

Brackenfield Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey Report

1.0 Introduction

The Brackenfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group conducted a survey of parishioners to support the development of its Neighbourhood Plan.

The survey was undertaken during October 2017. A newsletter outlining the benefits of the Neighbourhood Plan and encouraging residents to take part in the survey was delivered to every household in the parish prior to the survey period. The survey was subsequently delivered to all households and residents were invited to complete either the paper copy or an online version via the Brackenfield Parish Council website. The survey was open to all parishioners over the age of 16 years to complete.

Completed surveys were collected by members of the Steering Group, with an option for residents to drop them at convenient locations in the village.

A total of 58 individual and household survey responses were received by the closing date, representing a return of 47%¹.

1.1 The Analysis

The survey consisted of a mixture of 'open' and 'closed' questions. All printed survey responses were input to the online system (Survey Money) for data analysis. In order to capture and quantify the key themes emerging in the open-ended questions, comments were categorised. Where suitable, categories have been quantified, but this is referred to in the report as an approximate percentage given the attribution of themes to categories is not exact.

1.2 Key Findings

The results of the survey were interesting, with clear consensus in a number of areas and some passionate views, highlighting the strong sense of pride the community have for where they live and the desire to protect its special qualities.

Whilst there was a feeling by some that there should not be any further development in the parish, others acknowledged that some future development was inevitable and perhaps necessary to enable locals to stay/return to the village. It was felt strongly by most if not all respondents, that any future development should be of a small scale and in keeping with the existing character. There was a strong desire to protect

¹ Based on 174 residents on the electoral register and 44% of responses representing households (at least two adults).

the special character of the built environment and landscape and the unique qualities associated with living in a small rural village community.

The key findings were as follows:

- There is a strong appreciation for the area especially in terms of tranquillity, rural character and local wildlife and habitat.
- The areas for improvement centred strongly around traffic, roads and public transport.
- Respondents are generally not supportive of substantial change that would have an adverse impact on the special character of the area.
- Respondents support the protection and enhancement of footpaths, landscape and historic and natural features as key policy areas for the Neighbourhood Plan to pursue.
- The outdoor amenities are well regarded, with local footpaths, bridleways and the Green being particularly well utilised.
- Respondents would like to see broader access to the Church Hall as a potential community hub.
- The Green is highly regarded by the community as focal point for community events and a key defining element of the settlement's character. There is mixed opinion with regards any future enhancements.
- In the case of new development, respondents feel that the greatest need is for 'small/starter homes (1-2 bedrooms) followed by retirement or sheltered housing.
- Faster broadband and improved mobile reception would improve the experience of working and conducting business in Brackenfield.
- Respondents are generally supportive of sustainable tourism as long as it is in keeping with the character of the area.

2.0 Results

2.1 Profile of respondents

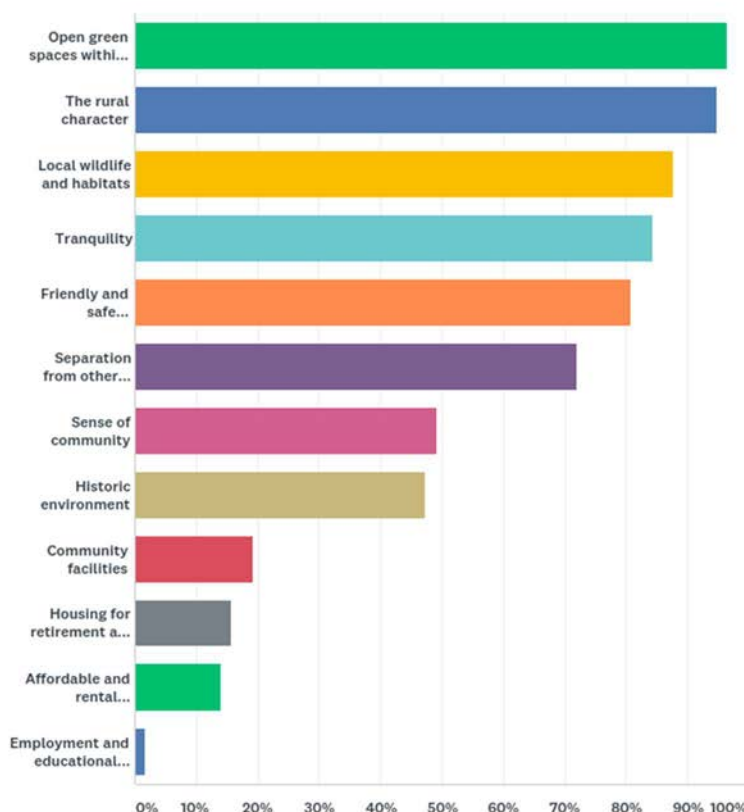
- There was an equal split of males and females responding to the survey.
- The majority of respondents were in the 55 to 64 (29%) and 45 to 54 (27%) age cohorts. Response rates from those in the younger age cohorts (under 45 years) was much lower.
- 44% of residents were responding on behalf of their household.

