

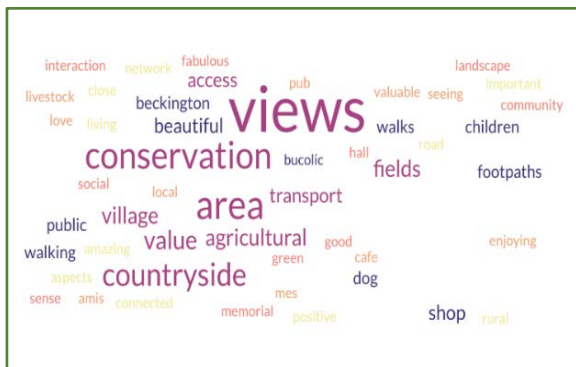


Summary of Residents Survey Findings

As part of the development of Beckington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP), a survey of residents was conducted in April 2024. The survey was executed by the NP Steering Group; 12 volunteers who are working in conjunction with the Parish Council and are committed to engaging with and reflecting the views of the community. Surveys were delivered to every property within Beckington Parish. 243 were returned, with 236 identifying their location - Beckington 223, Rudge 9 and Standerwick 4.

As explained in the survey and previous public meetings, the format and process for developing a Neighbourhood Plan is determined by national government and is primarily centred on land use planning. Once adopted or 'made' it becomes a powerful legal document which must be considered by both developers and planners. Other topics covered in the survey, have provided a valuable insight into how respondents currently feel about living in Beckington Parish in 2024. While some of these topics may not be directly addressed in the final plan, the Steering Group and Parish Council will aim to find ways of recognising and addressing them. What follows is an overview of the key views expressed in the survey. Going forward engagement with residents will continue as focus moves specifically to housing development within the Parish.

LIVING IN THE PARISH



Aspects most valued about living in the Parish, and selected by more than a third of respondents, were **rural setting** (42%), **access to open countryside** (40%), **proximity to larger towns** (37%) and **facilities** (36%). More than a quarter of respondents valued the **safe location**, **sense of community**, **attractive village/hamlet environment** and **scale of small village**.

Views and the **conservation area** were repeatedly mentioned in the comments section.

"Views across the beautiful countryside and walks"

When asked the open question 'what do you dislike most about living in the Parish?' responses included:

- **Traffic**, cited by 37% of respondents, notably **excessive traffic and congestion**, **traffic speed** and **road noise** (mainly from the A36). Related to this was **Parking** (26%), mainly on Bath Road and Goose St, with **congestion**, **limited access** and **lack of suitable parking** highlighted.
- **Housing development and expansion** was the second most cited issue, raised by a quarter of respondents, with the **threat of building on surrounding fields**, **over-development**, **inadequate infrastructure** and **inappropriate housing** all raised.
- **Diminished community spirit** was mentioned by a fifth of respondents but with some divergent opinions about the causes – newcomers, cliques, new versus old, 'politics'
- **Lack of facilities** was highlighted by a similar number, with **shop(s)**, **post office** and **community hub** being cited by most respondents.
- **Lack of community spirit**, **limited policing** and **traffic speed** were also cited by residents of Rudge.

LEISURE AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The most common activities, undertaken by more than half of respondents, include:

Walking (86%), **gardening/allotments** (54%) and **dog walking** (51%), followed by **community clubs** (36%) and **music and performing arts** (22%). Other activities included **church, bellringing, pubs, exercise classes and village hall events**.

All facilities in Beckington are well used. In order these include the **M&S shop, GP surgery, farm shop, pubs, Mes Amis, memorial hall and playing fields**, as well as the **garages, churches and schools**. The memorial hall, playing fields and tennis club were deemed in need of improvement.

Facilities for teenagers and young adults were considered inadequate, with provision of diverse additional sports and a youth club suggested. Again, there was some call for a post office, a central independent village store and village hub with café.

TRANSPORT

The five predominant modes of transport used by respondents are (in order): **car, walking, bus, train, cycle** with three main purposes: **leisure, shopping and visiting people**.

Bath and Frome are the main commuting destinations.

Asked '*what would encourage you to use the bus more*' several respondents said the current services are fine while others (47%) cited **better reliability** as the biggest factor. **More off peak services, earlier or later bus times, faster journeys and better access to timetable information** were also flagged. **Lack of provision for Rudge**, with no car parking available near to bus stops in Beckington, was also a disincentive.

"Important to continue the good service through Beckington." "Rudge has no service"

Those who would like to cycle more wanted **safer roads** and provision of **cycle lanes** on main roads and/or dedicated **cycle routes**.

"Dangerous at night on the rural lanes between Beckington and Rudge and Rode."

Those who would like to walk more raised issues relating to rural walking - **upkeep of footpaths, better footpath information, difficulty and danger of crossing the A36** and walking in built up locations - **improved lighting and better path or pavement surfaces**.

ROAD NETWORK AND PARKING

Some earlier comments came up again in this section, with **traffic speed, congestion** and the **condition of roads and footpaths** criticised.

