



CHEDDAR PARISH PLAN

CHEDDAR PARISH PLAN

Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	4
Background	5
Diary of Events	6
The Process	7
Survey Responses	8
Transport and Access	9
Environment	11
Lifelong Learning	14
Economic Success	15
Community Well-being	18
Housing	19
Crime and Disorder	20
Community Life	21
And What of the Future of Cheddar?	24
What Happens Next?	24

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parish Plan describes how the views of everyone in Cheddar have been sought to determine what actions can be taken to improve Cheddar both now and in the future. The Countryside Agency granted funding to the Parish Plan Group in October 2003 to carry out surveys to find out local views. The main issues are summarised below. The remainder of this document shows findings in more detail. However, it would be a very large document if each issue and all comments received were listed. The full results from all the surveys along with written comments are available on disc on request from Cheddar Parish Council.

The Parish Plan Group has set up Action Groups to look at the detailed comments and develop projects to address concerns raised. The Action Groups rely on the support of local community volunteers with the support of the Parish, District and County Councils along with other agencies such as the Police. An Action Plan describing the work of the Action Groups will be produced as a supplement to this document. It will not be produced as part of the main document so that it can be continuously updated as support for projects comes forward. If you wish to find out what is happening or be involved in the work of Parish Plan Action Groups please contact the Parish Council. Contact details can be found at the end of the document.

The main findings from the surveys are highlighted below:



Transport and Access

- ❖ Nearly all express concern about the safety of pedestrians from traffic.
- ❖ Better publicity is needed about local community transport schemes.



Environment

- ❖ Dog mess and litter top the list of environmental concerns.
- ❖ Cheddar's natural environment is valued highly.
- ❖ There is strong support for a Village and Gorge Design Statement.



Lifelong Learning

- ❖ Current provision for lifelong learning is good and is well supported. However, demand for certain courses is not being met at present.



Economic Success

- ❖ Cheddar is primarily a dormitory village.
- ❖ Tourism and the Business Park are recognised as being important contributors to Cheddar's economic success.



Community Well-being

- ❖ There is a high level of reliance on certain local services.
- ❖ Many think that the range of shops is inadequate.



Housing

- ❖ First time buyers, in particular, say there is a problem with finding suitable housing/accommodation in Cheddar.



Crime and Disorder

- ❖ The perception of crime in Cheddar is greater than the reality as represented by reported incidents.
- ❖ Many young people do not feel safe in Cheddar at night.



Community Life

- ❖ There is general agreement that Cheddar has good leisure facilities, but is nevertheless deficient in some provision for both young people and adults.
- ❖ Hannah More Park lacks facilities for older children over eight.
- ❖ Sharpham Road is not often used by young people over thirteen.

BACKGROUND

Cheddar lies partly on the dry limestone uplands of Mendip, and partly on the low, wet clays of the Cheddar Valley. The village itself sits on a low terrace at the foot of the hills, and at the entrance to Cheddar Gorge, from which the River Yeo springs.

Cheddar's name is probably from an old Celtic word meaning a bag or pouch, and referring to Cheddar Gorge. It is first recorded in the will of King Alfred the Great, in about 880 AD, when it was called Ceodre. Cheddar Cheese, now the world's favourite cheese, was invented here about a thousand years ago.

At the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, Cheddar was largely owned by the crown, but in the later medieval period, there were as many as six separate small manors, or estates, within the parish, owned by such worthies as the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and by powerful families such as the Berkeleys and de Cheddres.

Visitors to Cheddar over the centuries have been impressed by its Gorge and caves. In the 12th century Henry of Huntingdon described the caves with awe as one of the wonders of Britain; Daniel Defoe was more impressed in the 18th century by its fine cows and its cheese; the philanthropist Hannah More in 1789 by the poverty and illiteracy of its people.

Vince Russett - South West Archaeological Services

In the 19th century tourism was established on a businesslike footing, and gradually supplanted farming, quarrying, milling and shirt making as the area's leading industry. The hundred-year life of the Cheddar Valley Railway—'the Strawberry Line'—sustained commercial prosperity until its closure in 1963. During the 20th century new light industries have developed in the village and on two trading estates, and since the late 1920's extensive house building has tripled the size of the population.

Today Cheddar is a thriving community of around 5,000 people and is an attractive and historic village popular with commuters and retirees. Cheddar Gorge provides the scenic backdrop to the village and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The village has five churches, six pubs, several sporting clubs, sports fields, a recreation ground, allotments, a public library, health centre, leisure centre and indoor swimming pool, as well as First, Middle and Secondary Schools and approximately 205 businesses. Cheddar's Parish Council and Trade Association are active in local ventures.

DIARY OF EVENTS

September/October/November 2003

Local publicity for proposal to carry out Parish Plan

Countryside Agency agreed grant for Parish Plan

Survey leaflet circulated to households to seek views on areas to cover

Cheddar Business Breakfast

Exhibition of young people's work on their views of Cheddar

February/March/April 2004

Household survey carried out

Business survey carried out

May/June/July 2004

Attendance at School Councils by Parish Plan Group

Schools surveys carried out

September/October/November 2004

Analysis of results and priorities for action

Summary Leaflet drawn up to feedback results to households

Report back to Parish Council on survey results and priorities

January/February/March 2005

Setting up Action Groups on Transport, Young People, Crime and Disorder,

Environment and Economic Success

April/May/June 2005

Writing up Parish Plan and Action Plan

Housing Needs Survey carried out

THE PROCESS

In the Autumn of 2003 a leaflet was delivered to every household in Cheddar to explain the purpose of a Parish Plan and to seek initial ideas on what issues should be included in the Parish Survey.

