

# **Bushley Survey 2014 Report - October 2014**

## **Report on behalf of BUSHLEY PARISH COUNCIL.**

The Survey response was 46% (117 questionnaires were distributed (76 on line, 41 by hard copy)). It is known that a number of completed questionnaires were not received by Google Survey due to IT problems. The Survey response in 1992 was 98%, but that survey was carried out on a house to house with personal interviews being conducted where necessary. The response to a purely 'voluntary' system does indicate the level of engagement from residents, but is not nearly so effective at harvesting meaningful data. This needs to be considered when implementing the next village survey.

Consequently, this level of response limits the findings and analysis of the survey accordingly.

### **A1/A4: How old are you? / How many people live in your household?**

76% of respondents are aged over 50 years and 66% live in single or dual occupancy households. This suggests that most 'young families' did not engage with the Survey.

### **A2: Gender.**

59% of respondents were male, 41% female. This appears to buck the national trend.

### **A3/A5: Occupation / How long have you lived in the Parish?**

70% of respondents have lived in Bushley for 11 years or more, 32% are retired.

### **B1: Do you work the village?**

26% of respondents work within the village, 22% at home, 49% (est.) work outside the village. This (with the number of retirees) suggests that IT connectivity is an important issue and no doubt will become increasingly so.

### **B2/B3: Is Broadband speed a problem to you? / Details of ISP, connectivity speed.**

58% of respondents had problems with their broadband speed, 42% did not. The PC is monitoring the Worcestershire Superfast Broadband proposals, at present Bushley is not included in the proposed roll out. Also, the PC is investigating the potential use of the new Bredon School fibre optic service that runs through the village. It is likely that a pressure group of those who require faster broadband (for business use for example) will have to constitute itself to force this issue through with the relevant parties.

### **B4: Are there issues in the village that should be addressed?**

The main issues within the village that need to be addressed can be summarised as:

1. Road repairs and pot holes. 2. Hedge cutting. 3. Speeding. 4. Dog mess.

The PC is constantly pursuing the responsible parties with regard to items 1, 2, and 3. It should be pointed out that every resident can report these issues and their location directly via the Worcestershire Hub. With regard to item 4 every resident needs to exert their influence over dog owners to do the right thing and to take the offending article home for disposal.

### **B5: Would you be happy for the Precept to be increased to fund projects?**

48% of respondents agreed that the Precept could be increased to fund village projects, 52% did not. In principle, the PC is against committing current and future residents to increased levels of local taxation (to pay off long term loans for example). But any such proposal could be considered on a case by case basis that finally would have to be decided upon by a referendum of all council tax payers.

### **B6: Do you think that there should be any new building development in the village?**

68% of respondents thought that some form of building development would be appropriate within the village, 30% were against any further building development. Those in favour were predominantly concerned with limited development of single/affordable/low cost housing. The current MHDC planning policy applied to Bushley is that it is an 'unsustainable' village where no new building development is to be permitted. The majority view of the PC is that this policy is not in the best interest of the village as a viable community and that appropriate development (of single dwellings and redevelopment of redundant buildings) should be considered on a case by case basis.

### **B7: Do you have any skills or equipment useful in an emergency situation?**

Those offering skills and assets for use in an emergency situation need to make themselves known to the PC for inclusion in the Village Emergency Plan.

**B8: Are you interested in helping in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan?**

48% of respondents would be willing to help in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Bushley, 52% would not. The PC is currently investigating the implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The appropriate planning officer from MHDC is attending the October Parish Council meeting to discuss the issue. It should be pointed out that a mandate from the residents much greater than that of the survey response would be required to carry through a Neighbourhood Plan.

**B9: What is your 'vision' for the future of Bushley?**

The predominant 'vision for the future' of Bushley put forward by the respondents can be summarised as follows: 'the village should retain its current character, but should evolve organically, with small scale, sustainable, affordable housing where appropriate, aimed at younger families. The PC agrees with these aspirations and is keen to enhance the character and viability of the village.'

## **Report on behalf of BUSHLEY CRICKET CLUB**

The cricket club viewed the responses with interest but found that there was no overwhelming trend or majority in many cases. As a result the conclusion had to be that we are doing most things we need to but some small, cost effective changes could bring benefit to existing members and attract a few more to get involved.

It was viewed that there was a limited opportunity to increase participation on the cricket side of things with very little interest in a colts development team or any others taking part in the cricket side of things. Clearly this is the main reason for the existence of the cricket club so this is as a disappointment. It is imperative for the long term future of the club that we get more youth into the team and more general participation and we would invite more to be involved. The future of the club is youth involvement. The club will be discussing how best to increase participation, using the survey results as a useful starting position.

