

Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall Neighbourhood Plan Initial Survey Results

March 2021



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INTRODUCTION

Marbury and District Parish Council commissioned Cheshire Community Action (CCA) to carry out an analysis of the Neighbourhood Plan Initial Survey undertaken in January and February 2021.

This report presents the results of the survey. The content highlights issues that are important to the local community, and will help inform (along with other evidence) the vision, objectives and the direction of the planning policies in the Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall Neighbourhood Plan. There are also aspects which cannot be dealt with through the Neighbourhood Plan but may become actions or projects for the Parish Council to address through other means.

CCA is a local, independent charity that has supported over 60 neighbourhood plan groups in Cheshire and is therefore one of the most experienced local organisations in supporting and advising on neighbourhood plans.

DISTRIBUTION

The questionnaire was delivered by hand to all households in Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall during January 2021. Respondents could complete the questionnaire whereupon it could be delivered to a local councillor or member of the Neighbourhood Plan steering committee, emailed to the local parish website, or filled in online at the parish website. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 1.

The survey required responses from as many local people as possible and was therefore promoted through a variety of methods. The questionnaire was promoted by the village website www.marburyanddistrict.org.uk and was advertised by emails sent out on 19th January, plus a couple of reminders. The Parish magazines also had a paragraph explaining the Neighbourhood Plan and advertising the survey.

The deadline for responses was 5th February, but due to bad weather was extended until 15th February, so that individuals had approximately a month to respond. CCA carried out data entry and analysed the responses.

All personal information that has been received as part of the survey was treated as confidential in order to comply with data protection laws.

OVERALL RESPONSE

A total of 68 surveys were returned out of the 267 distributed. This gives a good overall response rate of 25.5%, particularly as the survey was undertaken during the covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Many respondents gave lengthy, well considered, thoughtful and detailed responses.

SURVEY SECTIONS

The survey had six main questions:

1. What do you like the most about our Parish as it is today?
2. Is there anything that you dislike about our Parish as it is today?
3. Your vision – how would you like to see our Parish in the future?
4. Which three (out of a list of ten options – design; local economy; community facilities; recreation; housing; natural environment; access to the countryside; climate change; sustainable transport; heritage) do you think are the most important issues for Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall?
5. Are there any green spaces that you think should be particularly protected?
6. Is there anything else that you think should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan?

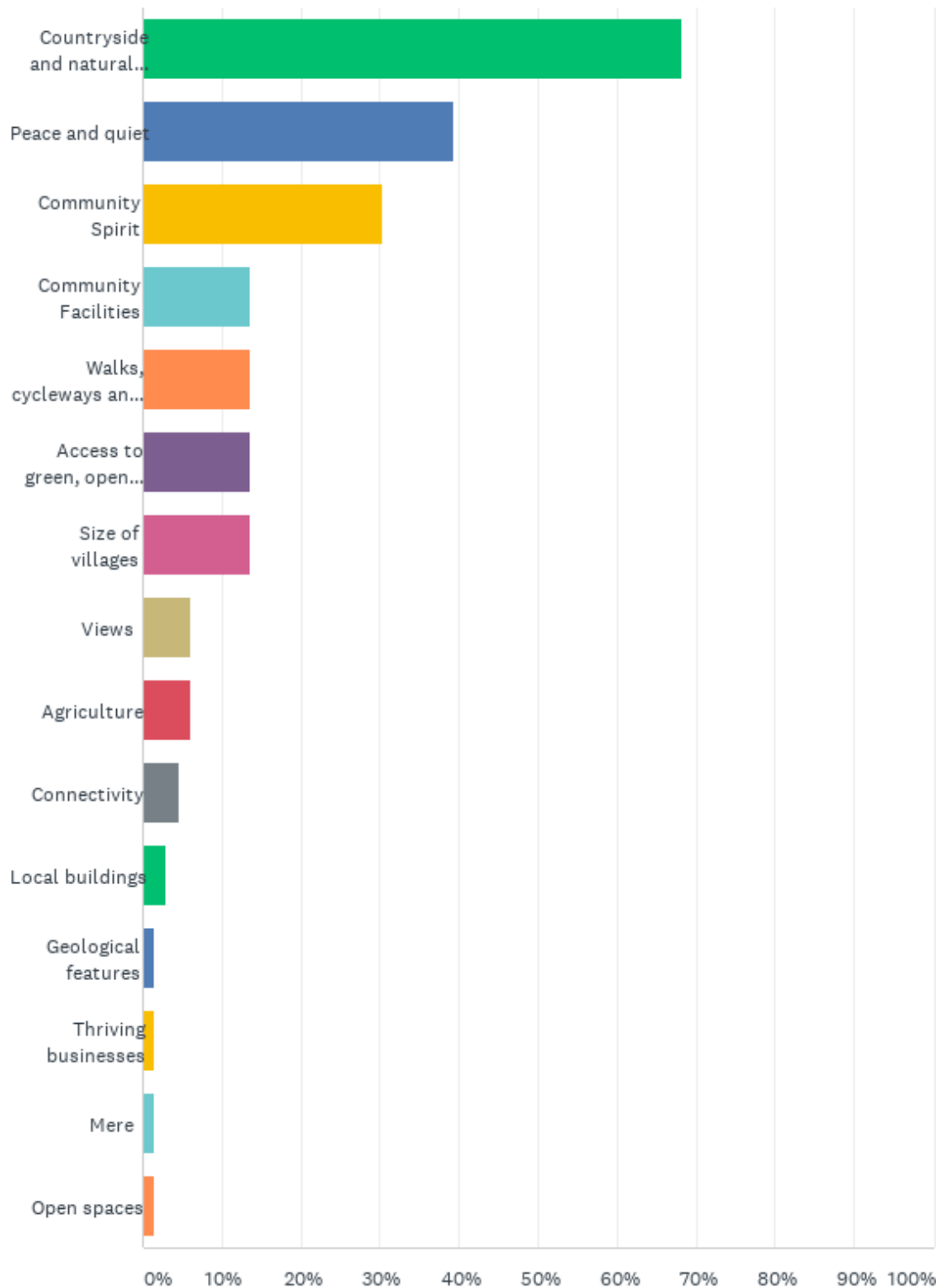
The questionnaire also asked for respondents' postcodes, and whether they were individuals, businesses or an organisation. Respondents were also asked whether they would like to help with the Neighbourhood Plan, and were able to give their details if they wished to become involved.