A Parish Plan is a long-term action plan to improve Cheddar based on the views of the local community.

A Parish Plan can provide the basis to:

- ❖ Compete for Government money
- ❖ Demonstrate those projects that have the support of the local community
- ❖ Help groups working within the community focus on the things that matter most.

Using the ideas from this leaflet the Parish Plan Group devised a survey that was distributed to all households during the Spring of 2004.

The District Council also held a Business Breakfast attended by 34 businesses to seek the views of business. The information from this was used to help devise a business survey that was also distributed to businesses in the Spring of 2004.

During the Autumn of 2003 Cheddar First School children, Fairlands Middle School children and the students at Kings of Wessex Community School produced an exhibition about what they thought of Cheddar. The exhibition of the children's work and the information provided at the Business Breakfast took place over a weekend in November and throughout December 2003 in Cheddar Library.

In addition, the Parish Plan Group worked with School Councils of both Fairlands Middle School and the Kings of Wessex Community School to develop their own surveys.

The surveys cover seven themes. These are:

- ❖ Transport and Access
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Lifelong Learning
- ❖ Economic Success
- ❖ Community Wellbeing
- ❖ Crime and Disorder
- ❖ Community Life

Response rates for each survey were high. We compared the results for the household questionnaire with the demographic profile of Cheddar's residents to assess how representative the sample was.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Household Survey 1,004 returns. Number of Households 2,352. Return Rate 42.7%

Census Data	Area/Source	Cheddar Survey
Population Structure Under 18 20.1% 18-24 5.9% 25-44 24.2% 45-64 28.4% 65+ 21.4%	Cheddar/ Somerset County Council Research and Information 2001 Census	Population Structure Under 18 0.7% 18-24 1.5% 25-44 26.6% 45-64 40.8% 65+ 30.4%
Gender Male 48.1% Female 51.9%	Cheddar/ Somerset County Council Research and Information 2001 Census	Gender Male 41.6% Female 58.4%

The results show that young people up to the age of twenty-four are under-represented. The school surveys help to make up for this deficit for young people below the age of eighteen. To increase the response rate for young people aged 18-24 the Parish Plan Group appealed in the local press for them to get in touch to express their views.

Business Survey 34 returns.

Number of Businesses 205; return rate 16.6%. In addition, a number of business people particularly those operating from home would have responded to the household survey.

School Surveys

Kings of Wessex Community School 311 responses; number on roll (approx) 1,103; return rate 28.2%.

Fairlands Middle School: 217 responses; number on roll (approx) 497; return rate 43.7%.

Cheddar First School: 61 responses; number on roll (approx) 240; return rate 25.4%.

The Parish Plan Group would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the survey. The contribution and support of the staff and young people of each of the three schools is very much appreciated.

The results of the surveys are organised under each theme. The base number is the number of people who responded to the question. The source of the information, e.g. Household, Business or School Survey, is also identified in each case.

In addition, where relevant statistical information is available this is included at the beginning of each section.

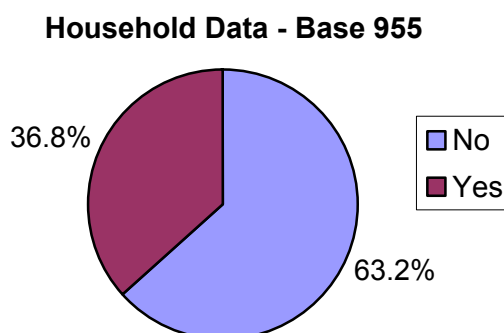
TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Car Ownership					
Cheddar			Sedgemoor		
No Car	400	15.1%	No Car	8,297	18.7%
1 Car	1,083	40.9%	1 Car	19,762	44.5%
2 Cars	857	32.4%	2 Cars	12,701	28.6%
3 Cars	234	8.8%	3 Cars	2,716	6.1%
4+ Cars	72	2.8%	4+ Cars	956	2.1%

Data Source 2001 Census



Do you use local buses?

