

Fringford Village Plan

November 2024





Fringford Village Plan – November 2024

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Abbreviations

CLP	Community Led Plan	VHC	Village Hall Committee
FVP	Fringford Village Plan	MPH	Miles Per Hour
PC	Parish Council	HS2	High Speed 2
CDC	Cherwell District Council	LP2040	Local Plan 2040
ROSPA	The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents	RDB 1	Red Data Book 1
ONS	Office for National Statistics		

Introduction and background

The purpose of a Community Led Plan (CLP) or Village Plan is to present a collective voice, keep our community vibrant and viable, and protect our rural identity. A Village Plan is a good way for local people to influence the planning and development of the area in which they live and work, through realistic and achievable goals. No one cares about our village more than the residents who live here. Having a Village Plan will ensure our requirements on the things that matter for our village are considered when any future development takes place.

In January 2016, the Fringford Village community came together to produce Fringford Village Plan (FVP) – January 2016. The plan included clear objectives for the village, showcased aspects of the community which were recognised as important, and highlighted areas in need of improvement.

In 2024 Fringford Parish Council (PC) has undertaken a review of the plan to ensure that it is kept relevant, representative, and inclusive. In collaboration with independent researchers from Research Oxford, we gathered feedback from the Fringford residents, allowing us to gain better insight into the needs and wants of our community.

This Village Plan sets out the collective outcomes of the consultation, and outlines some future plans and ideas to improve our community. The execution of this plan, which aims to reflect the views of the whole community, can only happen through collaboration and active support from our residents.



'You said, we did' - update on Fringford Village Plan 2016

Area of focus	Action taken
Tackle speeding through the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 mile per hour speed limit introduced • Electronic visual speed awareness signs at the entrances to the village installed • Village gates ordered for Fringford Road and Stratton Audley Road
Improve the Village Green and surrounding area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved the verges • Improved parking areas • Tidied up the pond area, planted wildflowers and bulbs. Put up nest boxes • Improved children's play area as recommended in the ROSPA safety audit actions • Cut back low boughs on the trees and pollarded willow trees • Renovated the old stone wall, including a memorial plaque for Queen Elizabeth II, and re-seeded the verge • Erected an iconic village sign positioned on The Green
Better environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of trees with landowners • Active volunteer litter picking group • Three new dog waste bins installed

'You said, we did' - update on Fringford Village Plan 2016

Area of focus	Action taken
Village Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Village Hall Committee to manage the use of the excellent facilities to maximise the income and ensure the hall is well used and maintained for the benefit of our residents • Improved the car park with a temporary surface • Replaced part of the Village Hall roof
Social events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Autumn/Spring Fayres • Continued Beer Festival • Church monthly coffee mornings • Bi-annual open gardens 2-day event • Ad-hoc events • Volunteers created the Candleford Drop Inn pop-up pub to cover when the pub is closed • Village Sewcial • Looking at ways to support the future of the Butcher's Arms pub

'You said, we did' - update on Fringford Village Plan 2016

Area of focus	Action taken
Avoid large scale housing developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully objected to 10 house developments proposed for Fringford Cottage site on Main Street • Successfully objected to 10 house developments proposed for land off Crow Lane site (known as land adjacent to The Cottage) • Provided feedback to ensure that Fringford is re-categorised as a smaller village in Cherwell District Council (CDC) housing strategy
Better communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered project to upgrade to fiber-optic broadband • Continued to support The Village Voice bi-monthly newsletter • Continued to support the village mutual support Whatsapp group
Improve neighbourly care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer group Fringford Friends set up and successfully operated to assist residents during times of need

The Fringford Village Plan 2024 - Vision and Objectives

The small rural village of Fringford boasts a friendly and supportive community, access to the idyllic Oxfordshire countryside and is seen as an all-round great place to live. Amenities that are enjoyed in the village include footpaths and bridleways, cricket pitch and club, playground, a restored Village Hall, a church, and a pub.

The vision and objectives of the Fringford Village Plan 2024 were to identify the areas and aspects of life in Fringford that are important to its residents, guiding the work of the Parish Council to ensure its activities were informed and relevant to the local community. Aspects that were identified as important included:

- Retaining and enhancing the distinct rural “small village” character of Fringford and its surrounding landscapes (such as the stone walls, grass verges, footpath network, village green, rural building types, and open spaces)
- Maintaining and enhancing the quiet, safe, and friendly character of the village by promoting a good sense of community
- Providing and maintaining community and recreation facilities that meet the requirements of the population including the footpath network, the cricket pitch and pavilion, the Village Hall, and the Village Green
- Supporting local facilities and economic activity such as the Butcher’s Arms pub, the school, preschool playgroup, and Church.

Consultation

The Parish Council worked with independent researchers from Research Oxford to carry out a consultation with the residents of Fringford. Fringford Village Plan 2024 resident survey, consisting of a mix of open-end and multiple-choice questions, collected feedback from our community over a period of 3 weeks, between March and April 2024. The main method of collection was via an online form, which was further supported by paper copies, which were available for collection and drop off at the Village Hall and the Church. Based on the figures from the 2021 ONS Census, there was a 21% response rate, with 1 in 5 residents providing their feedback.

Fringford Village Plan 2024 Resident Survey



Questions were drawn up to cover topics which were raised in the Fringford Village Plan - January 2016 and those that emerged from further conversations with the members of the Parish Council.

When compared to the most recent ONS Census (2021), there was a good representation of the local community across most of the demographic groups. It's important to note that groups from two demographics were underrepresented in the survey responses: people aged 0 to 35 and people living in households which had either 1 person or 3 people.

Following the initial survey collection, a targeted approach was used to recruit more people who fell into the under-represented groups.

