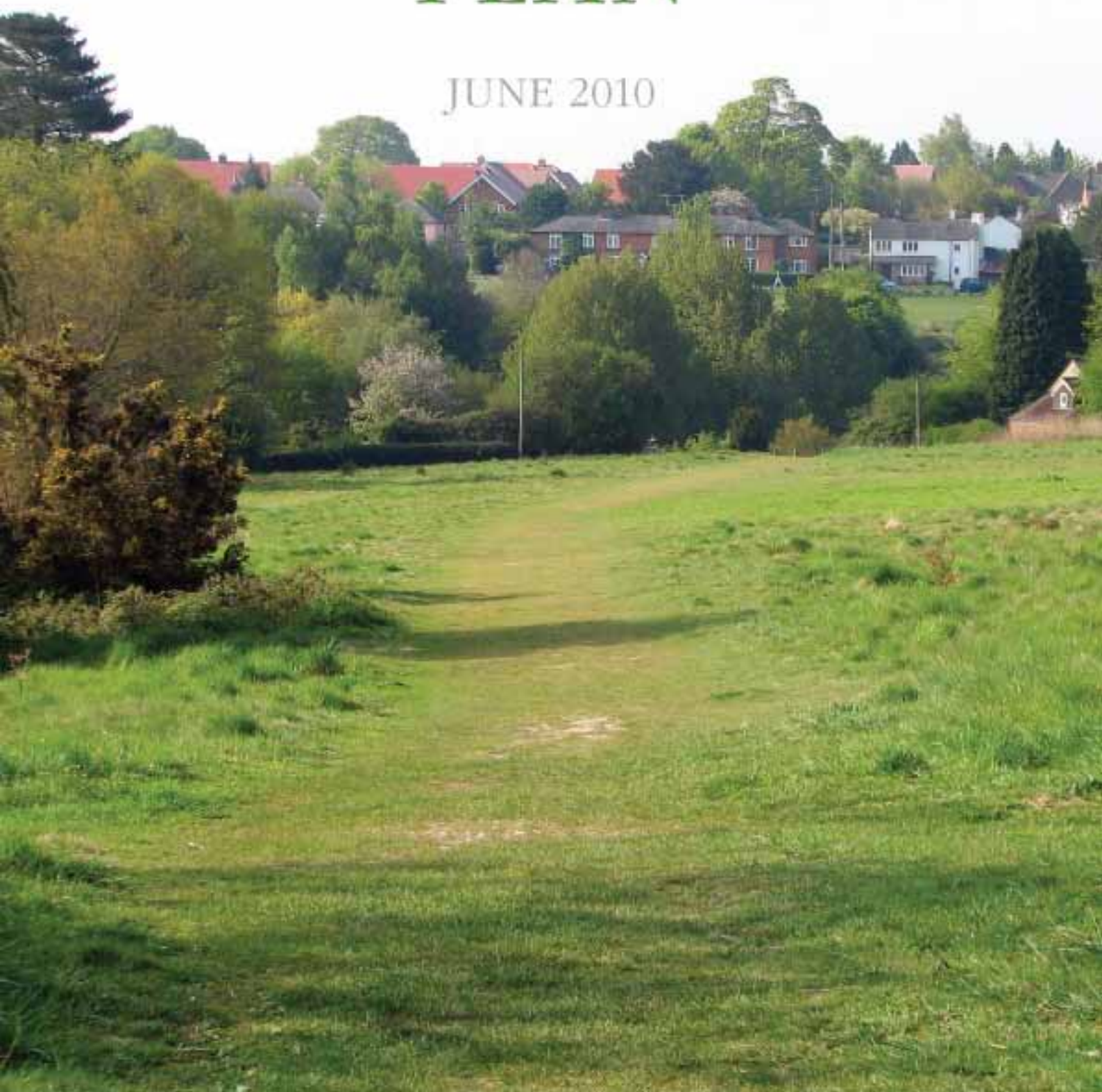


# THE DOWNLEY COMMUNITY PLAN

JUNE 2010



# The Downley Community Plan 2010



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Appendix 1: Graphical Output of Survey Results

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# The Parish of Downley

Downley is a village and civil parish within the Wycombe district of Buckinghamshire. It is located high in the Chiltern Hills, overlooking the west side of High Wycombe.



## History

Downley was originally a subsidiary parish of West Wycombe and consisted of three hamlets. These were Downley, the largest, with Littleworth and Plummer's Green on its south side. Both of these have now been incorporated into Downley village, but names such as Littleworth Road and Plomer Hill can still be seen. The central part of the parish is the Common, which extends over about 56 acres, is part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and forms the larger part of the Conservation Area.

Prior to the early 1800's, Downley was a farming community that turned to furniture and particularly chair-making in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The last major furniture factory closed in 1999. Considerable house-building took place in the 1950s-60s which effectively joined Downley to the High Wycombe urban area on it's south and east side. The parish boundary was extended to the bottom of Plomer Hill in May 2003 to include some of these new developments.

The War Memorial Hall built circa 1920 is still very much in use and the old School, built in the 1870s is now used as a Community Centre. A new school was built in 2002 which is now one of the largest in the area.

Outside the village, the parish of Downley is largely agricultural land, and woodland.



## Key Facts and Figures <sup>(1,2)</sup>

Since the recent boundary changes, Downley now contains 1992 households according to the most recent electoral roll with a population of approximately 4770 according to the WDC Fact File 48 for Downley.

The parish now covers an area of 381 hectares (previously it was 302 hectares). With the exception of the built up areas most of the parish is within the Green Belt (approximately 276 hectares or 72%) and the Chilterns AONB (approximately 279 hectares or 73%). There are some small areas of the Bradenham National Trust Estate in the north western corners of the parish, and parts of the Hughenden Manor National Trust Estate in the east of the parish. In addition to a network of public footpaths there is an area of open country and the large area of Downley registered common.

The parish area now coincides with the Downley and Plomer Hill District Council Ward

Population	4,770 (estimated at 2008)
Area	381 hectares
Education	The Downley School and Maplewood School, Woodlands Pre-school, pre-school at Sunnybank Methodist Church Hall and St James' Church Hall, Montessori School, Mums & Toddlers Group at the Community Centre, Adult Learning classes and After School Club at Downley Old School Community Centre
Retail	Range of shops including 4 convenience stores, hairdressers, 2 beauty salons, car repair garage, fancy dress shop, independent living shop, launderette, 4 off licences (some within other premises)
Pubs & Restaurants	Pubs – Le Despencers Arms, Bricklayers Arms, The Downley Donkey, 5 takeaway restaurants
Community Facilities	Downley Community Centre with library, Sunnybank Methodist Church and hall, St James Church with hall and coffee stop, War Memorial Hall, Scout & Guide centre
Leisure Facilities	Mannings Field Recreation Ground with football and cricket pitches and 2 cricket nets, sports pavilion, allotments, community orchard. Plomer Hill area – youth shelter and games area for young people

## Introduction

A Community Plan is the modern means by which change is brought about in a community. It highlights the aspects that need to be addressed if the village is to thrive and be an effective and happy society and a good place to live. It is a collective voice for all those who take an interest in their community and as a single cohesive document it is greater than the sum of its individual parts. It sets out to measure and quantify what its members consider is important and attempts to prioritise actions realistically and practically.

It gives valuable information to those who represent our interests at Parish and District level and gives evidence and ammunition when they seek funding and response from the District and the County.

### Previous Surveys

The Plan brings up to date the views expressed in the Survey held in 2000<sup>(3)</sup> which addressed 10 questions to a survey audience of about 650. The principal target of that survey was to gauge the level of support for the proposed Old School Community Centre.

The Village Design Statement was produced in 2002 and is a strategic vision for Downley<sup>(4)</sup>. It describes the special flavour of the village and celebrates the distinctive features that make up its character.

A survey and petition followed by proposals for traffic management in the village was also presented to the Parish Council in 2004.

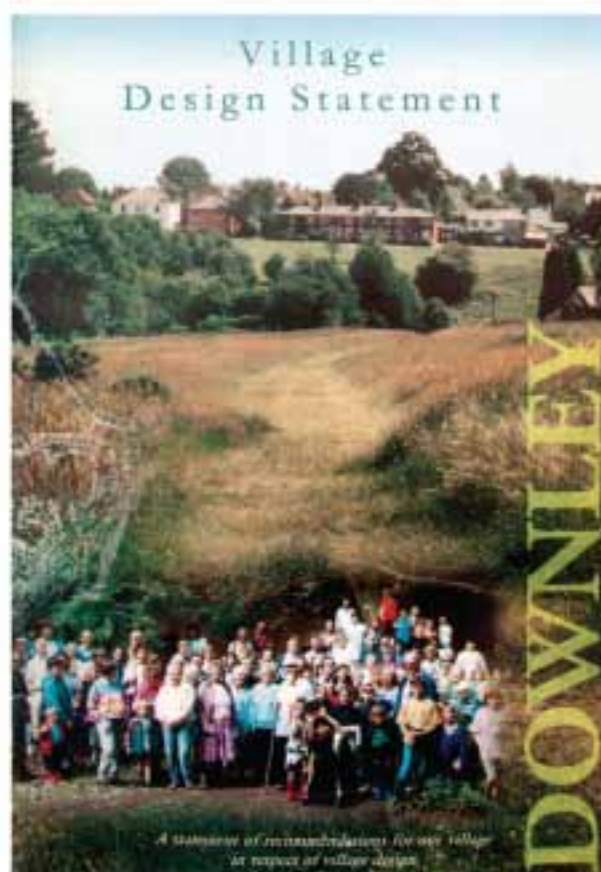
### Who is the Plan for?

If the Plan is to have life and be of use, then it has to be “owned” by the members of the community it serves.

It is our plan as the men, women and children who live in the parish of Downley, for those who work here, those who go to school in the village schools and all those who use the amenities and take part in the clubs and societies that are active in the village.

We intend that it will be helpful to the planners and various community representatives but essentially it is our plan as Downley residents and expresses what we want to see happening.

It is vital that as many as possible “own” the plan and play a part in making Downley a better place and a village of which we can be justly proud.



# Methodology

The idea of drawing up a community plan for Downley started with the Parish Council at the beginning of 2009. This group recognised that if our community of Downley was going to gain acceptance and financial backing for the various ideas for improvement, then a properly structured and democratically composed community plan would be vital. It was seen as critical that such an appraisal was “built up from the bottom” rather than a “top down wish list”. We were encouraged to do so by both Wycombe DC and Bucks CC.

Throughout the whole exercise of making a plan, Bucks Community Action<sup>(5)</sup>, a Bucks sponsored initiative (now incorporated into Community Impact Bucks), has given invaluable advice and support on the process to adopt and the steps to take. They gave two useful presentations early on, making available best practice and have facilitated our meetings. Our grateful appreciation is expressed to their leaders.

The proposal to undertake an appraisal and then draw up a plan was broadcast in the Village News magazine. Everyone was encouraged to contribute to the concept and say what subjects they would like to see included.

## 2010 Survey

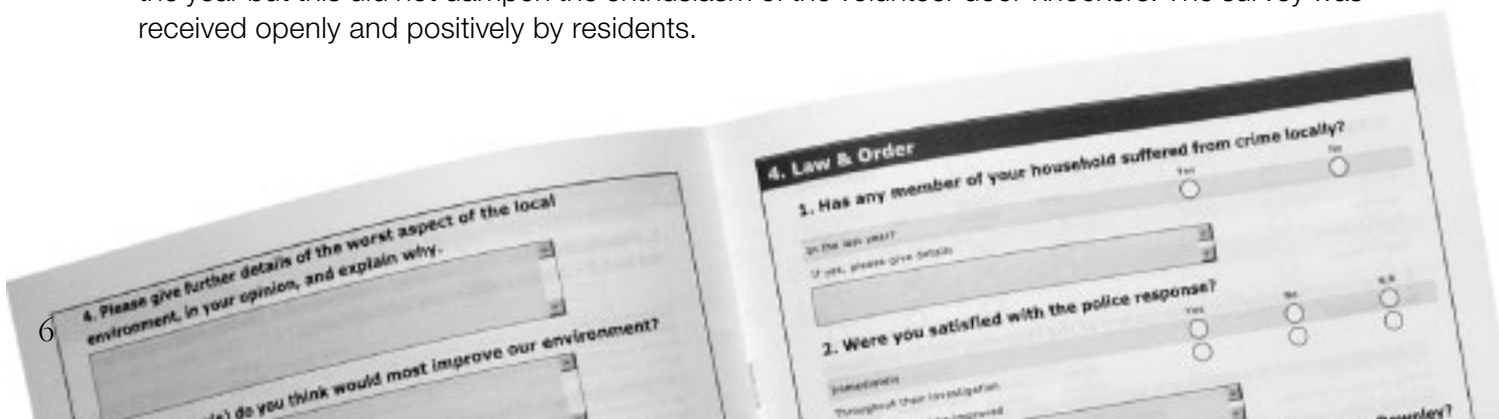
The idea of a survey was publicly launched at Downley Day on 19th of June 2009. Initial thoughts were divided into five separate categories and displayed on presentation boards. Everyone who came to the event was invited to put down their comments and questions --both positive and negative -- on “post-it” notes and place these on the relevant board. 175 “post-it” notes were completed by both adults and children.

All the comments received were analysed and used to form the nucleus of a draft questionnaire. This was tested to check that the questions were reasonably structured and clearly worded so as to attract a good response. The draft was given a “test-run” by the Women’s Institute and other volunteers and further refined to avoid any ambiguities or uncertainties.

It was decided to make the questionnaire available both in hard copy and on-line using a web based survey tool.

The Headmistress of Downley School kindly allowed a “pilot response” exercise to be completed on the school computers and this was done by an informal steering group.

Questionnaire forms and a covering letter were printed and packs made up for a small army of volunteers (35) to take out and distribute personally to all the homes in Downley. All residents and their families were invited to complete a questionnaire and were followed up in further visits. The survey took place in November 2009 which turned out to be one of the wettest months of the year but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the volunteer door-knockers. The survey was received openly and positively by residents.



## Survey Results

The household survey recorded valid responses (excluding duplicates and spoiled entries) from 663 households which represented 33% of the total number of households (1992 in January 2010). Percentages quoted below are based on the total number of valid responses regardless of the numbers who answered individual questions, to ensure consistency. It is assumed that non-responses represent a “no opinion”, “not applicable” or some other form of negative response.

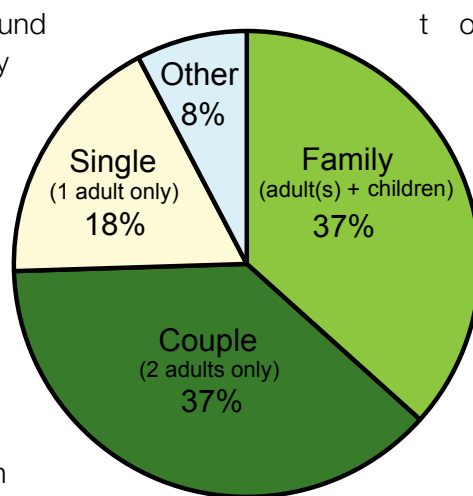
The separate young persons survey recorded 170 valid responses which represents 18% of the equivalent age ranges (5-18 years) in the Downley Fact File<sup>(1)</sup>.

In order to assess how representative the survey was, the make-up of the respondents was compared to the age distribution in Downley recorded in the Downley Fact File. The survey response was found to be broadly comparable with the population as a whole with the principal exception of the 19 to 30 age group which took relatively little part in the survey (7% of the total) compared to the census (18% of the total). The 31-50 age group was slightly over-represented in the survey. The young person’s survey was skewed in favour of the 5-10 age group with very little participation by the 16-18 year olds.