2.2 The Strengths of Brackenfield Parish

Residents were asked what they felt were the strengths or positive features of Brackenfield Parish and were provided with twelve options plus the opportunity to give their own responses.

The majority of respondents believed the 'open green spaces within the village' (96%) was Brackenfield's greatest strength, followed closely by 'the rural character' (95%), 'local wildlife and habitats (88%), 'tranquillity (84%) and 'friendly and safe environment' (81%).

Q1 What do you feel are the strengths or positive features of Brackenfield Parish? (Please tick all that apply)



There were 10 individual comments noted in 'other' and included:

"Numerous footpaths. Scenic beauty. Reservoir nearby for people and wildlife"

"Within a working agricultural environment, notably stock (sheep and cattle)"

"Working farms. Brackenfield Parish is still largely agricultural and is a good example of managed landscape"

"Quiet roads. Tranquillity"

"Housing for young families"

"Sense of community beginning to develop. Community facilities currently underutilised but has greater potential"

"Stone dwellings, church and reservoir"

"Freedom"

"Farming community"

2.3 What could be improved?

Residents were asked to state in their own words what could be improved in the parish.

2.3.1 Traffic, roads and parking

A significant majority of respondents (59%) made comments about roads and/or parking. The key issues raised include the speed of traffic through the village, pedestrian safety and condition.

"A more effective solution to the persistent problem of pot holes and standing water between the church and reservoir car park. Introduction of a 30mph speed limit and appropriate signage..."

"Max 30mph through our village because of the narrow roads. Roadside hedges cut to a minimum of 5ft for safety of walker and joggers, and the increase in pedal cyclists."

"Safer pedestrian access to those facilities that can only be accessed by narrow windy roads e.g. School Lane to Trinity Church or Brackenfield Lane to Wessington School...."

"There is too much "through traffic" at excess speed. Some of these are locals. Farm vehicles due to long term familiarity do not always realise their speed. Parking on School Lane is now creating a danger zone in the area beyond Carr Lane."

"Some roads have too many potholes. In places, if the edge of the Green is driven on it becomes muddy/swamp especially in the winter."

"Permissive paths to avoid pinch points on roads and create safe walking routes to school etc..."

"Road surfaces need to be better maintained, especially alongside Ogston Reservoir. Footpath surfaces need improving and woodland management by footpaths to enable people to walk safely..."

2.3.2 Community facilities

Approximately 31% of respondents made comments in relation to 'community facilities'. There was a range of comments, but the issue most commonly raised was that of the Church Hall and the opportunity for wider community use of this asset.

"Community facilities could be improved. The Church Hall is an under-utilized facility. It should be the focal point of the community and be managed in a far more pro-active way to draw people to it and cater for all requirements."

"Church Hall is underused – how about classes – art, yoga, Pilates, language classes, dog training."

"Better use of the Church Hall, coffee mornings, craft fairs, tabletop sales, toddler groups etc."

"A village shop.."

"Community shop/ café."

"Play area for young kids.."

2.3.3 Public Transport

Approximately 24% of comments made reference to public transport. The key issues for respondents were the frequency of buses and the need for an evening service.

“Community bus for ageing population.”

“More frequent and reliable bus services on the Matlock/Alfreton route.”

“What could really change Brackenfield for the better would be a good bus service. The timetables are really bad. Last bus in to Brackenfield is at 14:15hrs from Alfreton and 14:50hrs from Matlock. This means those without their own transport like young and elderly have to pay taxi fares to and from appointments at Dr/Hospital etc. “

2.3.4 Utilities and Services

Approximately 14% of comments made reference to utilities and/or services. The key improvements highlighted by respondents related primarily to the need access to improved broadband.

“Proper fibre broadband available to all residents.”

“Sewerage infrastructure needs improvement. Broadband fibre to home rather than just to cabinet.”

“Communication services – broadband, cell phone and DAB reception.”

2.3.5 Community

Approximately 10% of comments made reference to the community and specifically the need for events and activities to bring the community closer.

“There is no sense of community. People do not pull together as a community.”

“More community events to bring everyone together.”

2.3.6 Environment

Approximately 8% of comments related to improvement of the environment.

“A Village Green with more biodiversity. A ban on invasive domestic lighting, usually the strong, bright, white light.”

“Very eco-friendly built environment.”

“Pond on The Green, allotment/growing space to Southern end. Drainage and levelling of the rest of Green. Village walking trail with smartphone QR codes..”

“Woodland management is needed to enable visitors and residents alike to benefit from the view of Ogston reservoir and the nature and wildlife which has been lost due to non management of the environment.”

2.4 A vision for Brackenfield

Respondents were asked about their hopes for how Brackenfield will be in 2033 compared to now. This was an open question.

2.4.1 Unchanged/ relatively unchanged

The majority of respondents (approximately 55%) stated that they wished to see Brackenfield unchanged or relatively unchanged.

