



BOXFORD

PARISH

PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

What is a parish plan? Do we need one? Over the past two years I have been asked these questions many times. The development of parish and town plans is a government initiative to give more power to local people, to encourage them to decide what is best for their community and to give them more control over getting it done. The West Berkshire Council has strongly supported this initiative and encouraged the development of parish plans.

Our completed Plan is the result of detailed discussions and surveys within our community, including the younger generation. It can now serve as a valuable resource to help the Parish Council and other local committees in their future decision-making processes, as well as providing documented justification to support fund raising for projects.

The Plan sets down comments and ideas raised by the community over the last two years. Projects that received more than 50% support in the 2007 survey are incorporated in an Action Plan. All other topics and issues are still addressed but future action in relation to them will be the subject of further consideration by the appropriate village committee.

It is interesting to note that during the research work for the Plan two particular comments far exceeded the number of any others. The first was that most people in the community enjoy living in Boxford Parish and wish to preserve its rural character and keep things very much as they are. The second was that the Parish is divided and has no social centre. This is not surprising given its geographical fragmentation. These issues have been the subject of much discussion and are therefore carefully considered within the Plan.

Other favoured topics have been the rebuilding of the village hall, refurbishment of the sports pavilion, upgrading the children's play area in the recreation ground, renovation of the church, protection of the water meadows and concern about the noise from the M4 motorway. The recording of the parish history also received considerable support.

Indeed it has been encouraging to receive so much interest during the development of the Plan; 80% of the households in the Parish responded to the 2007 survey and many villagers attended the open meetings and events. Thank you all for your enthusiastic support and helpful comments.

So, what next? We have established an Action Plan for the protection and improvement of the beautiful Parish in which we are so fortunate to live. Now, we must turn our attention to implementing the Plan. In the meantime, this document contains much that none of us knew before about the Parish of Boxford and the views of its residents, I hope you enjoy reading it.

Mike Appleton
Chairman of the Boxford Parish Plan Steering Committee

1. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Boxford Parish Council took the initiative to develop a Parish Plan in May 2006 when the first of three public meetings was held to introduce the concept of a Boxford Parish Plan. Between 50 and 60 attended the first meeting on 25th May in the Village Hall and there was lively debate about positive and negative issues affecting the community. As a result of the considerable interest shown, a pilot questionnaire was generated and delivered to each household, together with a letter from the Parish Council summarising the discussions and requesting volunteer help.

The second public meeting was held on 10th July 2006 at which the results of the pilot questionnaire were discussed and a decision taken to conduct personal interviews with a cross section of the community. This enabled the issues raised to be further explored and the level of interest for a Parish Plan to be gauged. These interviews were based upon 'walk & talk' sheets which ensured that all issues were covered and that the feedback was structured.

The final public meeting in this initial phase was held on 4th September 2006, the meeting considered the feedback from the 'walk & talk' sheets together with the earlier pilot questionnaire and level of interest shown. The meeting concluded that there was a positive mandate and need for a Parish Plan to be developed. To progress the development of the Plan, a committee was established comprising those people from the community who had volunteered to assist in the Plan's development.

The first meeting of the Boxford Parish Plan Steering Committee was held on 24th October 2006. At this meeting a constitution was drafted and officers elected. The committee was set up to be independent of any other committee in the Parish but with a line of reporting to the Parish Council. The committee continued to meet on a regular, monthly basis and was joined periodically by a representative from CAWB (Community Action West Berkshire). CAWB helped the committee by providing an interface with the West Berkshire Council and information on how other plans in neighbouring parishes had been, or were being, developed.

The role of the Steering Committee was, first, to identify the wishes of the community for the Parish and, secondly, to raise money to cover the development and printing costs of the Parish Plan. The second of these matters was resolved initially by the Parish Council allocating a small 'start-up' sum to the Steering Committee, and then by the Lottery awarding a grant of £3,000.

Identifying the wishes of the community had already commenced with the earlier work of the Parish Council. The Steering Committee therefore had only to structure these early findings, establish if there were other community wishes and accurately determine the level of interest in the issues raised. This was achieved by the development of a detailed questionnaire, which contained both an adult and children/youth section and gave the opportunity to all those over the age of five to express their views.

The questionnaire was launched at the Open Weekend held on 23rd and 24th June 2007. Over 130 people came to the launch and most spent a good deal of time with members of the Steering Committee discussing their views and ideas. Any household that did not collect its questionnaire at the Open Weekend had one delivered during the following week.



**LAUNCH OF THE 2007
QUESTIONNAIRE AT
THE VILLAGE HALL**



The level of response to the questionnaire was very encouraging and the results were presented to the community at a feedback evening held on 1st November 2007. About 50 people attended and expressed their satisfaction both with the questionnaire and the way in which the survey had been conducted.

The table below shows that 80% of all occupied households responded to the survey and therefore the results can be considered a true reflection of the wishes of the majority of the residents of the Parish. The detailed questionnaire incorporating all the results is included at the end of this document, where more information on the respondents can also be found. Each question and result is considered in detail within the following sections of this document.

Number of Questionnaires issued to occupied premises	186
Number of unoccupied premises	6
Number of Questionnaires returned	149
Percentage of Questionnaires returned from occupied premises	80%