122

**Fringford residents
took part in the survey**

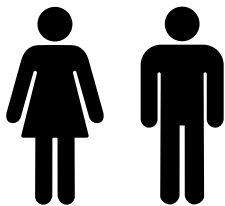
Demographics of Fringford - ONS Census 2021



590 people living Fringford



260 households in Fringford

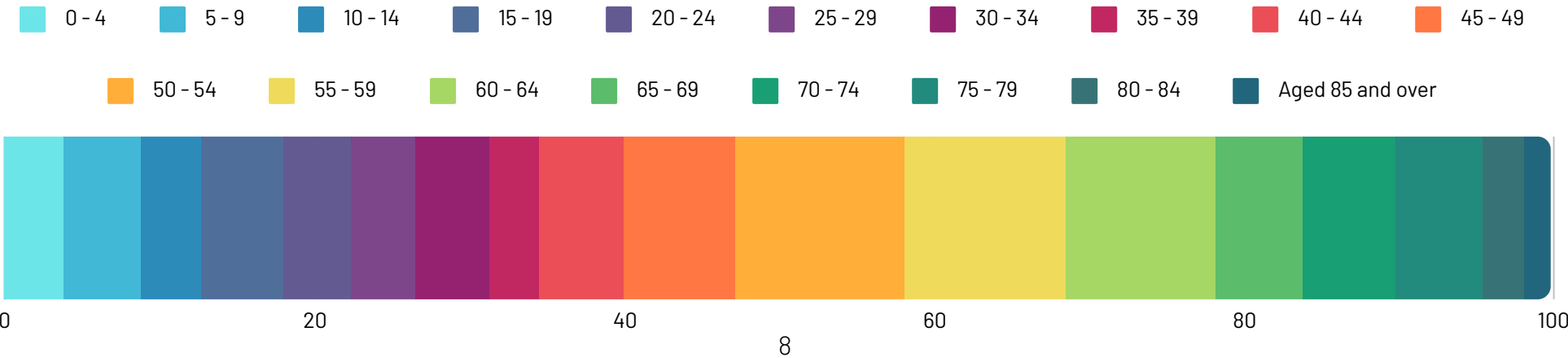


50.3% of residents identified as **female**, while **49.7%** identified as **male**

- 58% of Fringford’s households are not deprived in any dimension (England - 48.4%)
- Over 95% of residents identify as White
- The most common religion is Christianity (54%)
- 84% of residents reported being in very good or good health
- 14% of residents are disabled under the Equality Act
- 63% of residents over the age of 16 are economically active (60% in employment, 3% unemployed)
- 46% of residents over the age of 16 and in employment work mainly at or from home, while 43% use a car or van to travel to the workplace

Number of people in a household	% Fringford	% England
1 person	22.7	30.1
2 people	45.3	34
3 people	16	16
4 people or more	16	19.9

Age breakdown of Fringford’s residents



The status quo – or ‘what we do not wish to change’



The aim of the Fringford Village Plan is to not only identify areas which we would like to see improved, but to highlight the aspects of our lives in Fringford which we love and do not want to see changed.

Similarly to the 2016 edition of the plan, recent consultation showed that residents still enjoy living in a quiet, rural environment, with close proximity to open countryside. Our community is seen as safe and friendly, with people coming together to support each other in times of need.

Community events, such as Fayres and Festivals are well received by the residents and present an opportunity to get more involved in village life. There are also a number of clubs and societies available for villagers to join.

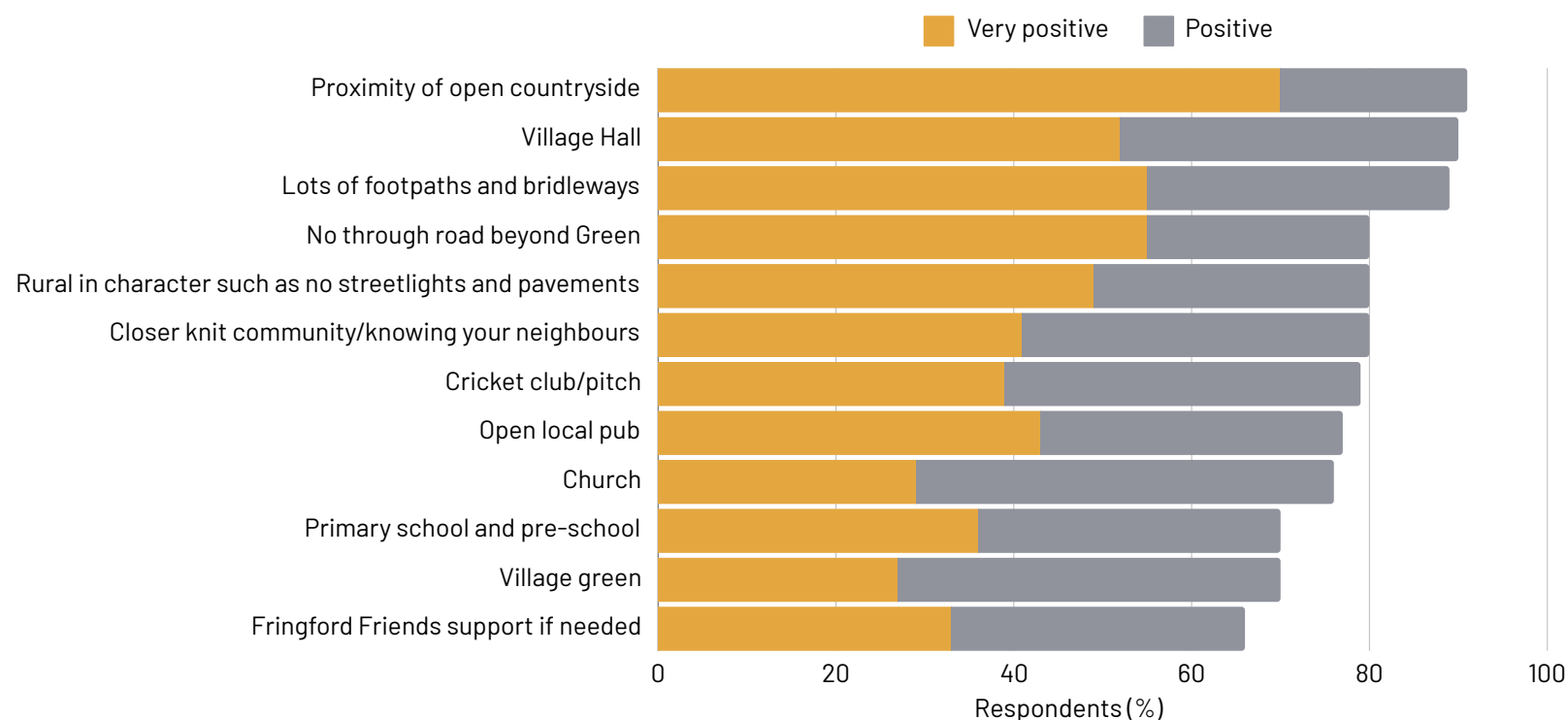
Residents of Fringford appreciate the unique character of the village and are passionate about preserving it. This includes retaining its ‘smaller village’ status and limiting the amount of new housing developments being approved. For any new housing, villagers identified the need to ‘keep in’ with the surroundings and have minimal impact on the green spaces, neighbours, and traffic.