The type of household was also compared with the Downley Fact File. Again the survey respondents were broadly representative except that slightly more households containing a couple (ie. no children) responded to the survey (38%) than expected from the Fact File data (30%).

The geographical distribution of the survey response was found to be fairly even with no obvious concentration of well or poorly responding locations although there are comments suggesting the recently acquired part of the parish at the bottom of the hill tend to feel slightly isolated from, and consequently less involved than the older part of the village.

There is some evidence from the numbers reporting involvement in village clubs and societies that the survey respondents represent the type of residents who tend to take an interest in village affairs. This is perhaps unsurprising, but nevertheless could result in a slight bias in the survey results.



Finally, it is interesting to note that the bulk of the survey responses were made electronically using the internet facility “Surveymonkey” and only a minority (20% of households) were submitted on paper.

### Forming the Plan

The analysis of the results and categorization of the comments have been used to identify the issues that are seen as important by residents and needing to be addressed for the benefit of the community as a whole. These results make up the action plan which follows.

# Community Facilities & Activities

## Healthcare Facilities

The demand for health care facilities was concentrated on a pharmacy (95% would use) and a doctor's surgery (78% would use) with a slightly lower demand for a dentist (69%). A chiropodist, baby clinic and alternative therapy clinics were lower priorities.

The demand for a surgery and pharmacy was identified in the survey held in 2000 and they are still the most sought-after facilities not already in the village.

## Sporting Facilities

Additional sporting facilities are not required to the same extent although indoor sport facilities such as badminton, basketball and dance would be most popular with 61% expressing interest. Other outdoor facilities such as tennis courts (57%), cycle routes and BMX park (47%) and a children's playground (42%) were considered desirable. The new children's playground in School Close is perhaps too new to be widely known although this was requested by nearly half of all children.

Least interest was expressed in additional playing fields for football and other team games. Despite this, Downley Dynamos currently can only find a suitable football pitch outside the village. While the Downley School football pitch is available, it is unplayable during the winter due to poor drainage which needs to be rectified.



While only 22% requested more allotments, this percentage represents 78 people who expressed a lot of interest; this is a large number compared to the number of allotments available. This demand is supported by the 30 people currently on the waiting list for an allotment.

Other minority suggestions from both adults and young people included a swimming pool and gym.

## Religious Facilities

Christian churches of 3 denominations are present in Downley and there appears to be minimal demand for anything else.

## Community Facilities

There is still considerable concern about the closure of the High Street Post Office with 42% saying the Brindley Avenue does not meet their needs, citing inconvenient distance, long queues and inability to offer car tax. There is no age bias in this opinion (ie the same proportion of pensioners are happy with Brindley as in the general population). While most complainants would like to see a return of a Post Office to Downley proper, some would settle for facilities within an existing shop or provided on a mobile basis.



The War Memorial Hall attracted 111 comments suggesting it to be in need of improvement particularly to the kitchen, toilets and general décor. In addition, to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), a suitable access will need to be constructed.



There was less concern about the Community Centre (Old School) (49 comments) although there was some demand for a new kitchen to be installed.

While the Scout & Guide Hut, St. James Church Hall and Moor Lane Chapel rooms are private facilities, they are also used by the wider community who felt that improvements could be made, particularly refurbishment of the Scout Hut, acoustics and disabled access at St James (already constructed) and parking at Moor Lane.

The ability to hire these facilities could be improved by providing better information (for example on the Parish Website) about contact details.

## Community Activities

Children are evenly split on whether there is enough to do in Downley . While Downley children's most popular pastimes are going to the cinema and ten-pin bowling, they also spend much of their time on the Common, playing football and at the Handycross leisure centre. Traditional activities such as scouts and guides (and younger versions) have been supplemented by the performing arts.

While the most wanted new facility is a playground (42%), there are a number of other facilities on the wish list including skate/BMX park, swimming pool, tennis courts, rock climbing wall and youth club (each around 10-15%).

Adult activities are represented by numerous clubs and societies in the village of which over half (58%) are members. The major village event is Downley Day which is enjoyed by 88% of residents. The Bonfire and Concert on the Common are enjoyed by over 70% of residents with the Downley Walk, Gardening Club Show and New Year beacon less popular. There were several suggestions to add more interest (fireworks, additional food outlet?) to Bonfire night.

Suggestions for new events included a community carol service around a decorated Christmas tree, a Downley Fun Run on New Years Day, autumn wild food collection day, Mayday maypole dancing and a Beer Festival. Volunteers to organise these are welcome to apply.



## Communications

The way to communicate village activities was explored in both household and young people's surveys and the village magazine at 93%, and to a lesser extent parish notice-boards and mass emails at 70% were felt to be the most effective. Direct mail was felt to be less effective at 58% while texts, telephone and social networks were considered not very effective at around 30%. A number of comments suggested that the Parish Council website is used, although improvements could be made. Suggestions included feedback facilities similar to West Wycombe or Princes Risborough, an option to sign up to news of different activities and for it to be "more interesting and dynamic".

Children get most of their information from parents, friends and school in that order. They sometimes look at notice boards (41%), the village news (31%) and websites (21%), but least of all from the community centre or the information pack(4-5%).

Numerous comments suggested that a mix of communication channels need to be used to access as many people as possible. It is also important for the village news to be distributed in a timely manner to ensure that news is fresh and relevant.

Two suggestions for improving the effectiveness of parish notice boards were to add boards at Cross Court and the bottom of Plomer Hill.

Greater access to computer technology was requested by children, with 50% saying more was needed, despite 95% of them already having a computer at home.

A small majority (56%) of children also say that they think their views are listened to, although this leaves a large minority who think they aren't. Several suggested that a Downley Youth Council should be set up to represent them.





## Recommendations

- **Doctor, pharmacy and dentist.** Lobby Wycombe Primary Care Trust. Possibly combine with Disraeli Ward which would give benefit to over 8,000 residents
- **Indoor sports hall.** Investigate potential buildings, new sites
- **Outdoor sports.** Could we use the school's netball area for tennis courts? Drain the football pitch at the Downley School
- **Children's playground.** A new playground at the School Close development has been completed
- **Cycle routes.** Develop cycling routes for mountain bikers
- **BMX park.** Investigate possible sites for a BMX/skate park
- **Swimming.** Work out a way to make Maplewood pool available to public
- **Allotments.** Investigate possible sites for additional allotments
- **Improve access to Post Office.** Approach Aviva to negotiate change of bus route 31 so that it goes via Brindley Avenue and stops at the shopping parade. (not via Brunel Road)
- **Post Office facilities in the village.** Survey which local shops would be interested in offering post office facilities or if there is a mobile post office in Buckinghamshire
- **Community facility hire details.** Contact details for all facilities and hiring information to be published together with a programme of events
- **Memorial Hall.** Investigate funding sources to construct a disabled entrance, improve the kitchen and install new toilets on ground floor
- **Community Centre.** Investigate funding sources to improve the kitchen
- **Parish website.** Add news feed facility, moderated comments from the public (suggestions/discussion board), community plan section
- **Parish notice boards.** Install additional notice boards at Cross Court and the bottom of Plomer Hill
- **Youth representation.** Invite/appoint/elect a young person onto the Community Plan task force

# Environment & Planning

## Appearance

It would appear that most residents are broadly happy with the appearance of the village with at least two thirds expressing satisfaction with the visual aspects of the village and services such as waste collection and grass-cutting.

Most people do not suffer problems with noise, smells, bonfires and fly-tipping with no more than 25% of people registering dissatisfaction in each case. However, the problems of dog fouling and litter is more significant with 40-50% complaining. Fly-tipping is regarded as unsatisfactory by about 25% although no identifiable hot spots emerge from comments received. Noise is also identified at a similar level of concern with most identifying aircraft noise from Booker and motorbikes, apart from the inevitable “noisy children” and traffic noise.

Although the provision of litter and dog waste bins is generally felt to be satisfactory, there were suggestions for additional bins near the Le Despencers and in the Gray’s Lane/Pheasant Drive area and at other undefined places. The installation of additional bins should be accompanied by a campaign to get dog-owners to use them.

It was also felt that litter bins are not emptied sufficiently frequently and an additional bin in the Dells would be beneficial. In fact bins are emptied weekly in the summer and fortnightly during the rest of the year and the WDC will empty a bin if it is reported to be overflowing, although this fact is not generally known. Communication of these facts to residents should be improved.

Although noise is generally not a problem, motorbikes are sometimes felt to disturb the peace. Several residents have complained about hedge and shrubs encroaching upon footpaths which should be cut back regularly.

## Services

The planning process for both small and large developments was perceived as satisfactory by just less than half but as 20-30% had no opinion, those saying it was unsatisfactory was only 10-20%.

The largest problem areas were with planning of large development, where 19% felt it was unsatisfactory. More specifically, it is felt that the planning process is not well-publicised and communication is poor. Several comments compared the action taken against Starlight Stores with laxness against some other planning violations.



Other comments were that roadside grass cuttings should be collected and that waste collection could include glass recycling.

Several residents suggested that there should be recycling facilities in Downley Village similar to those at Brindley Avenue. It should be noted that the recycling

facilities which used to exist at Cross Court were removed several years ago because of unacceptable rubbish accumulation.

Street lighting was felt to be satisfactory (only 18% unhappy) although several instances were reported where lighting could be improved (see action list). Equally there were several comments requesting that the amount of street lighting be reduced (especially on the Common).

### Further Development

There is little support for further housing developments in Downley with only about 20% supporting more housing for either rent or purchase and even then, only a little would be tolerated. A number of younger residents have commented that they have had difficulty finding 1-2 bedroom flats. An analysis of the survey indicates that there is slightly more demand (approx 5%) among households with both young adult and single occupants for more housing to both buy and rent.

Over a quarter of children up to 18 have said they would like to live in Downley when they are older which perhaps reinforces the need for sufficient low cost housing. While many naturally do not know, only 10% said no.

There was a little more support at 40% for both sheltered accommodation and residential care or nursing homes.

There is more enthusiasm for commercial developments with the exception of office/industrial and food outlets at less than 20%. However, there was around 50% support for more shops, banks/cash machines and personal services such as hairdressers. More motoring facilities (garage/petrol) would be supported by 36%. There would be support for a coffee shop or café.



## Best & Worst

A large majority of people think that Downley's best feature is its rural aspects as represented by the Common, other green spaces and woods and walks that are available there. Downley's community spirit is also much appreciated.

The children agree that the rural aspects (common, woods, green space) and community (friends, community, village) are the best thing about living in Downley. The Downley School also gets a mention.

Downley's worst aspects are much less focused although road-related problems such as speeding and inconsiderate parking come top of the list. This is addressed more comprehensively in the section on transport. Rowdy youths, new housing developments, litter and dog-related issues represent the majority of other problems.

Children's concerns are less focused except for the harassment by older groups of teenagers cited by 20%.

## Recommendations

- **Dog bins.** Install additional bins near the Le De and the field off Gray's Lane/ Pheasant Drive. Review other possible locations
- **Litter bins.** Install additional bin in the dells. Review other possible locations. Improve publicity about bin emptying (among other services)
- **Noise.** 20 mph speed restriction. Village Respect/Awareness campaign
- **Fly-tipping.** Need to identify hot spots before further action such as camera surveillance could be considered
- **Hedges near footpaths.** Village Respect/Awareness campaign
- **Planning communications.** Parish website (West Wycombe site does this)
- **Grass cuttings.** Approach contractor to improve grass management
- **Glass collection.** Approach WDC to implement a glass collection service
- **Recycling centre.** Review need for a recycling point at Cross Court (?) similar to Brindley Avenue
- **Street lighting.** Install additional/improved lighting at:
  - Basketball court behind St James
  - St James Church
  - Gap in Plomer Green Lane
  - Alley from Hillfield Close to Hithercroft
  - Gosling Grove opposite pond
- **Coffee shop/restaurant.** How can this be encouraged?

# Law & Order

## Crime Rates

Crime rates are normally expressed per thousand of the relevant population. The Official Thames Valley Police (TVP) figures quote a crime rate of 48 for the whole of 2009(6). The survey respondents reported a crime rate of 116 in the last 12 months which compares unfavorably with the official crime rate figure. However, it is clear looking at the types of crimes described, that many of these went unreported and cannot therefore be directly compared with the official figures. A more positive view of the crime rate is that nearly 90% of people suffered no crime at all during the past 12 months.

## Police Performance

Of more interest is the level of satisfaction with the way the police handled these reported crimes. A clear majority (over 70%) were satisfied both with the immediate response and throughout any subsequent investigation. The few suggestions made on how to improve police performance where it was judged to be inadequate, included a faster or more visible response from police with more support or a better follow-up afterwards.

There is also a desire to see a more visible police presence on the streets of Downley. There is a perception that Disraeli gets the majority of the Police attention for the Downley/Disraeli ward.



## “Fear of Crime”

The concern about crime is somewhat higher than the level of actual crime would really justify. Whereas less than 12% reported crime in the last year, a far greater proportion (70-80%) expressed some level of concern about anti-social behaviour, burglary, car crime and vandalism. Curiously, significantly less people (only 50%) are concerned about street theft or violence. Only 2 such crimes (out of 77) were reported, the vast majority (65%) being car-related crimes. Drug-dealing was also identified as a concern by some.

95% of children say they feel safe when out and about in Downley – clearly more confident than the grown-ups, despite some concerns about teenage bullies.

## Crime Prevention

Ways to reduce crime focused mostly on a greater presence of police or PCSOs with 40-50% saying they would help a lot. CCTV cameras and neighbourhood watch schemes were considered to be less effective with 20-25% saying they would help a lot.

The level of interest in joining neighbourhood watch schemes was quite low with 56% saying they are not interested. 22% are already members. There were several suggestions about setting up more activities for bored teenagers. This option is being actively pursued by the Downley/Disraeli Youth Scheme in conjunction with the police.

The local police publish neighbourhood updates on their website<sup>(7)</sup> and organise regular “Have Your Say” meetings at Cross Court shops on the first Monday of each month.

## Recommendations

- **Police response to reported crime.** Approach TVP with results of survey and request action plan to improve response
- **Police patrolling.** Approach TVP with results of survey and request action plan to improve patrols
- **Youth activities.** Support the Downley/Disraeli youth initiative with time and money
- **“Have you say” meetings.** Publicise in Village News and on website

# Transport & Highways

## Public Transport

Public transport serving Downley is generally considered to be satisfactory by 73% of people.

Nearly half (46%) of respondents claim to have used a bus during the last month with half of those going by bus more than 5 times. Households with pensioners use the bus slightly more frequently (10% more) than those without. Over a similar time frame 35% of children have used a bus in Downley.

The principal factors that would influence bus use include more direct routes and cheaper tickets with over 50% of people citing these reasons. Greater frequency of buses, better information and smaller buses would influence 30-40% of people whereas allowing cycles on buses would influence only 14%. The cost of tickets is also the principal reason given by children for not using buses; destinations, frequency and duration are all much less important factors.

The routes most commonly in demand include the railway station, schools and leisure centre at Handycross and Wycombe hospital. Several comments suggested that a route between the bottom of Plomer Hill and Downley village would promote greater participation in village activities. Other comments criticised the reliability of the service with frequent cancellations and poor time-keeping; however, others described the service as good.

The Bucks Lift-share<sup>(8)</sup> and Dial-a-Ride<sup>(9)</sup> schemes are used by only 1% (ie single figures). Many were unaware of the schemes and most would prefer to use a car or bus.



## Speeding

Of all the traffic issues, speeding is identified as a problem by most people (52%). Speeding problems are clearly location dependant with Commonsides, Littleworth Road and Plomer Green Lane the clear winners.