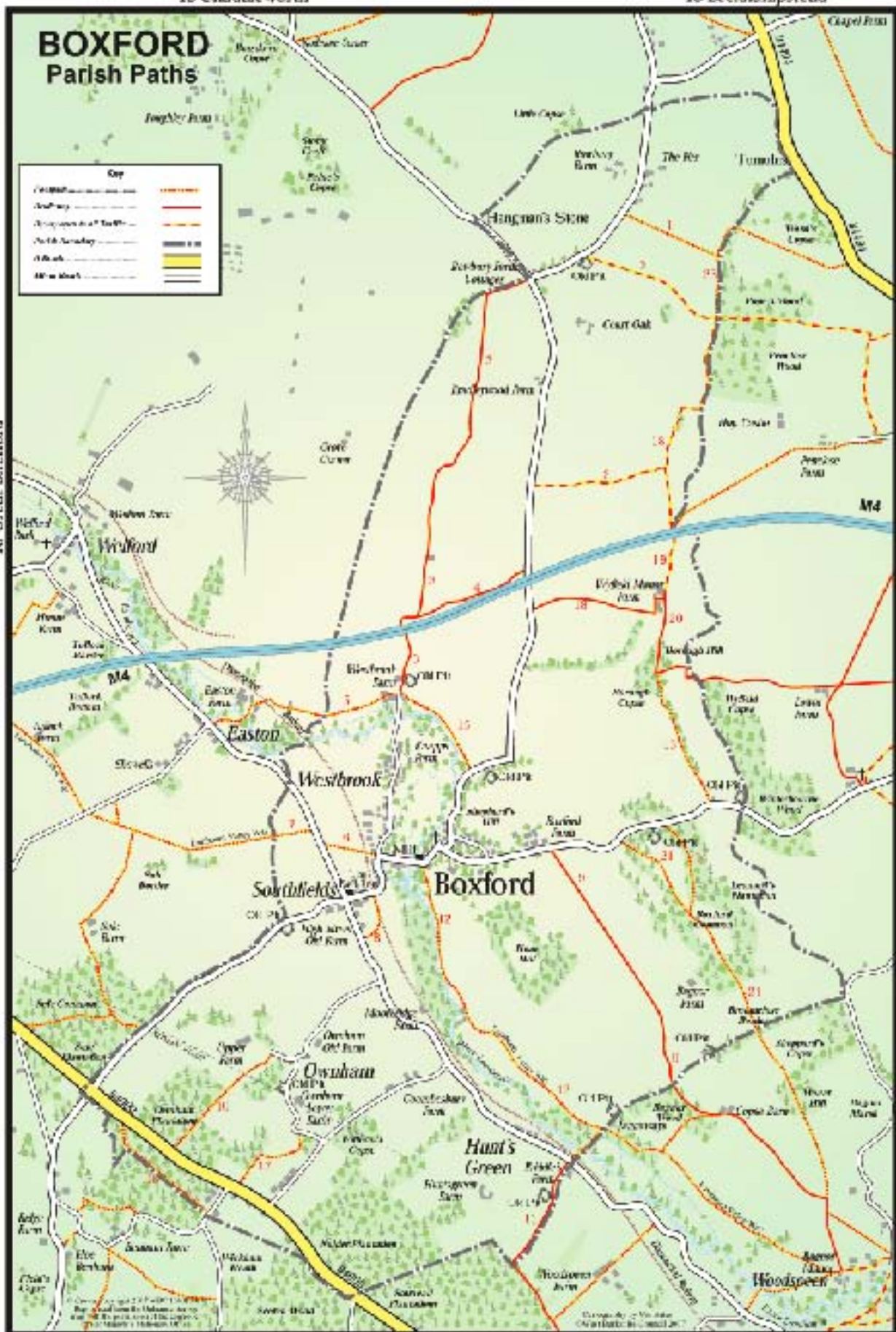
To Chaddleshworth

To Leckhampstead

BOXFORD Parish Paths

Key	
Footpath	—
Byway open to all traffic	—
Public Footpath	—
Track	—
All-weather	—

To Great Shefford



To Newbury

2. THE PARISH

The Parish of Boxford is attractively situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a few miles north-west of the market town of Newbury in Berkshire. The Parish is characterised by open chalk and flint downland fields running down to the rich soils of the wooded river valley of the Lambourn. To the south-west of the Parish there are large woodland plantations, through which the old Roman Road of Ermin Street passes.

The village of Boxford itself sits naturally protected by the surrounding woods and hills such as Shepherd's Hill, testament to a long association with sheep, and Hoar Hill which was once covered with Box from which the village takes its name. The River Lambourn, a fine trout stream, meanders through the village and thence south-east to Newbury, where it joins the River Kennet. Nearly all the water meadows at the heart of the village are classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The village of Boxford comprises the centre around the Mill House and St Andrew's Church, School Lane, Shepherd's Hill, Southfields, Westbrook, Winterbourne Road and properties along the Valley Road. The hamlets of Hunts Green, Ownham and Wickham Heath are to be found in the Parish and dotted throughout are working farms, cottages and converted farm buildings. The Parish is bordered to the south-west by the B4000, Ermin Street, to the north-east briefly by the B4494, Newbury to Wantage Road, and dissected east to west by the M4 to the north of Westbrook.

Boxford retains a substantial number of historic buildings, including many thatched cottages - some dating from the 16th century when they were owned by the Abbey of Abingdon. The largely 13th century Parish Church, dedicated to St. Andrew, stands on the site of an earlier 11th century church on the banks of the River Lambourn. The war memorial in front of the church was refurbished as part of a Millennium Project and illustrates the heavy toll paid by the parishioners in the First and Second World Wars. The Mill House on the River Lambourn in the centre of the village combines the architectural style of three centuries, while nearby Boxford

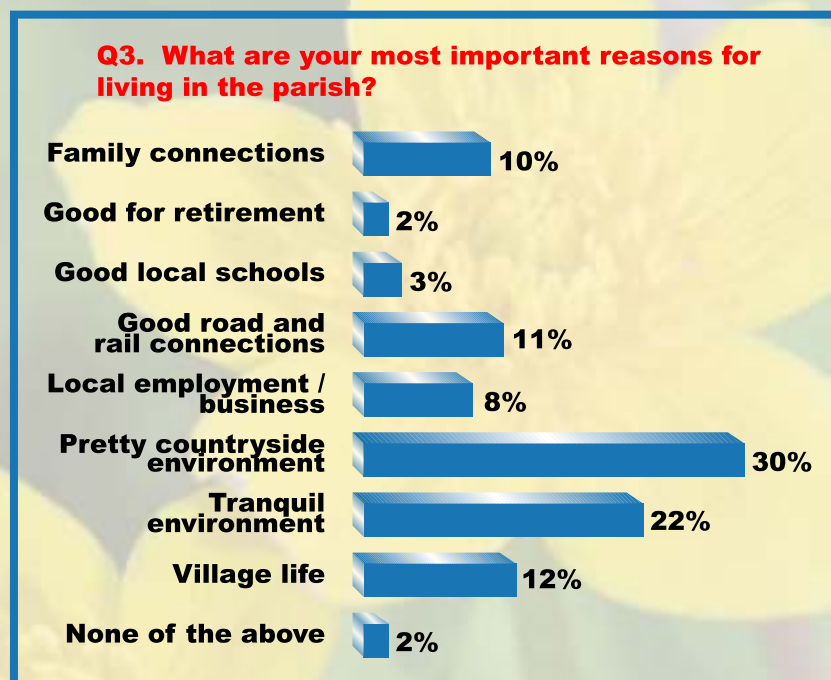


THE MILL HOUSE

House is an example of gothic revival architecture. Westbrook House was home to the author Charlotte Peake, who wrote the Boxford Masques in the early years of the 20th century. These plays have recently been rediscovered by villagers and, following adaptation by award-winning author Geraldine McCaughrean, revived and performed again on Hoar Hill by the local community under the direction of Ade Morris of the Watermill Theatre. The Bell Inn was rebuilt, after a fire in 1888, on the site of the old coaching inn.

The village has a large recreation ground and a village hall, home to the mother and toddler group and a pre-school. Boxford no longer has a school but children are able to travel by bus to Stockcross Primary School. Whereas Boxford was a pastoral community before the First World War, only about 16% of residents now work in the Parish.

Boxford is surrounded by beautiful countryside and endowed with many attractive and historic buildings. It has good road and rail connections with London and the south-west. The responses to Question 3 resoundingly show the importance accorded to a tranquil village life in attractive surroundings. Few respondents thought Boxford a good place for retirement. This probably reflects concerns about the lack of local services and poor public transport.



The population of the Parish, according to the latest census in 2001, totalled 466 spread across the age ranges shown in the table below.

Total Population	Age Under 5	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 24	Age 25 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age Over 74	Total Males	Total Females
466	28	58	29	125	169	37	20	231	235

When comparing the above census figures with the 2007 Parish Plan survey, it appears that there has been little change in the last seven years.

