

Neighbourhood plan update

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Pulborough carried out a Neighbourhood Plan survey in the summer. I'll bet you saw the boards out and about advertising it and I'm reasonably certain that most people reading this completed and returned it.

The Parish Council had a copy delivered to every household in Pulborough parish, approximately 2,300 of them. Some went by contractor, some by the Royal Mail and some personally delivered by the council chairman – and others. More were handed out at the supermarkets and more downloaded from the council website.

And 801 came back. That's around 35% of the households in the parish which is a very good result compared with other villages. So THANK YOU to all who took the time.

Over the last couple of months we have been analysing the results. First, every single one of the surveys was skimmed so the initial results of the first two questions could be shown at the Harvest Fair. Then every survey had every response to every question entered on an Excel spreadsheet on the computer so THANK YOU to all those volunteers who slaved away on those very boring tasks.

And THANK YOU to all the volunteers who answered questions from residents, manned information stands, chased up responses, collected surveys, put up (and took down) the posters, put out and collected the returns boxes. It was a huge team effort.

Next the results will be included in a Stage 1 Report which will bring together the views of the Community (through the survey and the work of the various focus groups) together with statistics about the parish from the government and district and county council statistics and the 2011 census.

Call for Sites. The Parish Council and Steering Group invite any landowner or developer who is considering developing a site in Pulborough Parish in the next 15 years to contact them. Whether it is a hundred houses in a field or one house in a back garden; an office building or industrial shed the Parish Council wants to hear from you.

The site suggestions will be used to guide and inform the preparation of the Allocations of Land and Site Development section of the Neighbourhood Plan which, when approved, will be referred to and influence the decisions of Horsham District Council when considering Planning Applications. For any queries, contact Sarah Norman, Parish Clerk, in the parish office on 01798 873532 or email pulboroughnp@gmail.com

So what were the results of our survey? There's more analysis to do but here's some results that have come out already.

The overwhelming majority of responses were from older residents (40% from ages 41-64, 47.5% from those over 65) with a disappointing but not unexpectedly low response from those under 40.

What people value about living in Pulborough parish

- Living in a rural setting with access to green spaces, countryside walks and scenic views
- Living in a convenient location with good local amenities, shops, services and transport links
- Living in a small, friendly village community
- Living in peace and quiet

This is confirmed by the top five words that people chose for how they would like the village and parish described in 15 years' time (ranked from highest to lowest):

Village

Safe
Friendly
Rural
Attractive
Tranquil

Parish

Rural
Safe
Friendly
Attractive
Tranquil

An overwhelming majority of survey respondents (94%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that "A rural feel and access to the countryside is fundamental not only to our quality of life and community identity, but also to many aspects of our economy."

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What people dislike about living in Pulborough parish

- Many say that recent development has brought too many houses and people without sufficient investment in infrastructure or community cohesion
- Many say that the volume, speed and type of traffic (particularly large commercial traffic/HGVs) adversely affect their quality of life
- Many say that the village has become too spread out and has no real commercial or social centre.

When asked what single change would most improve their quality of life as a Pulborough resident, the main responses were:

- A proper commercial and social centre for Pulborough village with more/better shops and services
- An end to unstrategic and counterproductive development
- Investment in essential infrastructure
- A reduction in speed and volume of traffic, particularly HGVs
- Better provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- More policing

When asked what additional services and amenities they would like to see in Pulborough, the most frequent response was for a leisure centre with gym/swimming pool etc. followed by more shops and restaurants.

Housing is a significant part of the Neighbourhood Plan. We asked people where house-building should be in the parish and of the five main constituent areas the results in order from most popular to least popular were :-

- a) Codmore Hill
- b) North Heath
- c) Pulborough village
- d) Marehill
- e) Nutbourne

Although many people dislike current traffic levels and are worried about future levels, 83% of respondents use the car as their primary form of transport. Few people use the bus with 72% saying they never or hardly ever take it mainly because times and destinations aren't what people need.

The train is better used with 63% of respondents taking it occasionally or a few times a month. Interestingly only 4 per cent of respondents use the train daily indicating that many commuters from Pulborough station live outside of the parish

– or perhaps commuters didn't, in general, return the survey. However 95 per cent of respondents agree or strongly agree that the station is an important asset which should be protected.

Parking was deemed to be a problem by 62% who agreed or strongly agreed. The station area including Stopham Road and surrounding residential roads was heavily quoted with Lower Street and New Place Road also featuring

Better footpaths attracted 94% response with Church Hill and Sopers Hill quoted frequently.

On infrastructure, water supply, gas (where it has reached) and electricity seemed generally to be working well. There were concerns about sewage and drainage but mobile phone, broadband, pavements and roads were not thought to be up to required standards.

The most popular option on the allocation of land for energy production was solar (44%) with only 20% of people against any sort of land allocation for energy. On fracking 50% were moderately or strongly against while 21% were moderately or strongly in favour. 25% said they did not have enough information.

Many people have commented on the lack of a centre to Pulborough village so we asked a specific question. We found 50% of respondents thought we should choose one area (Lower Street being the clear favourite with 58%), while 36% thought we should support all four commercially active areas.

The Treasures and Assets section was included to see what people thought were important and also to show what Pulborough has to offer. There's further analysis needed on the results but top of the list of important assets at the moment are the River Arun and the Wildbrooks. The village hall and the library followed and then Old Stopham Bridge followed by St Mary's church. Bottom of the list is The Moat with Gay Street Lane just above and Pallingham Bridge above that.

The next Parish Bulletin is due in February. By then we will have finished the analysis and will be able to publish a complete list of the results of the Survey.

David Hurst – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Member

The Parish Councillor Appointments

Following the resignations of Martin Dale, Graham Spillane and John Walsh, the Parish Council have co-opted Christopher Esdaile, Sarah Mills and Val Wilson to the Council.

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