A number of suggestions were made for controlling speeding, the most popular (52%) of which was the imposition of a 20 mph limit in the problem areas, with a greater police/PCSO presence the next preference at 42%. Flashing signs (34%) and naming and shaming (34%) were next in popularity. Other approaches such as speed bumps (22%), chicanes (30%), cameras (27%), were less favoured options. Of the active suggestions made, the most popular was flashing speed signs.

Although not specifically identified as such, zebra crossing appeared to be a favoured means of controlling speeding as well as congestion (see below).

Thames Valley Police consultation has identified Middlebrook Road (and presumably Southfield Road) as a speeding hotspot<sup>(7)</sup>. They will be looking to organise several speeding operations. They are looking to involve local schools with Speed awareness posters for roads. PCSO Carol Stride has been working with Downley and Disraeli School and they are looking to hold competitions to design local speed awareness signs.



## Parking

The survey was evenly split between those who consider parking to be a problem (41%) and those who don't (48%). Parking problems are also location dependant with Commonsides, the High Street and the area around The Downley School causing most problems. In addition to parking problems in the High Street (52%) most complaints mentioned parking on the verge or pavement (46%), followed by obstructed driveways (23%). A number of less major parking problem areas are known to exist on the Common at football practice times, Gosling Grove during the mornings, Hithercroft Road near Disraeli, Littleworth Road mainly in the evenings, Southbrook Road and Pheasant Drive.

Thames Valley Police have stated<sup>(7)</sup> that there are residents across Disraeli and Downley that are persistently parking their vehicles in an obstructive or dangerous position. PCSO Charlotte Cooper is looking to target these offenders. They have an ongoing project gathering information on parking issues.

The only clearly preferred method of improving the parking situation is to provide more off-

street parking space which was preferred by 63%. The use of yellow lines was split with 41% for and 30% against while the introduction of traffic wardens was preferred by only 21% with 42% against. However, doing nothing was rejected by over 90%.

## **Traffic Congestion**

Congestion is the least of the traffic problems in Downley with only 27% highlighting it. What problems exist are concentrated around the High Street, the bottom of Plomer Hill and around the Downley School at peak hours.

The most popular general method of dealing with this is zebra crossings (52%) particularly for children walking to school although this is seen also as a means to control speeding. Other methods such as roundabouts, traffic lights, pelican crossings and one-way roads were generally not preferred (all less than 30%) although doing nothing came bottom of the list at 9%. In fact traffic lights and one-way roads were the most disliked options.

Several comments suggested that the traffic light sequence at the bottom of Plomer Hill should be improved and that a roundabout (or multiple mini-roundabouts) be sited at the junction of Plomer Green Lane and Littleworth Road.

Mini motorbikes and bicycles riding on the pavement were also highlighted as a nuisance although neither was serious (less than 30%).



The condition of roads in the parish was generally considered to be good with only potholes causing concern, particularly over the winter season. However, the provision of road salt could be improved particularly on the hills. Suggestions for locating extra salt bins focused not unnaturally on the steepest slopes such as Sunnycroft, Westover Road, Pheasant Drive, Grays Lane, Plomer Hill, Coates Lanes and the Pastures.

## Cycle Routes

More and better cycle routes would be a popular improvement with only 19% of people thinking them to be adequate. The nearest National Cycle Route is currently at Princes Risborough although there is a proposal for a new one from High Wycombe to join the network at Great Hampden. The nearest registered local route runs through High Wycombe along the River Wye from east (near the Loudwater Tesco) to west, terminating at the top of Chapel Lane. Local cycle routes created around the village (particularly routes to the school) could conceivably also link to the High Wycombe east-west route and to the proposed National Route 50 at Hughenden Valley<sup>(10)</sup>.



## Recommendations

- **Bus tickets.** How can cost of tickets be reduced?
- **Bus routes.** Request Arriva to develop improved routes to station, Marlow Hill and the Hospital
- **Service reliability & comfort.** Open discussions with Arriva?
- **20mph speed limit.** Request WDC to impose 20mph limit in selected areas to be identified
- **Police presence.** Approach TVP with results of survey and request action plan to improve patrols. Support Police speed reduction operations
- **Flashing speed signs.** Request Bucks CC to install speed activated signs
- **Off street parking.** Consider need for:
  - Lay-bys at Pheasant Drive & Plomer Green Avenue
  - Single side road parking only
  - Limited parking for shoppers on the Bricklayers Arms forecourt
  - Encouragement of Police operations against problem parking
- **Limited yellow lines.** Parking controlled by double yellow lines, particularly at the road junctions
- **Traffic lights at bottom of Plomer Hill.** Rephase to allow improved traffic flow. Allow right turn up hill
- **Zebra crossings.** Identify priority among list below and request Bucks CC to install crossing at one or more of:
  - Junction of Commonsides & Littleworth Road
  - Top of Plomer Hill
  - Kiln Pond Lane to High Street
  - Littleworth Road by shops
  - Plomer Green Avenue at Cross Court
  - Grays Lane near school
  - Somewhere on Plomer Green Lane
- **Roundabout at Downley Donkey.** Request Bucks CC to create roundabout at Downley Donkey junction
- **Pot holes.** Lobby Bucks CC to improve road surfaces
- **Salt bins.** Need bins at:
  - Pheasant Drive
  - Plomer Hill (more)
  - Sunnycroft
  - Westover Road
  - Grays Lane
  - The Common by Downley Lodge
- **Cycle routes.** Investigate where routes can be created or upgraded

# Education

There are three pre-school nurseries and one combined primary school within the Downley Parish. There is no secondary education offered in Downley and children from the Downley School go to over a dozen secondary schools. There are some adult education courses available in the form of clubs.



## Pre-school

The majority of people (74%) consider that there is sufficient pre-school provision in Downley. Places do need to be booked soon after children are born to ensure they get into their chosen nursery. This can make it difficult for newcomers to get a place for their children. Approval for a new nursery on The Downley School site has recently been granted so this should make places easier to find in future.

## Primary School

Most people (71%) also consider there is adequate provision of primary education in Downley although the catchment area for The Downley School causes some concern. It is a very popular school and sometimes catchment children do not get a place because there are sufficient children living nearer to the school. Downley has a number of new housing developments and people are worried that this situation will get worse. A number of people have suggested that The Downley School should expand.



## Secondary School

There is great concern about the provision of secondary education for Downley children. Given that pre-school and primary school provision is excellent, people of Downley feel very let down with the provision of upper schools for those children who are not selected for grammar school. Many parents (65%) think Downley requires additional provision in secondary schools and they (71%) are also unhappy with the allocation process for secondary schools. Children of Downley are split up when they reach 12 years old and are sent to over a dozen different schools. This happens at a time when they are entering adolescence and really need the support of friends they know. 78 households requested that a secondary school is built in Downley where children from The Downley School can progress together.

There is no secondary school within walking distance to Downley and transport to the numerous secondary schools is haphazard. Not all schools offer organised transport and many parents have to take their children to school by car, adding to the congestion. It has already been noted that there is a lack of buses going to the Marlow Hill schools.

## School Travel

Most children walk to school (59%) but a surprising number (43%) go by car either for the whole or part of the journey. Only 6% cycle. 12% of the total go by bus, but all of these are over 11.

It would alleviate the school run congestion if the numbers of primary children traveling by car could be reduced further.

## Adult Education

Whilst there are a number of adult learning opportunities in the vicinity of Downley, such as Millbrook School, many people (69%) think there is a need for more adult education in Downley. For some people access down the hill is difficult and since buses do not run between Downley and Sands, it would be better if courses were offered in the village.

It will be necessary to find out what courses people are interested to follow. A small questionnaire could be conducted using the Village News magazine.

## Recommendations

- **Primary school catchment.** To be addressed by Governors of The Downley School
- **Secondary school.** To be addressed by Governors of The Downley School
- **Walk to school.** Support SRS group at The Downley School
- **Buses to Marlow Hill.** See Transport
- **Adult education.** Perform additional survey to establish what courses are wanted and lobby Bucks CC once identified

## Next Steps – Implementation Actions

The recommendations listed above have been assembled into an action plan in Appendix 2. Actions have been grouped into three sections entitled Community, Environment and Transport. It is recommended that the remaining education issues be addressed by The Downley School Board of Governors while the law & order issues be actioned by Thames Valley Police supported by the Neighbourhood Action Group.

It is recommended that a Community Plan Task Force covering the three sections identified in the action plan, be formed to report to the Parish Council. Their remit will be to drive forward the actions identified in this plan. Detailed action plans need to be prepared complete with responsibilities, costings and timescales within a 5 year limit.

This Task Force will require the recruitment of sufficient, motivated volunteers to give up their time to the project – not an easy task.

### **Reporting**

The Task Force will be required to issue an annual report detailing what progress has been made together with revision to the detailed plans as necessary. The Task Force will also publish regular reports in the Village News and on the Parish website. A specific section of the website will be allocated for this purpose. A comments section will also allow for feedback from the residents of Downley (moderated to prevent abuse).

The Community Plan should become a regular item on the Parish Council agenda.



# References

1. Fact File 48: Downley. Published by Wycombe District Council, January 2008.
2. Office of National Statistics website [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk).
3. Survey Report. 2000. Copies available from Downley Parish Council.
4. Downley Village Design Statement. 2002. Copies available from Downley Parish Council.
5. Bucks Community Action website. <http://www.bucks-comm-action.org.uk/>  
(now incorporated into Community Impact Bucks. [www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk](http://www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk))
6. Thames Valley Police Local Crime Map. <http://maps.police.uk/view/thames-valley>
7. Thames Valley Police website: "Your Neighbourhood" section – Downley/Disraeli neighbourhood. [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)
8. Bucks Car Share website. <http://www.buckscarshare.co.uk>
9. Wycombe Dial-a-Ride. See [http://www.alt-transport.org.uk/schemes\\_dar.asp](http://www.alt-transport.org.uk/schemes_dar.asp)
10. Sustrans website. <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

## Acknowledgements

The following made particular contributions to the project:

Barry Gay, Chris Hamilton, Peter Loadman, Lynne & Bill Thompson, Rosemary Saunders and John Rumble.

Sarah Allwood, Paul O'Hare and Carol Nutkins from Bucks Community Action for all their guidance.

Many local residents who volunteered to distribute the survey and collect responses and those who remain involved in the various Action Groups.

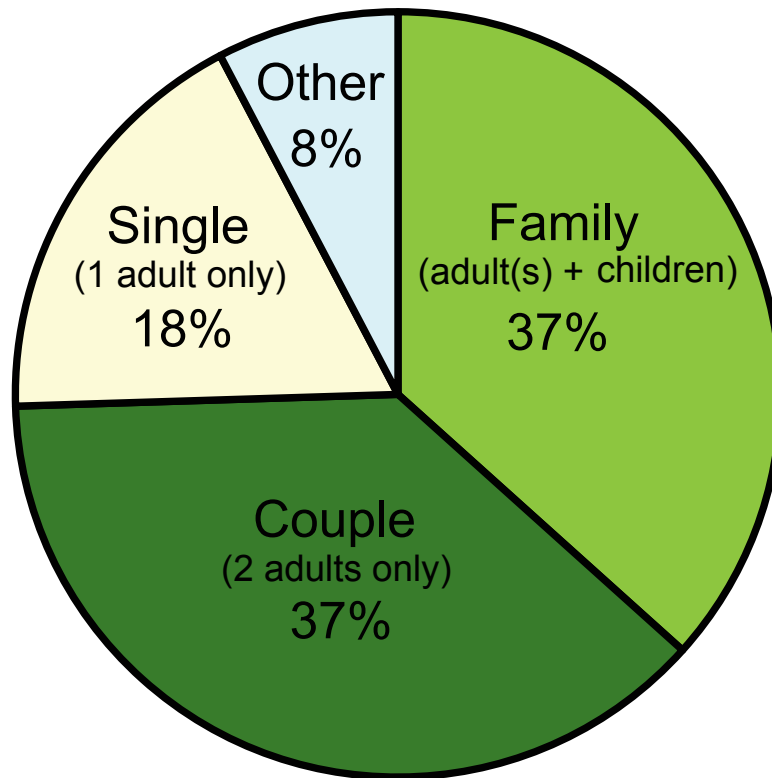
The Steering Group has also enjoyed both technical support and financial sponsorship from Downley Parish Council, and Bucks Community Action (now incorporated into Community Impact Bucks).



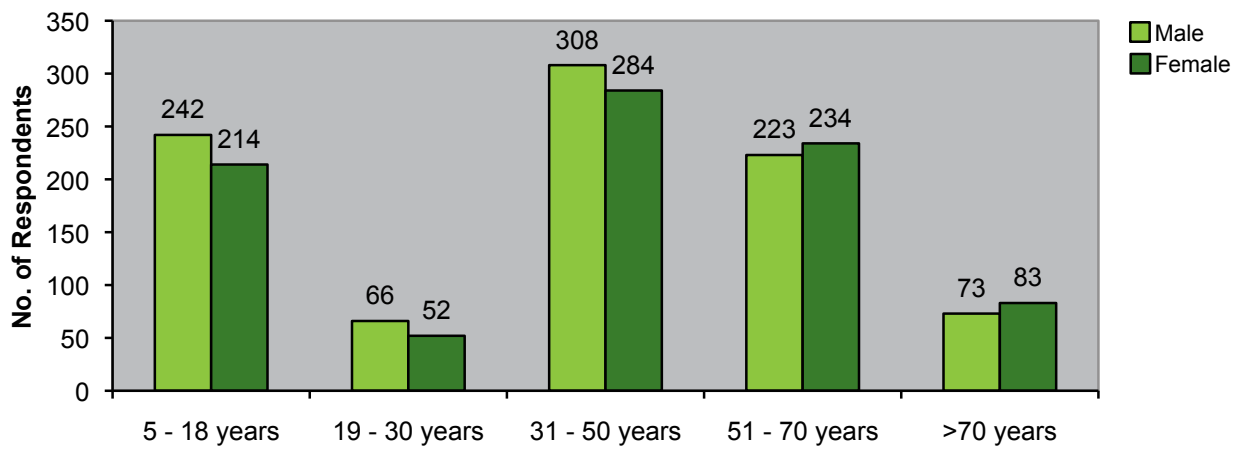
The following section contains detailed responses from the Survey held in Nov-Dec 2009. The raw data is available for inspection on the Parish Website.

