



INTERIM REPORT

WOLDINGHAM RESIDENTS' SURVEY

This is an interim report of the Survey results. A full report will be published in the spring. This report updates the one given in early October to the FORUM. Any numerical results shown are indicative only and subject to revision.

DISTRIBUTION AND RETURNS

The survey form was sent to 780 household addresses in early September and also made available online: (website, email and twitter links). By mid November a 50% return was achieved. This figure is based on the number of individual returns in relation to the number of households in Woldingham. Note however that the online survey has enabled multiple responses from one household and the percentage return does not take account of joint returns using the same form.

The respondent profile is broadly representative of the age profile of the village except that the under 30s are under-represented. A 'young people's survey' is planned. Other checks on coverage will be carried out, for example using postcode areas.

We are fairly confident at this stage that the returns give a good indication of residents' views and experiences of living in Woldingham and are therefore

a reliable starting point for the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

SOME KEY RESULTS

Nearly everyone supported the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan. This gives us a clear mandate as a Parish Council to put our efforts into the Plan – not a small task for us!

Most respondents who have chosen to come to the village are very happy with their choice. 72% are 'very satisfied' and 27% are 'satisfied'. It is worth observing that, unlike some communities, we are not looking to a neighbourhood plan to ward off or control a specific external threat such as a shopping centre or a large housing development. We are keen to preserve and enhance what we have.

We listed eleven possible policy areas to be rated as high, medium or low priority. All have been well supported – nothing is unpopular. The most supported policy priority area is protection of the Green Belt. This will give some heart to the Parish Council and the Woldingham Association, who strive jointly to keep building there to a minimum. The green environment of the village is a recurrent theme in the survey responses. What people like most about living in Woldingham is peace, the countryside, the green environment, the space



The Table shows possible priority areas for policies. It gives preliminary results only. It shows combined percentages for high plus medium priority ratings and puts them in rank order.

Protection of the local Green Belt from new* housing and large home extensions or ancillary buildings (*does not refer to replacement housing)	92.9
Preservation of general tree cover including established wooded hillsides	91.8
Strengthening of measures to combat pollution and nuisance (including noise, lighting, litter, refuse burning, flytipping, overgrown trees and hedges)	90.4
Effective sanctions against both infringements of local planning policies prior to consent and of conditions imposed as part of consent	90.0
Promotion of fast telecommunication services for householders and local businesses	87.6
Promotion of parking measures to assist residents to use Woldingham Station throughout the day	87.0
Protection of gardens from backland development (combining back gardens to create large development plots)	84.2
Protection of gardens from tandem development (one house behind another sharing the same access)	80.1
Stipulation of a minimum plot size that reflects the prevailing plot size in the surrounding area	79.8
Restrictions on the placement of telecommunication equipment	69.1
Promotion of a balanced stock of housing types and sizes to meet demonstrated local needs	68.6

and the beautiful location. The top ranked reasons for coming to live in Woldingham include access to countryside, the pleasant environment, the village atmosphere and the safe environment. Other attractions include the sense of community, the village atmosphere and the close proximity to London and transport networks. Not everyone could think of something they disliked about Woldingham but mention was made of station parking, speeding, noise, over development, large houses, road condition, slow internet and the lack of places for entertainment.

The survey is helping to identify possible housing needs and preferences. Some broad indications are coming through. Thus a policy promoting 'balanced housing stock' gains significantly more 'high priority' support from the over 50s (41%) than under 50s (18%). At least half of those

who said they had moved home within Woldingham, or were seriously considering doing so, were looking for a smaller house. High rated preferences for future housing included smaller housing than currently occupied, detached housing and retirement housing, with Woldingham often being a preferred location. The most frequently reported reasons why household members, relatives or friends had left Woldingham were to set up an independent home or to begin a job or course of study.

The survey reveals plenty of scope to improve village facilities. Among facilities rated good more often than fair were those for outdoor sport (by far!) and those for informal socialising. Many others were rated only fair. Most often rated fair were public entertainment and daily shopping. Most often rated poor were the facilities for young people over

16, disabled persons, commercial services, elderly care and eating out. Facilities most often described as non-existent were those for health/medical care, eating out, reading and study, business meetings and elderly care. The suggestions for additional facilities mainly related to perceived gaps in provision and tended to cluster round the terms 'pub-shop-restaurant-club'. However, the numbers making these suggestions were relatively low.

