

Results of the 1st Ixworth Neighbourhood Planning Questionnaire



January 2019

Background and Aims:

Ixworth Neighbourhood Planning Group was set up in the Autumn of 2017 with the intention of ascertaining what people living and working in the village want from living here as the village doubles in size in the next 30 years.

Our first engagement with the community has been in the form of a simple questionnaire distributed via the Ixworth Newsletter in November 2018. The aim was to find out what Villagers currently like and what they see as problematic. We have also attempted to identify what improvements the current residents would like to see in the future. The response was just under 15% of the community completing the questionnaire either on line or by returning a paper copy. The results are therefore somewhat limited but they do give us an idea of some of the issues that are of concern currently. Our thanks to all who responded.

We will use the results of the Questionnaire as a spring board for further consultation in the form of various open events, workshops and discussions to consider the various issues and views on how our community should develop in the coming years. Please look out for notices of forthcoming events in future issues of the Village Newsletter and on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/IxworthNP/

Help us to keep Ixworth a great place to live!

Here is a summary of the Findings

What residents value currently

The top three things that residents' value about living in Ixworth Parish are:

Friendly Community, Medical Services and Shopping Facilities

You also value the surrounding natural environment with 3.5 pages of comments on how much people like being close and having access to the countryside.

Main concerns in the Community

Traffic is the primary concern both the volume through the village and its speed. People were also concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety through the High Street. Junctions with the main roads are also seen as problematic

There are concerns about medical provision in the village.

Although only about 25% of people completing the questionnaire have children of school age there does seem to be issues with education provision in the Village

Protecting the wildlife environment

What do we currently lack or need?

Leisure facilities including either a new or improved Village Hall/ Community Centre seems important to the village. Coming in close behind was improved outdoor and indoor sporting and better green

spaces/park for outdoor events and leisure. Equally important is better leisure facilities for the Youth in the Village

Access to the countryside needs to be improved with current public paths improved and new walking paths opened. A lot of people feel that access to countryside is hampered by the busy roads surrounding Ixworth and that building a flyover/bridge over the bypass as being important

Views on future growth in Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe

We are clearly a community that feels it needs to encourage the young to settle with a substantial majority of respondents saying that smaller/starter homes are the number one build priority.

People feel that the recent building development has been too dense with houses built too close together and have not allowed adequate parking provision or green spaces.

Only 7 people from Ixworth Thorpe returned a completed questionnaire, but those that did felt there should be infill building development and better facilities such as pubs and shops

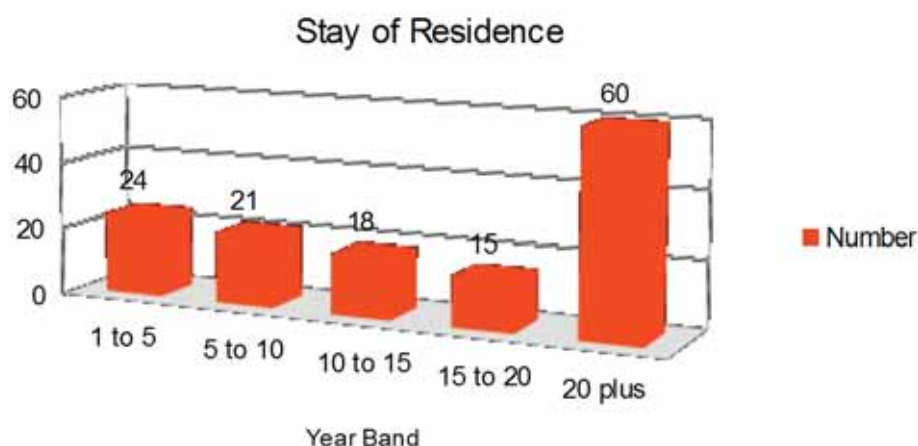
The majority, but not all people felt that land should be reserved for business growth in the village, but the majority of those that did felt that it should be reserved for start-ups and workshops.

There follows a more detailed analysis of the returns with graphs:

Question 1: Where do you live?

136 people responded with 93% living in Ixworth. 7 people from Ixworth Thorpe and the rest were from outside the Parish

Question 2: How long have you lived in Ixworth or Ixworth Thorpe?