Transport needs of residents did not seem to have changed since 2016, with a great majority still relying on private cars as their main mode of transport. Similarly to the previous plan, access to private transport is seen as a fact of life for rural communities. With the increase in home-working, there might be fewer people who regularly travel for work.

The Parish Council hope that the measures put in place since the previous consultation, such as the 20 mph speed limit, the Village Green improvements, the work on the pond area, and the public parking, will help improve life for everyone in the village. However, it is clear that there are still some issues with parking and speeding and the situation will need continual monitoring.

What you said about Fringford - character, situation, and amenities

How do you feel about the following aspects of living in Fringford?



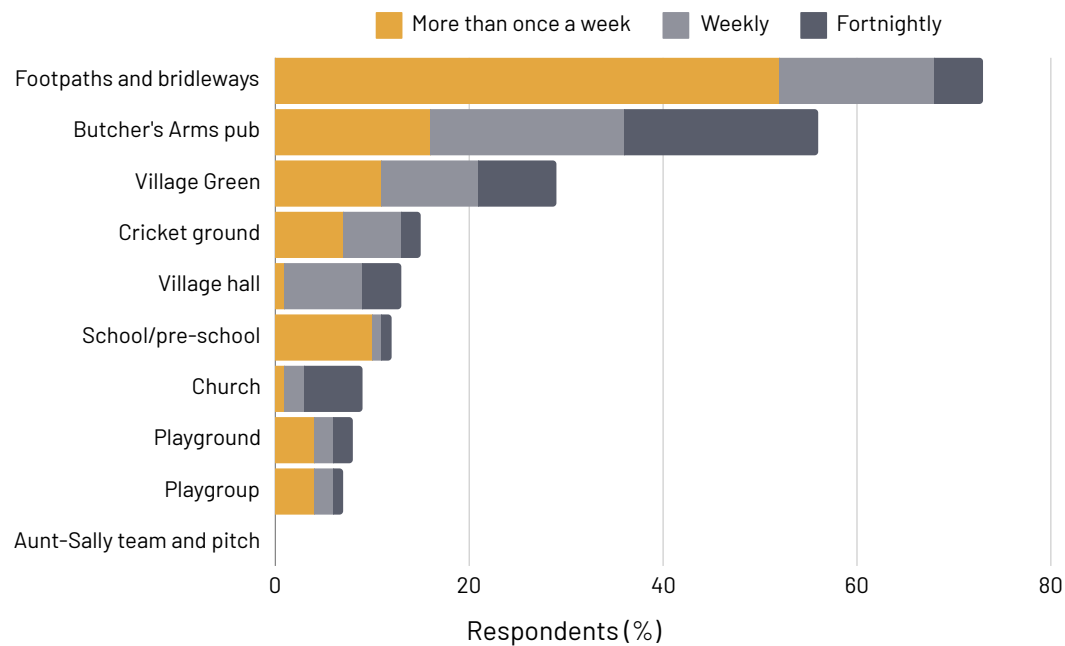
All amenities were thought of positively by the majority of respondents. The three most positively thought of amenities were Proximity to open countryside, 92% (112), Village Hall, 90% (110), and lots of footpaths and bridleways, 89% (108).

Just under a third of respondents made additional comments in this section. The sense of community in Fringford, peace and quiet in the village, and proximity to larger towns such as Bicester all came out very strongly as positive things about Fringford. Although a couple of responses did indicate that the sense of community had lessened in the past few years.

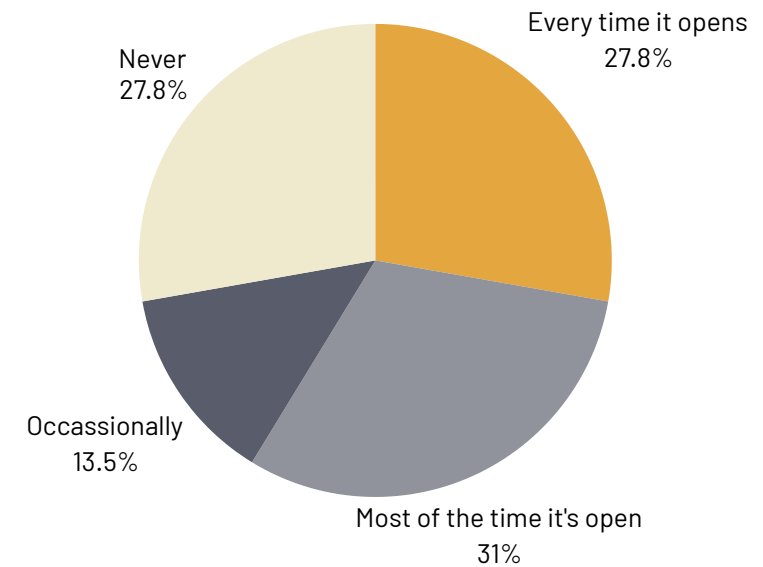
The state of the Village Green verges is seen as a problem, along with parking both on the Green and occasionally in St Michael's Close.

What you said about Fringford - character, situation, and amenities

How often do you use the following amenities?