Work plays a more significant part in the life of Woldingham than is sometimes supposed. Nearly a third of respondents say they have worked, or are working, in or from Woldingham. The most typical profile is being self-employed, working from home, travelling from Woldingham, having been in business for some years, and working in a professional, managerial or consultancy role in



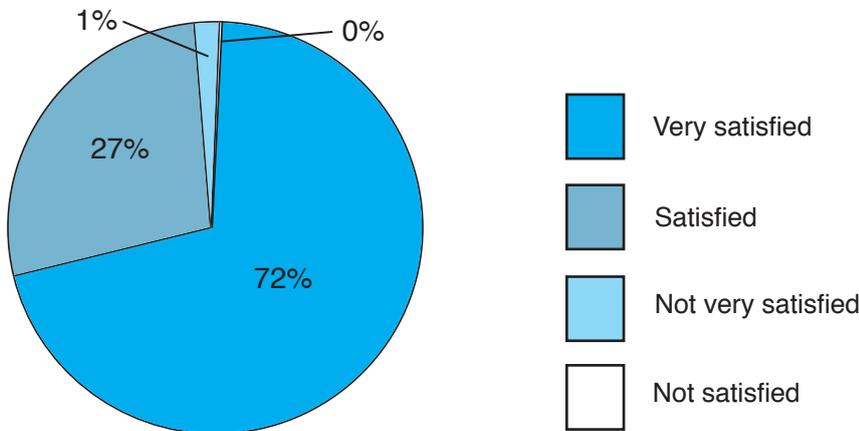
the public or private sector. The range of occupations is so wide that it defeats any attempt to summarise. In contrast, the respondents have given a very clear message on how we could improve the prosperity of the village by making it easier to work in and from here. The reported advantages of working in Woldingham include the attractive environment and good access to

London and the transport network. The disadvantages include road problems (snow and ice), poor mobile phone connections, lack of station parking and, most of all, slow internet speeds.

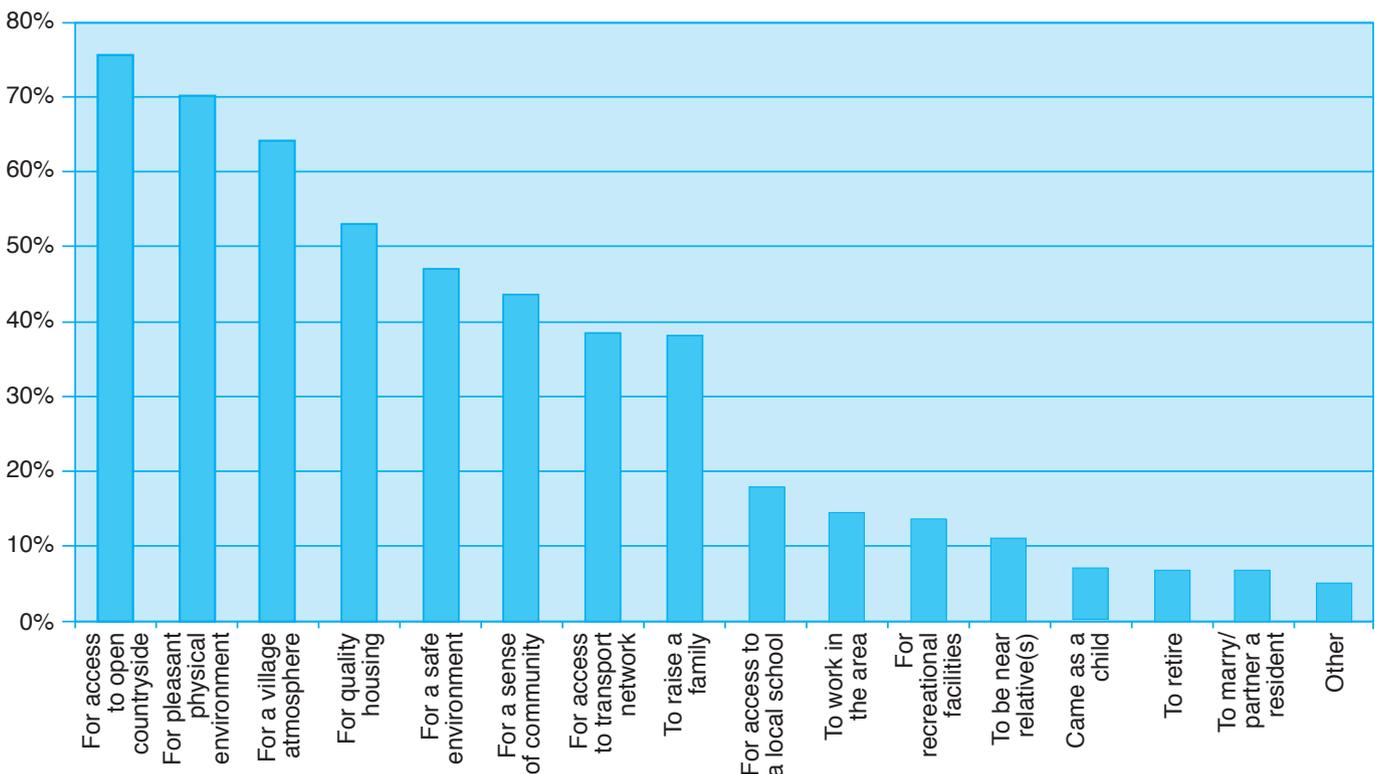
Getting around Woldingham is not just about navigating the steep hills. The top improvement priorities are seen as maintenance of road surfaces, paths and verges,