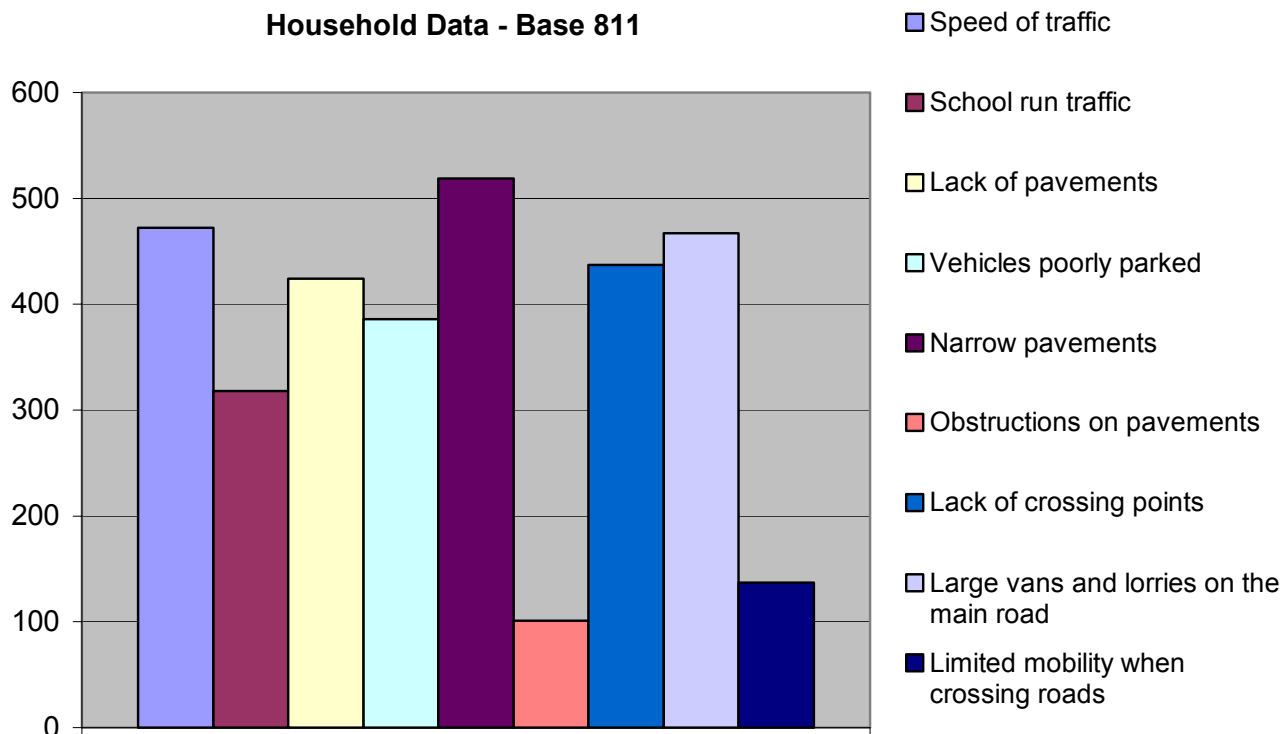


Over a third of respondents use local buses with Bristol as the favoured destination amongst adults, but for younger people both Weston and Wells feature strongly. Shopping, days out and visits to the cinema are the prime reasons for using the bus. Only one in ten people are aware of local community transport schemes.

Are you concerned about your safety from traffic as a pedestrian?

Source	Base	Yes	No
Household	969	789	180
Business	34	24	10
Kings of Wessex Community School	219	27	192
Fairlands Middle School	182	117	65
Cheddar First School	67	36	31

Why are you concerned about your safety from traffic?