**Demographics**

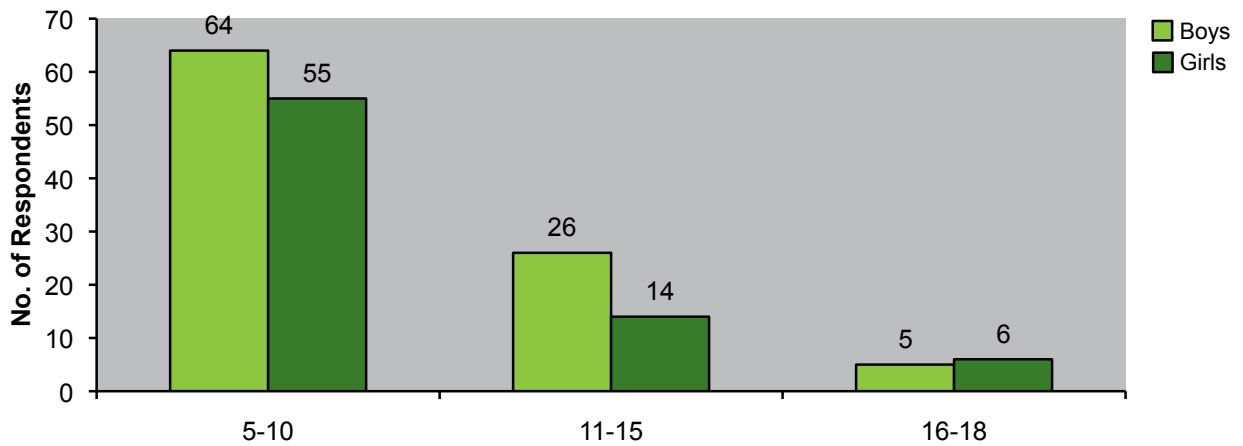
Household Type



### Household Survey Size



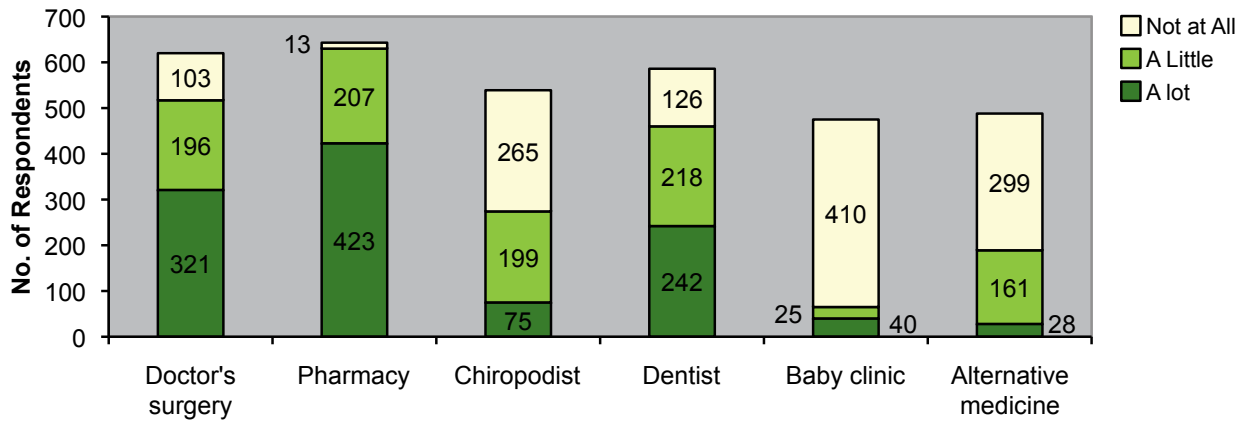
### Young Peoples Survey Size



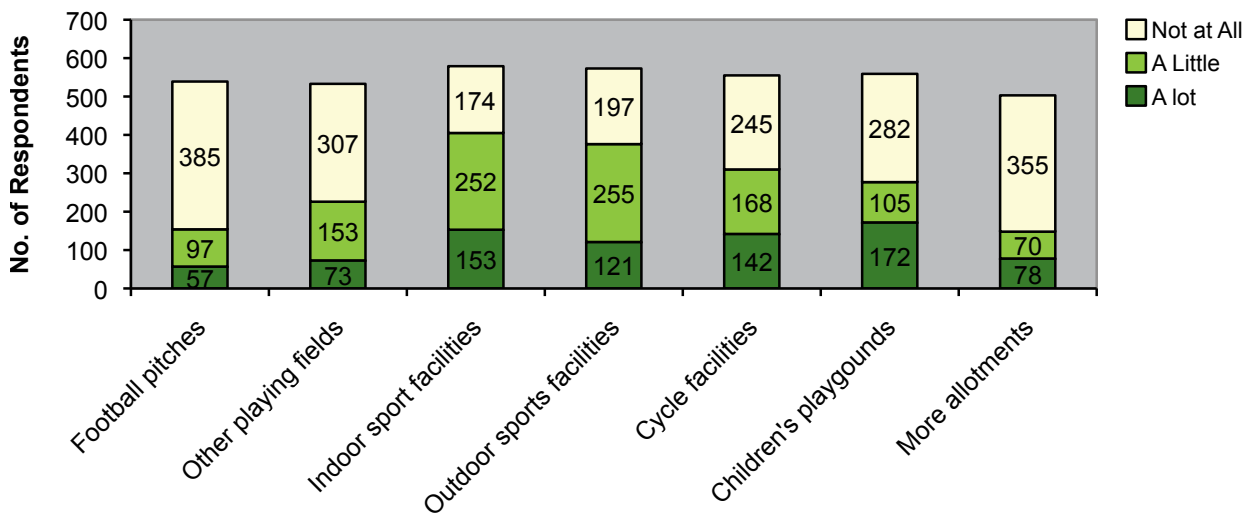
Organisations	No of respondents claiming membership
Downley Art Group	12
Downley After School Club	34
Downley Albion Football Club	9
Downley Bridge Club	6
Downley Coffee Stop	59
Downley Community Library	97
Downley Community Orchard	17
Downley Common Preservation Society	44
Downley Cricket Club	12
Downley Cricket Colts Academy	15
Downley Dynamo Football Club	67
Downley Evening Women's Institute	25
Downley Gardening Club	77
Downley Jubilee Allotments	21
Downley Neighbourhood Watch	72
Downley Theatre Group	54
Downley Youth Club	6
Downley Village Evening Women's Institute	21
Downley Wine & Beer Club	21
Guides, Brownies & Rainbows	53
Links Luncheon Club at St James' Church	12
Mother & Toddler Group	41
Scouts, Cubs & Beavers	48
Simply Walkers Group	36

## Community Activities & Facilities

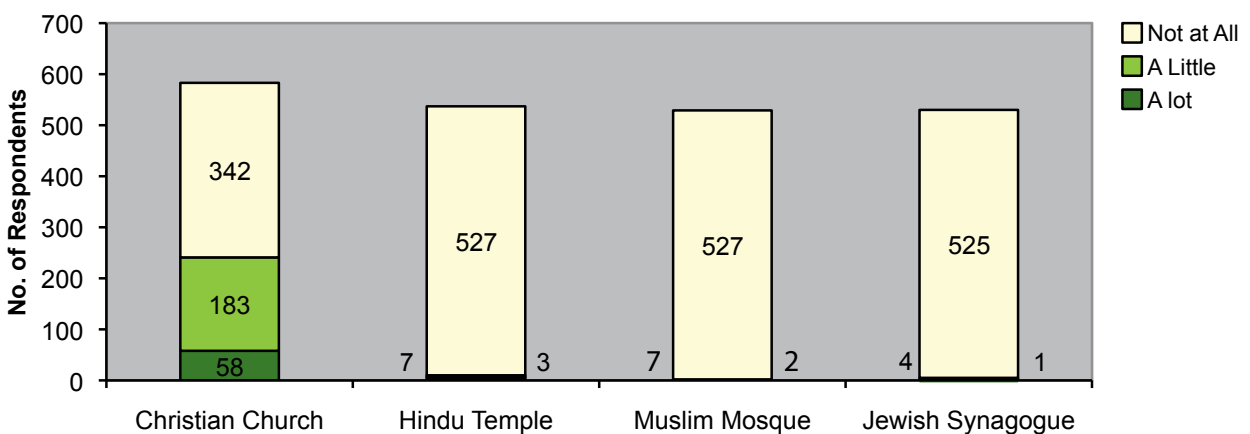
### Healthcare Facilities - How much would they be used



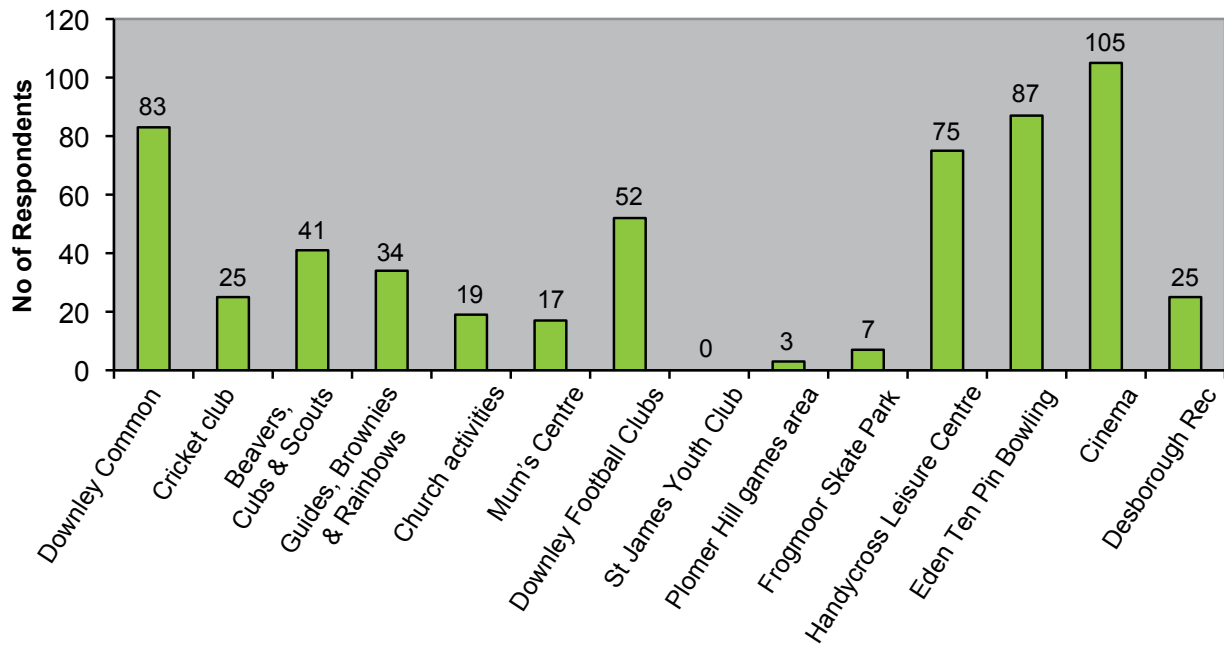
### Leisure Facilities - How much would they be used



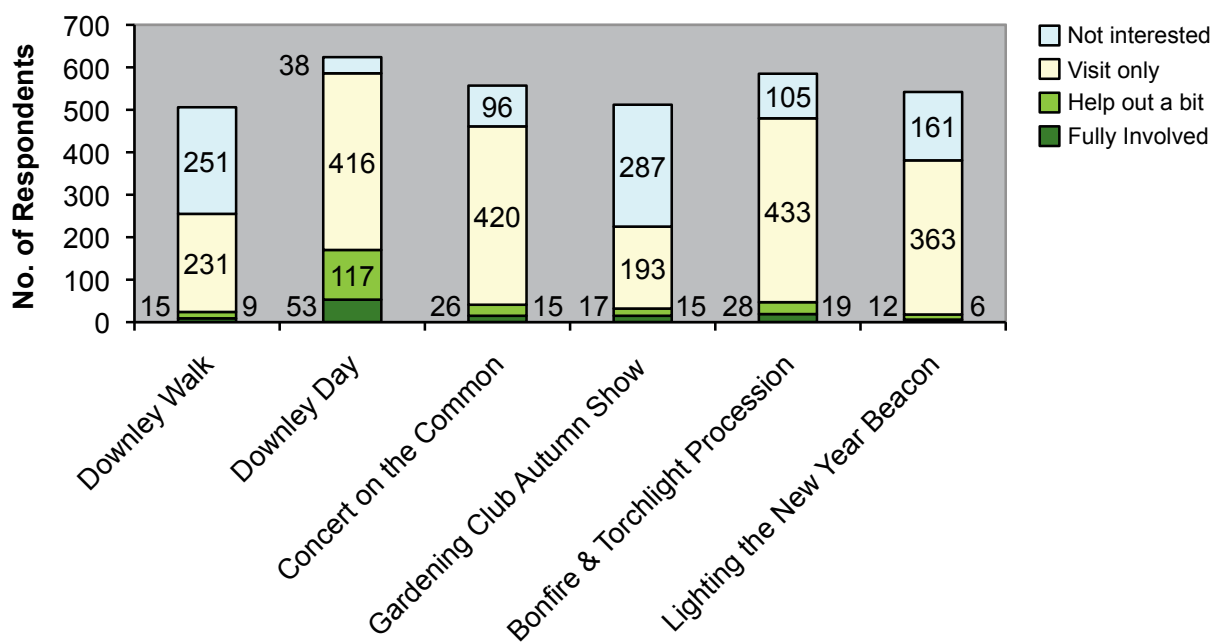
### Places Of Worship - How much would they be used



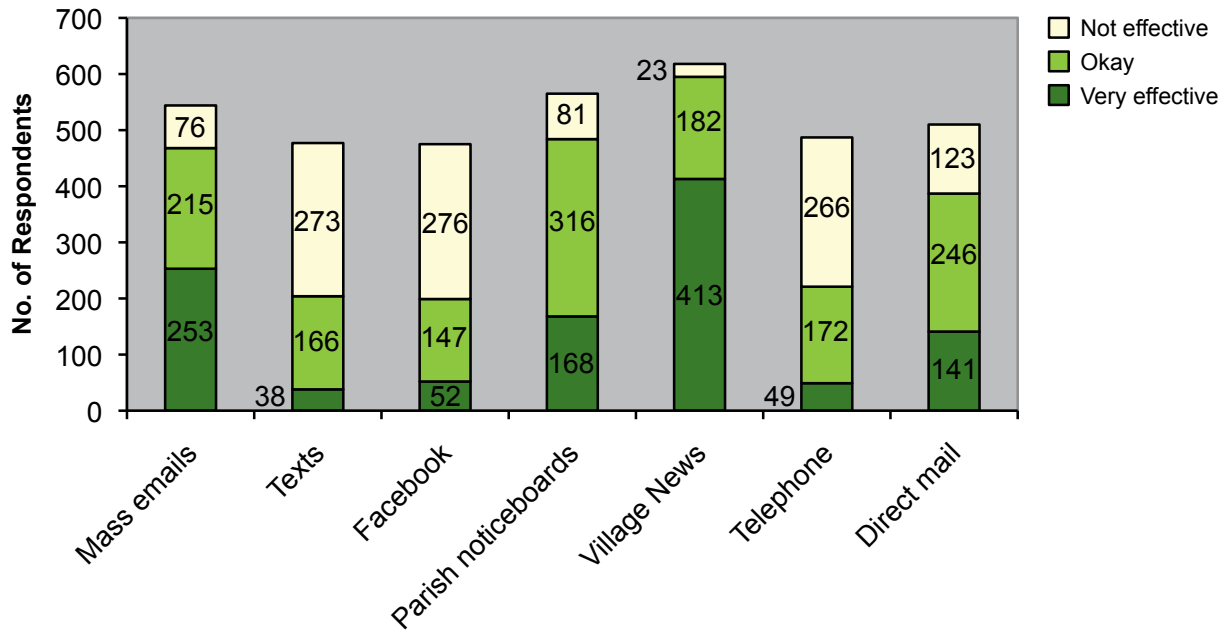
## Children's Activities - How they spend their leisure time