**How often do you use the pop-up pub?
(% respondents)**



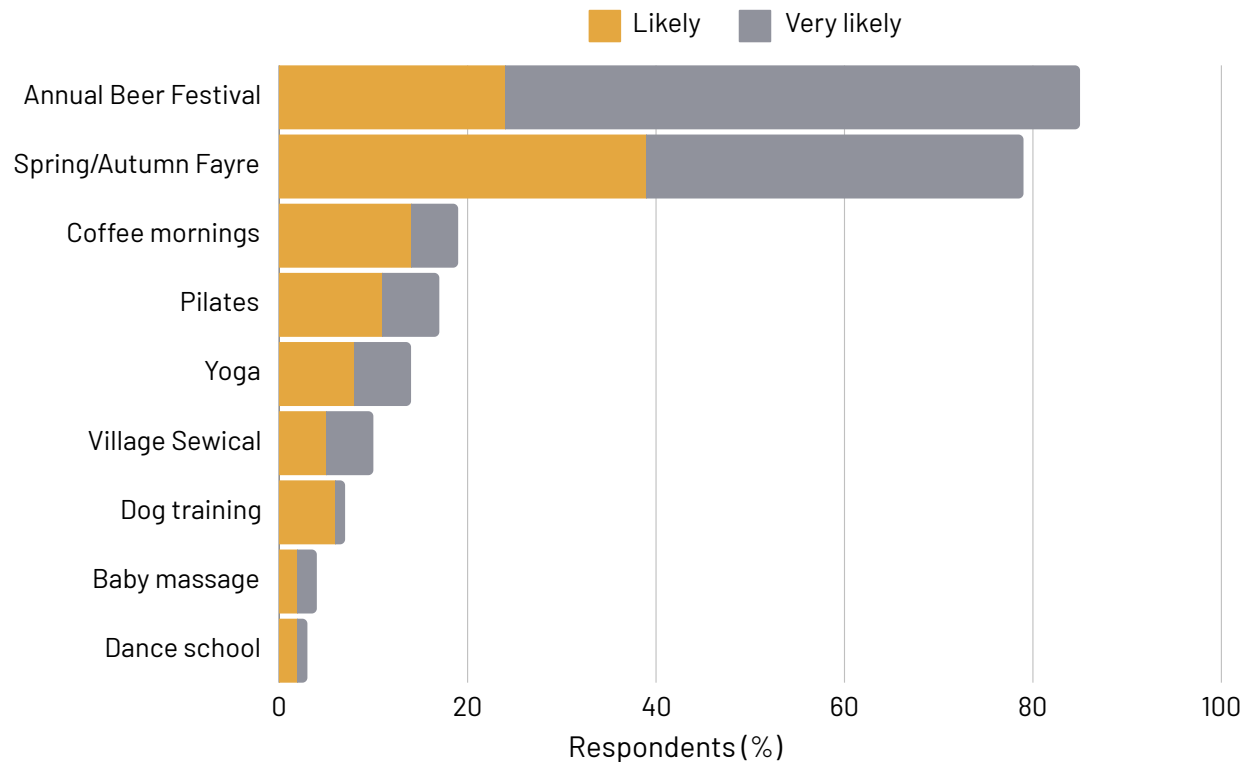
All amenities were used to some extent. Footpaths and bridleways were used very frequently, while some amenities (such as the Aunt Sally team and pitch) were only used occasionally, possibly due to their use being seasonal and some players live outside the village.

Respondents reported that generally they would use the Butcher's Arms pub frequently when it is open for food and drink on a regular basis. 93% (113) of respondents would use it at least occasionally, with 36% (45) of respondents using it weekly or more than once per week.

The pop-up pub was also very popular with nearly two thirds of respondents using it at least occasionally, and over half using it regularly when it was open.

What you said about Fringford - groups, clubs, and social activities

How likely are you to take part in the ongoing social events?



Larger, annual events are very popular in Fringford, with 85% (104) of respondents likely or very likely to attend the Annual Beer Festival and 80% (97) to attend the Spring/Autumn Fayre. Coffee mornings and Pilates classes were also popular with nearly 1 in 5 respondents likely to attend them. Yoga was also popular, with several calls for evening Yoga and Pilates sessions suggesting more people would like to attend if they were held outside of regular working hours.

Approximately 10% of respondents suggested new activities, with two calls for bingo and other suggestions including a village carpark market, a family quiz night, a walking club, and a choir.



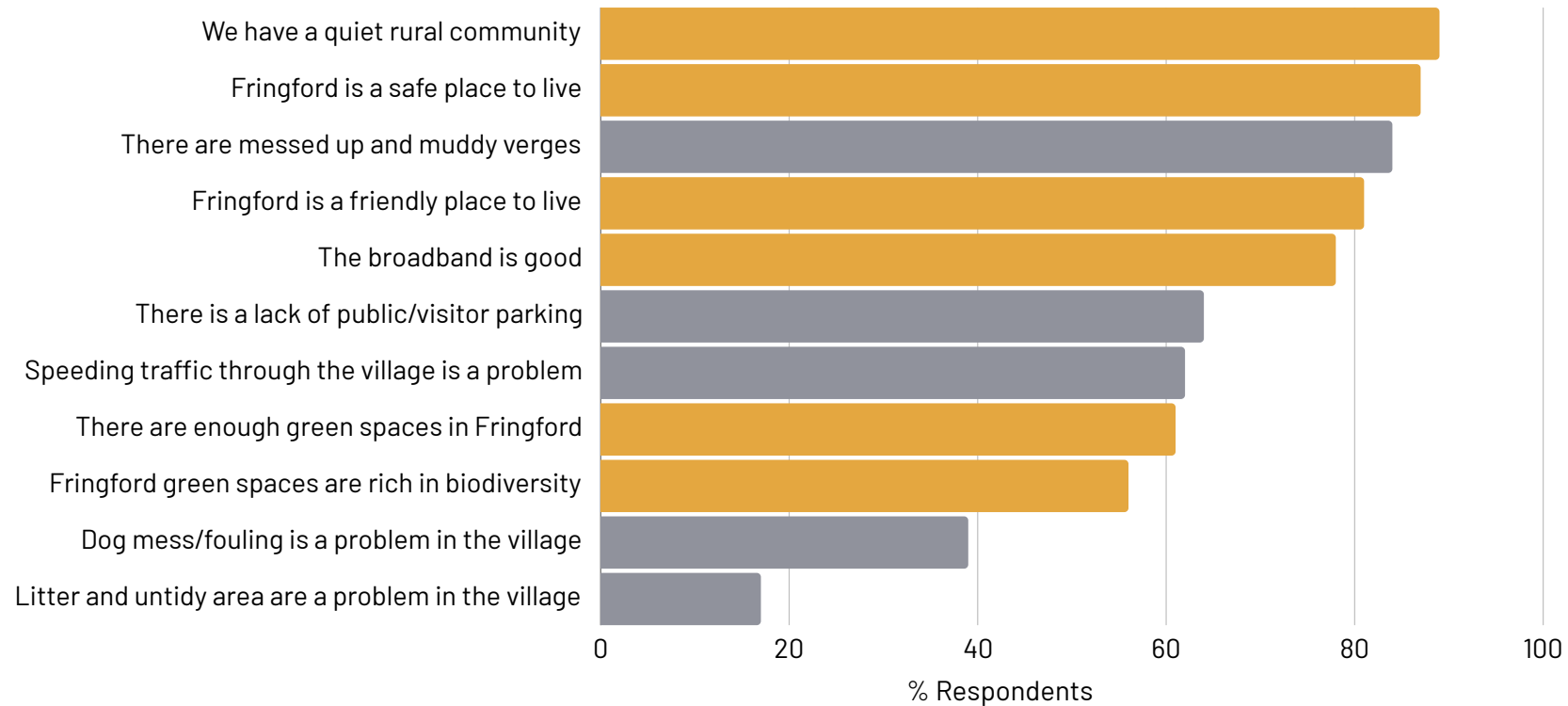
Future actions:

In relation to the findings regarding groups, clubs, and social activities, the following plans are to be actioned:

- PC and VHC will work to facilitate more events, particularly larger annual events but also more regular smaller events
- The PC and VHC will ask for volunteers to establish a social committee to arrange more events in Fringford
- The PC will look for opportunities to bring the village together, such as the unveiling of the new village sign or the Christmas tree lighting

What you said about Fringford - Views of Fringford

How do you feel about the following statements?