“Little change to the landscape.”

“The same number of houses (no further development). Still a peaceful farming community.”

“We enjoy the peace and tranquillity of our Parish. Other than the improvement in question 2 we wish to see little change.”

A number of these respondents whilst wanting to see relatively little change in the Parish, acknowledged that certain improvements could be made, most notably to transport.

“I would hope that our lovely village would remain as it is now, but with improved bus services, so that those without cars can get out and not be stuck in the village after 15:00hrs.”

“Road improvements including traffic calming measures. Improvements to footpaths and designated parking.”

“To keep very similar to now but with perhaps small amount of new homes (5/6), community shop/café/play area for children.”

“I would hope that Brackenfield remains much the same as it is today, with a few minor environmental improvements and strengthening of existing protection.”

2.4.2 Future development

A number of respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that any future housing development was undertaken sensitively in terms of scale and character.

“More houses for people born in the village.”

“I would like to see any building work done sympathetically to blend into the countryside...”

“Sensitive house building.”

“Would like to see a thriving village community with young families living within the village. New houses would be strategically placed around Brackenfield to enhance the surroundings. Housing should be in keeping with the historic nature of the village.”

“If any new housing is permitted, it should be on a very modest scale, unobtrusive – with minimal impact on the existing settlement and traditional in character.”

“...also careful selection and management of building developments in the local area, to enhance the village in a sympathetic manner.”

“We would hope that the village would maintain its identity and any new builds would retain that identity and character.”

2.4.3 Peaceful and tranquil

The terms ‘tranquil’ and ‘peaceful’ were used in a significant number of responses to describe how they would like the village to remain.

“Largely unchanged and retaining its charm and tranquillity.”

“I would like to think that Brackenfield retains its peaceful character with any housing strictly limited.....My worry is the quiet tranquil feeling of Brackenfield could/will be under threat from more visitors due to housing elsewhere e.g. Wessington.”

“That we maintain the tranquil, friendly environment.”

“A peaceful haven as it is now.”

“The character of the village to remain a quiet friendly place to live.”

2.4.4 Strong and inclusive community

Finally, the importance of a strong and inclusive community was raised by a number of respondents, including the need to encourage families and more community events to bring people together.

Environment and Amenities

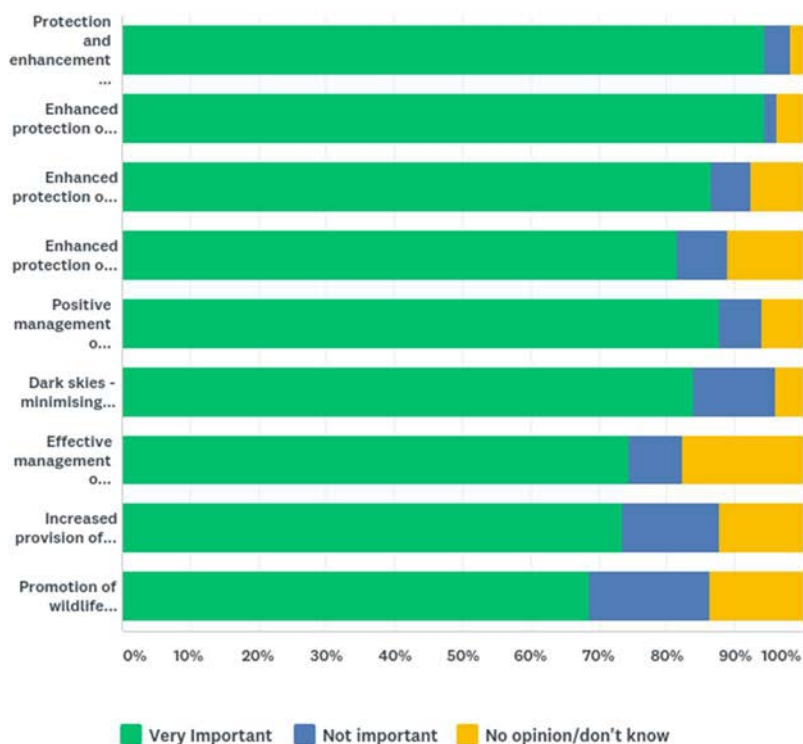
2.5 Neighbourhood Plan Policy Direction

Residents were given a list of potential policy directions and asked how important it was that the Neighbourhood Plan promote them.

Those policy directions felt to be most important to promote through the Plan were:

- Protection and enhancement of footpaths (94%)
- Enhanced protection of landscape (94%)
- Enhanced protection of the historic and natural features (87%)
- Enhanced protection of archaeological sites such as Trinity Chapel, Roman Kilns, Anglo-Saxon settlements (81%)

Q4 How important is it that the Neighbourhood Plan should promote the following?



2.6 Protection of buildings, places or views

Residents were asked to identify any buildings or views which should be protected.