Five of the six questions were open ended, and so in order for analysis to be undertaken, comments were grouped into certain main themes. In this report, the results are shown in chart and tabular form. The number of respondents who answered each question are included in the tables.

QUESTION ANALYSIS

Q1: What do you like most about our Parish as it is today?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 2



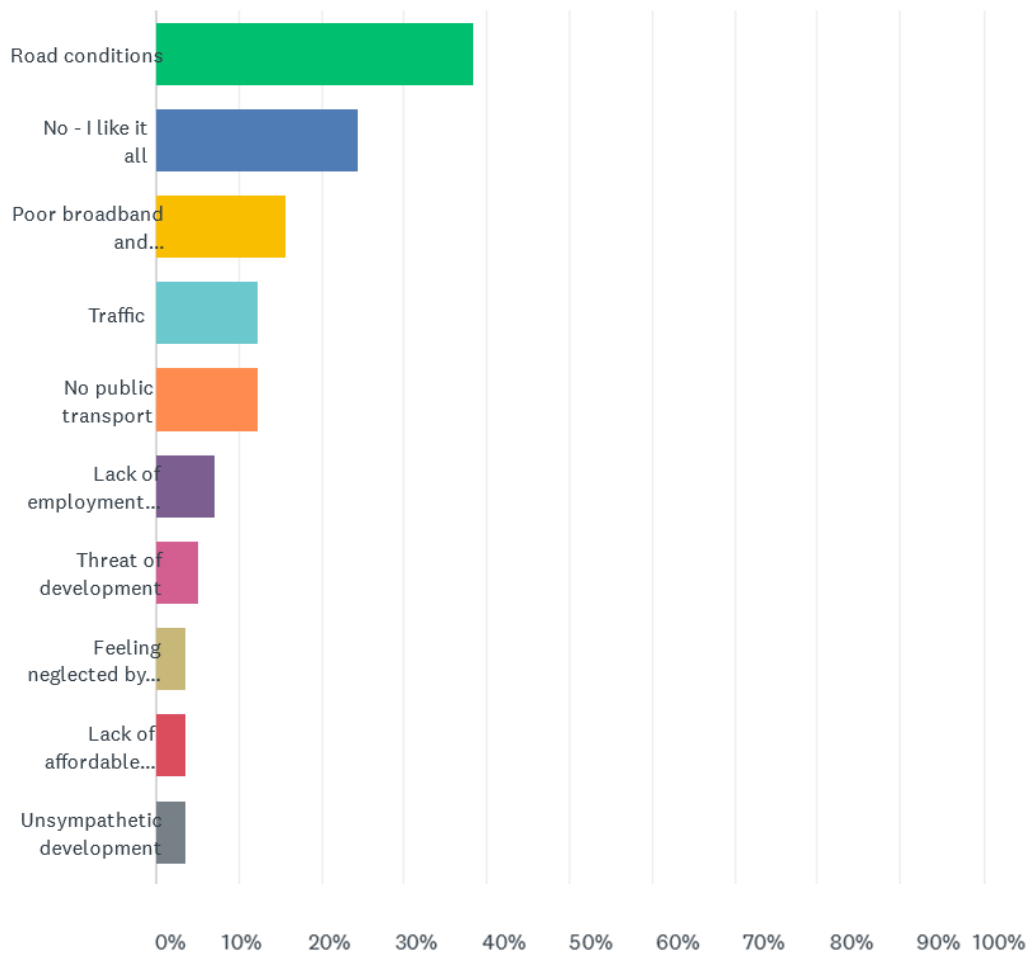
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Countryside and natural environment	68.18%	45
Peace and quiet	39.39%	26
Community Spirit	30.30%	20
Community Facilities	13.64%	9
Walks, cycleways and footpaths	13.64%	9
Access to green, open spaces	13.64%	9
Size of villages	13.64%	9
Views	6.06%	4
Agriculture	6.06%	4
Connectivity	4.55%	3
Local buildings	3.03%	2
Geological features	1.52%	1
Thriving businesses	1.52%	1
Mere	1.52%	1
Open spaces	1.52%	1
Total Respondents: 66		