The social side was more encouraging with plenty of people happy with the existing opportunities provided by the club and one or two other types of social event were shown to be popular and will be explored. There is a need to improve the facilities to make them a little warmer, cleaner, lighter and inviting but these changes were relatively minimal and reasonably affordable. The cricket club will work towards those changes as time and budget allows. Specifically we will be working on improving the kitchen and toilets, making them warmer. New flooring has already been put down in areas of the club and we are looking at solutions to increase the size of the pavilion by having a moveable wall where the away team changing rooms are to allow for an extend main area when the changing rooms are not in use. Without a pub in the village we do need to do more to provide events. We are pleased that events held are well received and valued in the village. The quiz nights are difficult to predict with numbers varying significantly from quiz to quiz.

We will need to advertise social events more thoroughly to ensure maximum exposure and participation, and it is important to ensure that we work with the other groups in the village to ensure events are efficiently spaced out to avoid clashes and feel a joint village diary would be of benefit to that end. It is important that all groups work together to move things forward.

We were pleased to be involved in the survey process, and whilst there is no significant trend to allow the club to improve or meet a specific additional need, it hopefully means we are doing a good job and doing the things people in the village want and need from us in general.

## **Report on behalf of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL and Chris Moss**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) that governs the life of St Peter's Church has welcomed the range of comments made in the 'church section' of the recent parish survey and is actively considering every point that has been raised. This is work in progress and will take some time to complete. However, we thought it worthwhile making an initial response to some of the issues, principally by way of clarification of what is both legally and practically possible. It is not immediately obvious how the Church of England 'works' so I hope what follows will help achieve a wider understanding.

**D1: The Church is unlocked each day. Have you ever visited the Church?**

Good to know that the open church is welcomed.

**D2: If you have been in the church what was the reason?**

Positive comments identify varied reasons for visiting.

**D3: Do the times of the regular services suit you and your family? D4: Alternative suggestions.**

As St Peter's Church is part of a group of four parishes (known as a Benefice), and sharing one vicar, it is not easy to make an adjustment to the timing of any one service without the agreement of the other three churches! The principle we have adopted hitherto is to seek to be fair to all. For many years, each of the four churches had one service every Sunday at one of the following times: 8.00 am, 9.30 am, 11.15 am or 6.30 pm, by rotation. In more recent years, the pattern has been reduced from 16 services per month to 14, allowing us a little more room for manoeuvre. In response to a suggestion made by parishioners, the PCC is proposing to move the Family Service from 11.15 am on the first Sunday to 9.30 am on the second Sunday. This will be done on an experimental basis, starting in January 2015. It may be that some people will find it easier to attend at the earlier time, as indicated in the survey, and we would welcome feedback on that change in due course.

**D5: Do you attend a church outside the village?**

Again the role of the Benefice was discussed and the proximity to Tewkesbury and the Abbey.

**D6: Opportunities to financially support church funds.**

The members of the PCC were delighted to note that 9 parishioners had indicated they were prepared to make a regular donation to the work of St Peter's, and it looked as if they were not already doing so! If anyone reading this is among the nine, would you please let me know by any means available to you? I will certainly call round to your home and discuss with you how this might be achieved. Voluntary giving of this kind is exactly what we are looking for and is the very best way to ensure the survival of such a very special place as St Peter's. I can be contacted by letter to the Church Office or the Vicarage, by telephone (833152 or 833256), by text (07590 573519), or by email ([cmoss.lcbq@gmail.com](mailto:cmoss.lcbq@gmail.com)). I look forward to hearing from you!

**D7: Suggestions for using the church building.**

The PCC can understand fully why some respondents thought the church should take a more commercial view and advertise St Peter's as an ideal wedding venue, coupled with the possibility of a reception at the Village Hall next door. The difficulty with this is simply the law of the land! Marriages cannot be conducted in a parish church unless at least one of the parties has a 'qualifying connection' with the parish. Traditionally, this has been residence. That is, current parishioners have a legal right to be married in their own parish church, but not in the church of another parish. More recently, this right has been extended to those who have parents who live, or have lived, in the parish, and to those who have been Baptised or Confirmed in the parish church. Another way to establish a qualifying connection is to attend worship regularly for at least six months, although this would weigh against any plan to sell a Bushley 'wedding experience.'

The Law aside, my own view is that, however tempting the raising of additional revenue might be, the priority of every Anglican parish church is to minister to its own parishioners, not to people from other parts of the country!