Residents of Fringford value its rural nature, the footpath network, and open space around the village. The village is seen as a friendly, quiet, and safe place to live with the majority of respondents, 80% (98), reporting that the rural nature of the village (such as no streetlights and pavements) is positive.

This local landscape is vital not only for its visual beauty, amenity value to residents, and natural character, but also for its contribution to the local economy, particularly the continued economic viability of the Butcher's Arms. The improved visitor parking, the frequent cricket matches, and the local footpaths should attract visitors to Fringford. The planning process has an important role in ensuring that the natural environment is maintained and enhanced.

Recent improvements

Efforts have been made to maintain and enhance the amenities around Fringford:

- Using money provided by HS2 grants, the pond area near the village hall has been renovated in an environmentally sympathetic way
- Using money provided by HS2 grants, additional village parking has been created
- Using money provided by HS2 grants, the verges of the village green have been repaired and protected from further damage
- The PC financially supported the village hall by helping with the roof repairs
- Fringford now has a 20 mph speed limit and two speed warning devices.



Future plans to protect what we value

The existing and valued natural landscape in Fringford and its surrounds will be protected through:

- Consideration of the impact of development proposals requiring planning permission on sites and features that are locally important to the rural environment in Fringford including: street view, views from local footpaths, trees, hedges and woodland, ponds, and equestrian and agricultural land.
- PC objection to any development proposals that would negatively impact on the open countryside in and around Fringford and threaten its rural nature
- The PC carefully considering the impact of any development proposals to ensure that it contributes positively to the historic character and rural nature of the village, with particular regard to listed buildings and their settings
- The PC discussing with residents in St Michael's Close what causes the occasional parking issues.

The footpaths, Village Hall, pub, and other local amenities will be protected through:

- The PC continuing to maximise the use of the Village Hall by working with the Village Hall Committee to develop and extend its use, and to put on events to increase and maintain the sense of community in Fringford whilst maintaining its generally quiet and peaceful nature
- The PC continuing to work with landowners and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the footpath network around Fringford is well maintained
- The PC continuing to support all active community and interest groups in Fringford, and continue to support the church, school, preschool, pub, and cricket club.

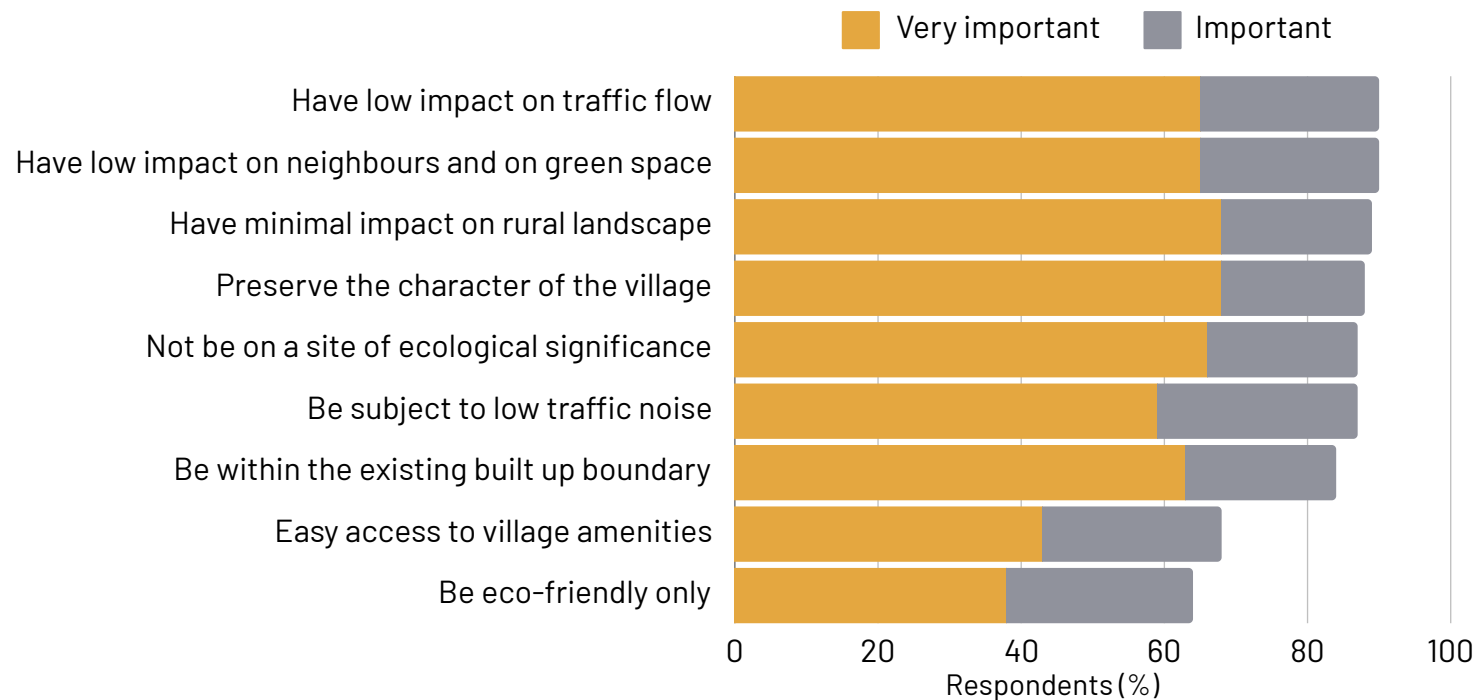
What you said about Fringford - New housing

Smaller village status was very important to most responders, scoring an average of 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 was unimportant and 5 was very important). Therefore it is important that any future development preserves Fringford's character as a smaller village.