footpaths and bridleways, removal of overhanging growth and efficient drainage, and ease of movement for the disabled. The norm for car ownership is two cars but three is common. Most people have never used the local bus but a minority would consider using it if the service were improved. The poorest aspect of the service is seen as the timetable. Footpaths play a bigger part in village life than is apparent to many. Their most common use is for rambling and access, but they are frequently used for jogging, cycling and exercising dogs. There is also some support for off road cycle paths. The problems most encountered in getting round the village are station parking (and to a lesser extent at the Crescent and the Village Hall), speeding and danger spots. Many of these spots have been clearly identified and this should enable us to pursue a programme of remedial action. The most favoured speed reduction methods are restrictions, checks

If you chose Woldingham as a place to live, how satisfied have you been with your choice?

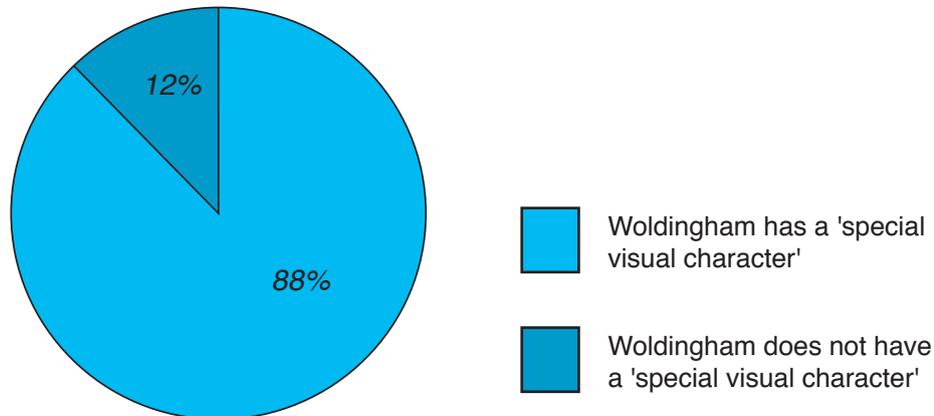


How have you come to be living in Woldingham? Mark as many boxes as you wish.





Please indicate whether you think Woldingham has a 'special visual character'



and warnings rather than physical restraints or fixed cameras.

Just a very few of us spend a lot of our time immersed in local planning policies. The Survey has provided us with a rare opportunity for reality testing. Do the residents really have a strong or shared view about the 'visual character' of the village? If so, what is that character and is it worth fighting to preserve? The results of the Survey have been very encouraging. The majority of respondents claim to have some knowledge of local planning policies and think they have given the village some protection. 88% think Woldingham does indeed have a special visual character. There is also a strong consensus on what makes it special. All the features that were extracted from local policies as contributing to that character have been predominantly rated as either important or very important. This consensus ranges from two thirds to almost unanimous. Eight of the twelve features are rated as very important by at least half of the respondents. The most highly rated features are the Green Belt setting (leafy roads and footpaths, rural surroundings); houses complemented by trees, vegetation and surrounding landscape; and wooded hillsides, protected trees

and the variety of fine tree species. The lowest ranked feature, open entrances or low informal gates in preference to high formal gates and pillars, nevertheless enjoyed more than two to one support.

A large number of respondents said that they would be looking for a school place for a child in their household. The majority of those seeking a primary place would plan to use Woodlea rather than a school elsewhere, including a private school. The majority seeking a secondary place would plan to use a private school rather than a state school. The implication is that local demand for places at Woodlea will be sustained but that local state secondary school places will not be in high demand from the village.

The survey confirms that residents generally see Woldingham as a safe place to live. Their personal experience of crime in the village reflects the low recorded crime rates. The most frequent experience is of property crime, then car crime, and then crime against the person. However, there is no room for complacency. When respondents were asked if they agreed with statements on the service given by the police (eg 'police respond promptly to incidents'), they consistently 'agreed'— but only a minority 'agreed strongly'. A large number of respondents identified places where they felt unsafe and said why. The comments referred to both road safety and personal safety. Feeling unsafe related to lack of lighting and isolated places. For obvious reasons these places will not be listed here but the accounts will be used to identify points for action. Respondents were asked what would make Woldingham a safer place to live. They tended to prefer measures which involved more active policing rather than measures focusing on their own behaviour, such as education of residents on crime prevention or naming and shaming! If this picture holds for all of us, surely we have some thinking to do!

F. Myers, Chairman

How familiar are you with the local planning guidance for Woldingham?

