of current provision - including village halls, tennis courts, pre-school at South Charlton
- Adequate current provision specifically for children at schools
- Lack of additional demand
- Bureaucracy associated with utilising facilities/hosting activities

Residents viewing this as a largely unimportant topic commented:

“all the schools have most what people need with after school activities. Most activities are built into the curriculum for young people”

“apart from the maintenance of existing buildings, I don't believe there is any real demand for improvements”.

In contrast, note support for this area of focus from a number of residents:

“we need to secure a long term lease on our village hall which I believe expires in a few years”

“we need a better broadband service in South Charlton”

“the cricket team could do with some help for equipment”

“all weather pitches (floodlit) would be good. My children have to travel to other parishes to play football and rugby every weekend and training through the week. For the last two months all football has been cancelled because of waterlogged pitches. Rugby training has been on the beach which is not ideal. People are happy to travel from Alhwick to the beach for training so would happily travel to South Charlton, North Charlton and Eglington if there was a suitable pitch. There lots of other age groups and activities that would make use of allweather pitches, bringing people into the parish”

“sport facilities are very important...the fitter we are the healthier we'll stay”

“community centres are very important and are a glue for local people. The community hall in South Charlton and Eglington are vital and need to be maintained and developed by the Committees that run them. The Trust might wish to discuss with the Committees their aspirations and perhaps share views taken from this survey and then look for ways to support the Committees in realising their ambitions by providing advice, support, time and expertise where it is needed and available”

“we do already have a village hall support group who maybe need to have a more universal outlook. The hall must be kept modern to encourage people and outsiders to use it”

“I believe that most of the Parish is fairly well served by community facilities but North Charlton has nothing that I am aware of. I appreciate that we are a smaller community but do feel that we benefit less from local activities and facilities”

“build something unique which would put the parish on the map and attract people to the community. This will help generate excitement around the parish!”

“the tennis court needs to be resurfaced and made durable to accommodate a number of activities”

“with the regrettable loss of the village school in Eglington, those children who still live in the community are denied local facilities and must travel to Alnwick or Wooler for recreation. The school field would make an excellent local sports hub with suitably enhanced facilities. An all-weather surface with multi-sports markings could attract a much wider usage than currently, with the schools at Branton and Whittingham soon to be taking children up to the age of eleven providing potential users”

“explore use of the old school building, or at least part of it, perhaps for local business purposes or changing accommodation for sports facility users would benefit the building which has remained empty since the school closed five years ago”

“our churches and village halls provide excellent spaces and lend themselves to many potential uses. They are at present very under-used. We need to be more creative in the way we market these buildings and be more proactive and innovative in the way we manage them. We should endeavour to own our own buildings if possible and it is something the Trust should look towards doing”

“the community buildings are a great asset and I feel the school could be used as a shop, post office and newsagents, owned by the trust as a non-profit entity to serve the community”

“outsiders need to be encouraged to hire the halls. It is the same people who attend all the time. Keep the leisure activities varied and not boring. All the activities are geared around old people!”

“there are not enough applications put forward for funding for North Charlton as we are a very small community”

“I feel there ought to be more allotments, we have one or two. Allotments instigate vibrant community spirit as well as providing produce for the community”.

Ideas for Community Facility Improvement

Figure 37 gathers together resident-driven ideas for community facility improvement. These focus on the provision of new facilities including a café/community hub, sports-oriented provision (including cricket facilities), and the provision of community broadband and computing facilities. Additionally, note suggestions which look to diversify participation and events – targeting the younger population, and embracing creative thinking in providing new and different options.

Figure 37



Moving Forward

The following steps are recommended in the wake of the Parish Survey. (See figure 38).

Figure 38