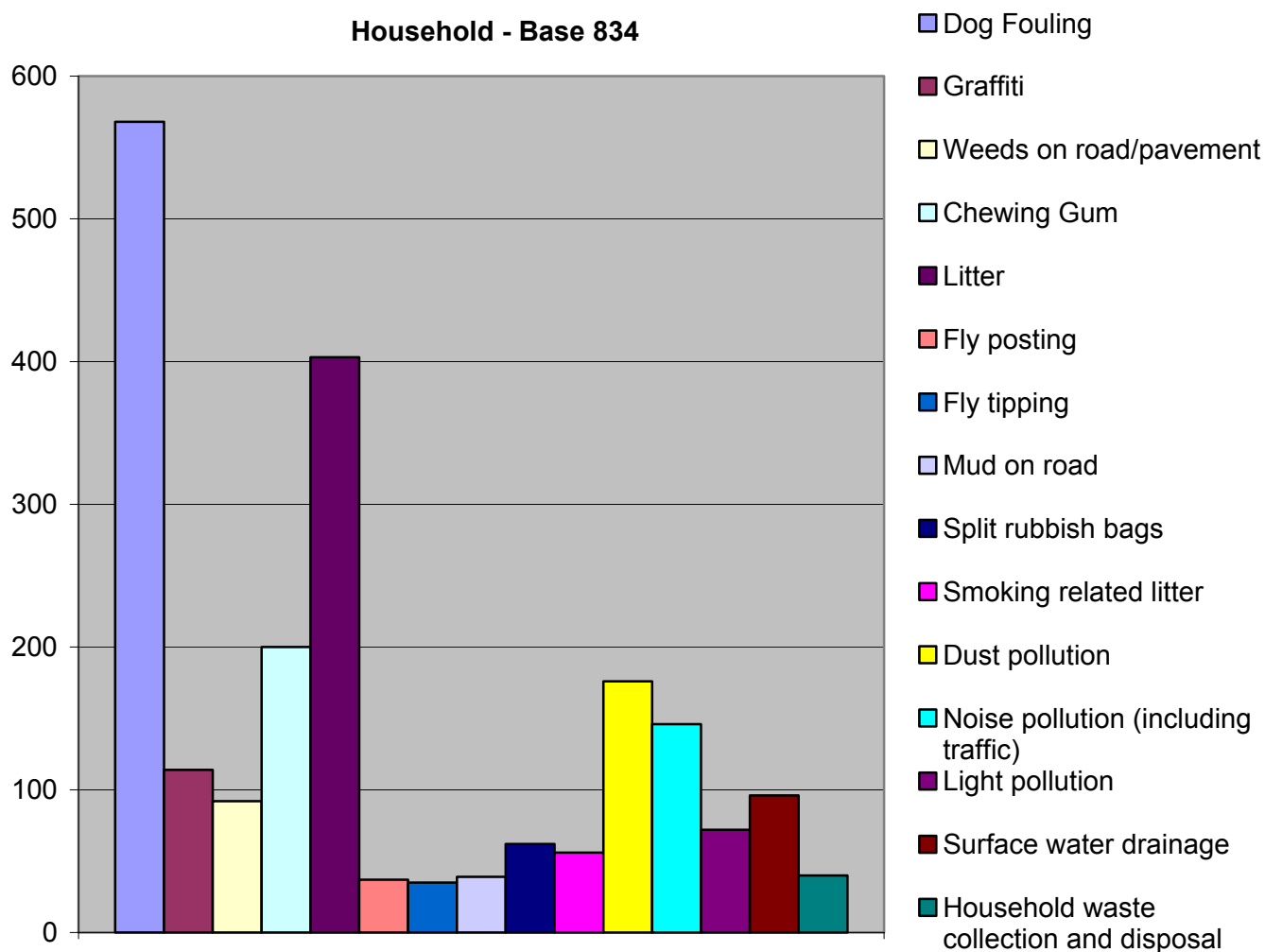




A key concern is safety of pedestrians from traffic, with problems occurring throughout the village. Narrow pavements, lack of pavements and crossing points, speed of traffic, heavy vehicles passing through the village, poorly parked vehicles; all these contribute to this major concern.

ENVIRONMENT

Are any of the following a problem for YOU?

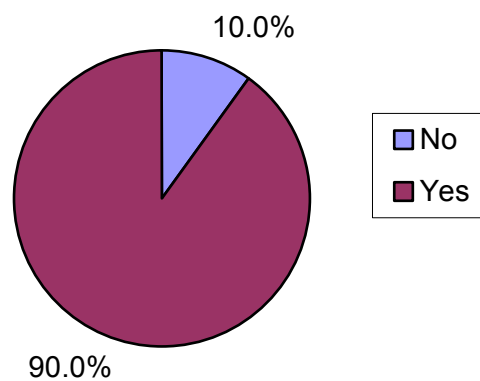




The main issues are dog mess and litter. Out of a total of 834 people who responded to this question, 568 people (almost seven in ten) cited dog mess as a problem and 403 (almost half) regard litter as a problem.

Are you in favour of a Village Design Statement?

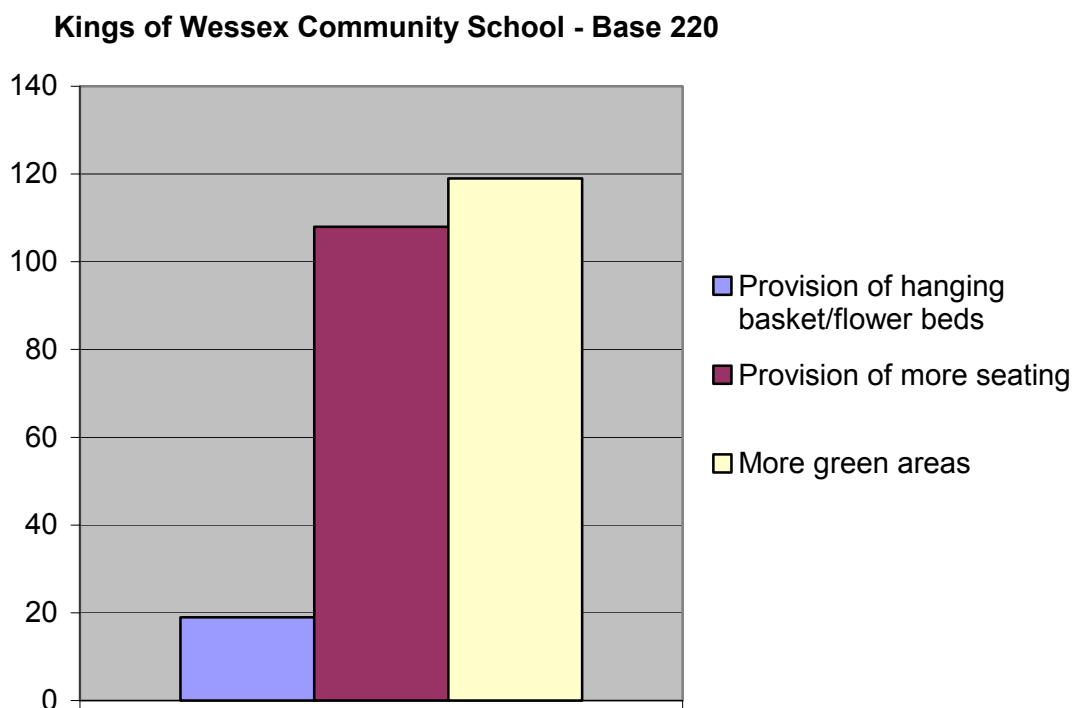
Household - Base 827



The production of a Design Statement for the Village and Gorge is seen as very important.