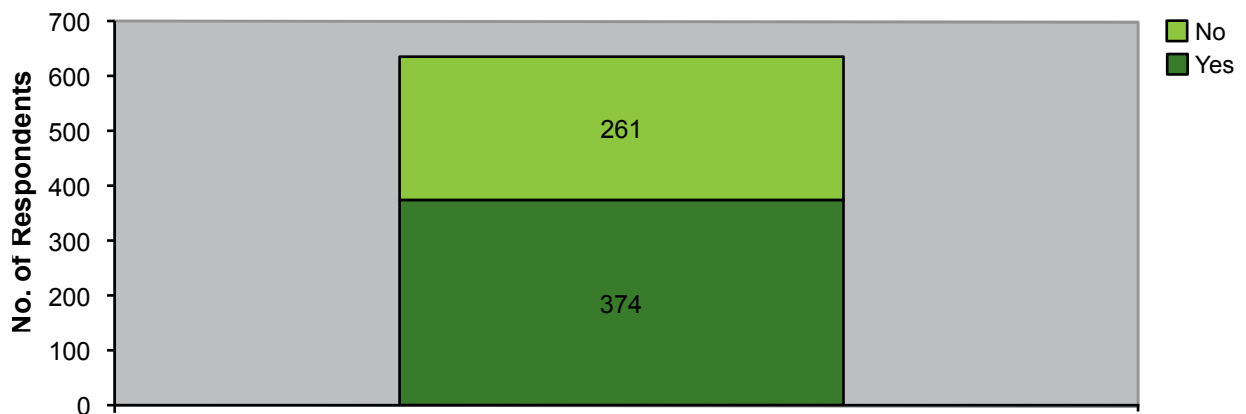
## Community Events - Level of interest



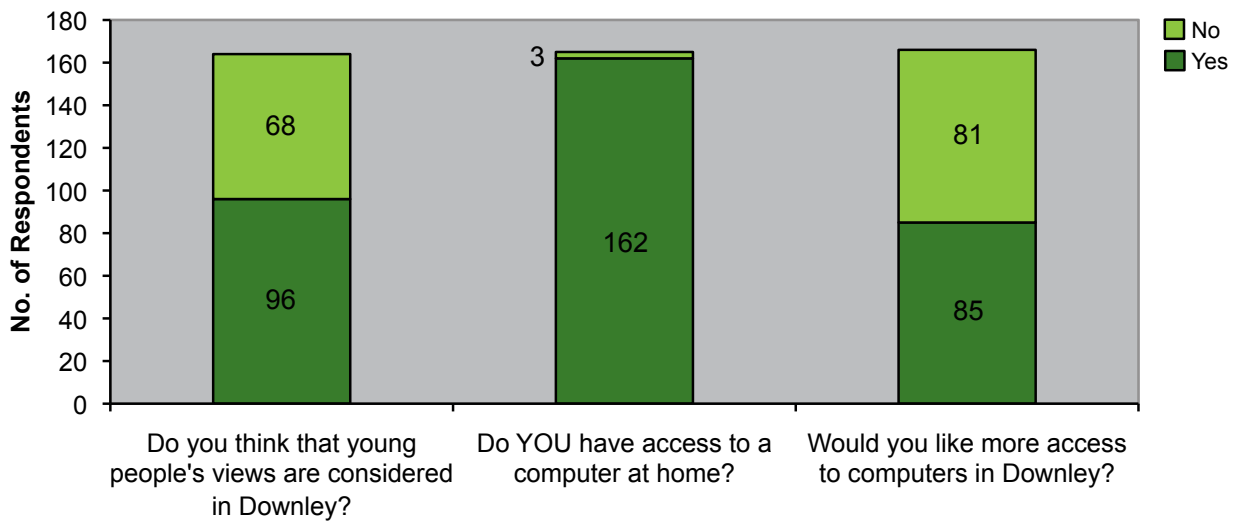
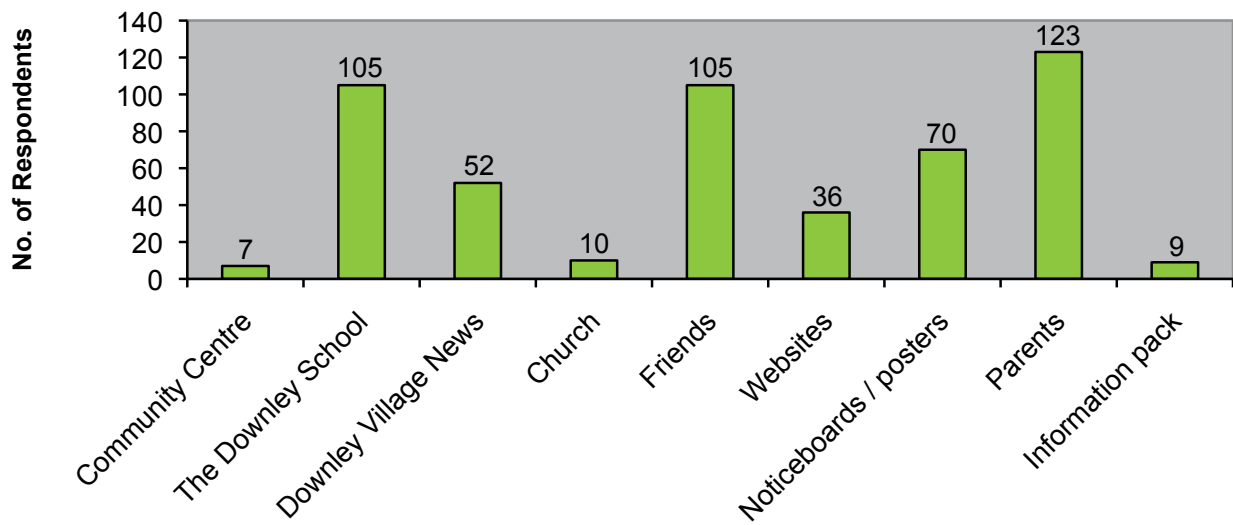
## Effectiveness Of Communication Methods



## Post Office Facilities - Is Brindley Avenue sufficient

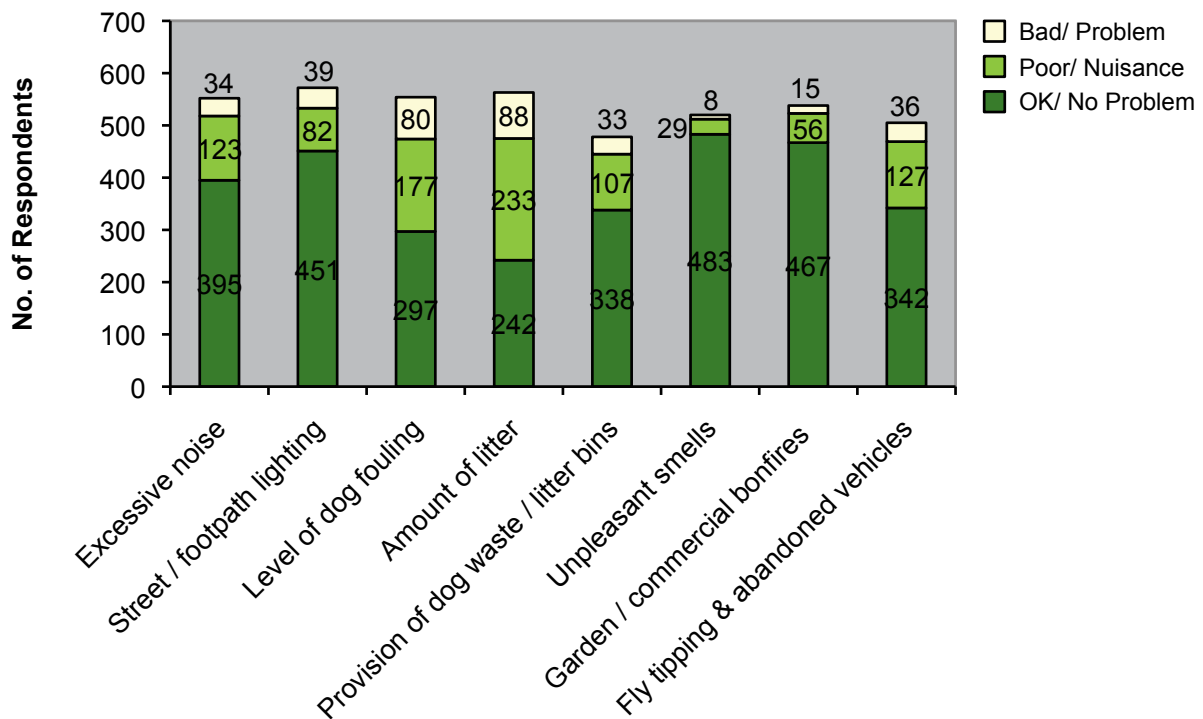
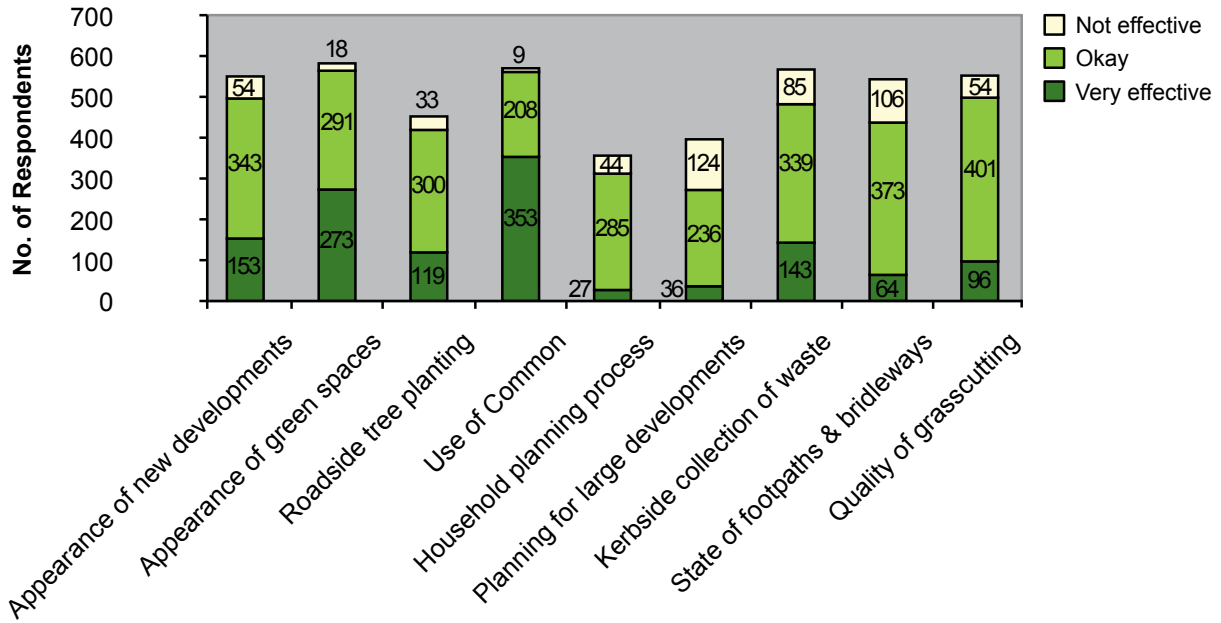


Children's Communication - How they find things out

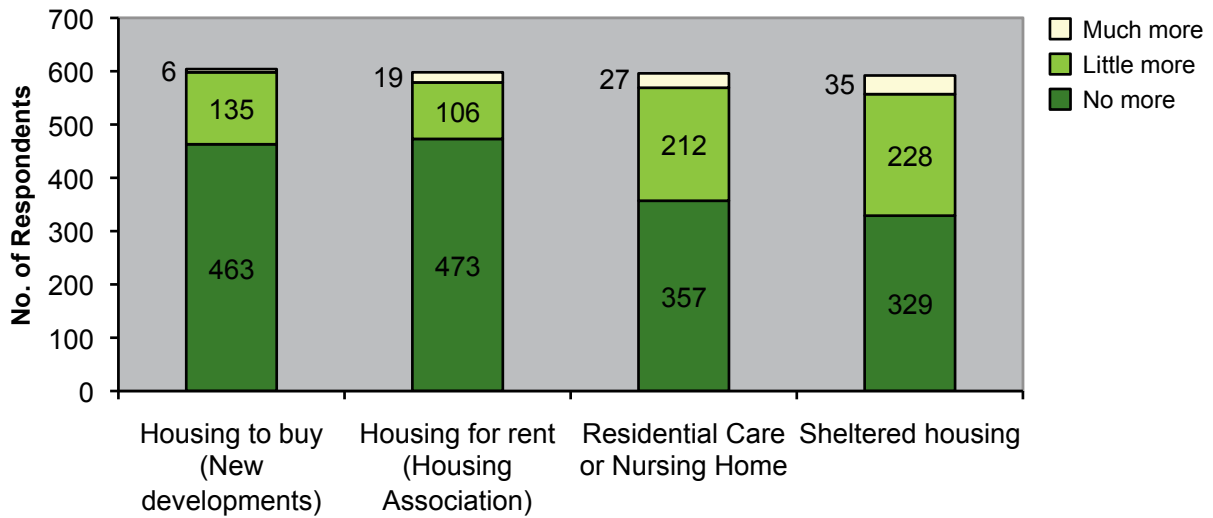


## Environment & Planning

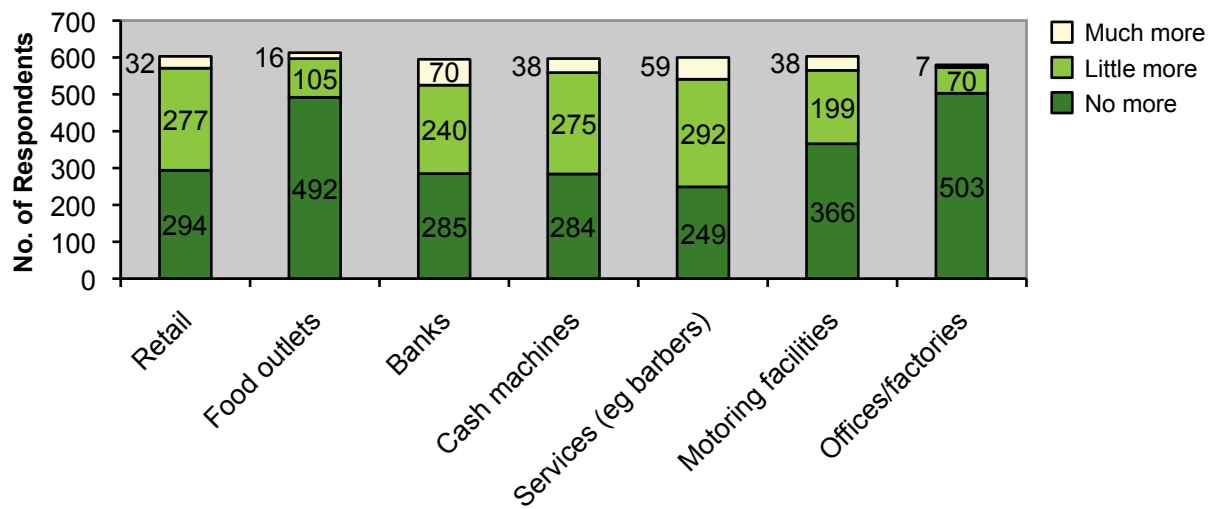
### Environmental Issues - How people view them



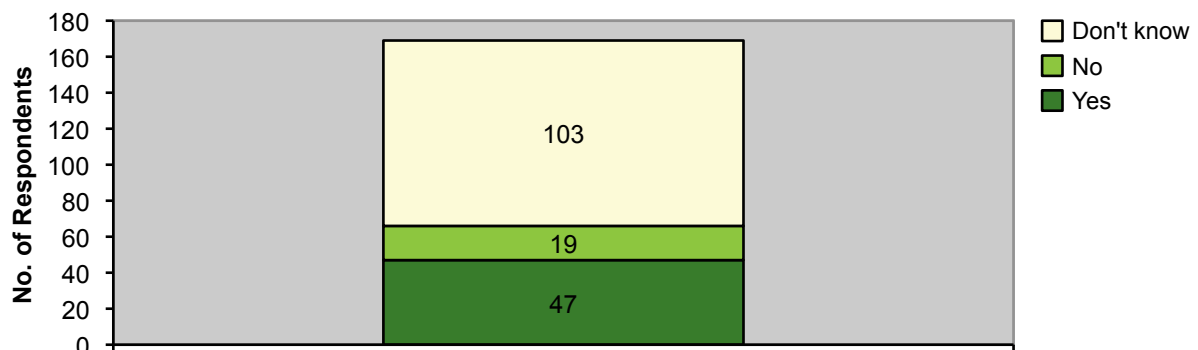
### Residential Development - How much is wanted