The use of parish churches for a wider range of activities than simply public worship has long been the norm in the Church of England and St Peter's is no exception. We have held concerts, both 'classical' and 'popular'; wine-tasting evenings; flower festivals; exhibitions; church tours; and a range of other fundraising events, and hope to be able to do more in the future. Although not everyone will be entirely happy with this trend, we believe it is right to encourage the best possible use of this key public building, identifying those activities which seem most suited to its unique ambience and character. All the suggestions made will be carefully considered.

**D8: The future of Bushley Church in 10 years time.**

The main point I would wish to emphasise in response to the many comments made under this heading is that Christians make (or ought to make) a clear distinction between the church as 'building' and the church as 'community'. Unfortunately, it is now virtually impossible to hold to that distinction in general conversation and a majority of the comments made in response to the survey seem to refer to the church as a building. I would suggest that the future of that building is largely in the hands of parishioners. Bushley is a relatively prosperous parish and a number of its residents can afford to maintain a historic church building if they choose to do so. The PCC will be considering carefully how to encourage increased financial support from those parishioners who wish to see the building continue to be available, whether they visit it regularly or only occasionally. A 'Friends of St Peter's' scheme is currently on the drawing board.

However, the future of the church as a community of faith is an entirely different question. In my view, this community will continue to function for as long as there are Christians living in Bushley, whether or not they have a particular building to meet in!

May I again say how grateful we are to all those who took the trouble to make comments and suggestions? They have been of immense value to us in considering how best to meet local needs, and we shall be reporting back again after a pause for thought.

## Report on behalf of the editor of the BUSHLEY NEWS

As editor I am delighted that 94% of respondents say that they read Bushley News, and that of those who read it 98% feel that it serves a useful purpose. The editorial philosophy is to produce each month a magazine that is available for the village to advertise forthcoming events or to write up happenings in the village. But rather than limit it to these important matters I try to encourage interesting articles that should be informative for all villagers. It appears that we are on the right track to achieve these aims.

## Report on behalf of the VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

**F1: The Village Hall Committee are undertaking a programme of improvements to the Hall, details of which were outlined in the Bushley News. What improvements would you like to see?**

It was encouraging to see the large amount of responses to this question and the wide range of positive and negative comments, this enables the Committee to try and direct available funds towards meeting your expectations. Many of the points raised (both + and -) have already been actioned with Phase 1 of the improvements or are in line with the plans for Phase 2. Additionally, we are carrying out interim work that addresses more affordable improvements, e.g. improved heating, better tables and chairs. A more detailed list of the points raised and the Committee response will be published by the PCC later on.

**F2: Currently we have Bowls, Pilates, Step Aerobics, Zumba, Cookery, Greenwoods Therapeutic Gardens and a variety of private functions. Please list below other activities you would like to see take place in the Hall e.g. table tennis:**

A good level of response with some very good suggestions. The majority favoured sports or entertainment activities and the hall is well suited to these activities. However, these activities require people to organise, manage and promote the event, this should not fall to the Committee who are busy fund raising, project managing and overseeing the current activities in the hall, but this is an ideal opportunity for someone new to take on and see through to completion.

*"School holiday club for the children, Activities for children (sports)"*

This a good idea but is difficult to set up, meet with current legislation on child safety, CRB checks, duty of care, and the training for the people running these events. Are there enough people outside of the Committee who would be prepared to give up their time to run the event and attend the necessary training courses to become suitable qualified?

*"Shop, small business centre, day centre, increased use by Greenwoods, starter units, walking centre, film club, cycling centre etc At the moment it is a white elephant, and ugly. It fulfils the useful functions you have listed, which cater for the village's health, but these could equally be catered for in a more open access Church building. A village hall of some sort could then provide employment and other local facilities, but the village as presently constituted is not large enough to support it as well as the church. If the church were able to modify its interior - move the pews, it could be made into a much more attractive village hall, leaving the Village Hall site available for housing, which would increase the number of people in the village and make the public buildings more viable and enjoyable."*

The majority of these comments are disappointing; the village hall is part of the community and has consistently proved its usefulness. The Church and the Village Hall complement each other and the focus should be on retaining both, as each has a function that the other cannot provide. The church is an ideal venue for concerts and musical events due to its acoustics, but the idea of moving pews aside to conduct Zumba, carpet bowls and wedding receptions is impracticable (catering, toilets, disabled access?). The author identifies that we need a village hall so let's work on improving the one we have whilst still generating the funds we need for the upkeep of the church. If we are struggling to raise the necessary funds for the upkeep of the church now, how will the additional money be generated to fund and carry out the work required for the proposed change of use?

**F3: Would you like to help organise any activity in the Hall?**

**F4: Would you like to help as a volunteer in fundraising towards our refurbishment projects?**

The positive responses to both of these questions is good news, with help from other members of the village community it will be possible to organise many of the events mentioned in F2.