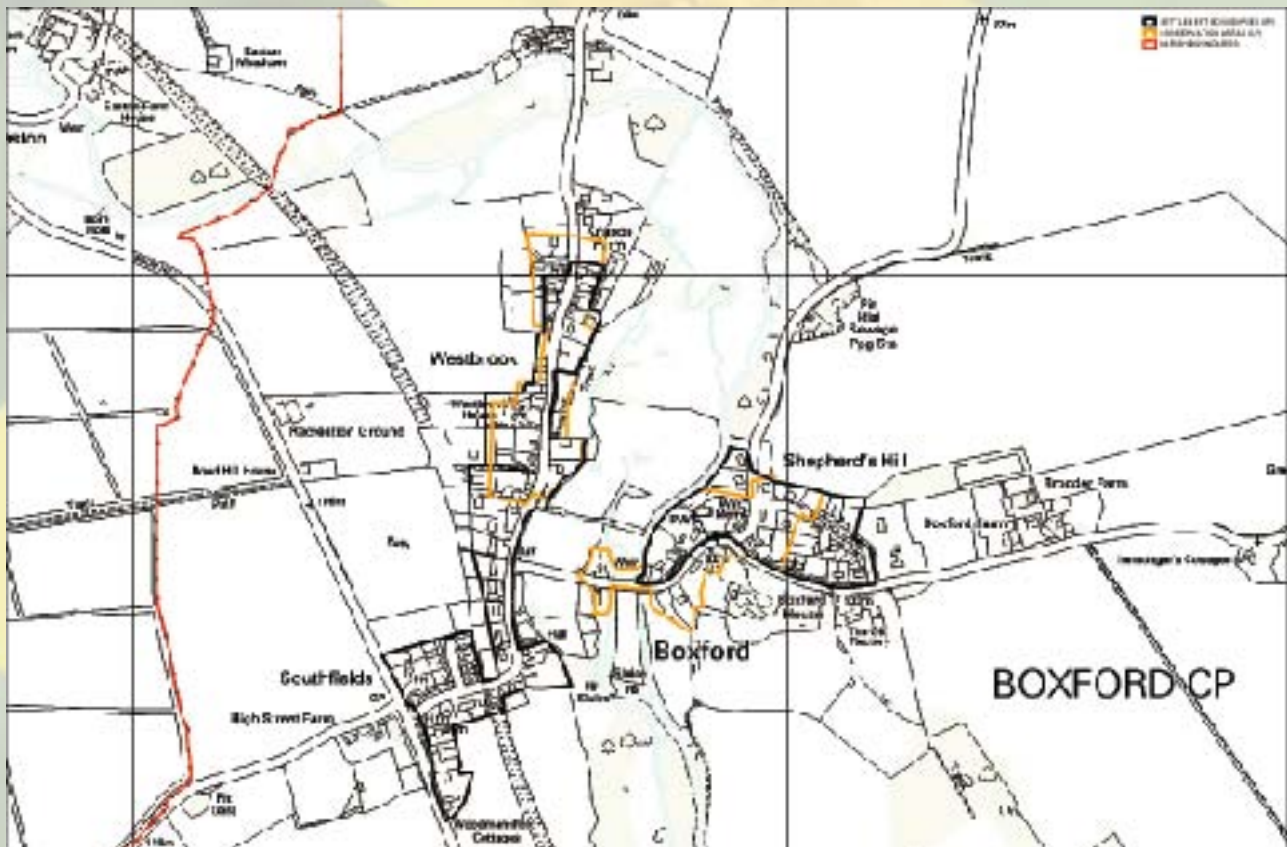
3. HOUSING

In the 2007 Parish Plan survey, 192 properties were recorded, six of which were unoccupied. The bulk of the housing stock is naturally in the centre of the village of Boxford and the adjoining hamlet of Westbrook. Together with Shepherd's Hill and School Lane, these are the areas where the oldest properties are to be found and, with Southfields, they form the main settlements of the Parish. One further significant area of housing is at Wickham Heath, where cottages were originally built for employees of Sir Richard Sutton's Settled Estates. The majority of the housing stock in the Parish is now privately owned, including the Wickham Heath cottages and some of the council-built properties at Southfields and Shepherd's Hill. There are a number of rented properties in Winterbourne Road and Westbrook as well as in outlying hamlets.

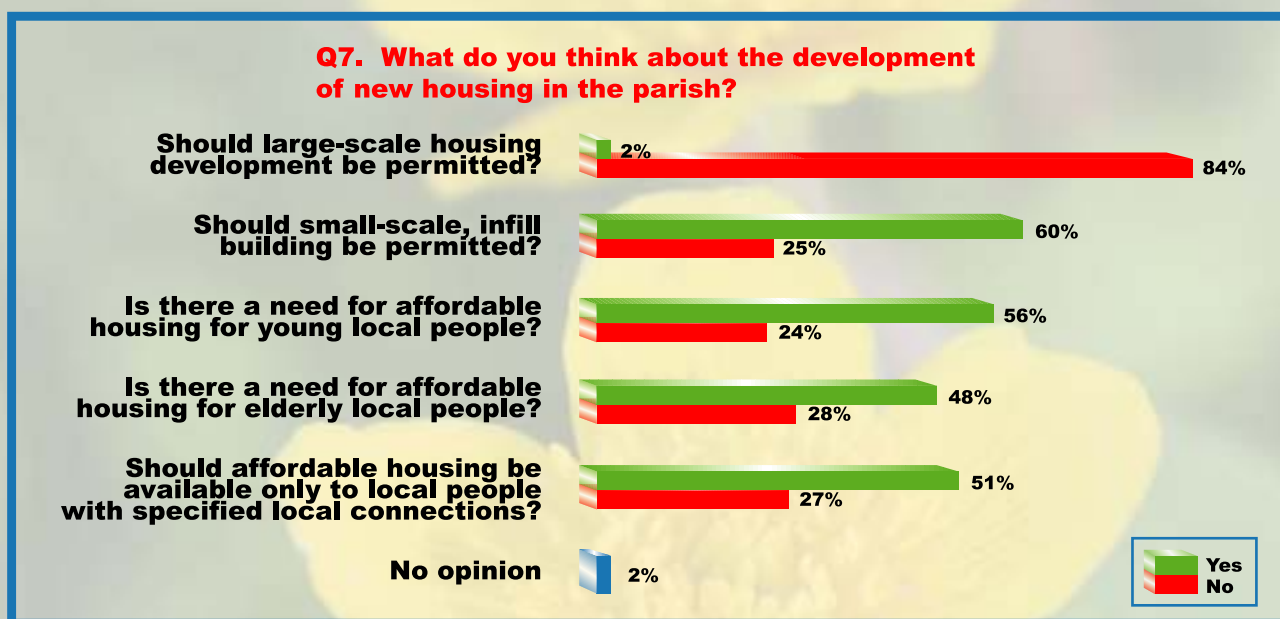
The council-built properties at Southfields and Shepherd's Hill were designed with plenty of green space and generous plot sizes, as were the former estate cottages at Wickham Heath. In the main, properties throughout the Parish have been built individually on fairly large plots. This feature, together with a high proportion of property of historic or architectural merit, helps to make the Parish an attractive place to live and Boxford a distinctive village.

West Berkshire Council's map of Boxford below shows permitted settlement and conservation areas.

SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES AND CONSERVATION AREA



The results from Question 7 indicated that residents are in favour of infill, small-scale development (60%); however, very importantly, development on a large scale is overwhelmingly opposed (84%). These results are included in the Action Plan. There was less of a clear cut response on affordable housing; 56% of respondents were in favour of affordable housing for young local people and nearly half (48%) for the elderly. 51% of the respondents felt that affordable housing should be only available to local people with specified local connections. Scoring over 50%, the first and last of these results are reflected in the Action Plan. While the 48% return in favour of affordable housing for the elderly has not been taken forward to the Action Plan, it should be kept in mind for future reference.



These results show that residents wish to keep the distinctive characteristic appearance of the area but also allow for conservative small scale infill expansion.



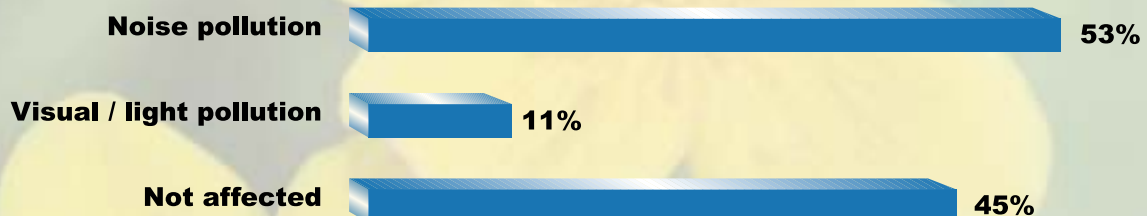
PART OF SOUTHFIELDS

4. MOTORWAY

Boxford's section of the M4 was opened in 1971 and runs east to west almost through the centre of the Parish to the north of Westbrook, and at some points on an embankment 90 feet above the surrounding area. This section of the motorway has never been fully resurfaced; instead, over the last 37 years, it has been maintained by patching. Traffic volumes have increased dramatically since the motorway opened and so has the noise and visual impact.