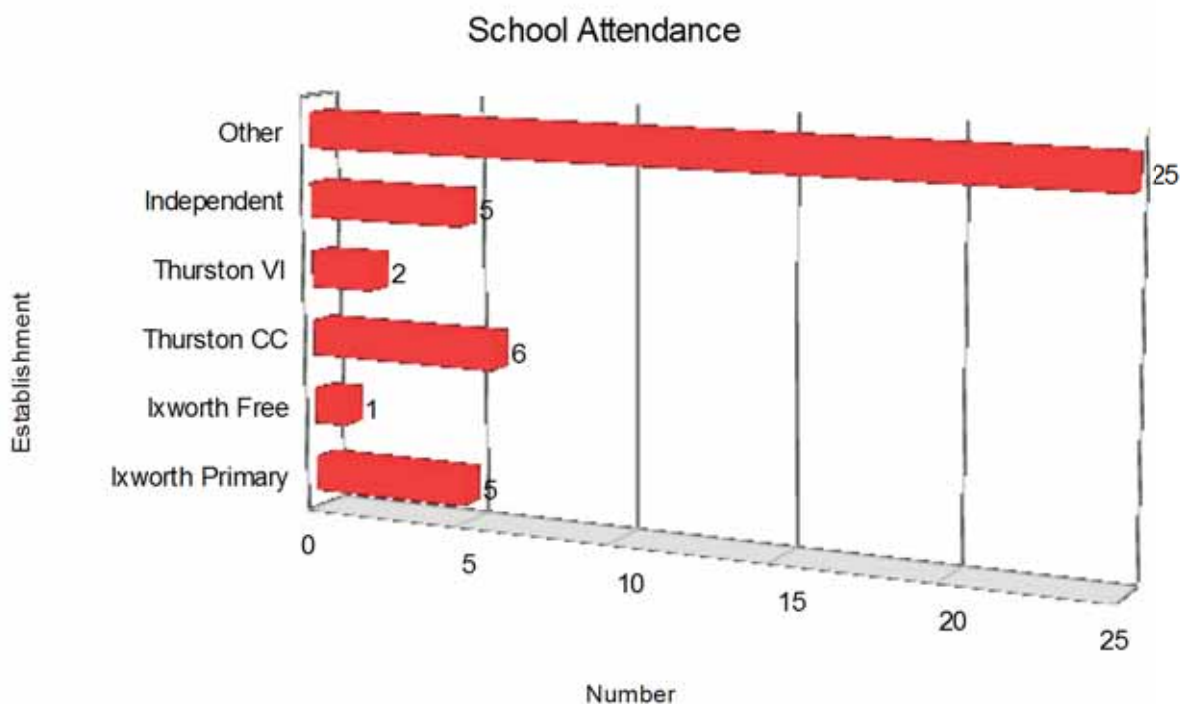
Question 3: What do you like about living in Ixworth/Ixworth Thorpe:

The top three were as follows:

Friendly Community, Medical Services and Shopping Facilities

In the comments section Theobalds came up 5 times as important! People also like Ixworth's location both its being rural and close to the A14. Country walks are also very important.

Question 4: Do you have school age children, if so which schools do they attend?

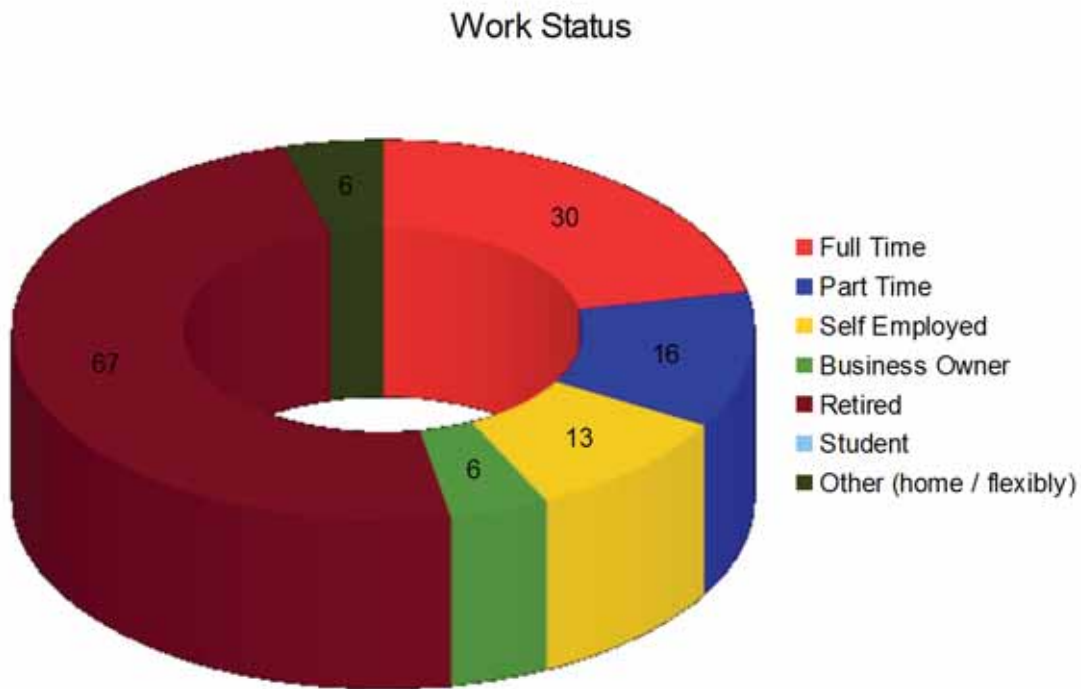


We only had 42 responses relating to Schools in the area and it is therefore probably not representative particularly as 13 of the respondents don't have school age children. It is clear though that from those responding that there is a perception of issues relating to current school provision within the village.