Ogston Reservoir was highlighted in approximately 50% of responses due to its importance in the landscape (views) and/or a place to visit.

In regard to buildings, The Church and Church Hall were most commonly referred to, followed by Trinity Chapel. Respondents highlighted the visual appeal of the church and its surroundings.

Other buildings and structures noted were Ogston Hall, The Vicarage, Methodist Chapel, Church Farm, Broomhill Farm and water pump on The Green.

"The group of buildings formed by Ogston Hall, Church Farm, Holy Trinity Church and the Rectory form a valuable group of Victorian estate planning of which few examples survive. Church Farm is a particularly attractive group of Victorian farm buildings and is not (to my knowledge) listed. All these deserve protection from possible unsympathetic development."

Brackenfield Green was considered by approximately 38% of respondents to be a place requiring protection.

The key views identified include:

- Brackenfield Green from the Church Hall wall and seat near Carr Lane
- Brackenfield Green looking towards the Old School and School House
- Brackenfield Green looking towards Higham
- Ogston reservoir from Carr Lane
- Ogston Reservoir from Mathers Grave Lane
- View from and to Highordish
- Carr Lane to Trinity Woods
- Trinity Chapel to the East
- Towards Ashover rock from footpath (off Carr Lane)
- Methodist Chapel towards Ogston Reservoir
- Ogston Lane (leading down from Higham over the Amber Valley
- View of Broomhill Farm from Butterfield/Millers Lanes junction
- Ogston Hall from footpath from Higham
- Plough Inn panoramic view towards Bradgate Park
- Butterfield Lane from the Cottages northwards

2.7 Important features in the landscape

Residents were asked to rate a list of landscape features in terms of their importance in the landscape.

All features scored highly in terms of their importance and in particular Hedgerows (96%), trees in the landscape (96%) and dry stone walls (96%).

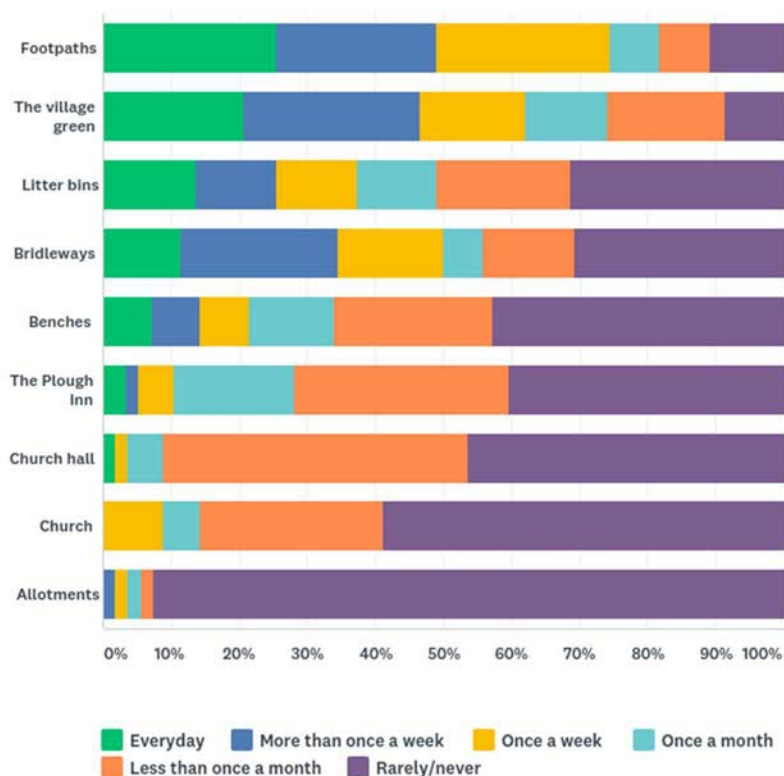
2.8 Parish amenities

Residents were given a list of parish amenities and asked how often they used them.

Amenities most commonly used every day were footpaths (25%) and the Village Green (21%). Other amenities that were relatively well used include bridleways (23% more than once a week), benches and litter bins.

The amenities least used were the allotments (93% never/ rarely), the church (60% never/rarely) and church hall (46% never /rarely).

Q7 How often do you use the following Parish amenities?



2.8 Additional facilities or improvements to existing facilities

Residents were asked what additional facilities or improvements to existing facilities they would like to see.

The majority of responses (31%) referred to the Church Hall and its potential as a community hub. There was a general feel that the hall could be more widely used to accommodate community activities and events such as book clubs, whist drives, 'pop-up-shop', coffee mornings

"Some residents in the village never have an opportunity to meet with others. I'd like to see perhaps the village hall opening once a week where everyone could go, have a coffee/cake, dvd/book swap. It works really well in Ashover and I would be more than willing to volunteer to be on a rota to help and bring the community close together."

A play area for children was mentioned by a number of respondents

Other suggestions included:

- More benches and/or picnic tables were mentioned in a number of responses, with specific references made to Ogston to enjoy the views, The Green and circular bench at the bottom of Millers Lane junction with Butterfield Lane.