### Commercial Development - How much is wanted

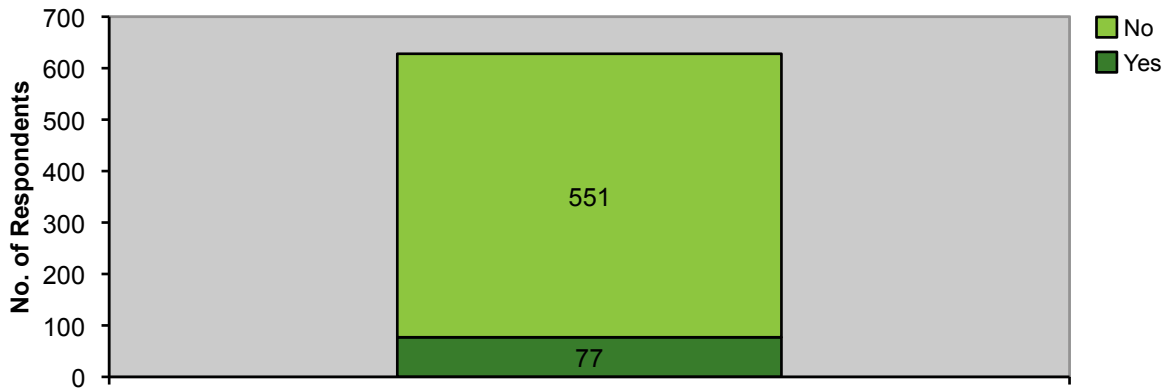


### Young Peoples Housing - When you reach the time to buy or rent your own home would you like to stay in Downley?

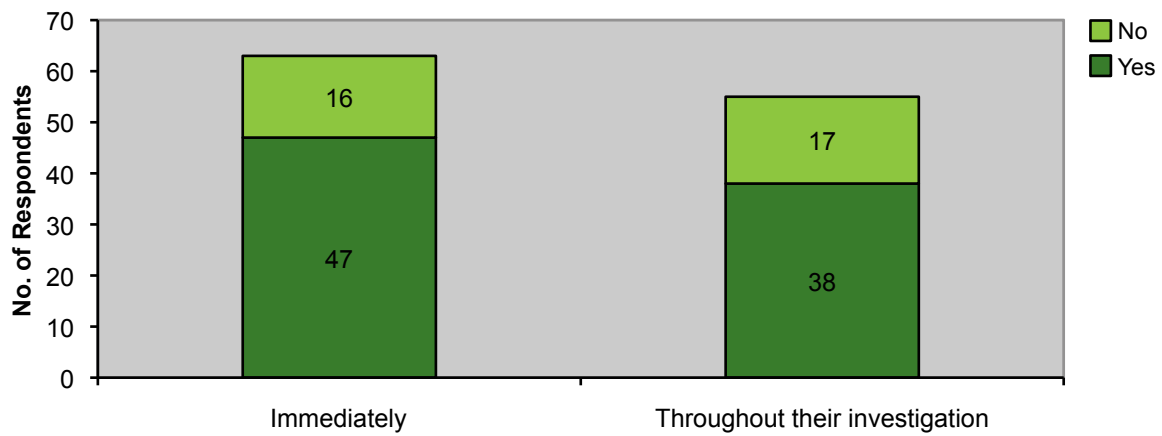


## Law & Order

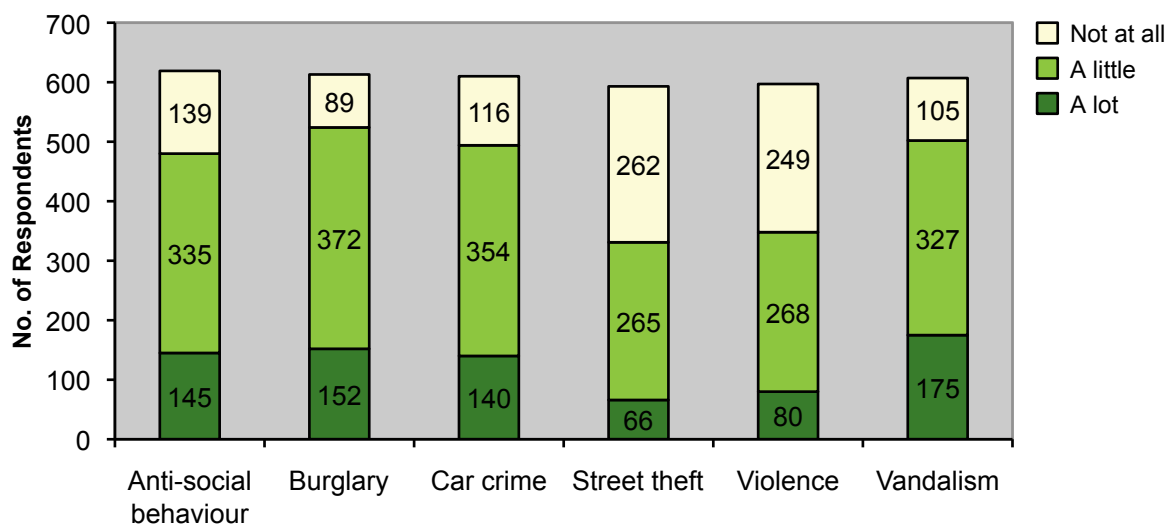
### Crime Rate - Has any member of your household suffered from crime locally?



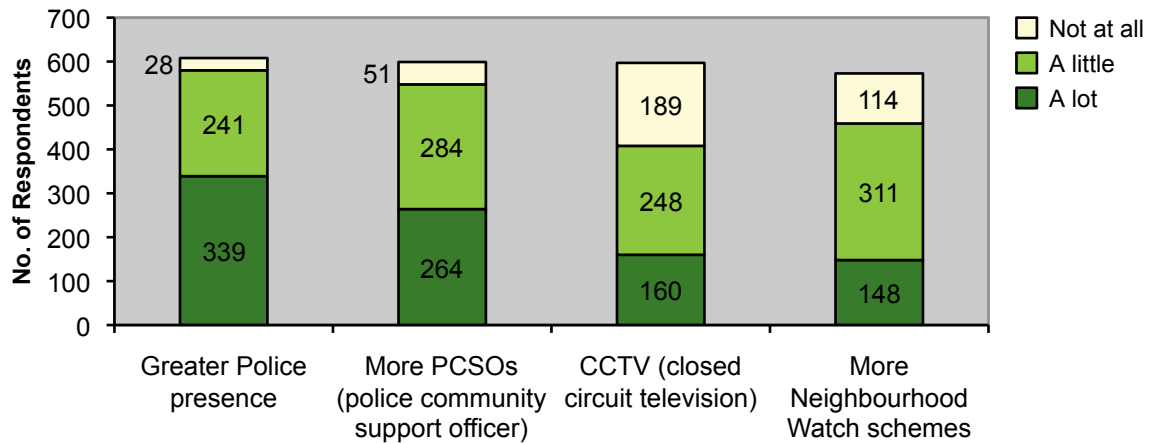
### Were You Satisfied With The Police Response?



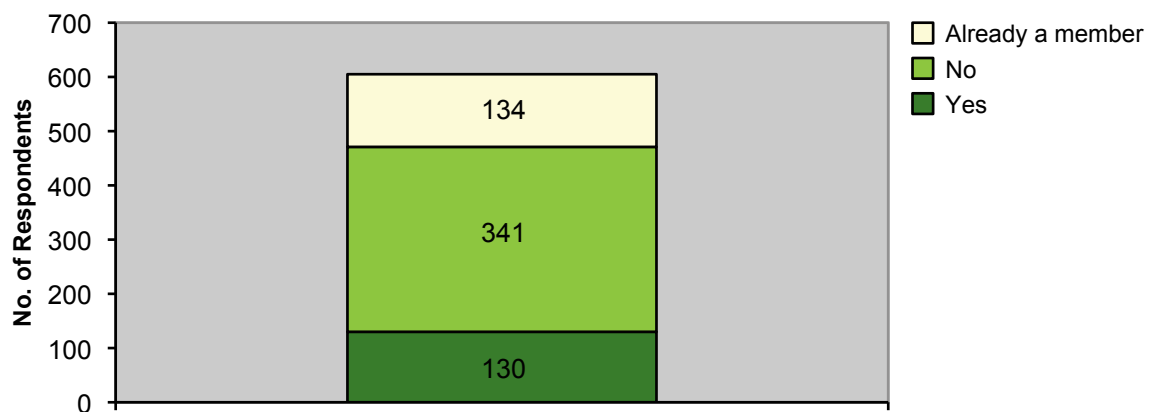
### Fear Of Crime



## Preferred Crime Prevention Methods

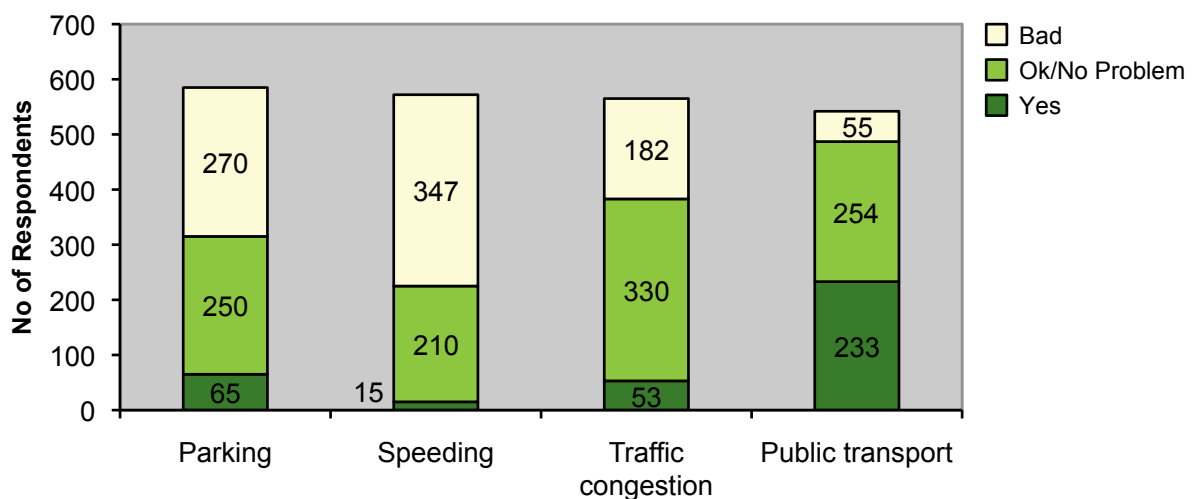


## Interested In Taking Part In A Neighbourhood Watch Type Scheme?

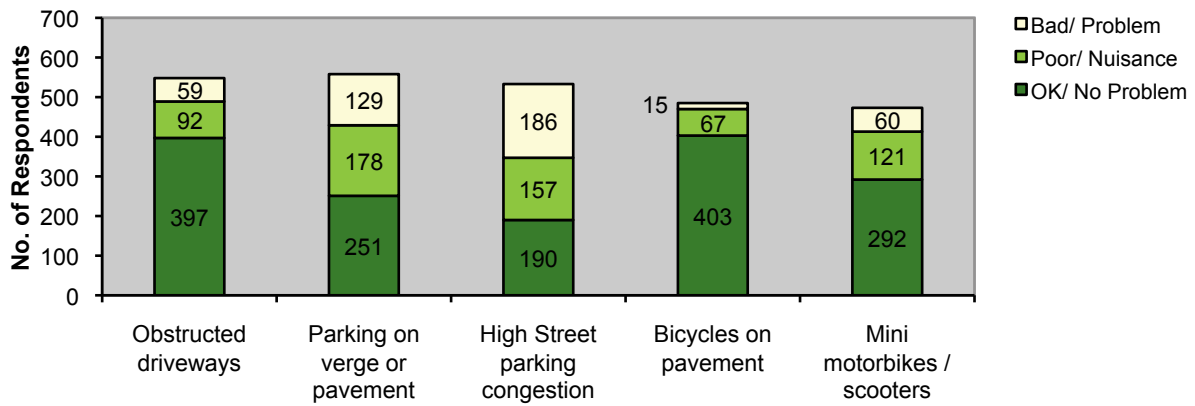


## Transport & Highways

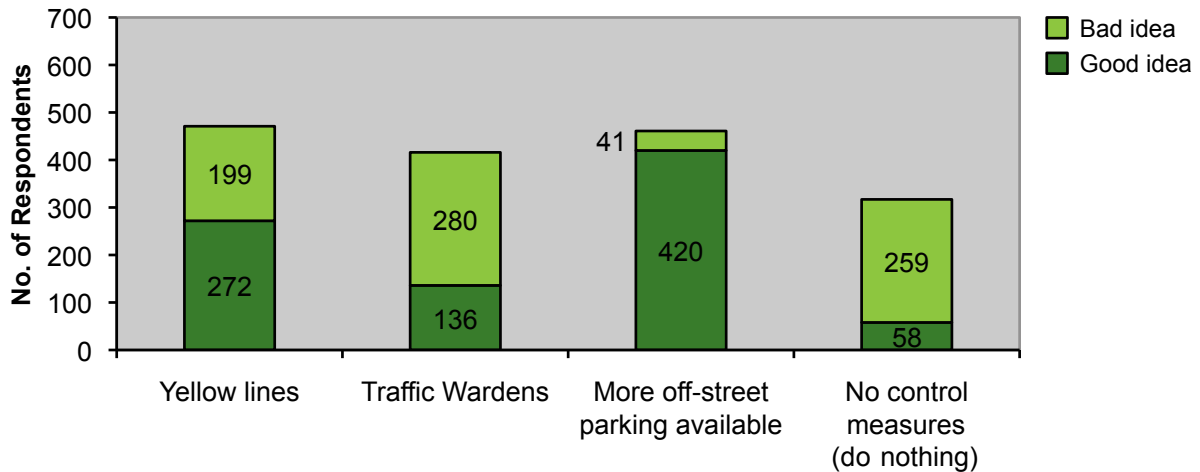
### Transport Issues - How people view them



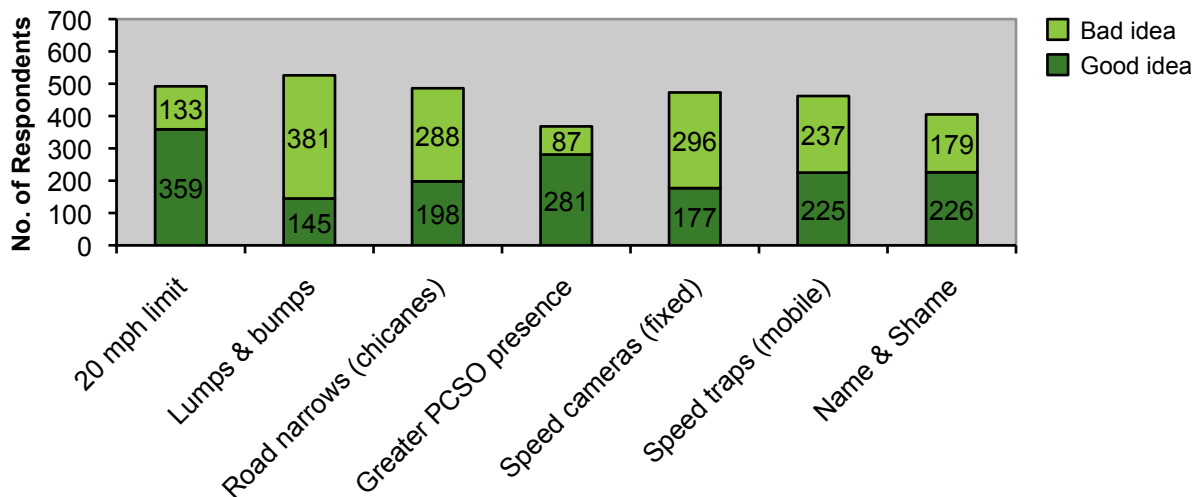
### Parking & Bikes - How people view them