Of the 29 families with school age children only 6 are using the village schools. The rest either go to Thurston, Kegs, County Upper, Independent Schools or primary schools in Honnington and Great Barton. It would be useful to get further feedback from families with children of school age to get a more accurate view of school provision in the village.

Question 5. What is your work status?

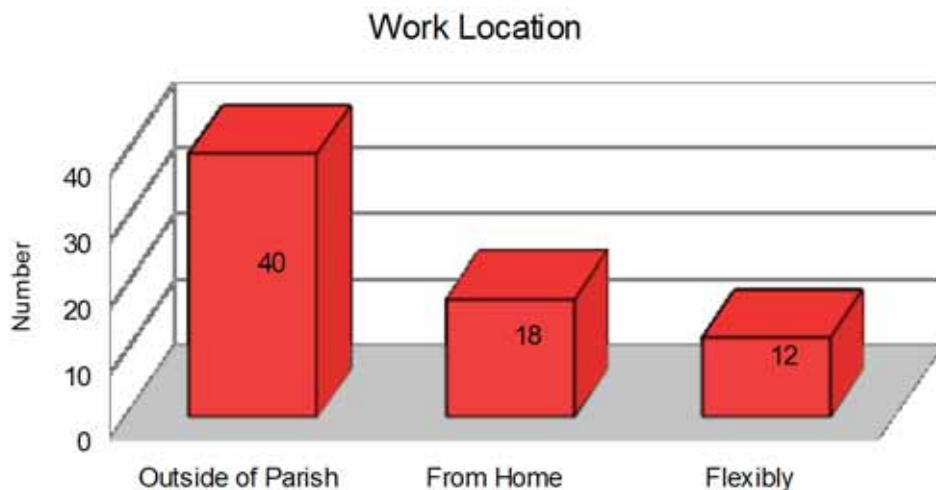
48.55% of respondents are retired and the remaining were well spread between full time, part time,



self-employed and business workers.

Question 6 Where do you work?

Most of those work outside the Parish. Interestingly 25% of respondents working, work from home.



Sports and Recreation in Ixworth/Ixworth Thorpe

Question 7: For a community the size of Ixworth/Ixworth Thorpe, what additional leisure, recreational and community facilities do you feel are needed?

Overwhelmingly respondents want there to be a new and enhanced Community Centre/Village Hall. 82.96% put it in their top 5 choices with 43% putting it as their first choice. There was strong and even support for improved sports facilities both outside and inside, a public park and more green spaces for outdoor events and informal recreation. Of equal importance was improved and enhanced areas for youth activity. There were many “other” ideas, the majority of which covered increased public footpaths and cycling paths, dog exercising areas and the need for a Post Office

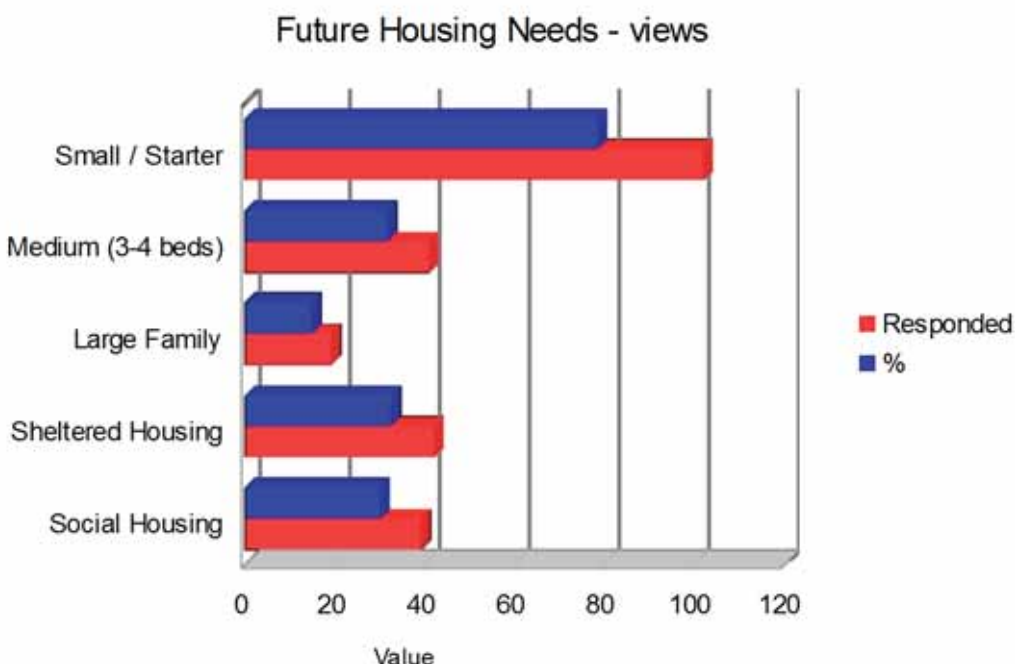
Question 8: What new facilities would you like to see in your new Village Hall?