Very nearly all respondents answered this question, with the most popular choice being the countryside and the natural environment, as well as many respondents saying that they enjoyed the peace and quiet that the village's location enjoys. The friendliness of the local people and the community spirit was also highly scored.

Other popular choices were the lovely walks and the green spaces on the doorstep, and the church and the pub were also mentioned by a number of residents. The small, unspoilt nature of the villages was another element of living in the Parish that was highly regarded.

Q2: Is there anything that you dislike about our Parish today?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 11

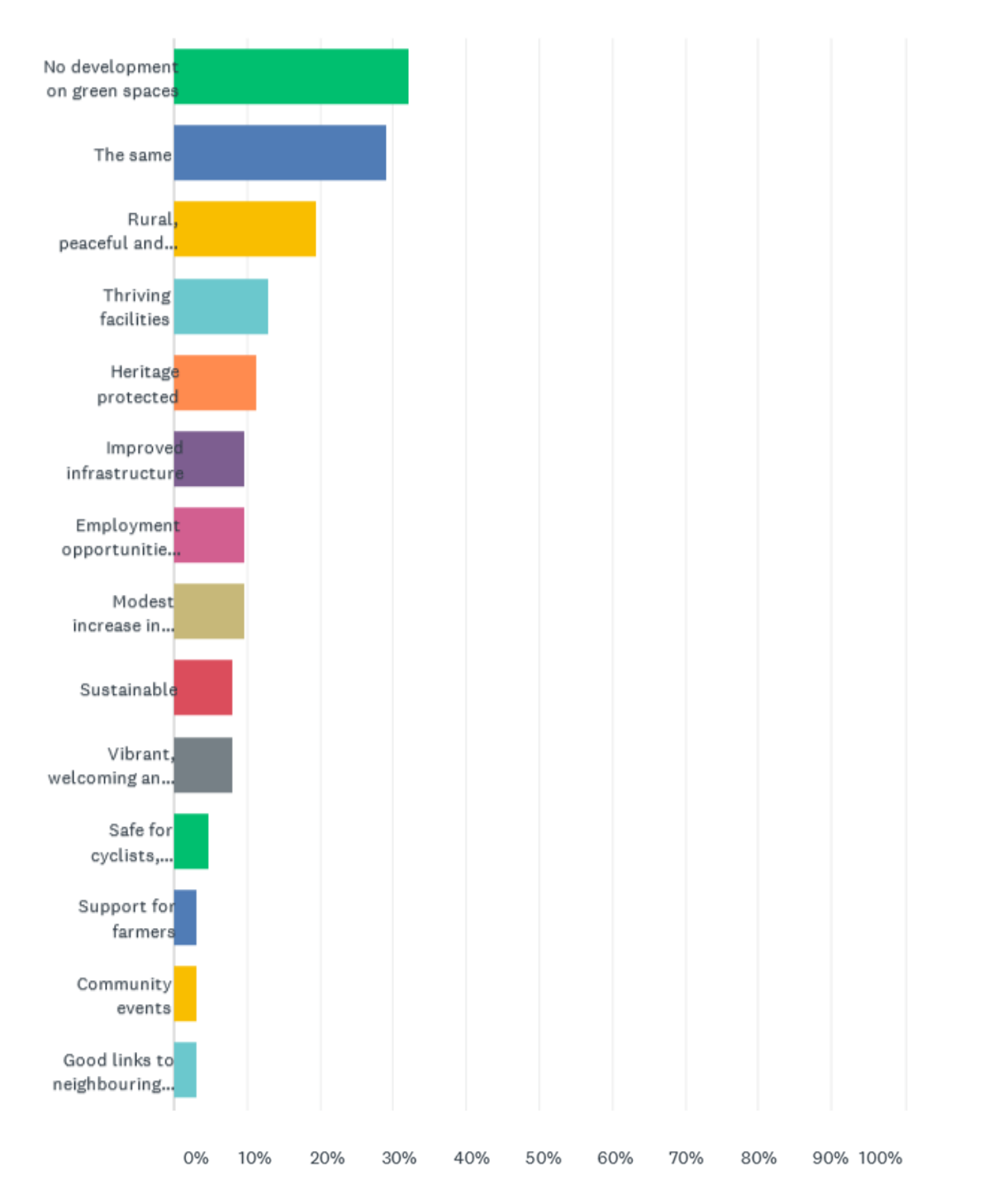


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Road conditions	38.60%	22
No - I like it all	24.56%	14
Poor broadband and infrastructure	15.79%	9
Traffic	12.28%	7
No public transport	12.28%	7
Lack of employment opportunities	7.02%	4
Threat of development	5.26%	3
Feeling neglected by Council	3.51%	2
Lack of affordable housing	3.51%	2
Unsympathetic development	3.51%	2
Soil Erosion and pollution	1.75%	1
Hunting	1.75%	1
Lack of facilities	1.75%	1
Snobbiness and cliques	1.75%	1
Lack of footpath maintenance	1.75%	1
Fragmentation of dairy farms	1.75%	1
Commercialism	1.75%	1
Neglect of heritage assets	1.75%	1
No parking for visitors	1.75%	1
Poor quality playground	1.75%	1
Dog poo	1.75%	1
Total Respondents: 57		

85% of respondents answered the question as to what they dislike about the Parish as it is today, and gave a wide range of answers. The most popular response was road issues, and traffic and lack of public transport were also mentioned by a number of respondents. The second most popular answer was that the respondents didn't dislike anything about living in the Parish today. The poor quality of broadband was also raised by a number of people, along with lack of employment opportunities and the threat of inappropriate development.

Q3: Your vision – how would you like to see the Parish in the future?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 6