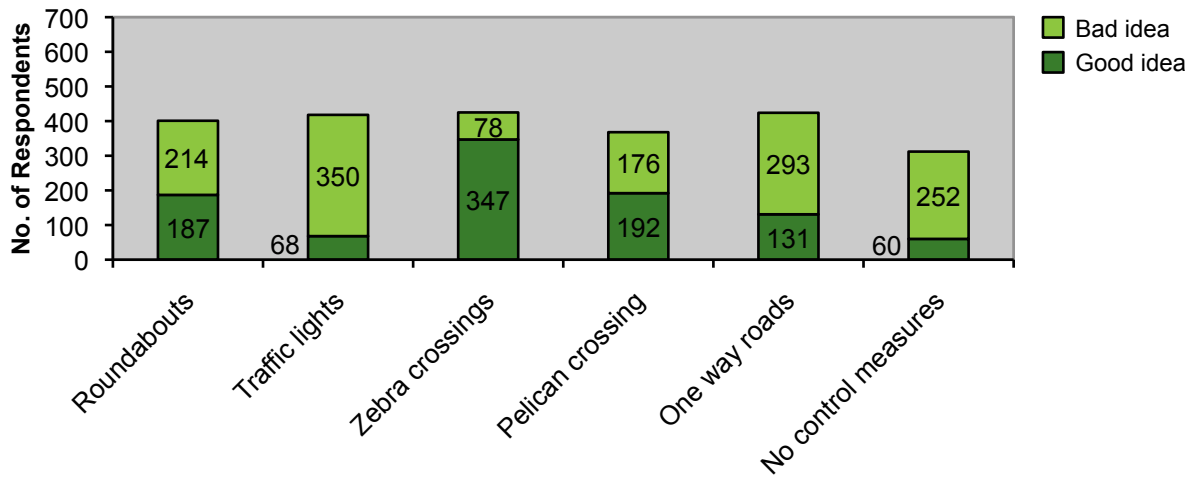
### Preferred Parking Control Methods



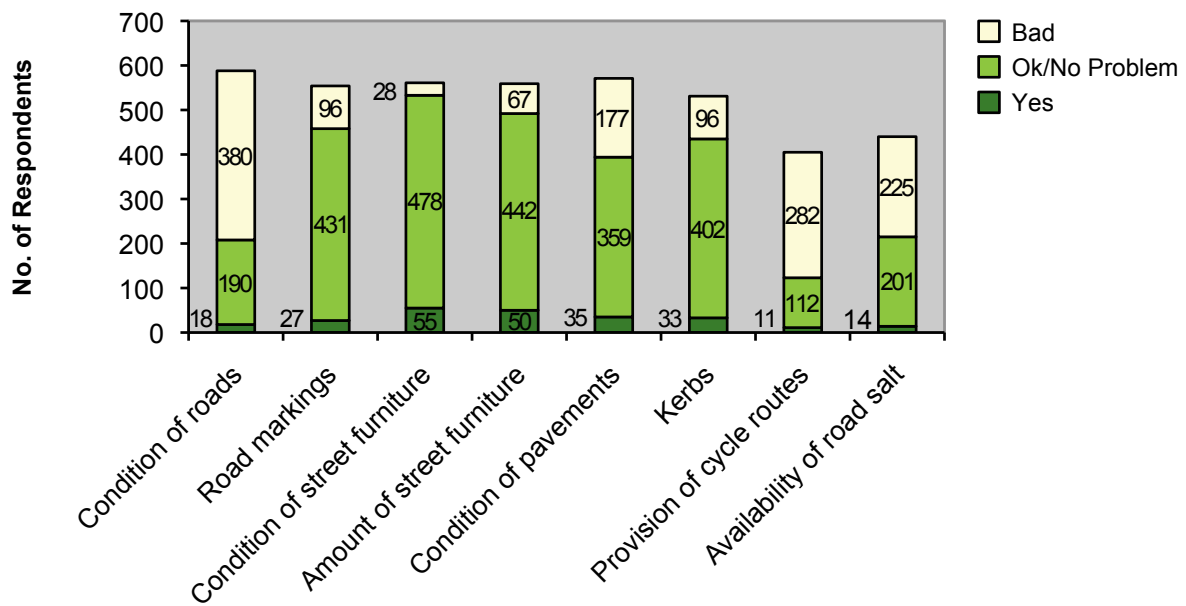
### Preferred Speeding Control Methods



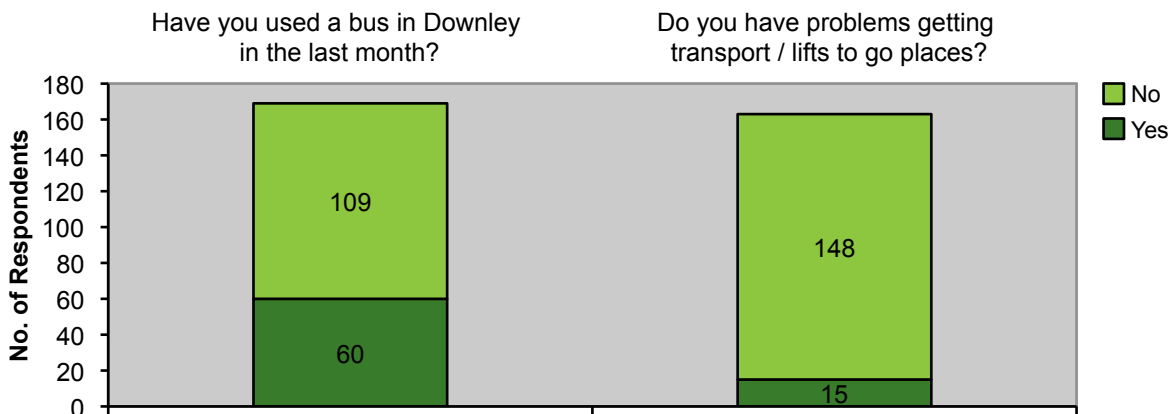
### Preferred Traffic Control Methods



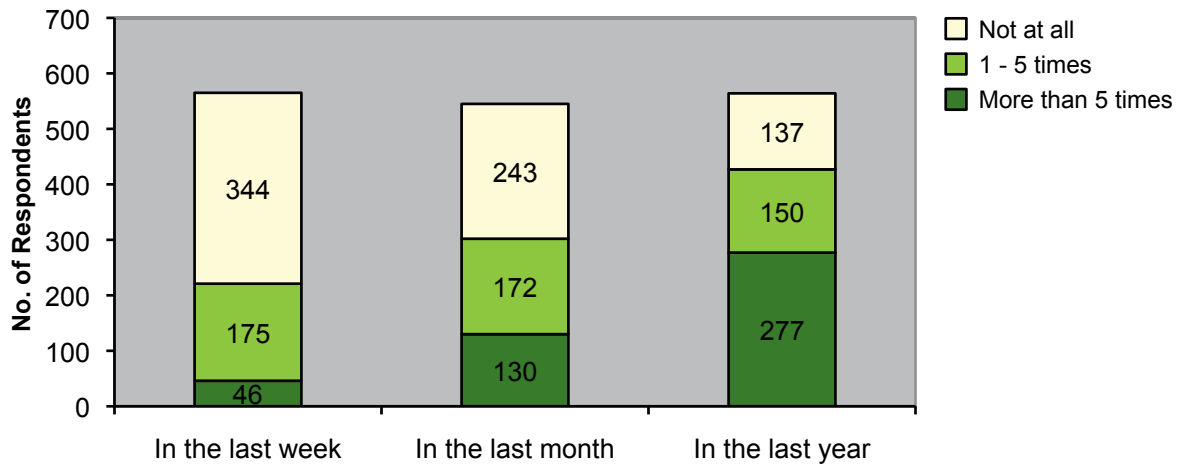
### Local Roads - How people view them



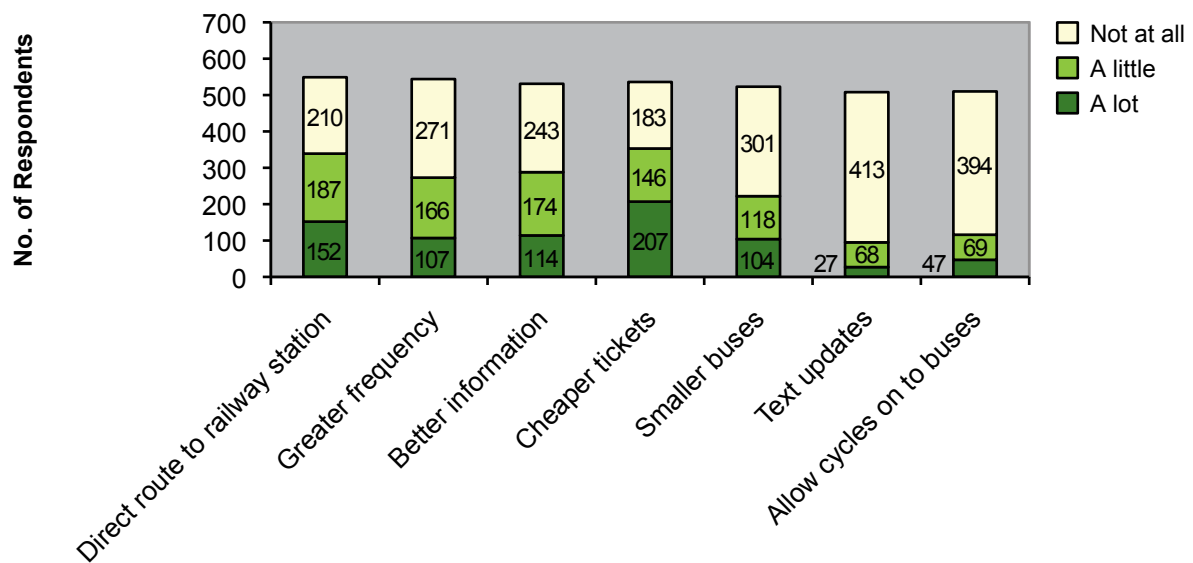
### Young Peoples Travel



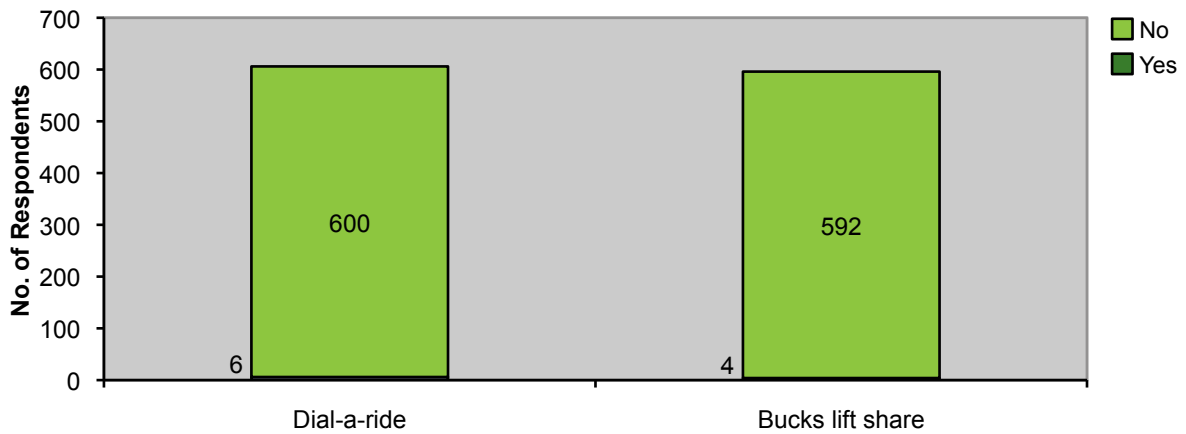
## Frequency Of Bus Use



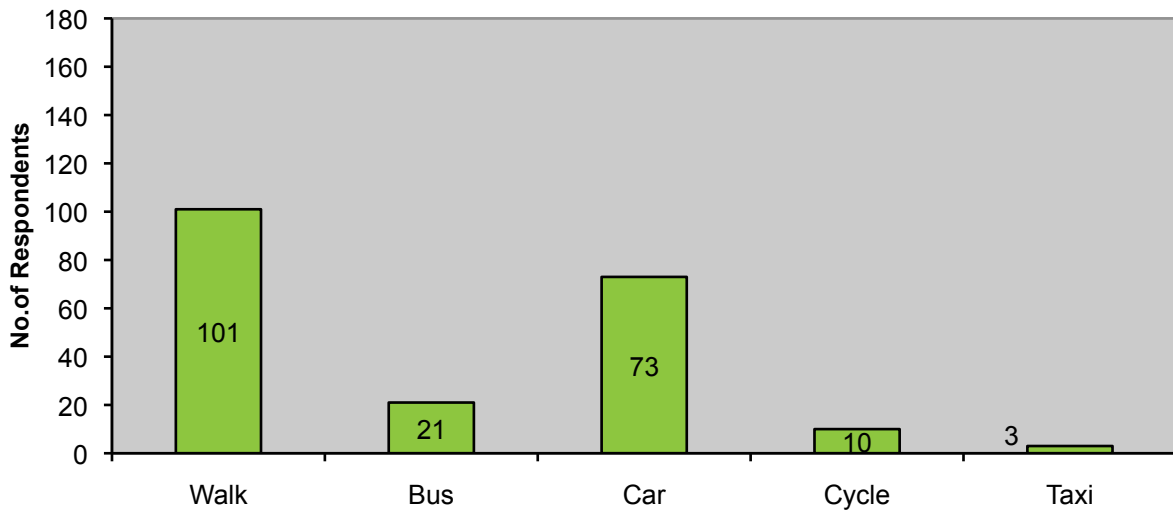
## Incentive To Use Buses - What would work



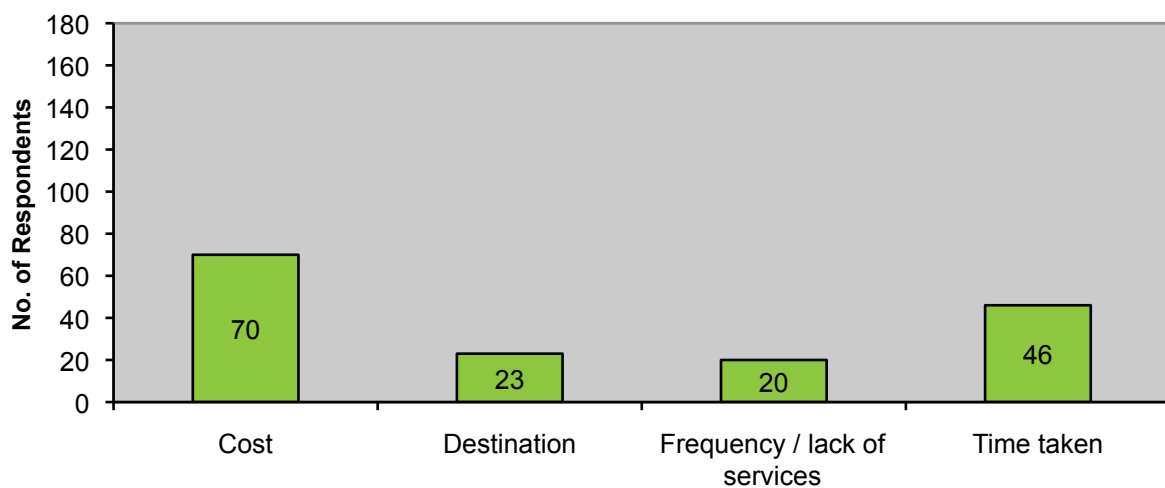
### Do You Use?