The firm favourite is to have a Wellness Centre incorporated in the Village Hall with 84% citing this in their top 3 choice and 61% of these saying it is their 1st choice. Dining /Bar facilities and Meeting rooms came in 2nd and 3rd choices. There was interest in the provision of a Music Venue and Recording Studio Facilities but much less. This may be because less of the younger members of our community responded

Building Development Plans

Question 9: Do you think it would be a good thing for the parish to have more of the following houses?

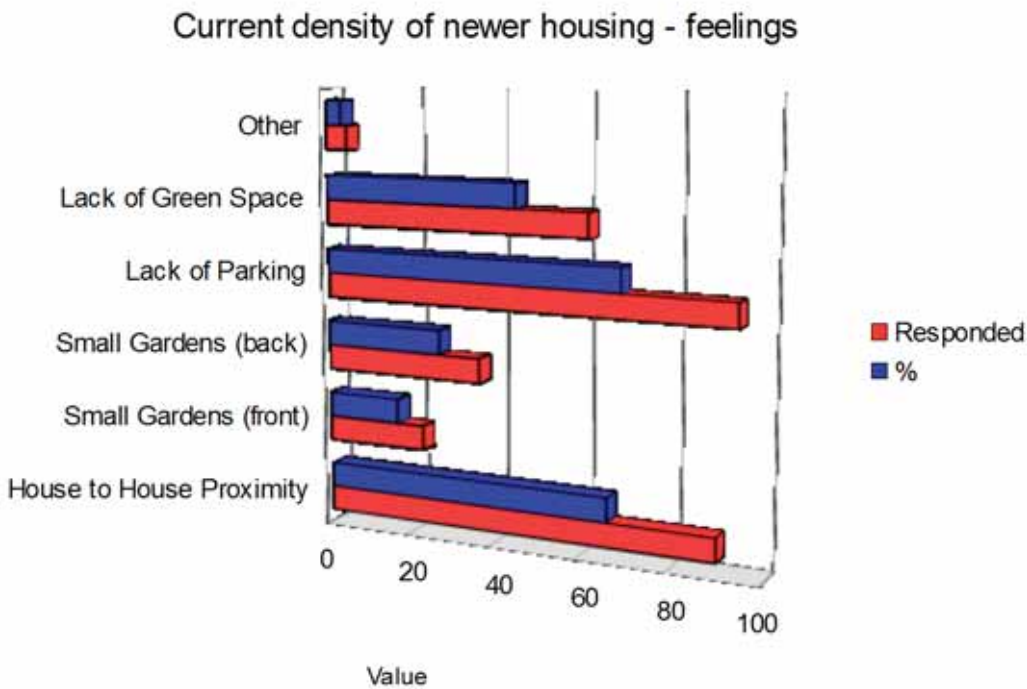
We are a community that is clearly concerned for those struggling to get on the housing ladder. As a result, Smaller/Starter properties are felt to be the best thing for the parish to have with 78.46% respondents saying this was important. There was an even scoring for Social Housing, Sheltered/Special Needs Housing and Medium $\frac{3}{4}$ Bed Houses with circa 30% scoring. Large Housing



seems to be the least desirable.

Question 10: A lot of people feel that local building development has been overly dense. If you agree what do you feel has made local development seem dense?

People felt 3 things have caused local building development to feel overly dense. The first is the lack of off-street parking, followed closely by the close Proximity of houses and finally by lack of green spaces.