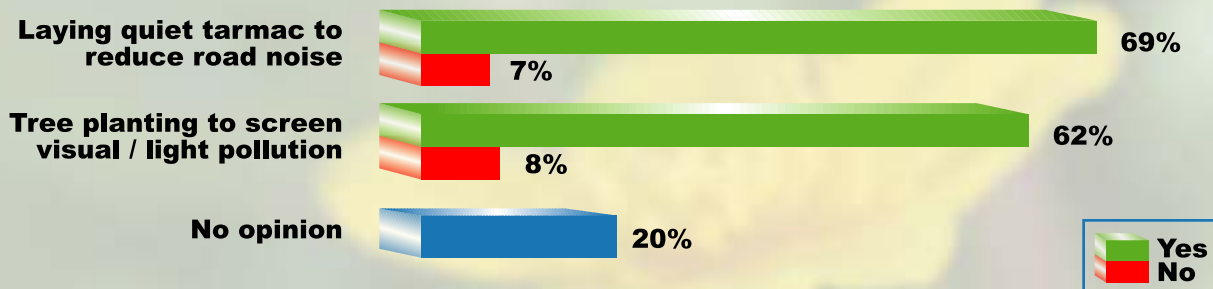
The 53% positive response to Question 8 suggests that more than half the inhabitants are affected by noise pollution from the M4. This is high, given that properties are so widespread throughout the Parish. Westbrook, School Lane, Winterbourne Road and the Lambourn Valley Road appear to be the most badly affected areas. Looking at the 45% who are unaffected by noise pollution, the returns show that these responses come from residents who are shielded from the motorway by distance (Wickham Heath for example), topography or adjacent properties acting as sound barriers. A significant proportion of residents, 11%, are also affected by visual/light pollution and these residents are in the main in Westbrook.

Q8. Are you affected by noise or visual / light pollution from the M4?



There was overwhelming support in response to Question 9 for the Parish Council's actions and requests to the Highways Authority to reduce M4 noise and visual/light pollution. Support for this action came from residents across the Parish, even if some were personally unaffected.

Q9. Do you support the Parish Council's actions and requests to the Highway Agency to reduce M4 noise and visual / light pollution?



As a result of the level of support in response to Question 9, this topic has been carried forward to the Action Plan.

During the period of finalising the Parish Plan, the Highways Agency has resurfaced the westbound carriageway of the M4 with "quieter tarmac" and advised that it will undertake some tree screening on the motorway verge. It has also indicated that the resurfacing of the eastbound carriageway is provisionally programmed for 2009.

M4 ABOVE WESTBROOK



5. ENVIRONMENT

The Lambourn Valley runs through the Parish from Welford at its western boundary to Woodspeen at its south-east corner. The area is very rural in nature, with no industrial employer. The water meadows are at the centre of the Parish and provide ever-changing interest for locals as well as visitors. To the north, on either side of the road to Leckhampstead, the countryside comprises rolling downland. The motorway has a negative impact on the environment of this area of the Parish in particular.



RIVER LAMBOURN



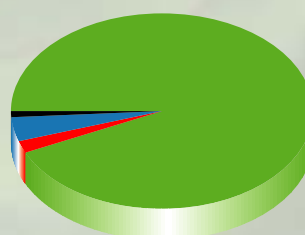
VILLAGE LANDSCAPE

Further south, Wickham Heath, on the ridge between the Kennet and Lambourn valleys, straddles the old Roman road, Ermin Street, with Hunts Green and Ownham located on the valley sides down towards the river. This area has a higher proportion of forestry than elsewhere in the Parish. The residents of Wickham Heath and surrounding hamlets are mainly shielded from the noise impact of the M4. Although heavy lorries have been banned from the B4000, traffic, especially the menace of speeding vehicles, still has a negative impact on householders - particularly those alongside the road.

Historically, agriculture and other land-based activities, with their limited impact on the visual environment, were the main source of income in the Parish. Agriculture is still important but modern mechanisation reduces the need for local employment and, since there is no industry in the Parish, most employment is found elsewhere.

Question 10 addressed the central issue of the protection of the environment. Not unexpectedly, 93% of the respondents affirmed that the surrounding area should be protected to preserve its special landscape character. This overwhelming result is reflected in the Action Plan.

Q10. Do you think the surrounding countryside should be protected to preserve its special landscape character?



93% Yes

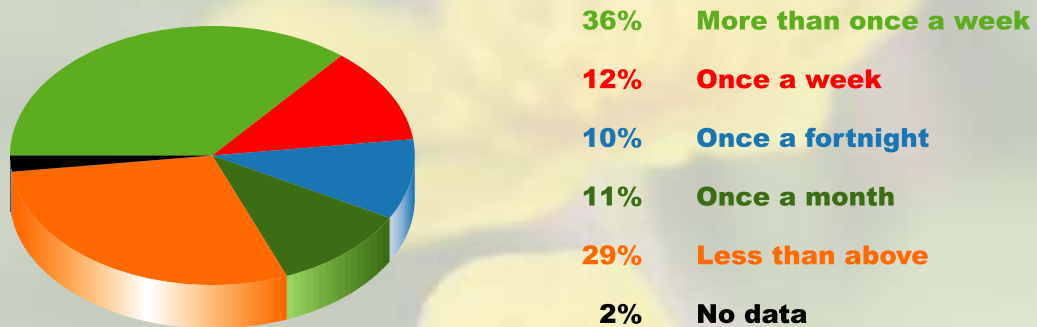
2% No

4% No opinion

1% No data

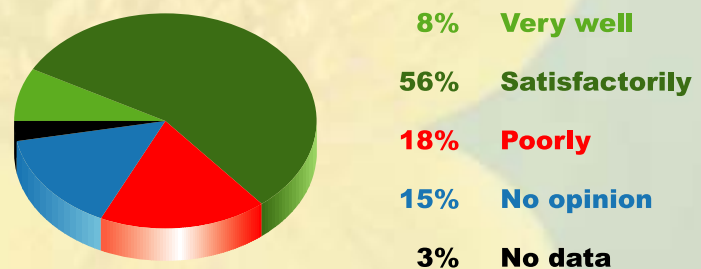
Responses to Question 11 clearly showed that parishioners enjoy the countryside, with a total of 69% using the local footpaths. A map showing the footpaths in the Parish has been published by the Parish Council, with funding and support from West Berkshire Council. A copy has been delivered to every household in the Parish.

Q11. Do you use the footpaths in and around the parish?



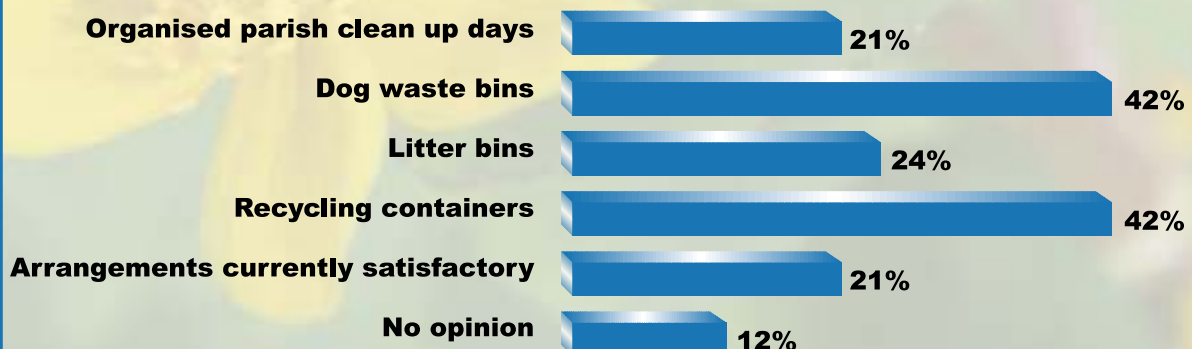
Responses to Question 12 indicated that 64% of residents consider the footpaths to be more than satisfactorily maintained.