Parked vehicles blocking buses (59%), **not enough school parking** (39%) and **lack of enforcement** (37%) were the major concerns about parking, with 16% of respondents having no concerns

'I have seen buses not able to get through on numerous occasions which is very bad and selfish of those who park where they shouldn't and has significant ramifications for many'

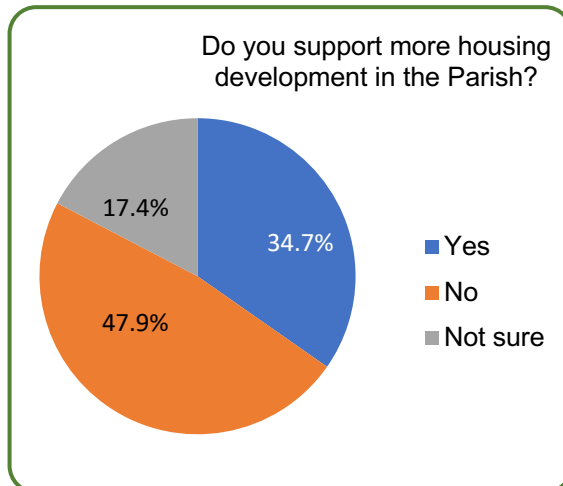
HOUSING

The Parish appears to be split on the issue of further housing development, with just over a third of respondents supporting more development versus just under half against. The views of the *not sure* could tip the balance either way. There is however, a general consensus over the type of housing preferred, in the event of more development, with a preference for **individual plots** (58%), **smaller developments** (43%) and **affordable housing** (30%).

When specifically asked about housing shortages, the most pressing types, in order of priority, were:

First homes (90%), **affordable rent** (56%), **private to buy** (49%), **self-build** (48%), **private to rent** (40%), **retirement** (38%).

Two- and **three-bedroom homes** were favoured over those with **one** or **four or more bedrooms**. A quarter of respondents knew of young families or young people raised in the community (who have either moved away or still live at home) or downsizers who are seeking housing in the Parish.



The most important design factors for any development, favoured by more than half of respondents, were **compatibility with local character** (84%), **provision of adequate parking** (76%), **energy efficiency** (68%), **use of renewable or low carbon energy** (58%) and **provision of adequate storage areas** (53%). The limitations of current infrastructure for any future development were also raised.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Most respondents expressed satisfaction with **gas** and **electricity supplies** (more than 95%) and **waste/recycling services** (83%), with lower satisfaction levels for **broadband availability** (66%) and **health care provision** (63%). There was much less satisfaction with **street cleaning** (42%) and only a third of respondents were satisfied with **sewage/ drainage systems** (33%).

"The sewerage infrastructure in the middle of the village is a major ongoing issue. No further connections should be made to this system until it is fixed, and capacity greatly increased."

"The Council has cut back on street cleaning, litter picking and verge cutting. This may have to become a volunteer led activity in future."

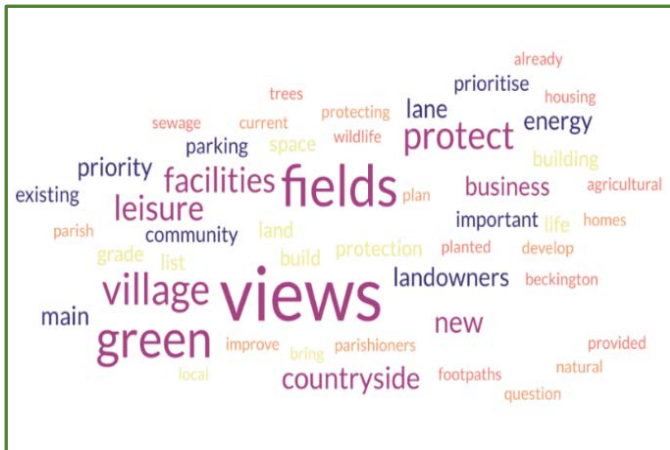
There was considerable support for **small-scale development of solar** (83%) and **wind energy** (66%). Other ideas put forward include **hydroelectric power** from water turbines on the River Frome, community **ground source heat pumps**, and **solar panels** on the village hall roof or any new developments.

"Addition of small scale solar and wind energy with special rates for locals would be a big benefit"

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE

The top priorities for the natural environment within the Parish, all with more than 50% support, were:

- **Protection and improvement of existing green spaces and recreational areas**
- **Improved flood prevention measures**
- **Protection of trees and hedgerows**
- **Manage the scale and location of alternative energy installations**
- **Promote preservation and restoration of local habitats and wildlife diversity**



“The main priority should be protecting the fields that are the main views loved and enjoyed by everyone.”

Specific green spaces cited within Beckington village for protection included the recreation ground at the memorial hall, tennis courts and adjacent fields, fields on both sides of Sue's Walk and next to St George's church.

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS

Nearly half of survey respondents expressed a preference for more **retail and hospitality businesses** (45%) and **creative workshop spaces** (44%), with less support shown for **small starter office units** (24%) and **community business hubs** (22%). Other suggestions again included a **community hub/café/post office** or **banking hub**, with repurposing of existing buildings favoured. Of those working from home, more than half wanted **faster broadband**. 11% of those responding indicated that they wanted no further commercial development in the Parish.

"Support this but only if it can be provided from existing building, not new build."

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. If you have any further feedback or queries, please email: npsgbeckington@gmail.com