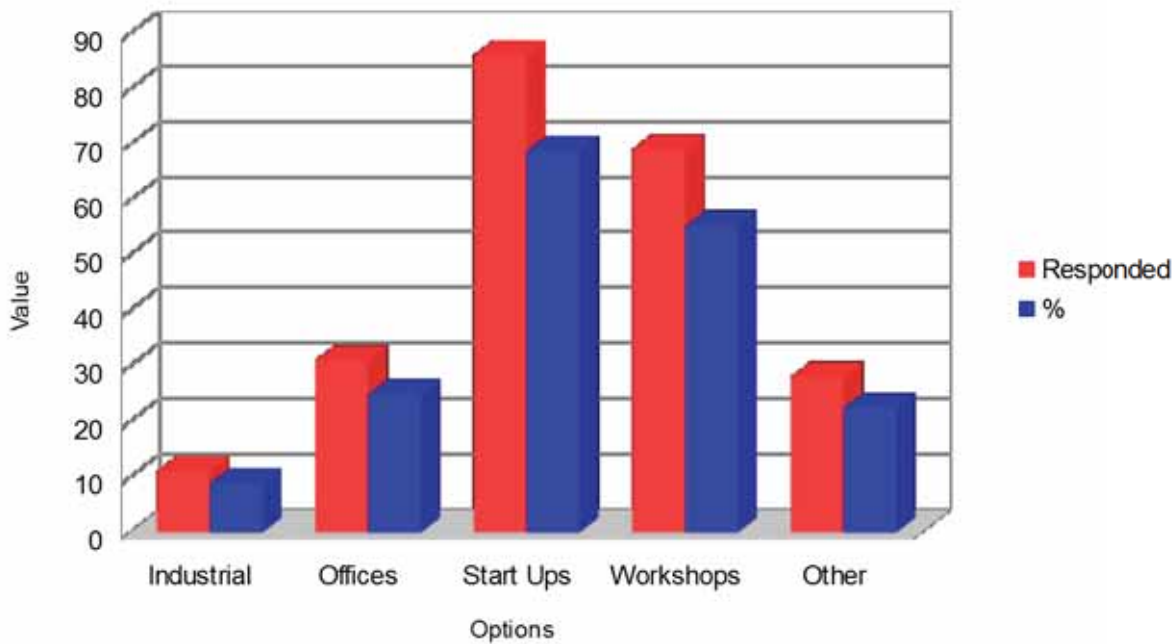


Interesting comments were made that were along the lines of the above, but one that stood out was “Why not build attractive terraces instead of little crammed in boxes. Cheaper to build and heat with more for gardens and green space”

Question 11: Do you think land should be reserved for business growth in the village?

Overwhelmingly when people agreed that land should be reserved for business growth, they felt the businesses should be start-ups or workshops. In the comments section a lot of people felt there shouldn't be land reserved for business growth at all although some felt that there should be more retail outlets.

Land Reserved for Business - views



Question 12: What Development would you like to see in Ixworth Thorpe?

38 people wrote comments and the vast majority felt that there shouldn't be development or had no opinion. As only 7 people from Ixworth Thorpe completed the full questionnaire I don't feel the feedback is representative of the community. There were several comments which said they wanted in fill housing and more facilities such as a Pub, shop, housing and transport.

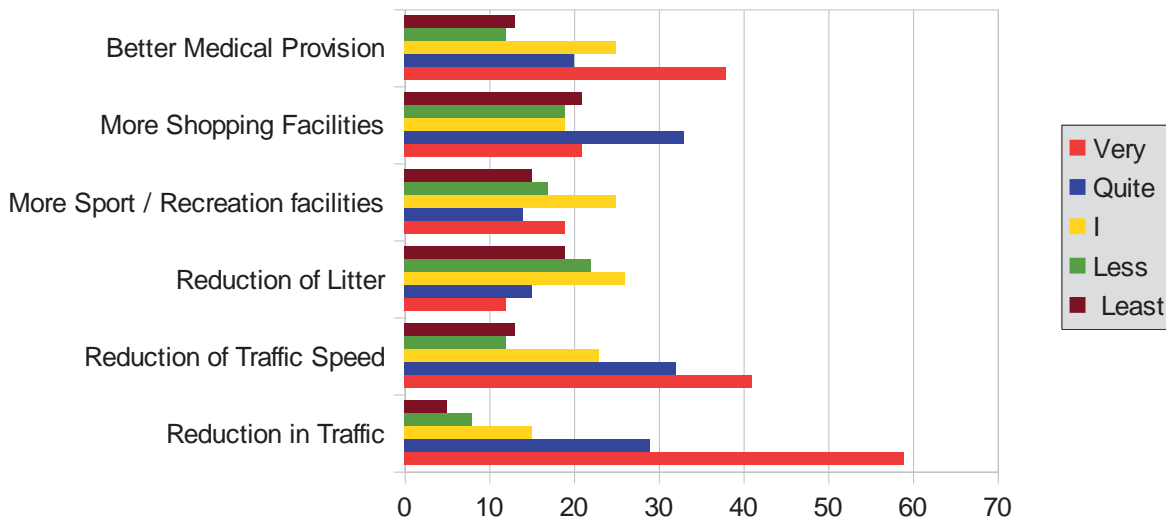
Community Concerns

Question 13: What is most important to you?

It is clear from the graphics below that a reduction in Traffic through the village was the most important thing in Ixworth.