Which of the following do you think would protect and enhance the environment near your school?

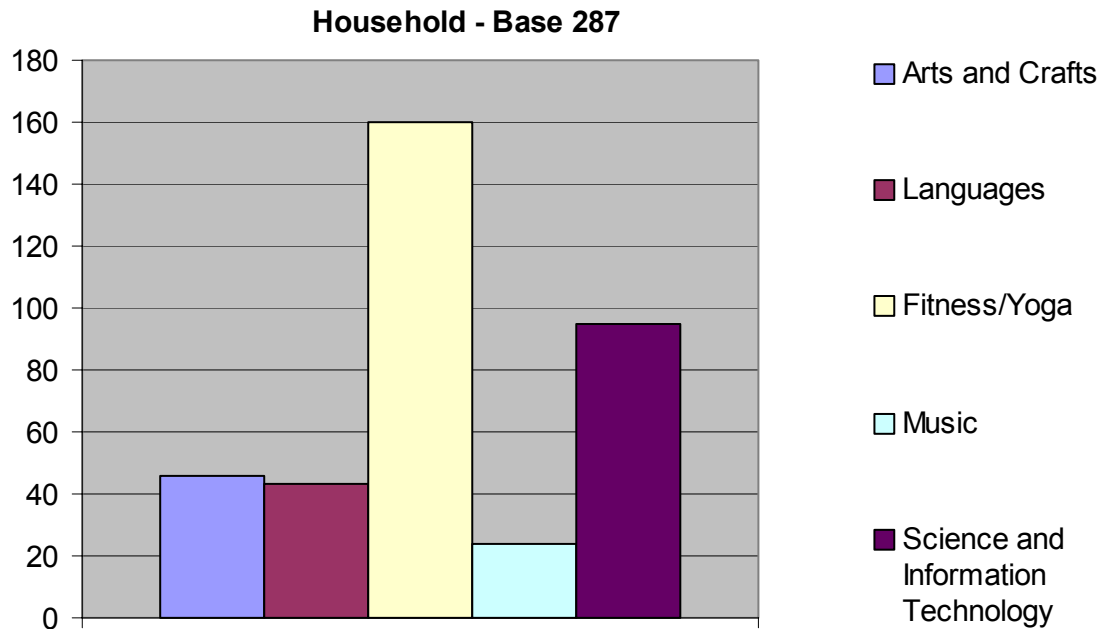


Young people would like to have more green areas and seating.



LIFELONG LEARNING

Do you or any of your family attend any of the following courses?



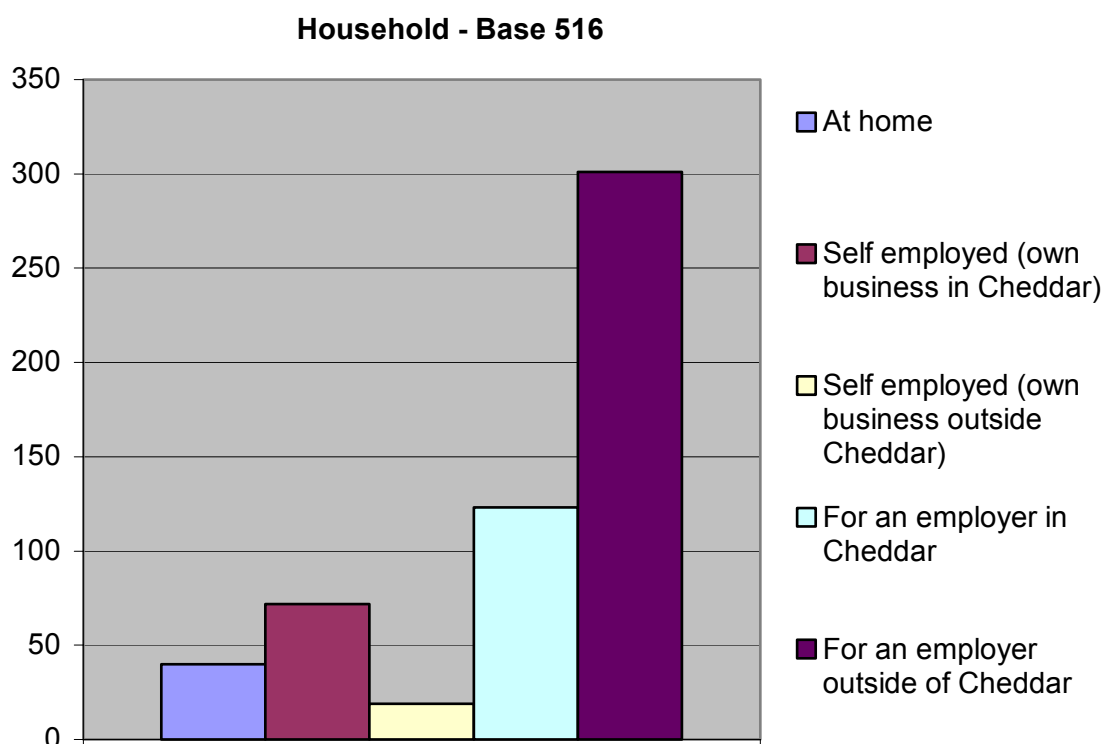
Adult education courses were well patronised, with the most popular being yoga, fitness, science and information technology. Requests for different courses included local history and model engineering.



ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Economic Activity (All 16-74 year olds)			
Cheddar		Sedgemoor	
Employed full-time	37.2%	Employed full-time	37.9%
Employed part-time	13.7%	Employed part-time	13.6%
Self-employed	13.1%	Self-employed	10.5%
Unemployed	1.7%	Unemployed	2.7%
Permanently sick/disabled	3.1%	Permanently sick/disabled	5.2%
Student	5.5%	Student	4.9%
Retired	17.7%	Retired	16.2%
Looking after home	6.0%	Looking after home	6.5%

If you are in employment, where do you work?



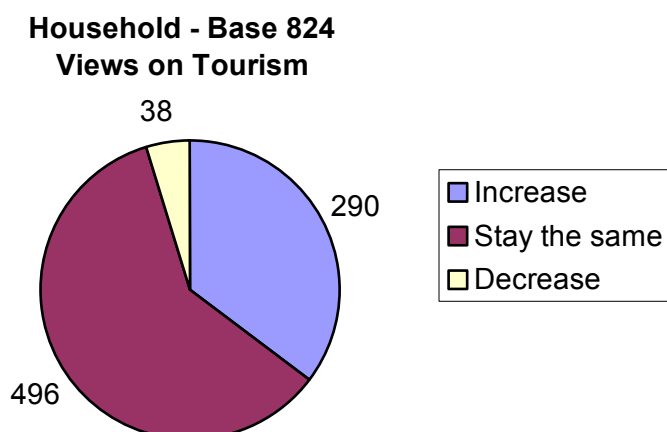
Two thirds of adults who responded are in work. Of these, the vast majority (two thirds) work for an employer outside Cheddar. A fifth work for an employer in Cheddar, and the remainder are self-employed.

What are your views about business development in Cheddar?

Household - Base	819
producers (excluding takeaways, cafes etc)	
Increase	386 47.1%
Stay the same	394 48.1%
Decrease	39 4.8%

Household - Base	863
Shops	
Increase	481 55.7%
Stay the same	371 43.0%
Decrease	11 1.3%

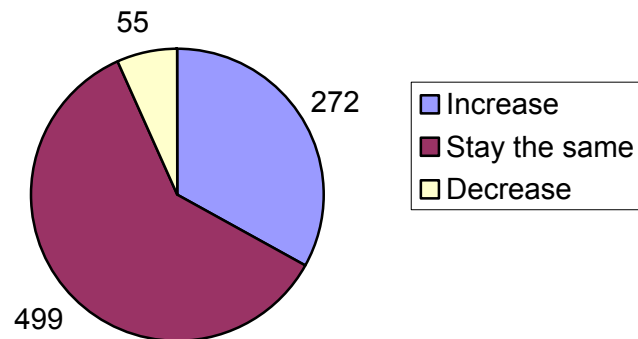
Increased shopping facilities are high on the list of wants, as is the need for more local food producers.



Almost a third of respondents would like to see an increase in Tourism.



Household - Base 826
Views on the Business Park



Six out of ten respondents do not wish to see any change in the size of the Business Park, whereas just over three out of ten would like to see an increase.

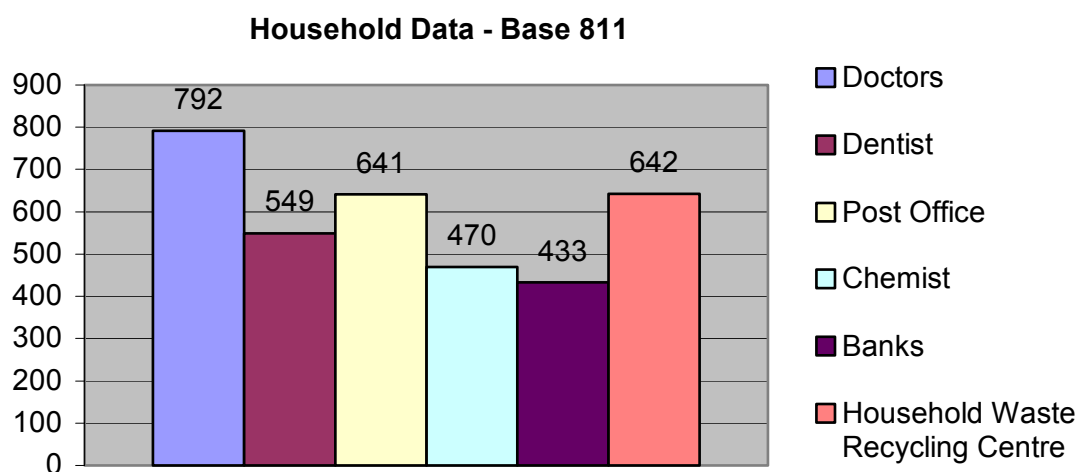


Half of the business respondents are in retail. Three out of four of all the business respondents would like to see more car parking whereas one in three would like more appropriately skilled workers to help develop their business.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

A third of respondents do their main food shopping in Cheddar. However, many would like shops to have greater choice and lower prices.