Two thirds of respondents said that Fringford did not need more housing, a fifth said that it did, and 13% were undecided. The Parish Council will object to any development proposals that would negatively impact on the rural nature of the village or the surrounding countryside.

Considerations for new housing

How important should the following criteria be when assessing any new house building proposals for Fringford?

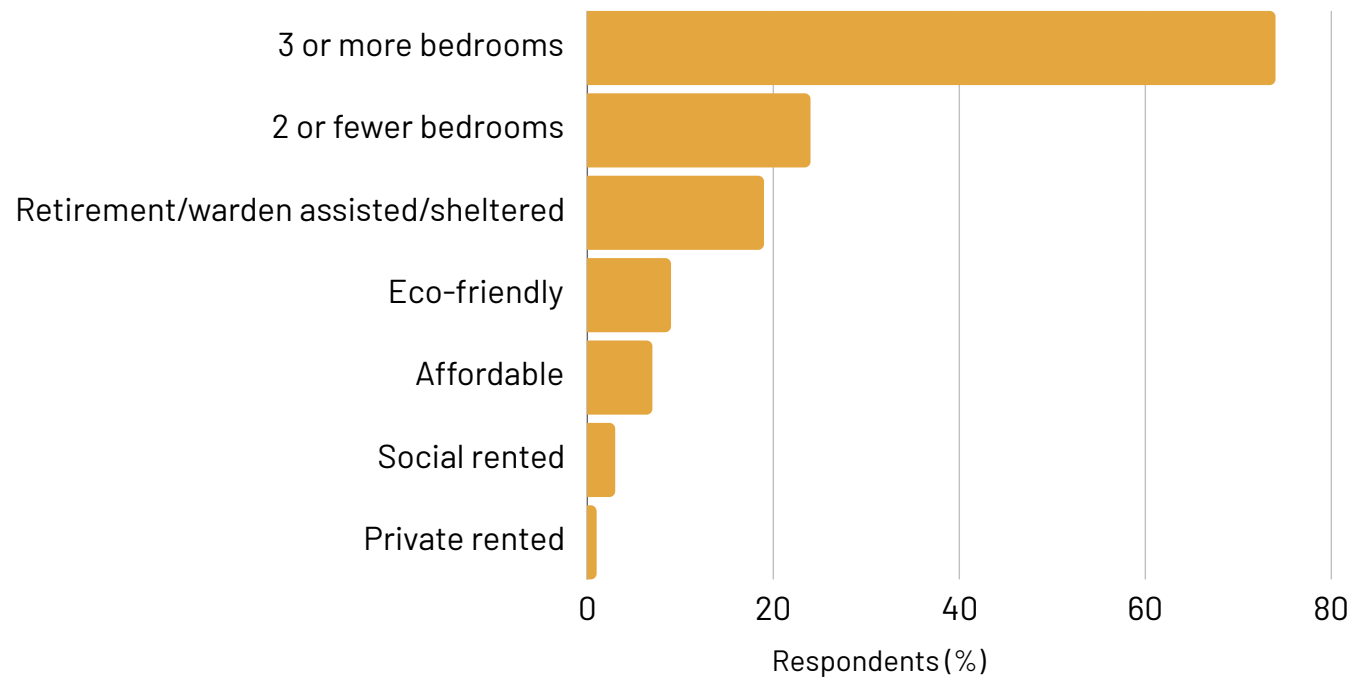


The majority of respondents believed that all of the above considerations were important when new housing was being proposed, having minimal impact on the rural landscape, traffic flow, and on neighbours and green space were most frequently considered to be important (89% (109) of respondents each).

What you said about Fringford - Moving within Fringford

113 respondents gave suggestions about housing required if they were to move within Fringford. Several people listed more than one housing type (for example, some people would consider retirement houses with 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms and so fall into several of the categories below).

If you were to move within Fringford in the next five years, which type of housing would you like to move into?



3 or more bedroom houses were seen as the housing that would be considered by the vast majority of respondents (74% (84)) if they were to move within Fringford in the next 5 years.

Future housing development – Important note

Fringford is classed as a small village in the draft LP2040 Cherwell Local Plan. There is insufficient, regular public transport to support commuting to Bicester for employment or educational purposes and there are no local shops or services. Therefore, it is deemed unsuitable for larger scale development and only suitable for in-fill proposals to be considered.

Whilst there are plenty of footpaths around Fringford, these footpaths do not join Fringford to Bicester. No safe walking or cycling routes exist to Bicester and it is not possible to commute into Bicester via green, sustainable transport routes. The definition of small village means that there are no shops and services that can be reached via safe, green, and sustainable travel options from Fringford.

Fringford Parish Council advocates that any planning applications for consideration in smaller villages should be looked at on a case-by-case basis to ensure that future development is about the right properties in the right places and not about arbitrary allocations being made on a numbers basis by Cherwell District Council. Fringford Parish Council believes that brownfield land should be identified and assessed for potential development before greenfield sites as brownfield land is more likely to be in sustainable locations with shops, services, and public transport.

Fringford Parish Council strongly supports Cherwell District Council's rural areas strategy that states it will "protect the character, appearance, heritage and identity of our villages." In line with the views of the vast majority of our residents, Fringford should have its

character, appearance, heritage and identity as a small, quiet, rural village protected.

Fringford Parish Council does not support an allocation of the district's housing supply that:

- 1) is outside the built-up limit of the village
- 2) would negatively impact on the rural in character nature of the village street scene and listed buildings
- 3) would negatively impact on the surrounding open countryside.

Fringford is an historic village, and this is reflected in parts of the village street scenes and its rural in character nature.

The village has had four in-fill new build properties, and a further 4-bedroom property has planning permission on a site on the corner of Farriers Close and Rectory Lane. A development of six houses has planning permission and is underway on land adjacent to Wise Crescent. As a result, the opportunities for any future in-fill planning applications are few because of the nature of the existing built environment and where spaces occur for a gap or a gateway to a field, for example, this does not mean it should be filled with houses. Gaps in the built environment are a key part of the village's historic street scene and rural in character nature.

To be considered for support by Fringford Parish Council, any future planning proposals for in-fill should look to satisfy the need for in-character design, meet the needs of our community, in locations that would not have a negative impact on listed buildings and the historic street scenes, as we wish to enhance the environmental and heritage assets.