Q12. How well do you consider the footpaths in and around the parish to be maintained?

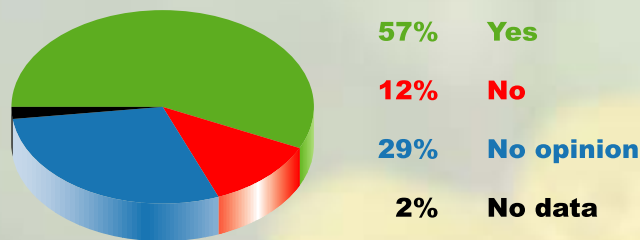


Question 13 listed ideas raised to help keep the Parish clean and tidy but none received the level of support sufficient to take them forward to the Action Plan. These ideas will be monitored for possible future consideration.

Q13. Do you think more should be done to keep the parish clean and tidy?



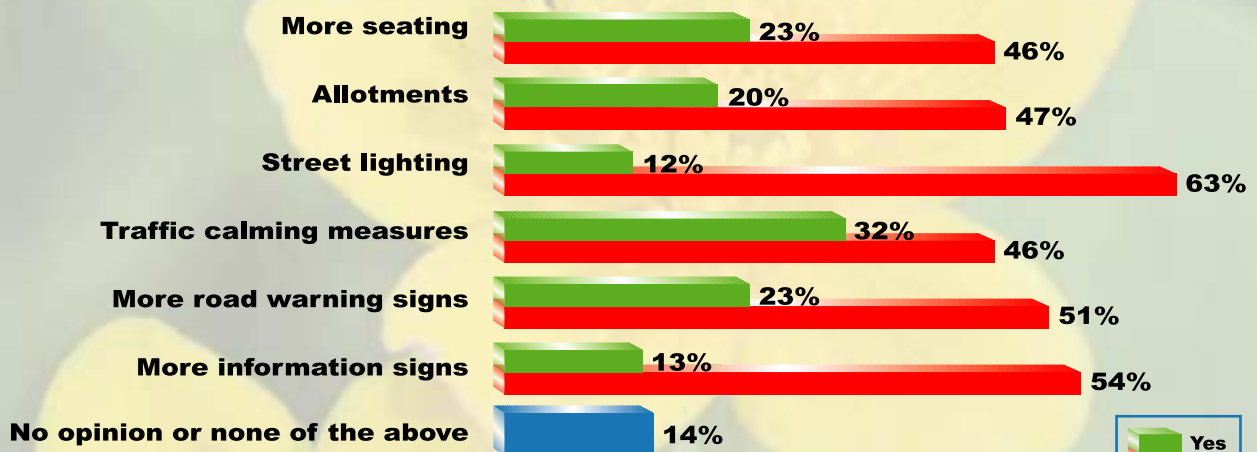
Q14. Would you be in favour of the overhead service cables in the parish being put underground?



Burying service cables underground received 57% support in response to Question 14 and this item is included in the Action Plan, with the utility providers being entreated to comply with this requirement whenever they renew any facilities.

Responses to Question 15 again indicated the wish of the community to retain the status quo in respect of the village character. It would appear there is little support for more seating or signage, and neither is there sufficient support for allotments, street lighting or traffic-calming measures.

Q15. Do you think there is a need for any of the following in the parish?



FLOODING

Although there had previously been some flooding in the centre of the village, the impact had been minimal and no comments regarding flood defences were raised prior to the 2007 Parish Plan survey being conducted. However, the torrential rainfall on 20th July 2007 (when a local farmer recorded 135mm falling in 18 hours) resulted in serious flooding within the village. A number of houses suffered damage, roads were blocked and the village was cut off for a short time. Because of the prospect of further flooding, representatives from the Parish Council and Parish Plan Steering Committee attended the District Parish Conference on flooding issues. As a result, Boxford Parish Council is now completing a 'Local Flood Plan'.

6. WATER MEADOWS

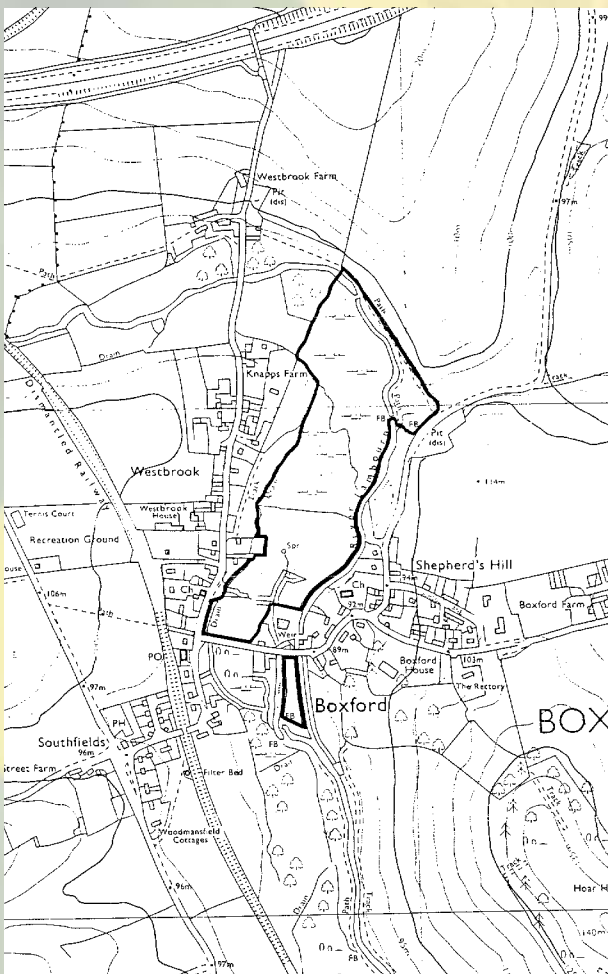
The Lambourn valley, with one of the loveliest streams in the United Kingdom running through it, offers many of the characteristic features of chalk stream valley landscapes. These are an important part of our national heritage and, in the case of Boxford, they include water meadows of great beauty and scientific importance.

The Boxford water meadows are home to numerous rare and endangered flora and fauna. They are also unusual in providing open countryside in the very centre of the village.

This wetland area has been designated both as a Special Area of Conservation under English and European Law, and most of it as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These designations give the water meadows special protection under the auspices of Natural England.



PART OF THE WATER MEADOWS



BOUNDARIES OF WATER MEADOWS SSSI

The map shows the boundaries of the SSSI which took effect from 1986. The area was classified as an SSSI because of the unique combination of 17 species of grass, 7 species of sedge and 76 species grassland herbs.

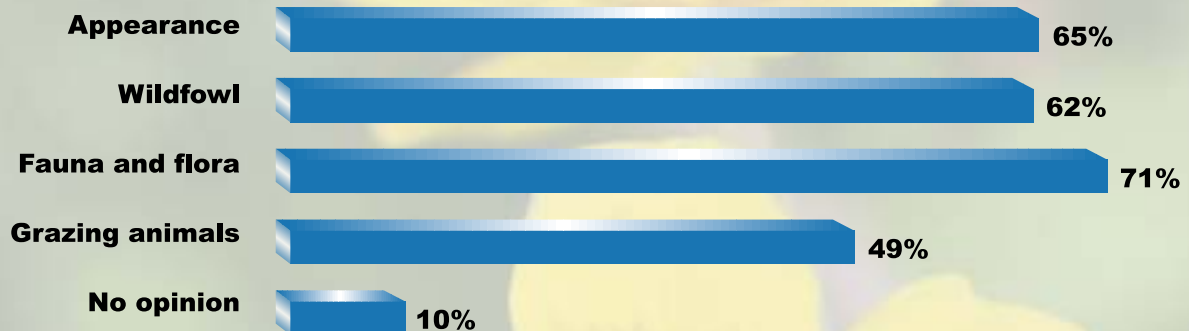
Several of these species are normally associated with ancient meadows with a long history of freedom from 'improvement' and disturbance. Additionally, the insect fauna was noted as being diverse with rare species of beetles, such as *Cantharis Pallida* and *Subcoccinella 24-punctata*, being found.