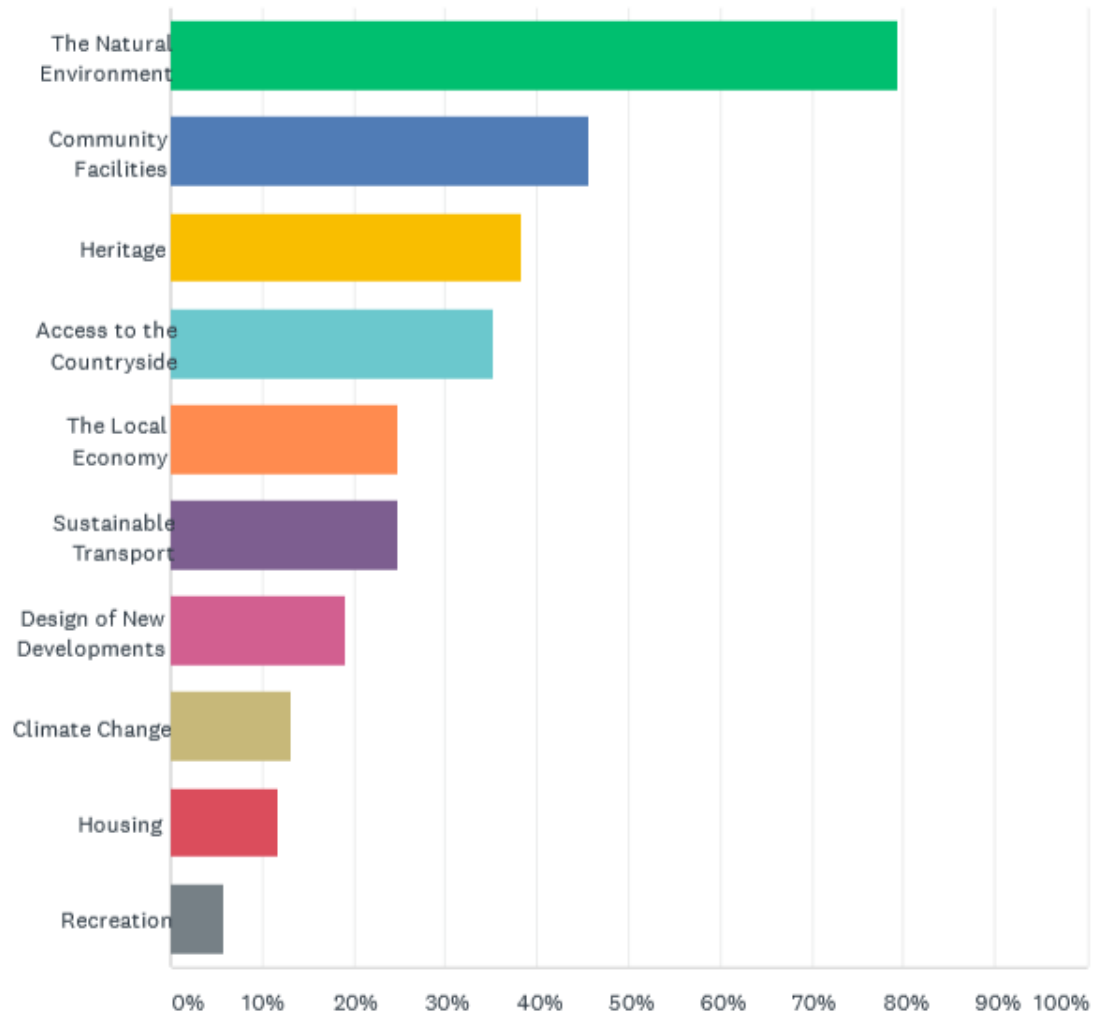


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No development on green spaces	32.26%	20
The same	29.03%	18
Rural, peaceful and quiet	19.35%	12
Thriving facilities	12.90%	8
Heritage protected	11.29%	7
Improved infrastructure	9.68%	6
Employment opportunities and wfh	9.68%	6
Modest increase in dwellings for younger and older people	9.68%	6
Sustainable	8.06%	5
Vibrant, welcoming and inclusive	8.06%	5
Safe for cyclists, walkers and horseriders	4.84%	3
Support for farmers	3.23%	2
Community events	3.23%	2
Good links to neighbouring towns	3.23%	2
Eco-system maintained	1.61%	1
Diverse house styles	1.61%	1
Meet climate change challenge	1.61%	1
Increase in trees and woodlands	1.61%	1
Less light pollution	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 62		

91% of respondents answered the question asking how they would like to see the Parish in the future. A third of respondents replied that they did not want to see development on the green fields and in the countryside. Almost a third of residents want the Parish to remain the same as it is now. Other answers included rural, peaceful and quiet; welcome and inclusive to all; the local heritage to be protected; to be sustainable; to have thriving facilities; employment opportunities; to be vibrant; and to have a diverse population, with facilities and housing to attract younger people, whilst also catering for the elderly.

Q3: What do you consider are the three top issues for Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall. Please pick three.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 0