- Better upkeep of footpaths/ bridleways with specific reference made to permissive pathways for safe walking route to school.
- A local shop was identified as an opportunity by several residents. Ideas included a village shop, 'pop up shop' where people could sell their local produce and a local pub including shop with local produce.
- Energy production was noted in several responses including opportunities for community heating oil/gas purchase scheme, small scale eco electricity generation and storage and becoming a model eco village – improved domestic insulation linked to future solar and min-turbine installation.
- More allotments/ community garden/orchard

2.9 The village Green

Residents were asked how they would like to see the village Green used in the future and what enhancements could be made.

Approximately 30% of responses highlighted the desire to see the Green as a focus for community events such as 'picnic on the green', 'the summer street part', harvest festivals, outdoor cinema, music and theatre.

Approximately 25% of responses stated that they would like to see the Green maintained as it is.

"The village Green is a wonderful asset to Brackenfield and should be kept exactly as it is. Any attempts to "improve" it or otherwise change it could easily ruin its unique character."

A number of respondents highlighted the opportunity to improve or introduce wildlife areas. Specific examples included:

- Tidy trees up in the wildlife part
- A reduced area of regularly mown grass extended mainly to the front of the Village Hall, large enough for the 'village picnic' type of events only and the remainder to be set aside for wildlife management.
- A large pond to encourage frogs, newts etc.
- Paths cleared through the wooded area
- Uncover the stream and reinstate the wet areas with marsh plants
- More habitat for wildlife

"Would like to see the village Green as it was with streams, marshlands adding interest to the landscape. Would like to see it more widely used by local schools/village events."

The introduction of additional or improved amenities included:

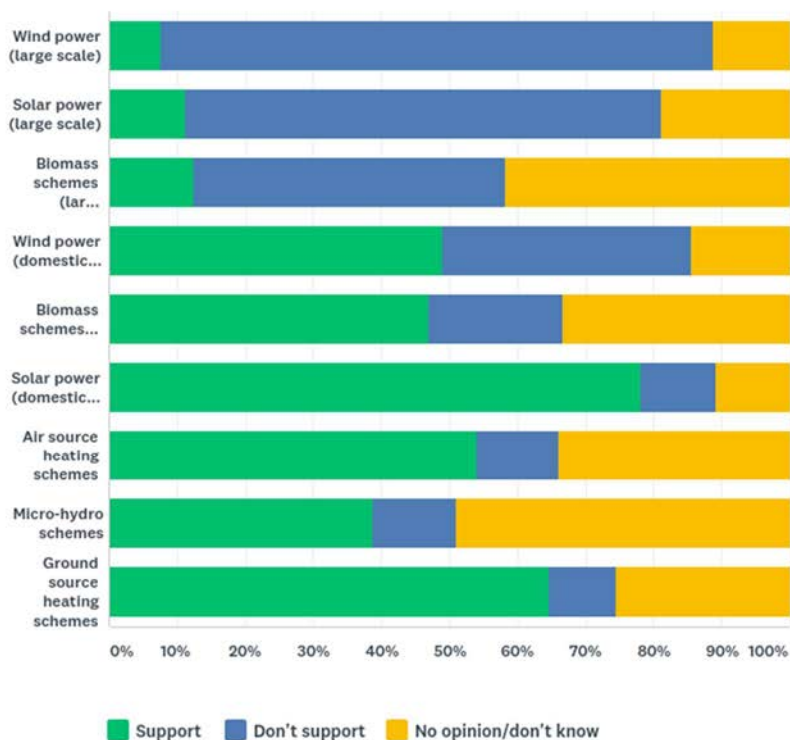
- Recreational area – cricket, petanque area
- Small play area

- Seating/ picnic tables
- Car parking

2.10 Sustainable energy production

Residents were asked to rate their support for a number of sustainable energy production methods. The strongest community support was for solar power (domestic purposes) (78%), followed by ground source heating schemes (65%) and air source heating schemes (54%). Schemes most strongly 'not supported' were wind power (large scale) (81%), solar power (large scale) (70%) and biomass schemes (large scale) (46%).

Q10 Which, if any of the following sustainable ways of producing local energy should the plan encourage?



Housing

2.11 Housing Type

Residents were asked if new houses were to be built in the Parish, which type of dwellings were needed.

The greatest support was shown for small/starter homes (1-2 bedrooms) (49% 'strongly agree') followed by retirement or sheltered housing (20%). It was felt that large detached houses were the least needed type of dwelling (2% strongly agree).