When the population of the Desmoullian Whorl snail (*Vertigo Moulinsina*) along the route of the Newbury by-pass was threatened, additional survey work was carried out along the Lambourn and Kennet rivers in 1996. It was found that the species was "widespread and very common" in the wetter areas of the Boxford water meadows.

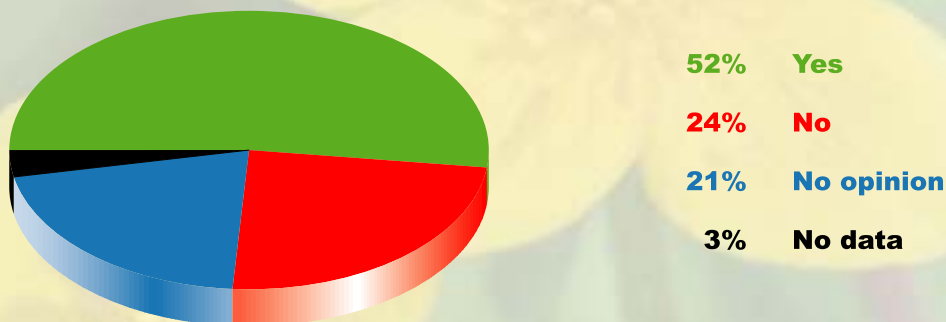
The little egret, water rail, snipe and other common species of birds associated with marshy land have all been observed in the water meadows.

Two questions on the water meadows were asked in the 2007 survey. Question 16 explored the respective importance to the residents of their various features and Question 17 asked residents if they were interested in having more information on the history and nature of the water meadows. The charts below show that respondents felt the flora and fauna were the most important features (71%), but there were high scores for every feature including general appearance. A majority (52%) would like to have more information on the history and nature of the water meadows.

Q16. What is important to you about the water meadows?



Q17. Would you be interested in more information and the history of the water meadows?



The level of support in relation to both questions was sufficient to take the points forward to the Action Plan. It should be noted that the Boxford water meadows are privately owned and therefore any project has to have the agreement, commitment and support of the landowners concerned.

7. HISTORY

Before the advent of man, the area was covered by a warm sea, evidenced by rare microscopic sea creatures found in one of Boxford's chalk pits, and now protected by Natural England as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Early man was drawn to settle here because of the clear water supply and river ford. Neolithic flints have been found across the Parish from Westbrook to Ownham. Earthworks at Borough Hill near Wyfield Farm are evidence of an Iron Age settlement and Romans who lived alongside the locals left many relics across the whole Parish as well as a network of roads, of which Ermin Street is the most notable. Much of the land in the Parish was subsequently owned by Abingdon Abbey, later confiscated by Henry VIII and leased, sold or gifted during his reign and that of Elizabeth I.

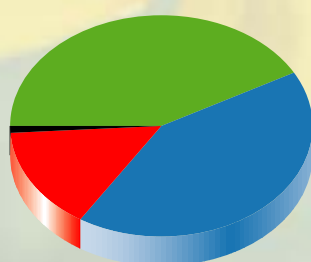
Up to World War I, Boxford was a largely self sufficient settlement with farmers, bakers, brewers, millers, wheelwrights, cartwrights, ropemakers etc. and many people in domestic service. Church registers and census data record the beginning of the end of the old social order following the war, with far fewer people in domestic service and many trades disappearing.

After the First World War, villagers tried unsuccessfully to raise enough funds for a lych-gate as a memorial for those villagers who had given their lives and built a modest war memorial instead. A Millennium Project refurbished this war memorial, and built the intended lych-gate together with a brick and flint wall which re-established the boundary between the churchyard and village green. Additionally, in collaboration with local school children, research was undertaken into the lives of the men named on the memorial. This was subsequently published in leaflet form and distributed to every household. Parishioners also contributed to a substantial time capsule which was buried under the large threshold stone in the centre of the lych-gate.



WAR MEMORIAL

Q18. Are you interested in preserving the history of the parish?



42% Very interested

42% Quite interested

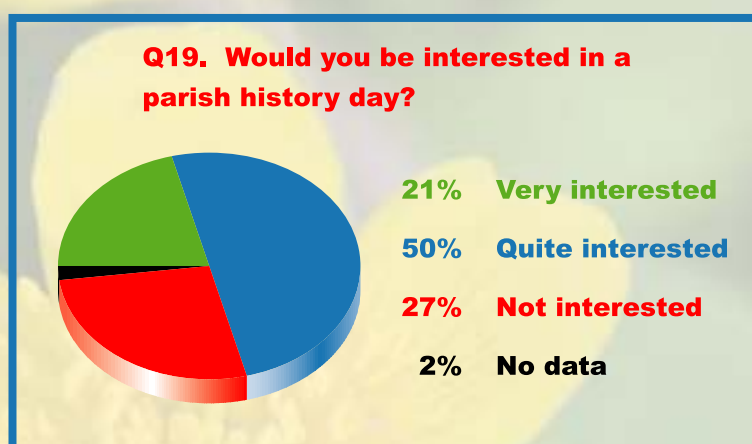
15% Not interested

1% No data

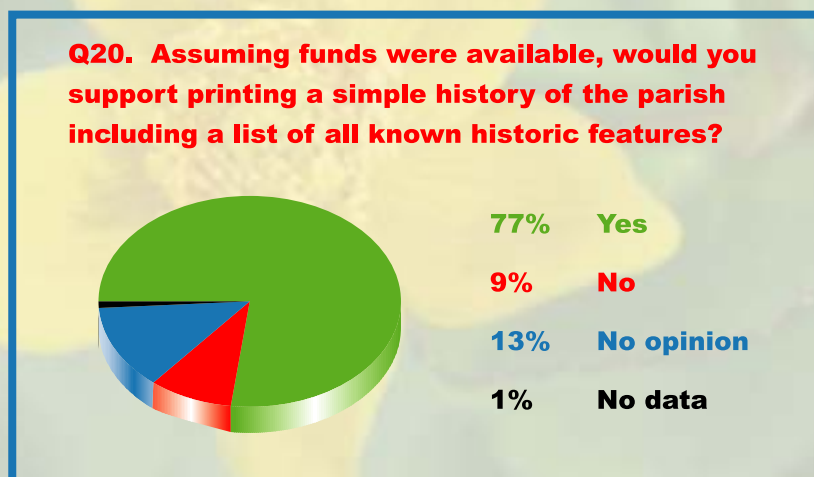
With previous historical projects having been well supported by the community, it was not surprising to find an 84% response to Question 18 in favour of preserving the history of the Parish. It is gratifying to note that this interest came from all age ranges, from 11 to over 85 years; indeed, in every age band more than 50% interest was recorded.

Preserve parish history - age group	11-17	18-24	25-44	45-60	61-64	65-75	76-85	Over 85	No data	Total
Very interested	8	5	34	39	14	16	6	3		125
Quite interested	4	9	29	44	9	19	10	2		126
Not interested	5	3	11	15	3	3	4		1	45
No data	1			1			1		1	4
Total	18	17	74	99	26	38	21	5	2	300
% interested	67%	82%	85%	84%	88%	92%	76%	100%		

Additionally, 71% expressed interest in a Parish History Day, as shown in the responses to Question 19.