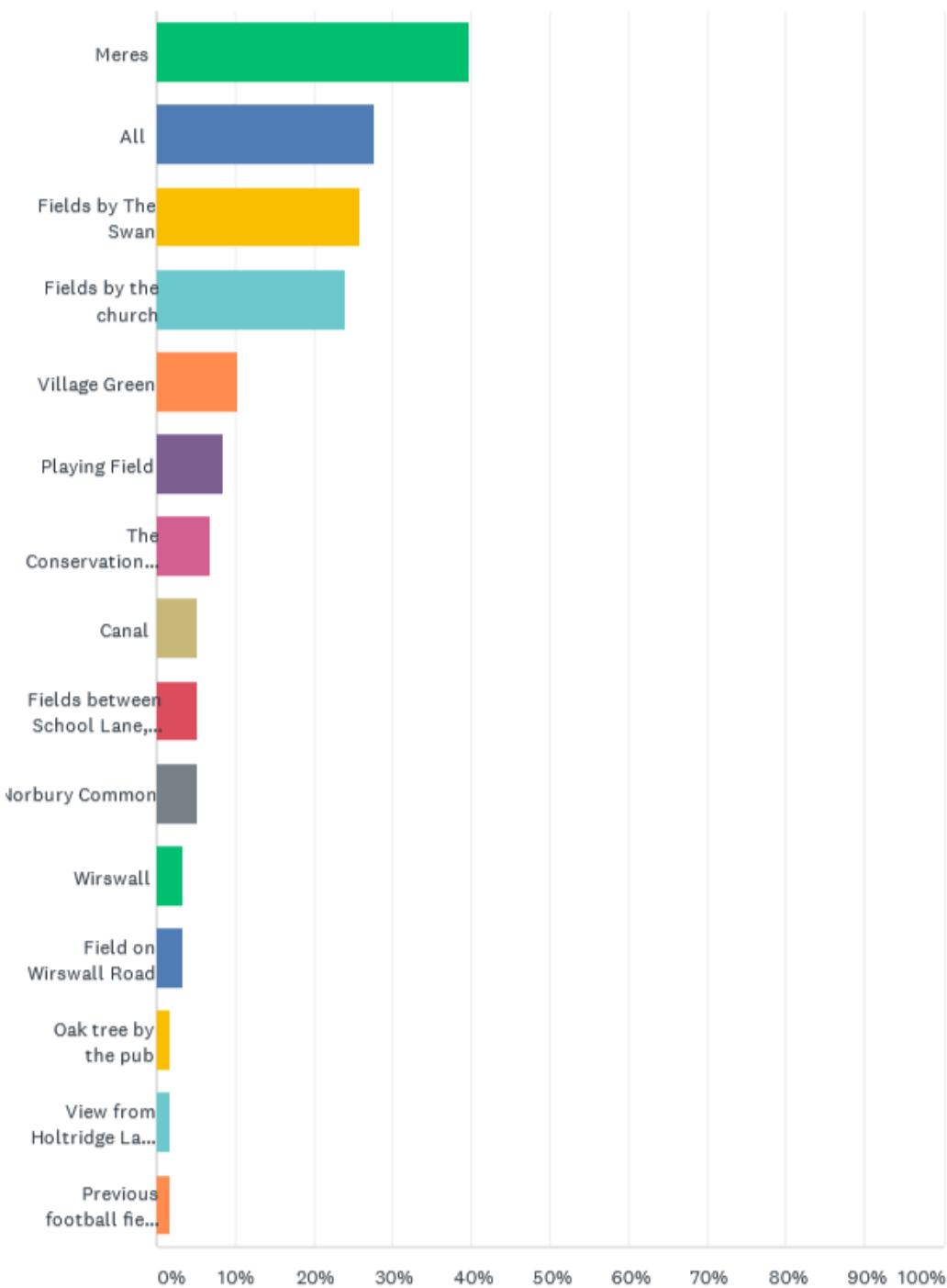


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The Natural Environment	79.41%	54
Community Facilities	45.59%	31
Heritage	38.24%	26
Access to the Countryside	35.29%	24
The Local Economy	25.00%	17
Sustainable Transport	25.00%	17
Design of New Developments	19.12%	13
Climate Change	13.24%	9
Housing	11.76%	8
Recreation	5.88%	4
Total Respondents: 68		

All respondents answered this question, and all gave three answers. By far the largest response, with almost 80% of respondents citing it as one of their three choices, was the natural environment. The next largest was community facilities, and a large proportion of respondents considering heritage and access to the countryside as important issues. A quarter of all respondents considered the local economy and sustainable transport to be one of the three issues most important to them. The issues considered to be important by the least amount of people were the design of new developments, climate change, housing and recreation, although they were all considered as one of the three most important by a small number of respondents.

Q5: Are there any green spaces that you think should be particularly protected?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 10