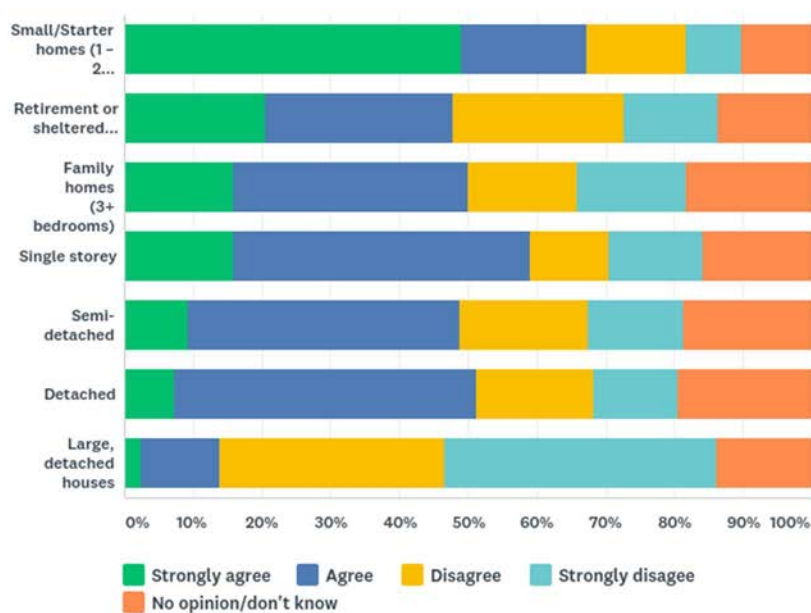
“No multiple developments.”

“Any as long as they fit with the existing housing style.”

“All above based on a small integrated development.”

“I don’t think we need development. Our current infrastructure cannot support more development.”

Q11 If new houses were to be built in the Parish, which type of dwellings are needed?



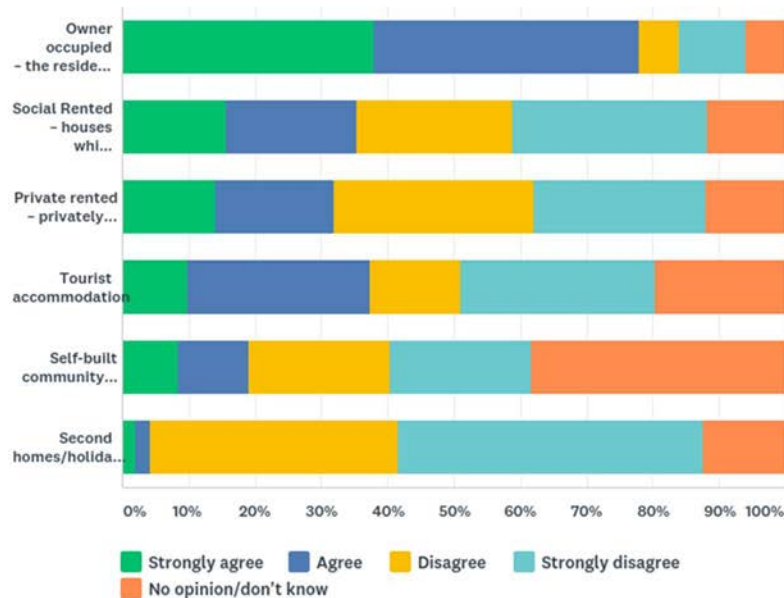
2.12 Building priorities

Residents were asked what priority should be given to three methods of building. The greatest support was shown for 'restoring and refurbishing current housing and empty homes' (67% strongly support), followed by 'barn conversions or similar re-use of existing redundant buildings' (50% strongly support) and lastly 'self-building by local people for their own use' (33% strongly agree).

2.13 Housing sort

Residents were asked what sort of housing was needed in the Parish. The greatest support was shown for 'owner occupied' (38% strongly agree) and 'social rented' (16% strongly agree). The least support was shown for 'second homes/holiday homes (2% strongly agree).

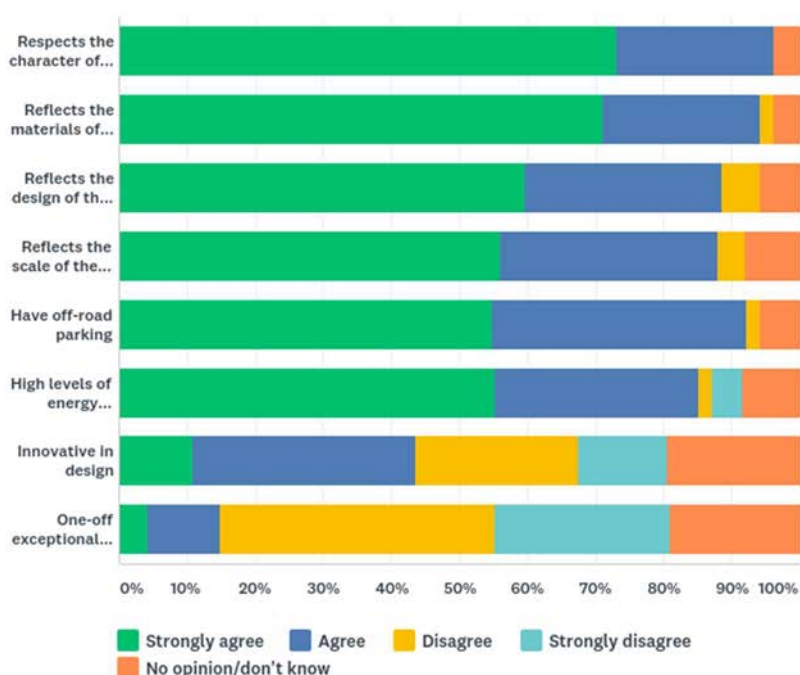
Q13 What sort of housing do you think we need in the Parish?



