

Teme Valley Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan Results of Survey 2014

Background

This paper reports the results of the survey completed in March 2014 by Martley Parish Council and Knightwick and Doddenham Parish Council. The aim of the survey was to collect the opinions of local residents about the future development of the three parishes, to help the two parish councils formulate a neighbourhood development plan.

Information was collected using a questionnaire, one copy of which was distributed to each household. Collection boxes were located in Martley Post Office, the Talbot at Knightwick, and at the exhibition on neighbourhood planning which was held in Martley Village Hall on 15th March.

The author wishes to express his thanks to: Mrs Janet Dale (Martley Parish Clerk), who organised the printing and distribution of the questionnaire and the data-entry of the results; to the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, who helped develop the questionnaire; and to those who distributed the questionnaires to individual households.

Households

A total of 105 questionnaires were returned from the three parishes. This is less than the 208 completed questionnaires completed for Martley Parish alone in 2011, when a similar survey was completed as part of the process for developing the Parish Plan. The higher rate of completions in 2011 may have occurred because of widespread opposition in the parish at that time to the proposal to build a new housing estate on the Crown Meadow. This raised local interest in planning issues, which may have subsided since the decision by Malvern Hills District Council to approve these plans.

Answers given to the questions about individual households showed that they included 243 individuals. The great majority were long-term residents. Very few (10%) of households had lived all their lives in their parish, but another two-thirds (67%) had lived ten or more years in their parish. The main reasons people gave for moving into this area were the desire to live in a rural location and because work was available locally. Smaller numbers mentioned a wish to move closer to other members of their family, or because a suitable house was available in this area.

Living in this community

When asked 'Do you feel part of your local community?', just over two-thirds (68%) agreed. Those who did feel part of the community gave many reasons. The most common related to personal contact with other residents, mainly through membership of organised groups, the church, attending local events, meeting other parents at the schools, visiting local shops and pubs, and volunteering their own time. Many commented on the friendliness of local people, said they 'knew everyone' and had many

friends locally. The great majority said that members of their household had in the last 12 months visited local shops (95%), one of the local GP surgeries (90%), one or more of the local pubs (76%), and their memorial hall (68%). A quarter (25%) reported that a member of their household had used Sport Martley in the last 12 months. Just under half (47%) said that someone in their household was a member of a local organisation in their parish.

The survey found little fear of crime. Almost all (96%) said they felt safe from crime in their home or when walking around local roads and lanes.

The great majority (88%) said they knew how to contact their parish council. Most people used multiple sources of information to find out about local events, of which the most common were their parish magazine (95%), word-of-mouth (84%), and notice-boards (53%). A total of 13% also used parish websites.

When asked 'What else could be done to create a better community in this parish?', a wide range of suggestions were made, of which the most frequent were more local events and groups, better parish websites, places for people to meet (such as a local café or seating area), and safer footpaths and roads to enable people to get about on foot.

Housing

There was an even division between those who believed there should be more housing in their parish (50%) and those who did not (50%). When asked which type of housing was preferred, the most frequent responses were affordable houses to buy, affordable houses to rent, small houses for people who want to downsize, low-energy houses, bungalows, and sheltered housing. Note that several of these categories overlap.

Type of housing	%
Affordable to buy	37
Affordable to rent	28
Small houses for downsizing	28
Low-energy homes	21
Bungalows	20
Sheltered housing	19
Specialised housing for disabled people	16
Self-build homes	13
Larger family homes	12

Some of the proposals for new housing were probably to meet the needs of local residents, or of former residents who wish to return to the neighbourhood area. Eight

percent said their present house was not adequate to meet their needs (in most cases because their house was too big), while 22% said that there were members of their family who would need housing now or in the future.

The great majority of homes (90%) had an internet connection. The majority of those with a connection (55%) reported that connection speeds were not adequate to meet their needs. Better connection speeds were mentioned as a factor by a third of the 15% of residents who said they ran a business from home.

The environment

There was strong support for the conservation of listed buildings. Two-thirds (68%) said it is very important to retain them, and a quarter (26%) said it would be good to retain them if practicable. The remaining six percent said they were ‘not bothered one way or the other’. Households were asked which local landscape features should be designated for conservation. Responses are shown in order in the table below.

Conservation	%
Berrow Hill	68
Ankerdine Hill	66
The Nubbins	64
Millennium Green	60
Martley Rock	50
Route of Geopark Way	47

A further question asked which local services should be designated as ‘assets of community value’. These are listed in order below.

Asset	%
Martley Memorial Hall	74
Central Stores and Garage	60
The Talbot Hotel	51
The Crown	49
The Admiral Rodney	44
Knightwick Butchers	34
Knightwick Village Hall	30
The Old School, Berrow Green Road	30

A large majority (88%) of households supported community renewable-energy schemes.

Half (52%) of households said that there are sufficient pavements along the roads in their parish and three-quarters (74%) said they were satisfied with the condition of the pavements. The main areas recommended for additional pavements were between Martley village and Hillside, and between Martley village and Berrow Green. The main reason given for preferring more pavements was road safety, especially for children walking to school.

There were some specific problems with the local environment mentioned by minorities of households. These included litter (36%), dog-fouling (43%), and local eyesores (39%). The most frequently-mentioned eyesores were the cones in front of the former post office in Martley, Pencroft's yard, Roger's yard, and the area around the Central Stores and Garage.

Roads and transport

Only 28% of households were satisfied with the condition of local roads. The most common problem identified was potholes, with smaller number mentioning poor drainage and the maintenance of verges. Two-thirds (66%) said there were parking problems in the area, almost all of whom mentioned the shop in Martley, with several also identifying problems at Martley Memorial Hall and the Martley schools. Two-thirds (68%) said there were speeding problems on some local roads. The questionnaire did not include a question on where speeding problems were most severe, but some households wrote about their concerns about the A44 road through Knightwick and Doddenham.

Just under half (45%) said that a member of their household had used local buses in the last 12 months. The main complaints about the bus services were that it was infrequent, and that the last bus left Worcester for Martley at too early a time to allow people to use it to commute to work.

The future

The final section of the questionnaire asked for ideas about the future of the three parishes, and included a list of possible improvements. The table below shows these in order of preference. It can be seen that half identified a need more local employment opportunities, more opportunities for old people to keep in contact, and improvements to Martley Memorial Hall. A third supported a community transport scheme and local allotments, while a quarter saw a need for more parks and green spaces and more sporting facilities.

Preferred improvements	N
More local employment opportunities	49
More opportunities for old people to keep in contact	49
Improvements to Martley Memorial Hall	47
Cars share/community transport	33
Allotments	31
More parks and green spaces	24
More sporting facilities	23
Garden share scheme	13
Better play areas	11
Improvements to Knightwick Village Hall	9

Finally, households were asked to suggest priorities for spending Section 106 payments agreed for the new houses on the Crown Meadow in Martley. This produced many interesting ideas, including improvements to Martley Memorial Hall, landscaping and visual improvements, various new recreational facilities, more car parking spaces, and more local events and entertainments. The full list of ideas is appended.

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3 July 2014