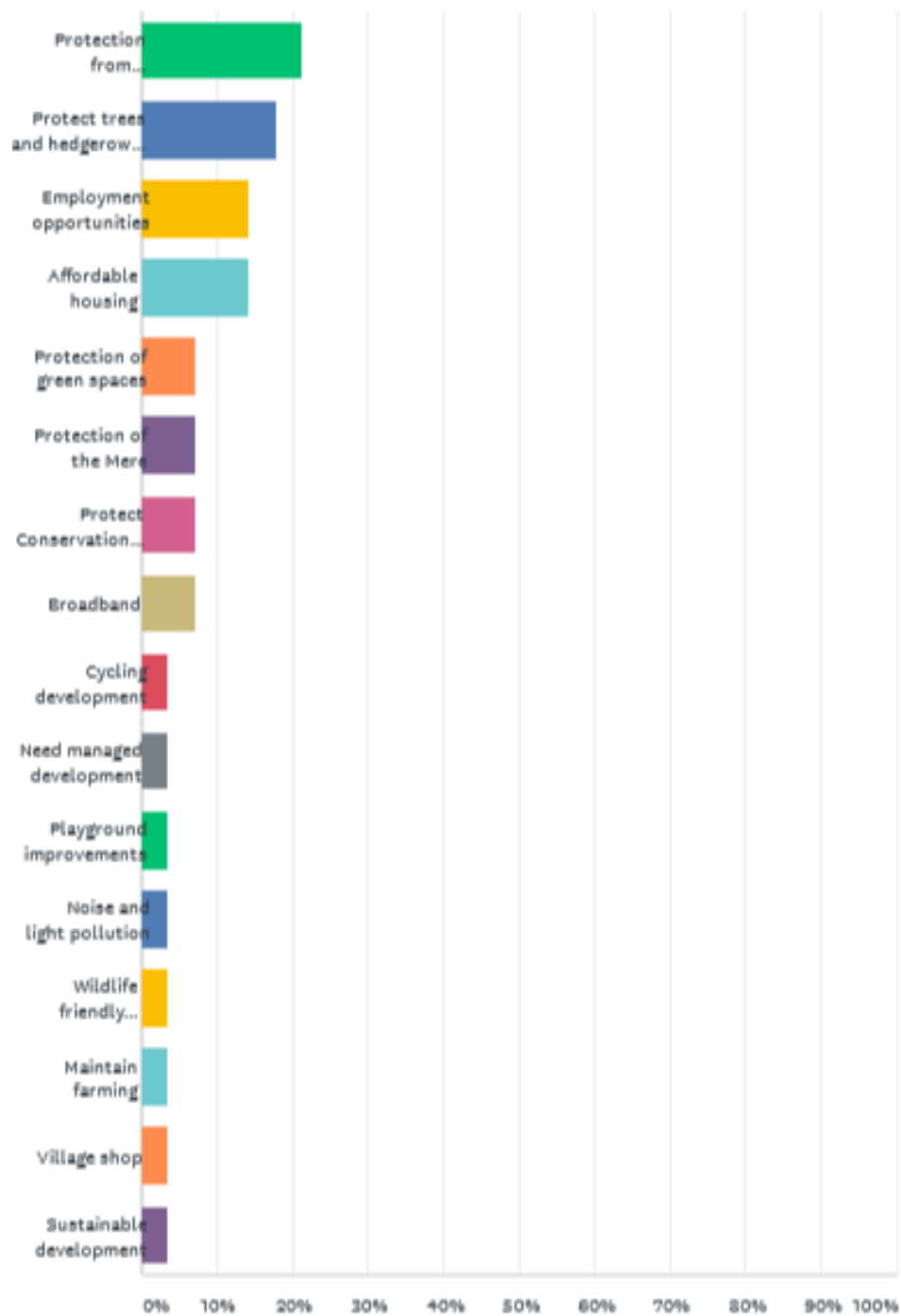


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Meres	39.66%	23
All	27.59%	16
Fields by The Swan	25.86%	15
Fields by the church	24.14%	14
Village Green	10.34%	6
Playing Field	8.62%	5
The Conservation Area	6.90%	4
Canal	5.17%	3
Fields between School Lane, Marbury Road and Canal Loch Bridge	5.17%	3
Norbury Common	5.17%	3
Wirswall	3.45%	2
Field on Wirswall Road	3.45%	2
Oak tree by the pub	1.72%	1
View from Holtridge Lane to Bickerton	1.72%	1
Previous football field by the bungalows	1.72%	1
Total Respondents: 58		

58 respondents gave suggestions as to whether there were green spaces that should be particularly protected, with 15 suggestions. The most popular suggestion was the Meres, with nearly 40% of those who responded suggesting this. The protection of all green spaces was another popular response. The fields by The Swan and by the church were suggested by a quarter of the respondents, with the village green and playing field being the next most popular suggestions.

Q6: Is there anything else you think should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 40



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Protection from development	21.43%	6
Protect trees and hedgerows, plant trees	17.86%	5
Employment opportunities	14.29%	4
Affordable housing	14.29%	4
Protection of green spaces	7.14%	2
Protection of the Mere	7.14%	2
Protect Conservation Area	7.14%	2
Broadband	7.14%	2
Cycling development	3.57%	1
Need managed development	3.57%	1
Playground improvements	3.57%	1
Noise and light pollution	3.57%	1
Wildlife friendly developments	3.57%	1
Maintain farming	3.57%	1
Village shop	3.57%	1
Sustainable development	3.57%	1
Total Respondents: 28		

The most popular response to whether there was anything else that should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan was the need to protect the Parish from development. Other responses included the need to protect trees and hedgerows and plant more trees, and the need for more facilities and housing to attract younger people in order that the Parish can remain vibrant and sustainable.

A number of the suggestions are likely to be covered by the issues already raised in the survey, such as employment and heritage. Additionally, a number of the responses raise suggestions that are unfortunately outside the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan, such as speed limits, road maintenance, bus services, littering and hunting. However, all responses are valuable and will be brought to the attention of the Parish Council, who can take further action where appropriate.