2.14 Design principles

Residents were asked what principles should influence the design of new houses.

Q14 What principles should influence the design of new houses?



There was strong support for most of the principles:

- Respects the character of the surrounding buildings
- Reflects the materials of the surrounding buildings
- Reflects the design of the surrounding buildings
- Reflects the scale of the surrounding buildings
- Have off-road parking
- High levels of energy conservation in new buildings

The two principles that received least support were 'innovative in design' and 'one-off exceptional design.'

"High quality- environmentally efficient/friendly will be absolutely essential in the longer term – the future starts now."

"Traditional in character i.e. using (mainly) stone, slate roofs, chimney stacks etc. in keeping with older cottages and farms in Brackenfield from the Victorian period and earlier."

"Surrounding buildings must equate to the whole village – not just those buildings situated next door."

Business and Tourism

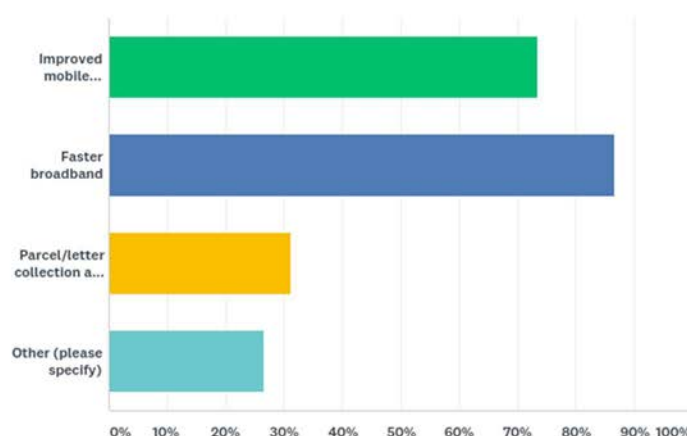
2.15 Work and business

36% of respondents run a business from home or work in Brackenfield.

2.16 Supporting work and business

Respondents were asked from a list of options, what would improve their experience of working in the parish or would support the growth of their business or service.' Faster broadband' was considered the most important factor (87%) followed by 'improved mobile reception' (73%).

Q16 Please tick any of the following that would improve your experience of working in the Parish, or would support the growth of your business or services.



2.17 Support for sustainable tourism

Residents were asked whether they supported sustainable growth of tourism and tourism related activities within the parish. The majority (66%) were supportive of sustainable tourism.

2.18 Acceptable types of tourism

Residents were asked to identify the type of tourist facilities/ activities they would find acceptable. The top five most acceptable types put forward were:

1. Village café
2. Bed and breakfast
3. Nature trails
4. Camping/glamping
5. Seating

2.19 Unacceptable types of tourism

Residents were asked to identify the types of tourist facilities/activities they would find unacceptable. The two most unacceptable types put forward were camping and caravanning.

A number of general aspects raised in terms of what would be considered unacceptable included proposals involving:

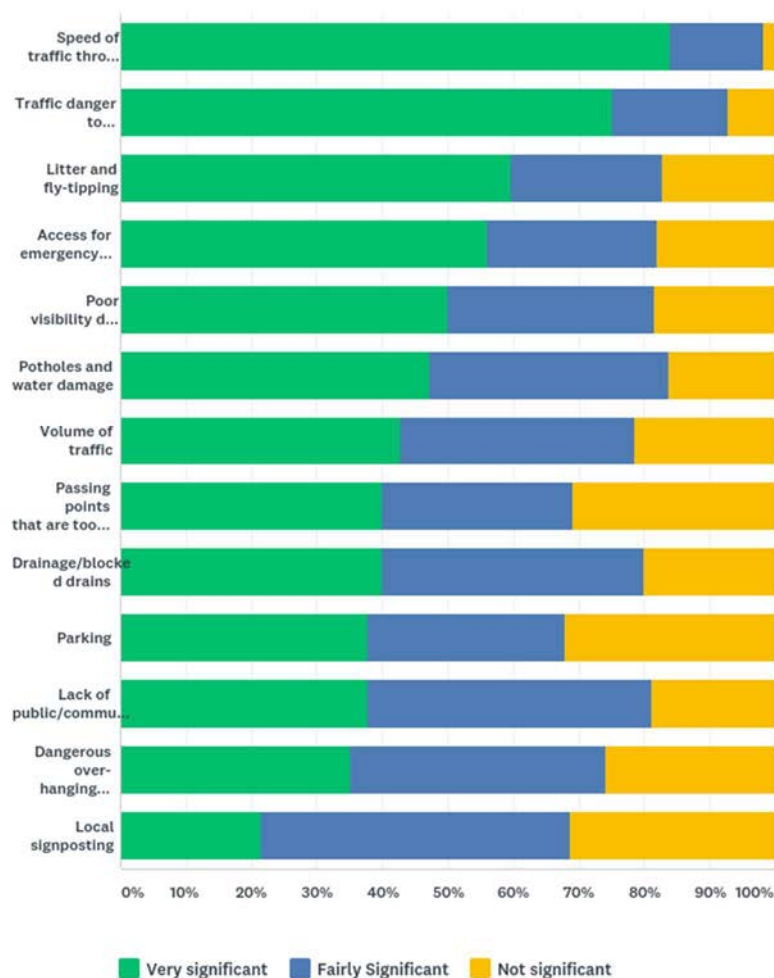
- Permanent buildings
- Anything of medium to large scale
- Noisy activities
- Anything out of character with the village
- Large volumes of traffic