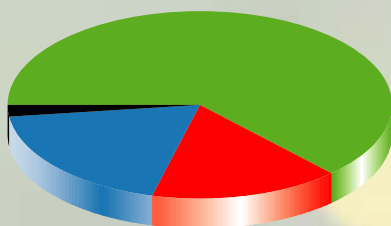


Boxford Barleycorn, a history of Boxford written by Elsie Huntley in the late sixties and published in 1970 by the Abbey Press, has long been out of print. It is a gold mine of information for those lucky few who have copies. It is therefore not surprising that 77% of respondents to Question 20 supported printing a simple history of the Parish, including a list of its historic features.



Boxford has 50 Grade II listed properties ranging from tombs, outbuildings, houses and the church together with many other sites of special historical interest, a considerable number for such a small parish.

Q21. Assuming funds were available, would you support renovating the old parish room / schoolroom located in the churchyard, to provide a small parish museum?



63% Yes
16% No
19% No opinion
2% No data

The Parish is very fortunate in that many documents of historical interest are held locally; however, few people see them and strong interest was shown in having them easily accessible. The response to Question 21 indicates that 63% support renovating the old parish room/school room and turning it into a small museum. .



OLD PARISH ROOM

As a result of the level of interest in and support for the topics covered in Questions 19 -21, they have been carried forward to the Action Plan.

8. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

There is evidence of a church in Boxford from as early as the 11th century. Like most country churches of its time, the original St. Andrew's was considerably smaller and simpler than it is today, comprising only a nave and chancel. The present building dates from around 1225 and was mainly built from local flint, although there are indications that the east chancel wall may be of earlier Saxon origin.

In the 15th century, rebuilding work was carried out to the nave and chancel, and above the arch to the chancel a fresco was painted depicting a Tudor coat of arms, part of which is visible today. The first reference to a tower also dates from this time but it collapsed in 1667 and was rebuilt in 1692. The porch was added in the middle of the 18th century.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

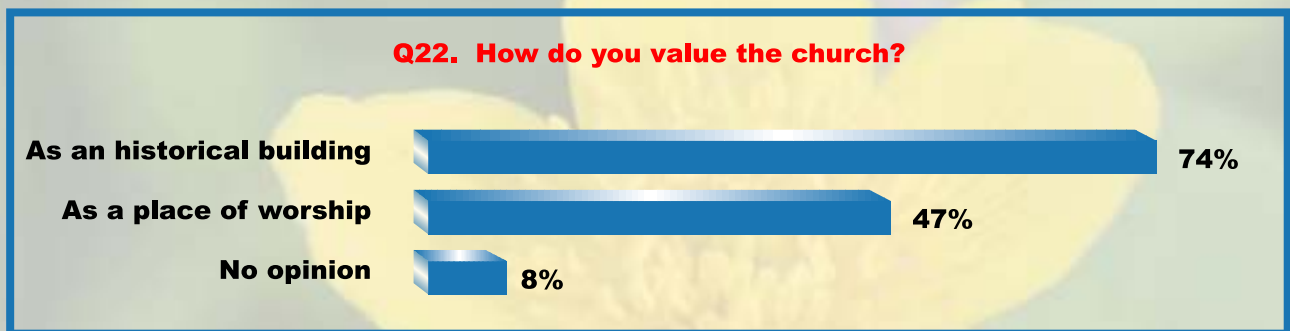
The church was significantly extended and remodelled in 1841, when the north aisle and vestry were added. However, by 1900 it had fallen into a bad state of repair and underwent a major restoration in 1907/8.

In 1967 the church was listed as a Grade II* building and as such is considered to be of national importance, being one of only 4% of all similarly listed buildings in England.

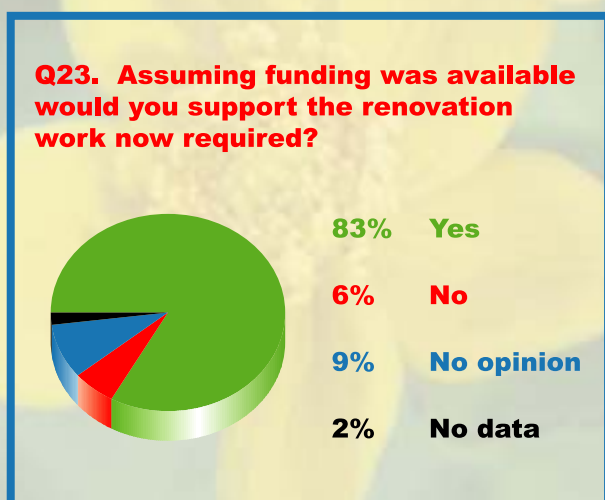
Unfortunately, the fabric of the church again requires serious maintenance. During the last restoration, cement rendering was applied possibly in an attempt to overcome internal rising damp. This has not been successful, as the damp is trapped in by the impervious rendering. Specialist advice suggests that this rendering should be removed and either replaced with a breathable lime mortar or, preferably if the original building materials are reasonably satisfactory, the walls could be restored to their original appearance and re-pointed.

The main cross beam supporting the tower roof also needs replacing, as does the lead roof covering. Some of the stonework around the windows is in need of attention and the interior of the church is well overdue for redecoration.

While carrying out this restoration work, it would be possible to incorporate a toilet and a kitchenette, which would greatly add to the versatility of the building. The extra facilities would certainly be appreciated for family services and special services such as weddings and funerals. They would also enable the church to be used more frequently as a venue for such village events as would benefit from the good acoustics, the size and the character of the building.



Question 22 of the survey explored the value the community placed upon the church. The results shown in the bar chart indicate that 74% of respondents valued the church as a historical building, although somewhat fewer, 47%, valued it as a place of worship. Support for the need to renovate the church received a very positive 83%, as the chart for Question 23 shows.



St. Andrew's is managed by the Parochial Church Council (PCC), which represents the laity. Together with the Rector, the PCC is responsible for all matters relating to the church, including the maintenance of the church fabric. Given the considerable support for the renovation work, the PCC and the Church Architect approached the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in Oxford, the governing body which controls all work to be carried out to local churches. The DAC has subsequently indicated its support for the proposed work.

As a result of this support from the community and the DAC, the renovation work is included in the Action Plan.

9. VILLAGE HALL AND RECREATION GROUND

The village hall was built by public subscription and the land was given by deed of gift in 1936 by Major H.L. Archer-Houblon of Welford Park. The land for the Recreation Ground was given to the village in 1947 by Mrs. Joan E. Palmer, the wife of one of the executors of the late Mr.H. Peake of Westbrook House.



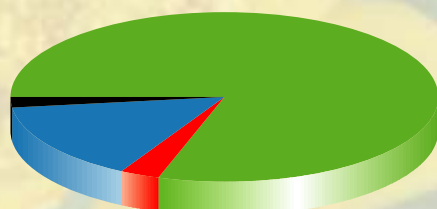
VILLAGE HALL

The current management of the hall and the recreation ground and associated facilities is organised by the Village Hall Committee. This committee oversees the accounts, organises general maintenance and administers the hiring of the hall and playing field. It also organises some of the village events, such as the flower show and the senior citizens' and children's Christmas parties.

The most regular current users of the hall are the Teddy Bears Pre-School, the Panda Club playgroup and the weekly bingo club. The hall is also occasionally used for private parties.

It now requires considerable maintenance, which is placing a burden on finances. Recently, the electrics and plumbing have been upgraded to satisfy legal requirements for the pre-school activities but the hall is generally in poor condition and without an adequate heating system.

Q24. What would be your opinion if it was decided to source funding to refurbish or rebuild the village hall?