Other questions

67 out of the 68 respondents were individual residents. Only one of the respondents was from a business – which was farming.

One respondent had a CW5 postcode, but all the rest of the respondents had SY13 4 postcodes.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

The main themes that come out of the survey results are the importance of the countryside to the character of the Parish and the rural tranquillity that residents enjoy. There is also a great pride in the historic core of the Parish, along with the appreciation of the local facilities, including The Swan and St Michael's Church. The importance of the canals and the Meres is also a recurring theme, along with the continual support of agriculture and farming.

Whilst a number of residents don't wish to see any changes, there is a recognition by others that in order to maintain the vibrancy and sustainability of the Parish, younger people and their needs and requirements should not be ignored, and local employment opportunities should be encouraged.

Given the high value placed on the local natural environment, it may be worth considering commissioning Cheshire Wildlife Trust to undertake a study of the Parish's natural environment and nature conservation, in order to help draw up appropriate policies such as biodiversity and wildlife corridors. It may also be worth deciding whether the local heritage designations that cover the Parish, such as the Conservation Area appraisal, are up to date and do their job, or whether a heritage study may be necessary. There was only a very small response from local businesses, so it may be worth considering a business survey or directly approaching known businesses to help draw up a local economy policy.

The survey results give an excellent starting point for drawing up a vision and objectives, and give a direction as to what policies may need to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Suggested policy topics could include:-

- Nature Conservation
- Hedgerows/Trees
- Local Green Space
- The Meres and Canal
- Heritage
- Local Economy
- Community Facilities
- Footpaths and Cycleways
- Design
- Sustainable Transport
- Dark Skies and pollution
- Local recreation and tourism

It should be noted that Neighbourhood Plan policies must be in general conformity with local and national policies. The Parish is designated as open countryside within the Cheshire East Local Plan, and as such new development must be in conformity with Policy PG6 of the Local Plan (see Appendix 2) which provides guidance as to what development is allowed in the open countryside.