Traffic and transport

2.20 Road traffic issues

Residents were asked to rate a series of potential road traffic issues in Brackenfield. The most significant traffic issues highlighted by respondents were 'speed of traffic through the village/parish (84% very significant) and 'traffic danger to pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders (75% very significant).

Q20 Which, if any of the following aspects of road traffic in Brackenfield are of concern to you?



“Exit to A615 from Plough Inn Car Park. Have requested a mirror.”

“I would like to see Miller’s Lane be given Quiet Lane status.”

“Passing points too small on Wessington Lane.”

“The road between the Common and Church very narrow.”

2.21 Locations of road traffic issues

Residents were asked in which areas of Brackenfield the traffic issues raised require the most urgent attention

Church Lane and School Lane were identified by a significant number of respondents. Further specific issues relating to these two areas included blind corners, potholes and water damage, parking and rat-running.

A number of other areas were also identified including Mathers Grave Lane, the main road past The Plough, the junction from Cold Harbour Lane onto White Carr Lane (cars turning right onto Cold Harbour Lane)

2.22 Speed limit

Residents were asked whether it appropriate that the national speed limit (60mph) applies to all the roads in the parish. All 58 respondents stated that this was not appropriate.

2.23 Lower speed limits

Residents were asked to identify where lower speed limits were required. A significant number of respondents stated that lower speed limits were required throughout the village. Specific areas that were identified are:

- From the Church throughout the village until reach White Carr Lane. Around the Green and along Brackenfield Lane until Wessington.
- After the Lodge house, Ogston up to Trinity Farm
- Brackenfield Lane
- Millers Lane,
- Butterfield Lane.
- School Lane/Church lane
- Carr Lane
- Smithy Cottage Junction back to Old Filling Station
- Utter Field Lane
- Coldharbour Lane (from Mathers Grave to Watson's Farm)
- Occupation Lane
- Ogston New Road.

2.24 Further comments

Residents were invited to make any further comments or suggestions not covered in the survey.

"Keep the village unspoilt and not turned into another place for the more affluent to escape from cities."

"It has been known for some households to have access to more than 1 Council Garage. Should be limited to one per household. Priority given to residents in rented accommodation."

"People do not cut hedges or trees. They need cutting back, so that you can see all the road."

"It is quite difficult and feel I have had conflicting answers, we do not need huge development but our children and grandchildren hold the future in their hands and will need affordable housing in the future. We may also need more bungalows for the elderly (us)."

"2 things I personally would like 1. A pathway permitting walker from Ogston Bridge, past Ogston Hall coming out just north of Church Farm. I know years ago there were footpaths before the reservoir. It would mean you didn't have to walk all around the north end of the reservoir 2. Gas in the village."

“See my answer to Q3. All Derbyshire villages are under attack from developers. A practical defence strategy is needed and stay alert.”

“I would like to stress the importance which I consider should be given to the protection of the small group of Victorian buildings – the Hall, Church, Rectory, Church Farm and Holly Cottage – all of which present a valuable and increasingly rare example of Victorian estate landscape. The first three buildings and possibly Holly Cottage are the work of T C Hine, a prominent architect from Nottingham.”

“Need to be making a much bigger fuss to openreach re the poor provision of fibre broadband.”

“I would love to see part of the stream brought back into the sunlight, possibly from below the Church Hall down to Nether Farm. The heart of the village is the Green and the brook stream is missing. Great for wildlife, pets, children, stepping stones, visitors, picturesque.”

“Any new homes allowed should be offered to young/local people first. Young people can not afford high prices pushed up by outsiders.”

“Broadband speeds.”

“Would like to understand the process for applying for a dwelling within our garden, how can interested parties put forward their land for review?”

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment.”

“A clear emphasis on building standards.”