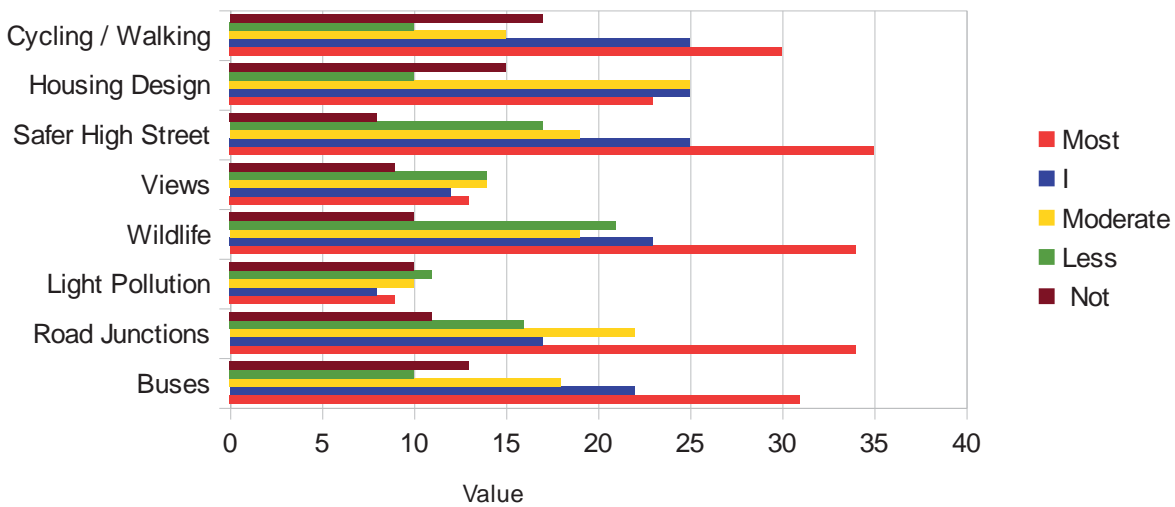
A reduction in the speed limit through the village came in second with improved medical provision coming in third.

Community Concerns by Importance



Question 14: Please rate which of the following issues in importance to you + your family

Important Community Issues by Importance



Here several issues were of equal importance, these are, in descending order:

Safer High Street for pedestrians and cyclists 35/139 rated this as number 1

Improve A143 and A1088 junctions (Norton and Thetford) 34/139 rated this as number 1

Protecting wildlife habitats 34/139 rated this as number 1

Improving and extending bus services 31/139 rated this as number 1

More safe cycling and walking routes: if so where specifically? 30/139 rated this as number 1.

Respondents were also able to comment on this question and there was a large response with suggestions for better cycling routes and better, safer walking routes. Here is a selection of comments:

Confirm official public footpaths and bridlepath with SCC Rights of Way team. Some routes have 'fake' signs put up by landowners so make these official footpaths, marked on OS maps e.g. track by Roundhouse, Thetford Road to bridlepath; path beside Free school from Walsham Road to Crown Lane.

See if permissive paths can be re-instated e.g. path from bridlepath to Cucumber farm on Troston Road. This used to be a very popular running route.

Establish more circular routes e.g. allowing People to walk along river Blackbourne. Open up access to Clay Lane which was a popular circular walk in the past.

Reintroduce the Programme of Health Walks to benefit physical and mental health.

Will the new proposed footbridge over the bypass from Crown Lane to Wood Street be accessible for e.g. cyclists, wheelchair users, horse riders? Will it be an official public footpath or bridlepath as some sections are only permissive at present (path leading to Norton road opposite pumping station) so could permission could be withdrawn by landowner?

For wheelchair chair users and people with mobility problems most pavements are substandard

Difficult to negotiate a lot of areas with a pushchair even down main roads due to poor paths or overhanging bushes and trees (Thistledown Drive, Walsham Road, entrance to park)

Cycling routes to Bury.

Pavements needed in lanes

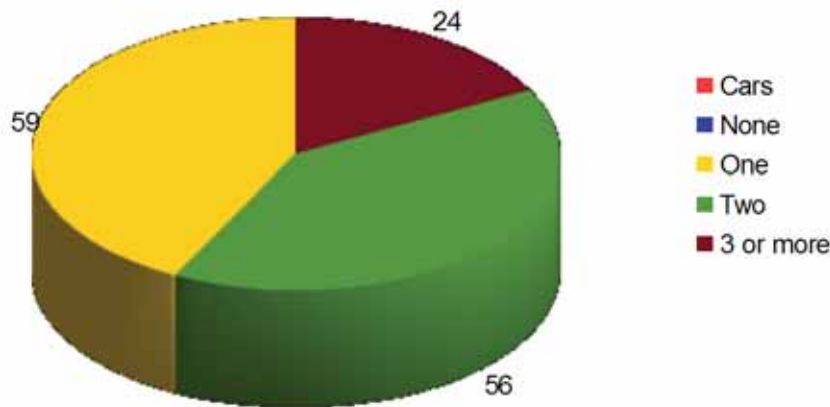
Must is a bridge over the Bypass. With the amount of traffic that speeds down that road it is very dangerous to cross