Do you use any of the following shops, services or facilities in Cheddar?

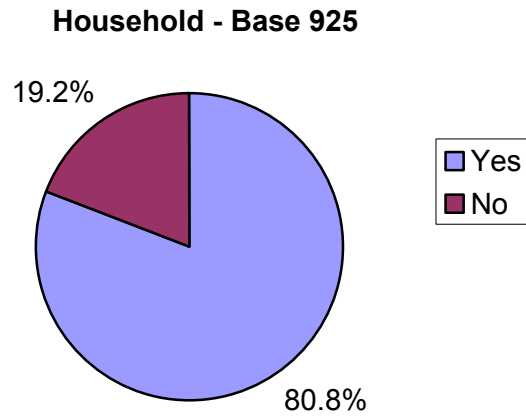


The majority of respondents rely on local doctors, dentists, Post Office, chemist, banks and the Household Waste Recycling Centre. One in eight respondents would like a wider range of greengrocers and fresh food shops.



HOUSING

Does the choice of available housing/accommodation in Cheddar meet the needs of you and your family?

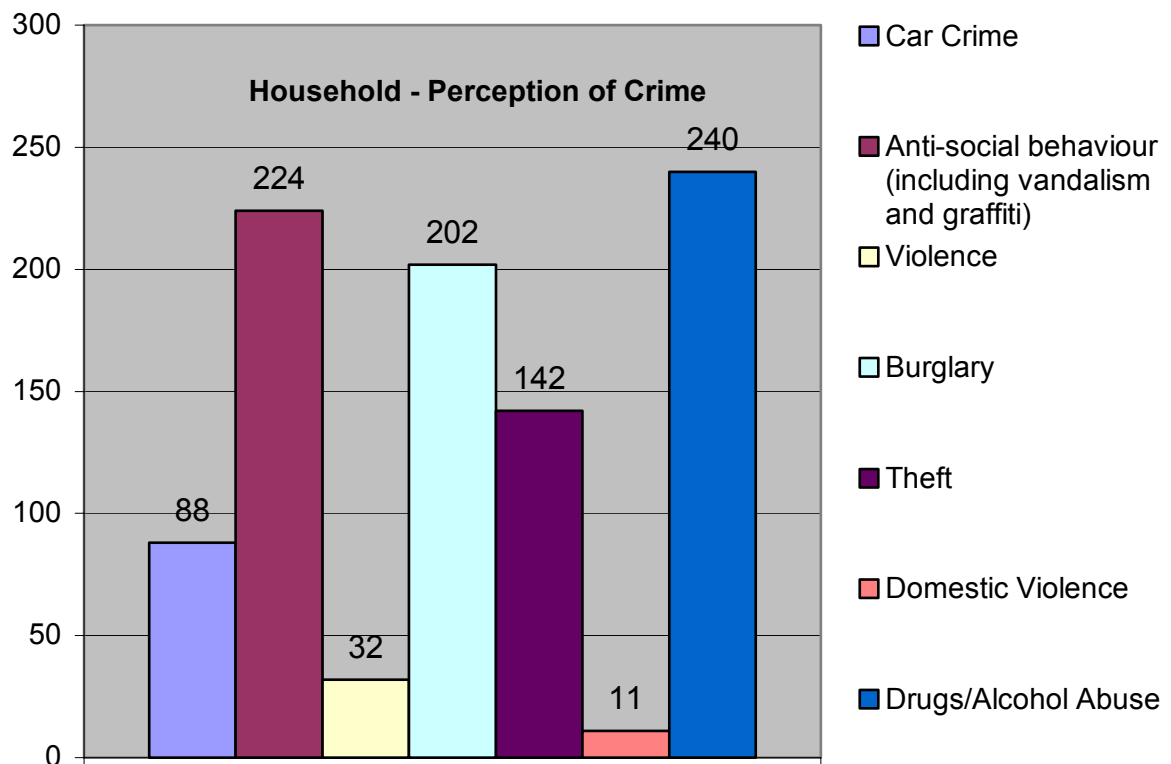


Cheddar has around two and a half thousand properties. However, not everyone can find suitable accommodation. The main concerns are the difficulty of getting on the housing ladder and the availability of affordable housing, this is a particular problem for first time buyers.



CRIME AND DISORDER

How much of a problem would you say the following are in Cheddar?



Drugs/alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and burglary are all cited as serious concerns.



These young people are working with local residents and the Police to find ways of providing constructive activities in Cheddar.

How safe do you feel in the following situations?

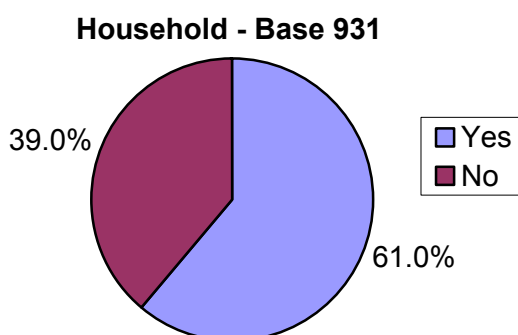
	Kings of Wessex Community School Base 210			
Situation	Very Safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe
In public places on own during the night	23	77	78	32
In public places in a group during the night	74	100	34	5

	Fairlands Middle School Base 180			
Situation	Very Safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe
In public places on own during the night	7	40	74	59
In public places in a group during the night	32	89	45	13

Many young people feel unsafe at night in Cheddar, when they are on their own or in a group.