### Young Peoples Travel Methods

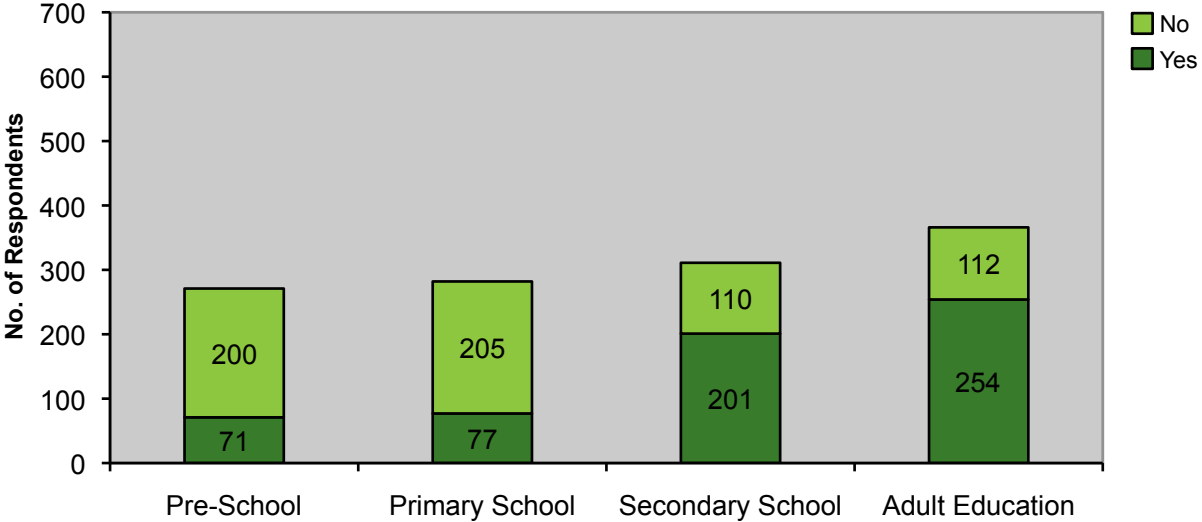


### Reason For Young People Not Taking The Bus

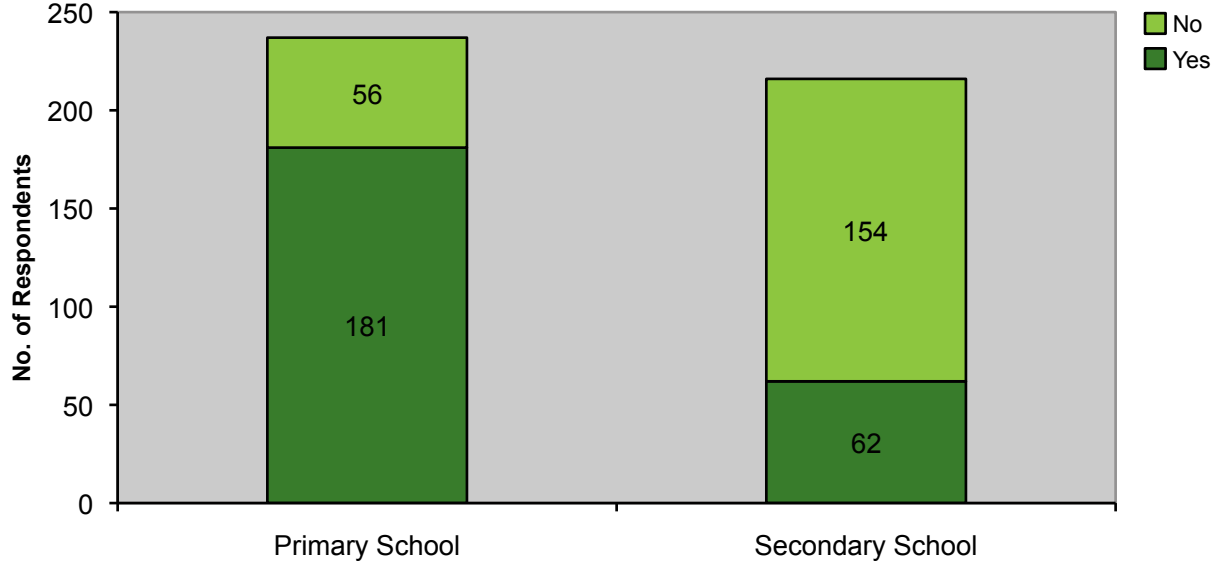


**Education**

Perceived Need For More Education Facilities



School Allocation Satisfaction



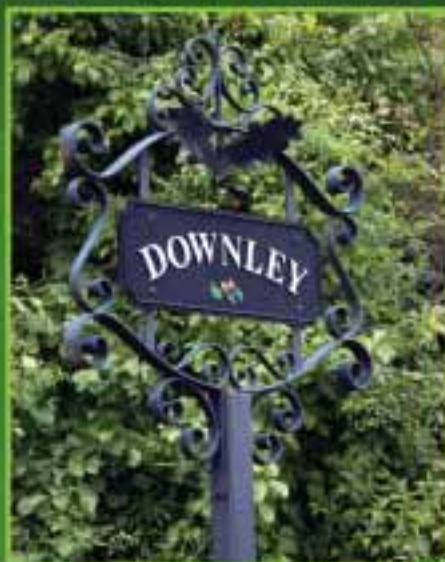
## Appendix 2: Downley Community Action Plan

Issue For Improvement Or Change	Priority	Recommendations Or Action	Approximate Timescale	Partners (*Lead) And Others
<b>Community Action Group</b>				
<b>Pharmacy</b>	High	Lobby Wycombe Primary Care Trust.	Complete	District Councillor*, Primary Care Trust (PCT)
		Contact Assura Pharmacy	Complete	Downley Parish Council* (DPC), Assura
		Follow sale of shop unit at Cross Court	3 months	DPC*, Assura
<b>Outdoor Sports</b>	High	Explore use of the Downley school's netball area for tennis courts	3 months	The Downley School* (TDS), Local Authority (LA)
		Explore Maplewood's tennis court area	3 months	Maplewood School*, LA
		Drain the football pitch at the Downley School	18 months	TDS*, WDC, Sport England
		Explore field next to school for use as a sports area	2 years	TDS*, LA
<b>Children's Playground</b>	High	Build a playground with swings and a roundabout for young children of Downley	Complete	Building Contractors, DPC
		Install simple seating within the playground area (eg a tree cut in half lengthways)	1 year	WDC*, DPC, DCPS
<b>BMX Park</b>	High	Investigate possible sites for a BMX/skate park	2 - 3 years	WDC*
		Explore funding sources	3 - 4 years	Sports Council*
<b>Allotments</b>	High	Investigate possible sites for additional allotments	2 - 3 years	WDC*, Hughenden Estate
		WDC to report on review of sites	3 months	WDC*
<b>Community Centre</b>	High	Investigate funding sources to improve the kitchen	6 months	Management Committee for Community Centre*, WDC
		Obtain planning approval from WDC for kitchen improvements	1 year	Management Committee for Community Centre*, WDC
<b>Village Communication</b>	High	Review village communications as a whole to explore potential for streamlining and improvement	3 months	DPC*, parish website rep, Community centre
		Install additional parish notice boards at Cross Court and the Community Centre (each one costs ~£500)	6 months	DPC Clerk*
		Approach Mole Run Residents Association (MRRA) to see if a notice board can be installed at the bottom of Plomer Hill	6 months	DPC Clerk*
		Set up a system for updating Village Information Pack (Welcome Pack)	1 year	DPC*
		Publicise contact details and hiring information for all community facilities	1 year	DPC*
		Investigate ways of using the Village News as a conduit to improve communications between village organisations (eg. Parish Council) and the residents of Downley	3 - 6 months	Village News Committee*, DPC
		Add RSS facility to Parish website, moderated comments from the public (suggestions/discussion board), community plan section	1 year	DPC*
		Explore other websites for parish councils	1 year	DPC*
		Put website management in budget in October for next April spend?	5 months	DPC*

Issue For Improvement Or Change	Priority	Recommendations Or Action	Approximate Timescale	Partners (*Lead) And Others
<b>Adult Education</b>	High	Perform additional surveys on Downley Day and in Village News to establish what courses are wanted	3 months	
		Lobby Bucks CC	1 year	DPC*, Bucks CC
		Find suitable premises	1 - 2 years	DPC*
<b>Doctor</b>	Medium	Investigate criteria for attracting a practice	2 - 3 years	DPC*, PCT
		Lobby Wycombe Primary Care Trust once pharmacy is arranged	2 - 3 years	PCT
<b>Swimming</b>	Medium	Work out a way to make Maplewood pool available to public	1 year	Maplewood, BCC LA
<b>Post Office Facilities</b>	Medium	Survey which local shops would be interested in offering post office facilities	6 months	Post Office Counters Ltd*
		Explore if there is a mobile post office / banking in Buckinghamshire	6 months	Post Office Counters Ltd*
<b>War Memorial Hall</b>	Medium	Investigate funding sources to construct a disabled entrance, improve the kitchen and install new toilets on ground floor	6 months	Committee of Trustees of War Memorial Hall*
<b>Youth Liaison</b>	Medium	Launch at Downley Day to find young people who are interested	3 months	
		Find out about youth initiatives	6 months	Downley Youth Club*, Bucks Community Action, Bucks CC
		Support the Downley/Disraeli youth initiative with time and money	Ongoing	Bucks CC*, WDC
		Invite/appoint/elect a young person onto the Community Plan task force	1 year	
<b>Police Liaison</b>	Medium	Approach TVP with results of survey and request action plan to improve response, patrols and presence	3 - 6 months	TVP*
		Publicise "Have you say" meetings in Village News and on website	3 - 6 months	TVP*
<b>Indoor Sports Hall</b>	Low	Find an expert on indoor sports facilities to see what sports can be done inside and what type of facilities are required (ceiling height, floor area?)	2 - 3 years	Sports Council*
		Investigate potential buildings, new sites	3 - 4 years	DPC*
<b>Environment Action Group</b>				
<b>Glass Collection / Recycling</b>	High	Approach WDC to implement a glass collection service?	1 year	DPC*, WDC
<b>Street Lighting</b>	High	Evaluate where additional/improved lighting. Possible locations: Basketball court behind St James St James Church Narrow Lane/Commonside junction School Close estate Gap in Plomer Green Lane Alley from Hillfield Close to Hithercroft Gosling Grove opposite pond	1 - 2 years	DPC Lighting Sub-committee*
		Review control of light switching to save parish money and allow us to see the stars at night	1 - 2 years	DPC Lighting Sub-committee*
<b>Dog Bins</b>	Medium	Raise awareness about dog fouling and improve education and enforcement on dog owners	6 months	DPC*
		Install additional bins near the Le De	1 - 2 years	DPC*
		Review possible locations for additional bins	1 - 2 years	DPC*

Issue For Improvement Or Change	Priority	Recommendations Or Action	Approximate Timescale	Partners (*Lead) And Others
<b>Litter Bins</b>	Medium	Improve publicity about bin emptying (among other services)	1 year	
		Review other possible locations	1 - 2 years	DPC*
		Install additional bin in the dells	2 years	DPC*
<b>Planning Communications</b>	Medium	Website? (West Wycombe site does this)		
		Link to WDC weekly report	3 months	DPC*
<b>Noise</b>	Medium	Conduct Village Respect / Awareness Campaign	2 years	
		Consider 20 mph speed restriction	1 - 2 years	DPC*
<b>Hedges Near Footpaths</b>	Low	Village Respect/Awareness campaign?	2 years	DPC Clerk
<b>Coffee Shop/ Restaurant</b>	Low	How can this be encouraged?	2 - 3 years	
		Explore local pubs to see if they could offer coffee mornings	2 -3 years	Pubs*
<b>Transport Action Group</b>				
<b>Bus Service</b>	High	Open discussions with Arriva about service reliability & comfort	6 months	Arriva*, DPC
		Request Arriva to develop improved routes to station, Marlow Hill and the Hospital	1 - 2 years	Arriva*, DPC
		Consider change of bus route 31 so that it goes via Brindley Avenue and stops at the shopping parade.(not via Brunel Road)	1 - 2 years	Arriva*, DPC
		Consider change to route 39 to go up Pheasant Drive and down Plomer Hill along Southfield Rd and then continue on its normal journey (this would enable residents at bottom of hill to get access to shops at Cross Court / Littleworth Rd)	1 - 2 years	Arriva*, DPC
		How can cost of tickets be reduced?	1 - 2 years	Arriva*, DPC
<b>Traffic Lights</b>	High	Re-phase traffic lights at the bottom of Plomer Hill to allow improved traffic flow and allow right turn up hill.	1 year	Bucks CC*
<b>Zebra Crossings</b>	High	Investigate the use / installation of zebra crossings in Downley	1 - 2 years	Bucks CC*
		Identify priority among list below and request Bucks CC to install crossing one or more of: Junction of Commonsie & Littleworth Road Top of Plomer Hill Kiln Pond Lane to High Street Littleworth Road by shops Plomer Green Avenue at Cross Court Grays Lane near school somewhere on Plomer Green Lane	1 - 2 years	Bucks CC*
<b>Pot Holes</b>	High	Lobby Bucks CC to improve road surfaces	6 months	Bucks CC*
<b>Salt Bins</b>	High	Need bins at: Pheasant Drive Plomer Hill Sunnycroft Westover Road Grays Lane The Common by Downley Lodge	6 months - 1 year	DPC*

Issue For Improvement Or Change	Priority	Recommendations Or Action	Approximate Timescale	Partners (*Lead) And Others
<b>Speeding Traffic</b>	Medium	Evaluate different means of reducing speeding traffic.	1 - 2 years	
		Request WDC to impose 20mph limit in selected areas to be identified.	2 - 3 years	WDC*
		Support Police speed reduction operations	2 - 3 years	Thames Valley Police*
		Request Bucks CC to install speed activated signs. Or we could buy (£6,000) / hire (£100/week)	2 - 3 years	Bucks CC*
<b>Parking</b>	Medium	Meet with Parking Service Strategy Manager on Downley Day	3 months	Parking Service Strategy Manager*
		Explore areas where more parking is needed / can be provided (e.g. Lay-bys at Pheasant Drive & Plomer Green Avenue)	1 - 2 years	Parking Service Strategy Manager*, Bucks CC
		Organise limited parking for shoppers on the Bricklayers Arms forecourt.	1 year	DPC*
		Single side road parking only.	2 - 3 years	Bucks CC*
		Encourage Police operations against problem parking	2 - 3 years	DPC*, TVP
		Consider use of double yellow lines at dangerous road junctions and where roads narrow	3 - 4 years	DPC*, Bucks CC
<b>Roundabout</b>	Low	Request Bucks CC to create roundabout at Downley Donkey junction	3 - 4 years	Bucks CC*
<b>Cycle routes</b>	Low	Explore Chiltern Common's initiative	1 year	Chiltern Commons Network*
		Identify organisations / support for promotion / funding of cycling	2 - 3 years	Sustrans*
		Investigate where routes can be created or upgraded.	2 - 3 years	Sustrans*
		Develop cycling routes for mountain bikers	3 - 4 years	Sustrans*, DPC
		Develop extension to Kiln Pond Lane as cycle route	3 - 5 years	DPC*
<b>Walk to school</b>	Low	Support SRS group at school	Ongoing	SRS TDS*, Bucks CC



Prepared By  
Downley Community Plan Steering Group  
for Downley Parish Council, with the support  
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