Transport

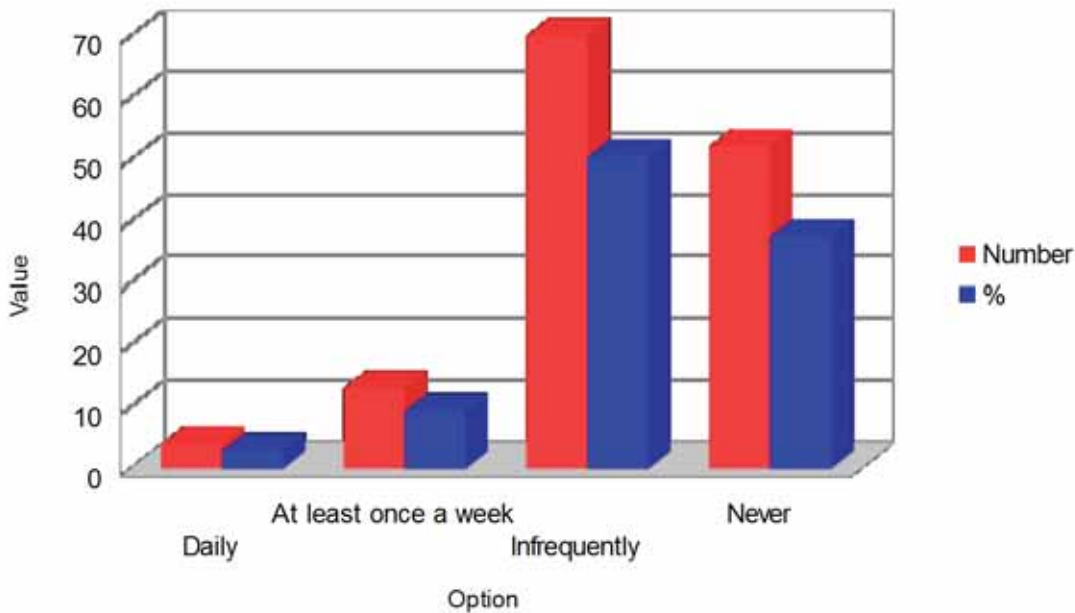
Question 15: How many cars are owned by your household

The graph shows the split of car owners. Interesting that all respondents own a car.

Cars by Household



Use of Public Transport



Question 16: Do you use public transport?

The graph above demonstrates that the majority of people (approximately 80%) infrequently or never use transport

Question 17. Do you find the public transport services available satisfactory?

Only 13.68% felt it was satisfactory. Are these the people who actually use it daily/weekly?

The rest found the transport services unsatisfactory with a variety of comments. Here is a sample of these:

OK during the day but nonexistent evening

Buses sometimes don't arrive or are very late

Not always well planned e.g. travel to hospital/station, quantity and regularity. Attention to minor hubs generally not considered so difficult for aged or unhealthy individuals or those trying to avoid using a car

Only one bus a week in Ixworth Thorpe

Environment

Question 18: What do you value or like best about the natural environment in the village?

We received 3.5 pages of A4 of comments and it does seem that you do like and value Ixworth and its surrounding environment! Here is a selection of comments....

I enjoy living in a village knowing when I walk down the street there is someone I know. Being able to walk in the countryside a few minutes from my doorstep. In spite of the traffic/parking in the High Street I enjoy the stressfree driving in the village compared to the town

Ixworth bird song is a treat. Summertime swifts swooping. plentiful garden birds. Quality trees abound. The river is an underused resource. Too many dogs not enough hedgehogs. wide range of wildlife to watch and the lack of street lighting helps with light pollution I value living in a village in the countryside but like everywhere being undermined by the motor car.

Nice large well kept green playing field and lovely dog walk down Commister way

As dog owners, we enjoy walking in and around the village using the limited paths available

Mature trees. Bird song. Hares in the fields. River but frustrated by lack of access to it. The walks around the river. Shame the river isn't kept clean though, the youth drop all their cans and crisp packets in it.

More Public Footpaths would be good.

Question 19: How could the area be improved with regards to nature?