COMMUNITY LIFE

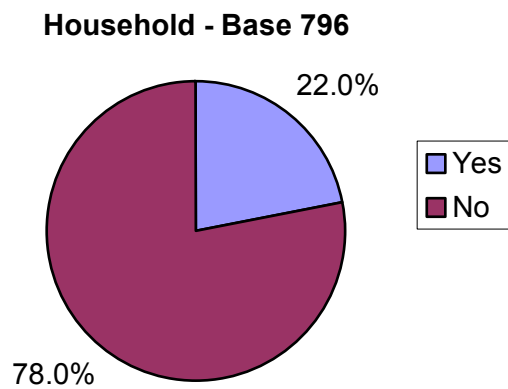
Do you take part in any social, leisure or sporting activities, either as an individual or as part of a group in Cheddar?



More than half the respondents who take part in sporting, leisure or social activities do so in Cheddar.



Is there any social, leisure or sporting activity that you would like to take part in that is not currently available in Cheddar?



There is general agreement that Cheddar has good leisure facilities, but is nevertheless deficient in some provision for both young people and adults.



Do you use the following facilities?

	Fairlands Middle School Base 170		Kings of Wessex Community School Base 215	
Area	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sharpham Playing Fields	40%	60%	33%	67%
Recreation Ground (Hannah More Park)	47.4%	52.6%	33%	67%

Hannah More Park lacks facilities for older children over eight. Sharpham Road is not often used by young people over thirteen. The provision of a skate park and cinema are the most popular activities requested by the young people who responded. A cinema is also seen as needed by adults, as is a bowling green.



AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE OF CHEDDAR?

- ❖ The vast majority of respondents believe that Cheddar will grow over the next fifteen years both in terms of population and housing.
- ❖ The loss of green fields due to the expansion of housing estates as well as infilling, the unacceptable extension of the village development boundary and the loss of village character are all regretted.
- ❖ Concerns are raised that expansion will lead to increased traffic congestion, and to overstretching of medical services, schools and the infrastructure generally.
- ❖ Respondents generally prefer Cheddar to stay as it is.
- ❖ If Cheddar expands, then a third of respondents want a by-pass.
- ❖ Six in ten respondents want a quieter, safer and cleaner environment.
- ❖ Four in ten respondents would like more community facilities.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Parish Plan Group along with the Parish Council will seek to involve local people in finding solutions to the issues identified by the surveys. Initially, five Action Groups will be convened; these are: Young People, Transport, Crime and Disorder, Environment and Economic Success.

The work of these groups will form the Action Plan for Cheddar. This is attached as a separate appendix so that it can be regularly amended and updated. For details of the work of the Parish Plan Action Groups or full results of all the surveys contact Cheddar Parish Council. Please make your request to the Clerk, Cheddar Parish Council, The Parish Hall, Church Street, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3RA Telephone: 01934 743217



Photo courtesy of Jason Bryant and Mid-Somerset Newspapers

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

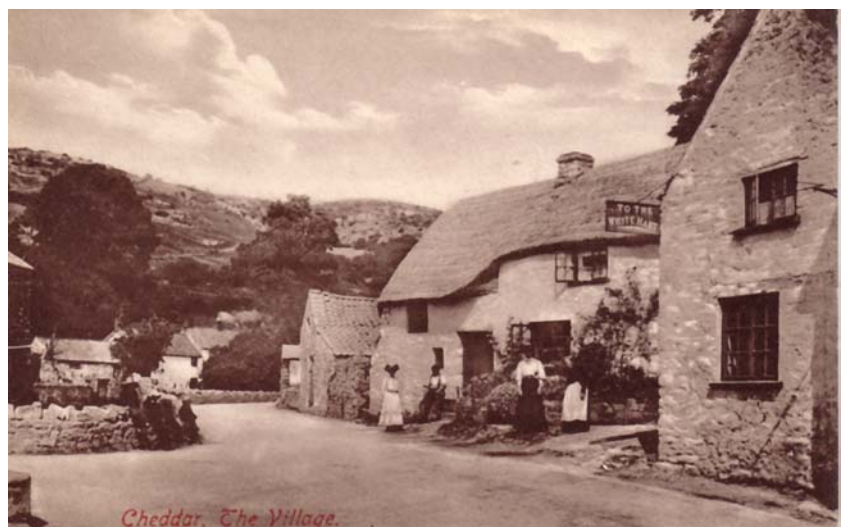
The Parish Plan Group would like to thank all those who responded to the surveys and who have volunteered to be part of the Action Groups. We would especially like to thank the staff and pupils of the Kings of Wessex Community School, Fairlands Middle School and Cheddar First School for their work to produce the exhibition and the Cheddar Valley Gazette for raising awareness of the Parish Plan. Finally, we would like to thank the Countryside Agency, Sedgemoor District Council and Cheddar Parish Council for providing funding for this work.

Cheddar Parish Plan funded by:



CHEDDAR PARISH COUNCIL - 2005





Cheddar, The Village.