The residents of Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall gave many full, well thought out and detailed responses to the survey, which will be of great value when drafting the

Neighbourhood Plan. Once the Covid 19 lockdowns are over, and vulnerable people no longer need to shield, it will be worth holding an event to provide feedback on the survey results, and explain the next steps of the Neighbourhood Plan and see if residents are in support of the policies and direction of the Plan.

There were a number of comments made that unfortunately are outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. The largest amount of comments were regarding highway maintenance, or lack of, and there were also comments regarding the need for more frequent public transport. Whilst these cannot be covered in the Neighbourhood Plan, they are obviously real concerns to the community and it may be helpful for the Neighbourhood Plan steering group to pass on these concerns to the Parish Council, who will be able to direct the comments to the relevant authorities.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN for Marbury, Norbury & Wirswall

Your chance to have your say – make sure you say it!



WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

We have the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that allows us to have a big say in the future planning of our community. Topics covered can include the protection of the countryside, heritage, housing, the local economy, design, tourism and recreation etc. There are 30 adopted Neighbourhood Plans in Cheshire East, with many more underway. Your Parish Council has successfully applied for a grant to help with the cost.

A Neighbourhood Plan has to be in conformity with national planning policy and the Cheshire East Local Plan. However, having an adopted plan means that ***planners must take into account*** our vision of what the future looks like and what is appropriate for our combined Parish.

Remember, we live in a rural area in open countryside, rich in heritage, history and wildlife sites with no big housing developments.

Neighbourhood Plans are used by Cheshire East Council to help determine planning applications in our Parish. This means that our plan must be about 'land use' and other matters requiring or affecting planning consent. For example, it ***cannot*** cover issues such as state of the roads, speed limits, litter, or public transport.

Producing a Neighbourhood Plan involves us all. At the end of the process it will be independently examined and you will be able to vote in a referendum to adopt it. When it is safe to do so, we will hold some events in the Village Hall where the Neighbourhood Plan can be explained and discussed and further developed. For now though, we would love to hear your views as we start the process. We would be very grateful if you could complete the questionnaire online at www.marburyanddistrict.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan and click on "Take the Survey" to get the ball rolling (this is the best way) or fill in the questionnaire on the reverse side and get it to your Parish Councillor who will pass it on.

How would you like Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall to look in the future?

How should we protect and enhance the countryside and our heritage?

What would you like to see?

Do we need better local facilities?

What should any new development look like?

Get involved – take part - have your say!

1. What do you like the most about our Parish as it is today?

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2. Is there anything that you dislike about our Parish as it is today?

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3. Your vision – how would you like to see our Parish in the future?

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4. Which **three** of the following do you consider are the most important issues for Marbury, Norbury and Wirswall?

Design of new development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to the Countryside	<input type="checkbox"/>
The local economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>
The natural environment	<input type="checkbox"/>		

5. Are there any green spaces that you think should be particularly protected?

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6. Is there anything else that you think should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan?

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My views are: Individual or a Business or an Organisation (please circle as applicable)

My Business or my Organisation is: My postcode is:

Please use an additional sheet of paper if you need to. The online version is unrestricted.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it to **Chris Wheeler at The Old Smithy, Marbury SY13 4LS** or your Parish Councillor by **29th January 2021** or you can scan your survey and email it to np@marburyanddistrict.org.uk or even better go online at www.marburyanddistrict.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan and click on **"Take the Survey"** (all replies are ***In Confidence*** and will be anonymous when the results are analysed and published).

If you are interested in helping with our Neighbourhood Plan, then please provide your name and contact details below:-

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Policy PG 6

Open Countryside

1. The Open Countryside is defined as the area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary⁽³⁴⁾.
2. Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.
3. Exceptions may be made:
 - i. where there is the opportunity for limited infilling in villages; the infill of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage elsewhere; affordable housing, in accordance with the criteria contained in Policy SC 6 'Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs' or where the dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable development terms;
 - ii. for the re-use of existing rural buildings where the building is permanent, substantial and would not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension
 - iii. for the replacement of existing buildings (including dwellings) by new buildings not materially larger than the buildings they replace;
 - iv. for extensions to existing dwellings where the extension is not disproportionate to the original dwelling;
 - v. for development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business;
 - vi. For development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.
4. The retention of gaps between settlements is important, in order to maintain the definition and separation of existing communities and the individual characters of such settlements.
5. The acceptability of such development will be subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to design and landscape character so the appearance and distinctiveness of the Cheshire East countryside is preserved and enhanced.