Fringford Village profile

Within the draft LP2040 Cherwell Local Plan it states that two sites LPR-A-078 Land at Hall Farm and LPR-A-171 Land to the west of Fringford are “promoted” for use for housing. Fringford Parish Council does not support planning applications on either of these sites and has requested that they are removed from the subsequent versions of the draft local plan;

LPR-A-078 Land at Hall Farm is an agricultural field backing on to open countryside and adjacent to two Grade II listed buildings, namely Hall Farm and The Forge. The frontage of this field and opening on to Main Street forms a key part of the village’s historic street scene and rural in character nature. It would detrimentally impact on the character and appearance of the area and would be out of keeping with the established built form of Fringford.

This village profile states, “the listed buildings {in the village} are considered to be sensitivity in contributing towards the historic character of the village.” In addition, the profile also shows there are no services except for a part-time pub, a primary school, and a part-time bus service.

LPR-A-171 Land to the west of Fringford is in the open countryside and beyond the built-up limits of the village. This same piece of land has already had two planning applications for 10 houses refused by Cherwell District Council in September 2022 (21/02553/OUT) Land adjoining The Cottage, The Green, Fringford and September 2024 (24/00899/OUT) “because they would detrimentally impact on the character and appearance of the area and would be out of keeping with the established built form of Fringford.”

Cherwell Local Plan 2040



Fringford Village profile

Development will be supported where it:

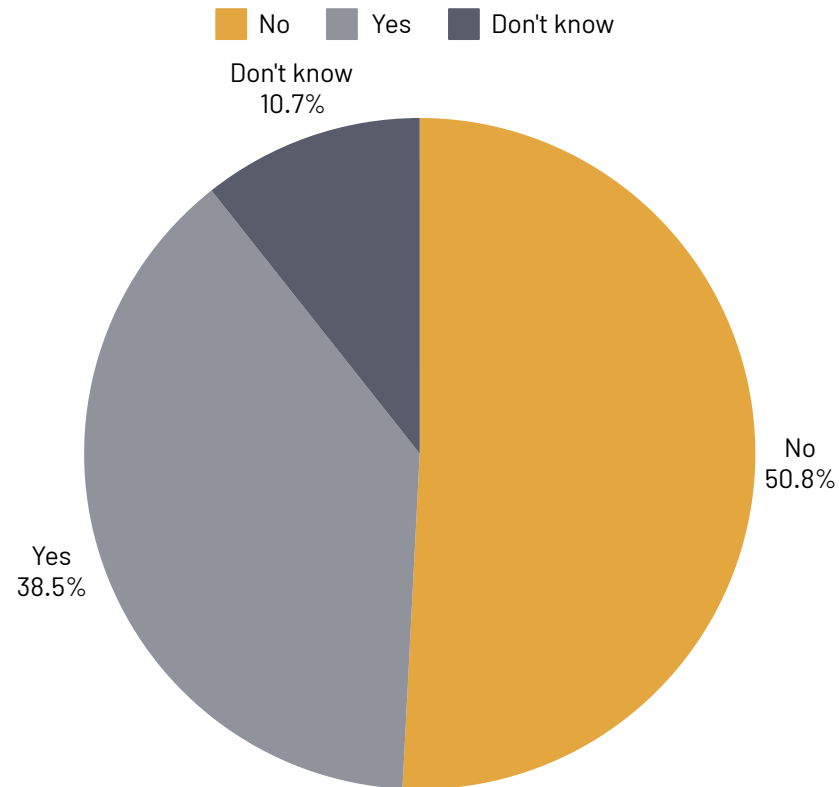
- Does not extend the village “footprint” or go outside the village envelope
- Is of a size in keeping with the small, rural village nature of Fringford
- Does not impact adversely on important green spaces within Fringford such as the village green, the cricket pitch, and the land adjacent to Hall Farm
- Respects the local character and historic and natural assets of the surrounding area, and takes every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce local distinctiveness and a strong sense of place
- Incorporates, wherever possible, locally distinctive features such as stone walls and boundaries
- Does not unacceptably erode the important, predominantly undeveloped gaps between Fringford and surrounding villages
- Respects local landscape quality ensuring that visual amenity is maintained wherever possible
- Provides off-street parking and charging for at least two cars per house.

Development proposals that would damage or result in the loss of ancient trees or trees or hedgerows of arboricultural and amenity value will not be supported.



What you said about Fringford - Traffic and transport

Do we need more traffic calming measures in Fringford?



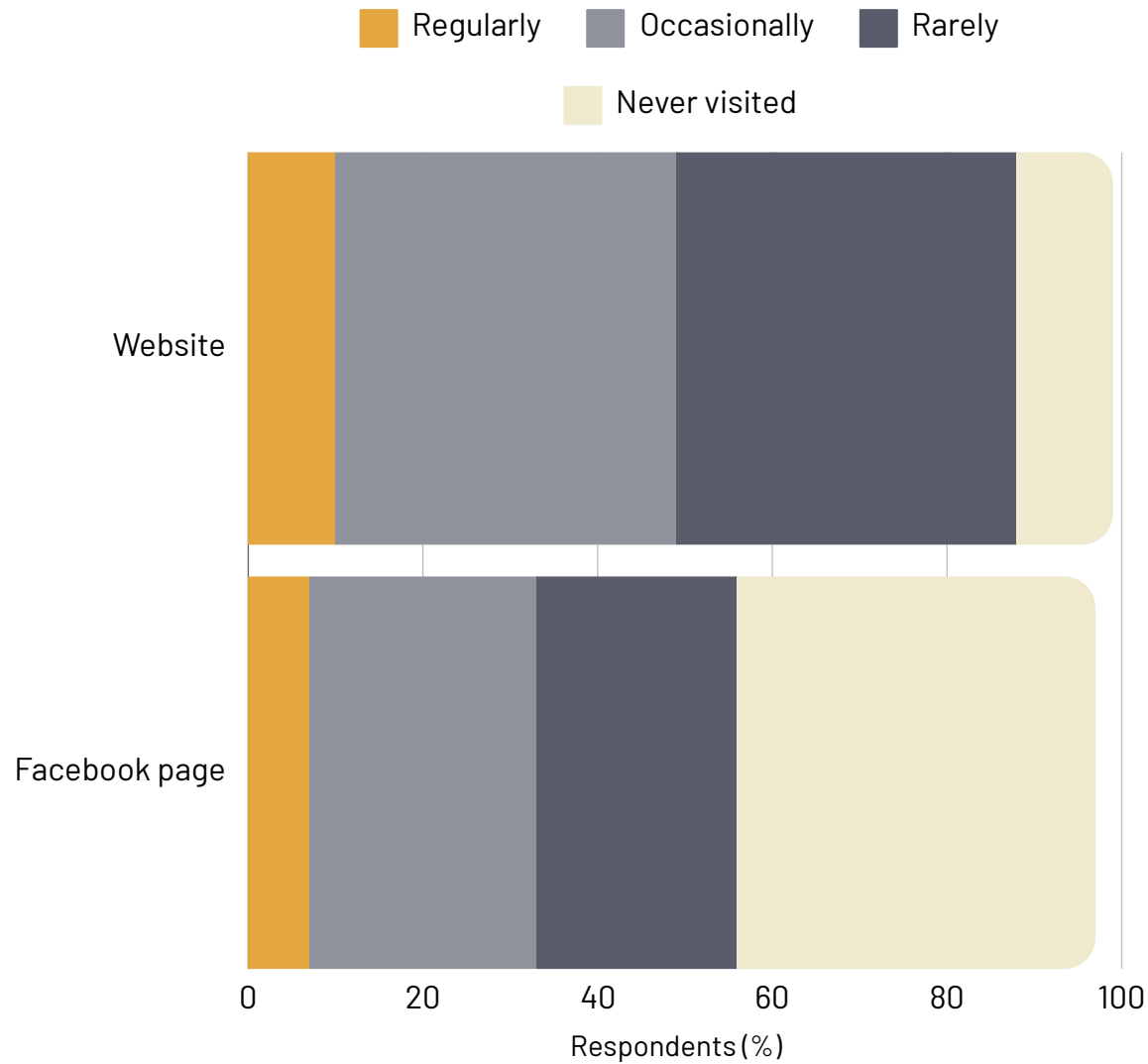
Opinion on traffic calming in Fringford is divided. While 62% (76) of respondents believe speeding traffic through the village is a problem, approximately half of respondents believe there are no further traffic calming measures needed compared to over a third that believe they are needed.