80%	Approve
3%	Disapprove
15%	No opinion
2%	No data

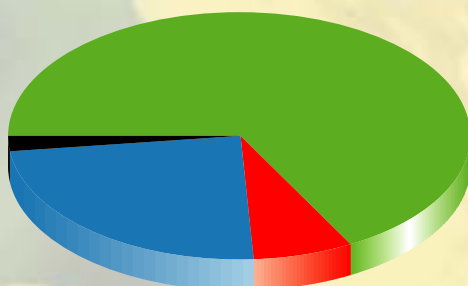
The 2007 survey sought the opinion of the community with regard to either refurbishing or rebuilding the village hall. Responses to Question 24 showed 80% in favour of sourcing funding for this course of action. As a result of this strong support, the topic has been included in the Action Plan.

The recreation ground and pavilion are important parish amenities and have regular users in the form of two local football teams. However, the pavilion is in need of upgrading to include shower and toilet facilities and, to avoid dangerous congestion on Rood Hill, off-road parking is required. Responses to Question 25 indicated that 67% approved the proposal for refurbishment of the pavilion and development of a car park. The strong support given has led to this topic, too, being included in the Action Plan.



RECREATION GROUND AND PAVILION

Q25. What would be your opinion if the pavilion in the recreation ground was refurbished and a proper car park was developed?



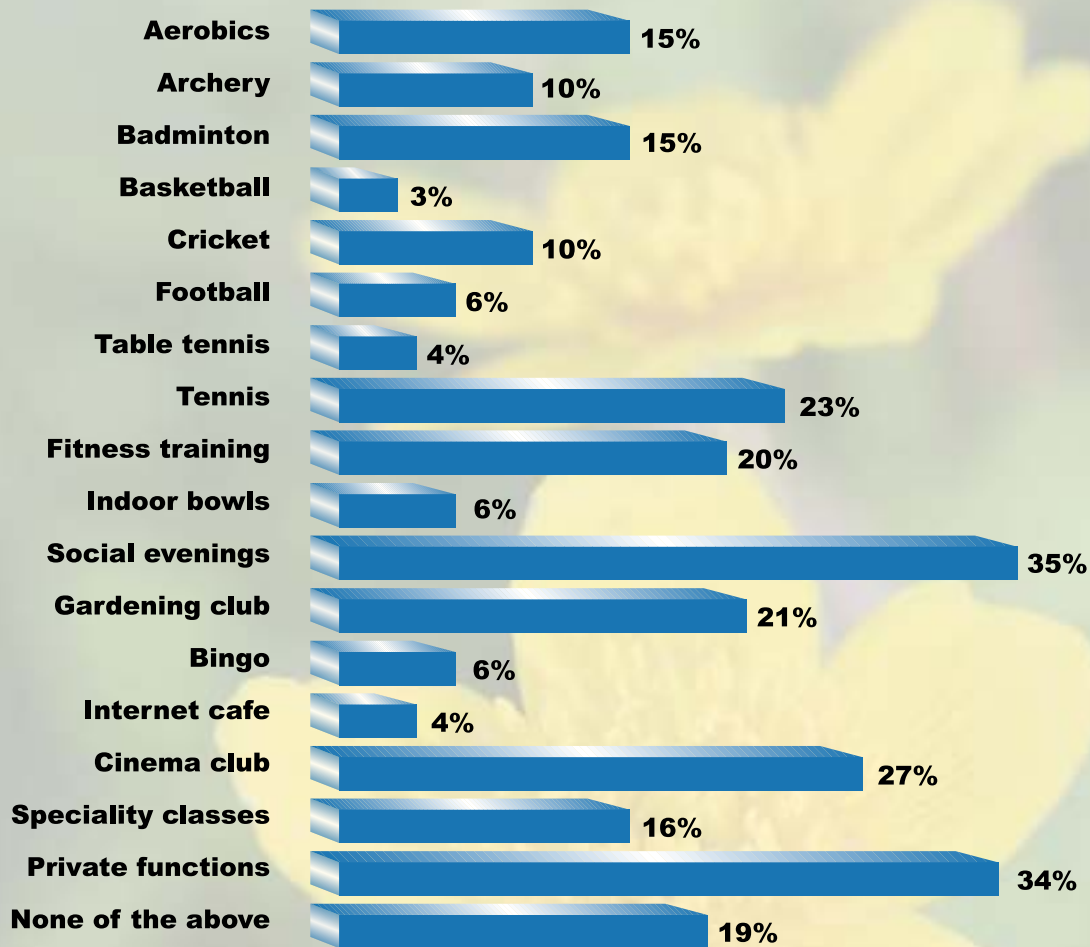
67% Approve
7% Disapprove
24% No opinion
2% No data



TENNIS COURTS

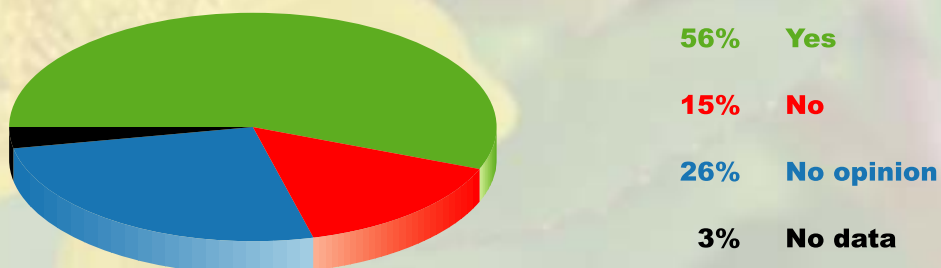
A redeveloped village hall could provide the focal point currently lacking in the Parish and an upgraded pavilion greater opportunity for sports activities. The activities listed below in Question 26 were derived from comments received from the pilot questionnaire and the 'walk & talk' sheets. Any new work to the village hall and the pavilion should take into consideration the following results and the wishes of current and prospective users.

Q26. Assuming that there were the necessary facilities at either the village hall or the recreation ground, would you be interested in taking part or in using any of the following?

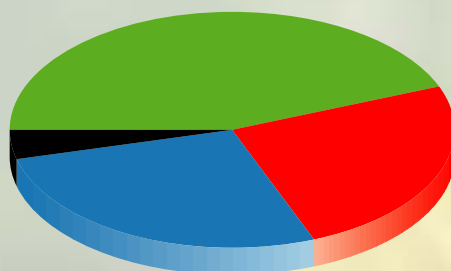


Questions 27, 28 and 29 explored the community's ideas for recreational activities. 56% indicated a preference for annual village events, such as the village party and duck race. This conclusion has been carried forward to the Action Plan.

Q27. Would you like to have more annual village events such as the village party or duck race?

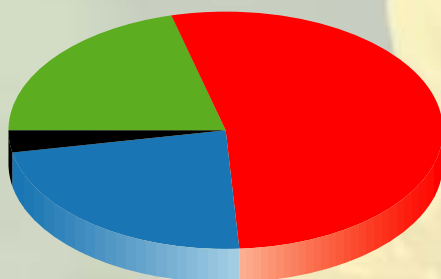


Q28. Would you be interested in more regular social events using the village hall, such as tea dances, themed nights or film nights?



44% Yes
25% No
27% No opinion
4% No data

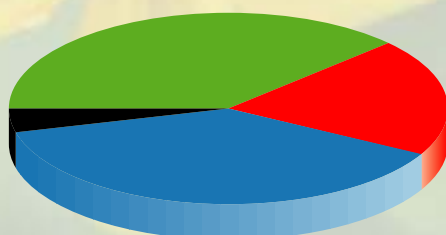
Q29. Would you be interested in participating in organised village outings?



21% Yes
53% No
23% No opinion
3% No data

Currently, there is no single web site for the Parish; each organisation has developed its own using the 'Action for All' site provided by West Berkshire Council. Question 30 considered the possibility of a single parish web site. However, the response was only 38% in favour. This item should be further monitored by the Parish Council and, if circumstances change, reconsidered.

Q30. Web sites for the Parish Council, church and Parish Plan have been set up under the Berkshire Community "Action for All" plan. Would you like to have a single dedicated web site for the Parish?



38% Yes
20% No
38% No opinion
4% No data