There was a large and in the main very positive suggestions on how to improve our natural environment. It is difficult to analyse free text but there seems to be 4 broad areas which people agree. These are:

Encouraging wild life by the following:

1. Wildlife friendly gardens with less hard surfacing of gardens, improved hedging with access for hedgehogs to travel between gardens. More bird boxes and feeding of wild birds. More tree planting and tree protection of existing trees
2. Improving access to the countryside with better footpaths and cycle paths, more submissive footpaths and making existing submissive footpaths official. Better management of woodland and hedge rows. The river was flagged up an area where more the public should have more access and it should also be cleaned up. Access over the A143 via a flyover was cited several times.
3. Less or no further house building. When there is house building to ensure that there is adequate allowance for green spaces. Ensure trees are planted up the side of the A143/new housing estate to prevent noise and fume pollution and encourage wildlife
4. Creation of Green spaces in the form of a Wildlife preservation area, Meadowland and Nature Reserve. Pocket parks in new developments with trees planted. Old fish ponds off Commister Lane could be turned into a part and recreational area.

Here are a handful of your comments:

Please could we have more public interaction with Suffolk Wildlife Trust regarding the Blackbourne Valley initiative. Perhaps they could be encouraged to have an occasional advertised presence at the village hall for consultation and promotion of natural sites.

We need to do something to stop the decline of the bird population especially swifts. The playing fields are under exploited- they could be used more satisfactorily for nature/recreation etc. There are several sites in the village that could be better exploited eg planting trees, bulbs, benches etc. One site that really needs attention is where the village sign is located. This is a horrible area and needs to be completely redesigned. We need better access to the river and make better use of the roundabouts.

Good management of both grave yards- to combine care of graves and planting to attract insects also owl boxes etc? bee hives?

Question 20: Do people in the village have easy access to nature? If not: how best can this be improved?

96 people responded to this question and of this 96 approximately a third of those that responded actually felt we do have easy access to nature and that we have some lovely walks directly from Ixworth.

The rest felt that things could be improved and suggestions fell into 2 main groups: those that felt what the access we have is reasonable but could be improved and the others who felt access was inadequate.

Here are some of the comments made by the second and third groups:

The recommended walks in the village are lovely but difficult to cross the roads in most places. The underpass gets flooded and inaccessible.

Yes & No. Countryside on our doorstep but busy roads limit easy access on foot or by cycle.

Regular maintenance of bridle paths and footpaths as often difficult to walk along surface, cutting back undergrowth, clear official signposts. How about setting up Geo caches, nature trails, bird boxes?

Establish a 'volunteer working party' (many villages do this) where members check the paths for eg obstructions, clear litter etc. Encourage local groups to use e.g. Brownies, Guides, Scouts, schools. Ask Suffolk Wildlife Trust to come and do organise activities.

Could be improved by footbridge across bypass and area by side of river in Commister Lane being accessible, as apparently it used to be.

Could be better. Even though we live in Ixworth Thorpe there is very limited access to the countryside, as there are no public bridle paths. Would be great to allow walking routes through some of the farmed land. It would be safer too, as I currently have to walk my dogs on the lanes around the village, which can be dangerous.

Unlike other villages such as Walsham and Rougham we have limited access which are often quagmires in wet weather and involve dangerous crossings of busy main roads. Those villages have miles of wide field edges for walkers and wildlife maintained as part of Government schemes. Create a riverside walk (I have never anyone with a fishing rod. The remains if the old Stanton Road and Wood Street could with safe access be used as a cycling walking routenot sign posted and many miss out

No. Need to restore traditional walking routes closed by landowners: Langridge, Clay Lane, Dairy Lane, riverside path. Ixworth PC in April 1955 gave up the fight against landowners because the money for legal action ran out. Do this instead of a pointless footbridge over the bypass.

I don't think there is! So much of the land around Ixworth is privately owned and this has a real impact on accessibility. Perhaps we could negotiate to open up more public footpaths - particularly along the river. AND we must have safe crossings across A143

Question 21: What actions should we encourage to reduce the carbon footprint of the Parish as it grows?

You felt that the best way to encourage us to reduce the carbon footprint of the Parish as it grows is to ensure there are enough green habitats/spaces in any new developments. 111 people selected this with 85.59% naming it as their number one choice. Solar Panels and Rain foresting came in second and third.

There were interesting comments in the Other please specify. Here is a selection of some of these:

If you really want to double the population, public transport must be addressed. If you don't understand this try commuting to nearby towns and business parks to arrive by 8.30 am. You could do another survey on people's travel. 20 years ago, 20 miles took 30 minutes. Now I hear it's 30 minutes. Try it! Go anywhere I dare you! I bet you don't as no one ever listens

Less cars, less new houses. No diesel vehicles

Bigger recycling centre on edge of village

Improving local school so people don't have to drive

All new building must have ecofriendly systems. 1. solar panels. 2 air exchange heating

Cycle ways extending to join route 51 near Bury into Bury St Edmunds

Consider local renewable fuel production for the Village