Use of their own car was reported as the main mode of transport for the vast majority of respondents (90% (109)) making any type of journey, with taxi (6% (7)) and walking (5% (6)) completing the top three.

There was a clear desire for a bus service with 70% (79) of respondents saying this would be helpful.

What you said about Fringford - Website and social media

How frequently do you use the following communication channels?



The majority of respondents, 78% (95), visited the Fringford village website occasionally or rarely, with 10% (12) visiting it regularly and 11% (14) never visiting it.

The Fringford village Facebook page was regularly visited by 7% (9) of respondents, with 49% (59) visiting it occasionally or rarely. 41% (50) of respondents had never visited the Facebook page.

What you said about Fringford - WhatsApp groups

The vast majority of respondents did not need help accessing online resources (97%).

Two thirds of respondents used the WhatsApp Mutual support group and just under a third (31%) used the WhatsApp pub/chat group.

Just over a third of respondents (35%) suggested that the Mutual Support WhatsApp group required more steering in order to:

- Help prevent a “bullying tone” or clique mentality so that it can remain a supportive space
- Encourage conversations between two people to move to direct messaging
- Encourage new members to introduce themselves

There were suggestions to improve the advertising of available communication channels in order to make it easier for people to know what was available. Specifically mentioned were the village email list and WhatsApp groups



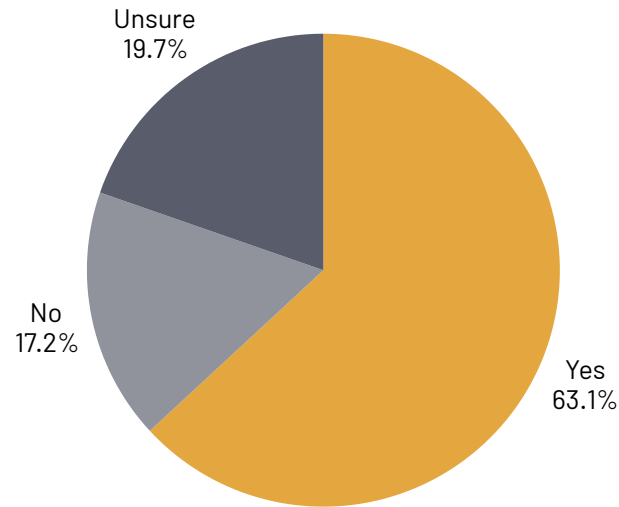
Future actions

With regards to communication channels and the responses provided in the survey by Fringford residents:

- The PC will continue to liaise with the WhatsApp group administrators and consider what further action, if any, is needed
- The PC will work to increase the visibility of all electronic communication channels.

What you said about Fringford - Environment and sustainability

Would you be supportive of activities to make Fringford more wildlife-friendly?



The majority of respondents, 63% (77) would be supportive of activities that would increase the biodiversity of Fringford and make it more wildlife-friendly.

61% (74) of respondents thought that were enough green spaces in Fringford, and 56% (68) agreed that Fringford's green spaces are rich in biodiversity.

60% (74) of respondents reported that sustainability and carbon footprint is important to them, compared to 9% (10) who saw it as unimportant.

Recent improvements

The pond area by the playground has been improved to enable the area to act as a natural soak away pond and support the population of fen relict water beetles and other wildlife. Wildflowers and bulbs have been planted, nest boxes for birds have been installed, and larger willow trees were pollarded.



Future actions

In relation to the environment:

- The PC will consider the impact of any development on environmental diversity.
- The PC will consider initiatives such as "no mow May" and planting to improve biodiversity.

What you said about Fringford - Crime and safety

87%

of respondents agreed that Fringford is a safe place to live

73%

of respondents agreed that they feel safe from crime in Fringford

54% of respondents were not aware of the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Fringford. Half of those not aware were interested in joining. Many people did not know who their local coordinator was. There was some desire for local police patrols.



Future actions

In relation to crime and safety in Fringford:

- With increasing pressure on the local police, it seems unlikely that we can reach a situation where Fringford has a local police patrol, but the PC can liaise with the neighbourhood policing team.
- The PC will identify who the local neighbourhood watch coordinators are to increase awareness of this scheme.

The Fringford Village Plan has been a real collective community effort.

The Parish Council and Research Oxford would like to thank all the residents who gave up their time to provide us with their invaluable feedback.

Thanks to your insights, we were able to identify many ways in which we can look after our village.

Acknowledgements

Fringford Parish Council
Tim Mustill - 2016 Fringford Village Plan member

