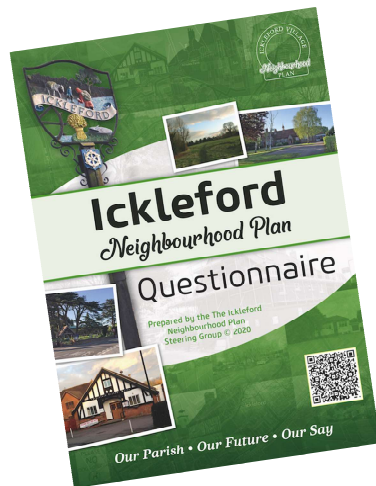




Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan

Questionnaire Results

Summary



Prepared by the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group - August 2021



Introduction



- Aim – to inform the development of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan
- Available online via Survey Monkey 27th October - 21st December 2020
- Hard copies were also available
- Extensively publicised via posters, banners, e-mail, Facebook and leaflet to every household

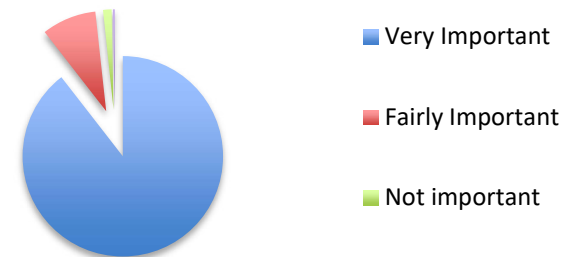
345 online responses and 10 hard copies received, a response rate of approximately 40%

Approach

- The questionnaire built on earlier consultation work
- It consisted of open and closed questions
- Responses to open questions were coded to identify shared concepts and draw out detail
- These concepts were reviewed and merged into more general themes. Frequency was noted, but not used statistically

Example of closed question and resulting chart

How important is it to you to minimise the impact of development on trees, hedges, verges, footpaths, bridleways, rivers, ponds and wildlife?



Example of open response question

Do you think public transport in the village could be improved? If so, what routes would you like to see?

More detail on the methodology and full results can be found on the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan website: icklefordnp.com



Survey Sections



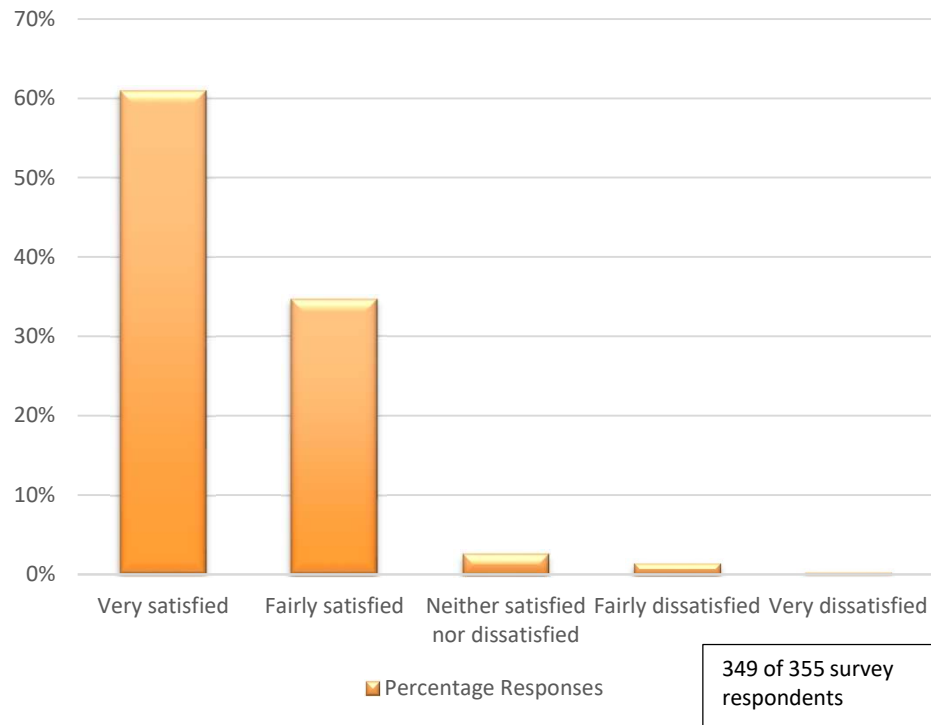
The survey contained the following sections:

1. What Ickleford means to you
2. Amenities and Facilities
3. Ickleford Primary School
4. Housing Development
5. Environment and Heritage
6. Economy
7. Transport
8. About your household
9. Final comments



1. What Ickleford means to you

Thinking of all aspects of living in Ickleford, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you and your household with living in the parish?



95% or residents are very or fairly satisfied with living in the parish



What Ickleford means to you – likes and concerns

Likes

- attractive accessible countryside
- location, close but separate to Hitchin
- small village feel
- sense of community
- strong central hub

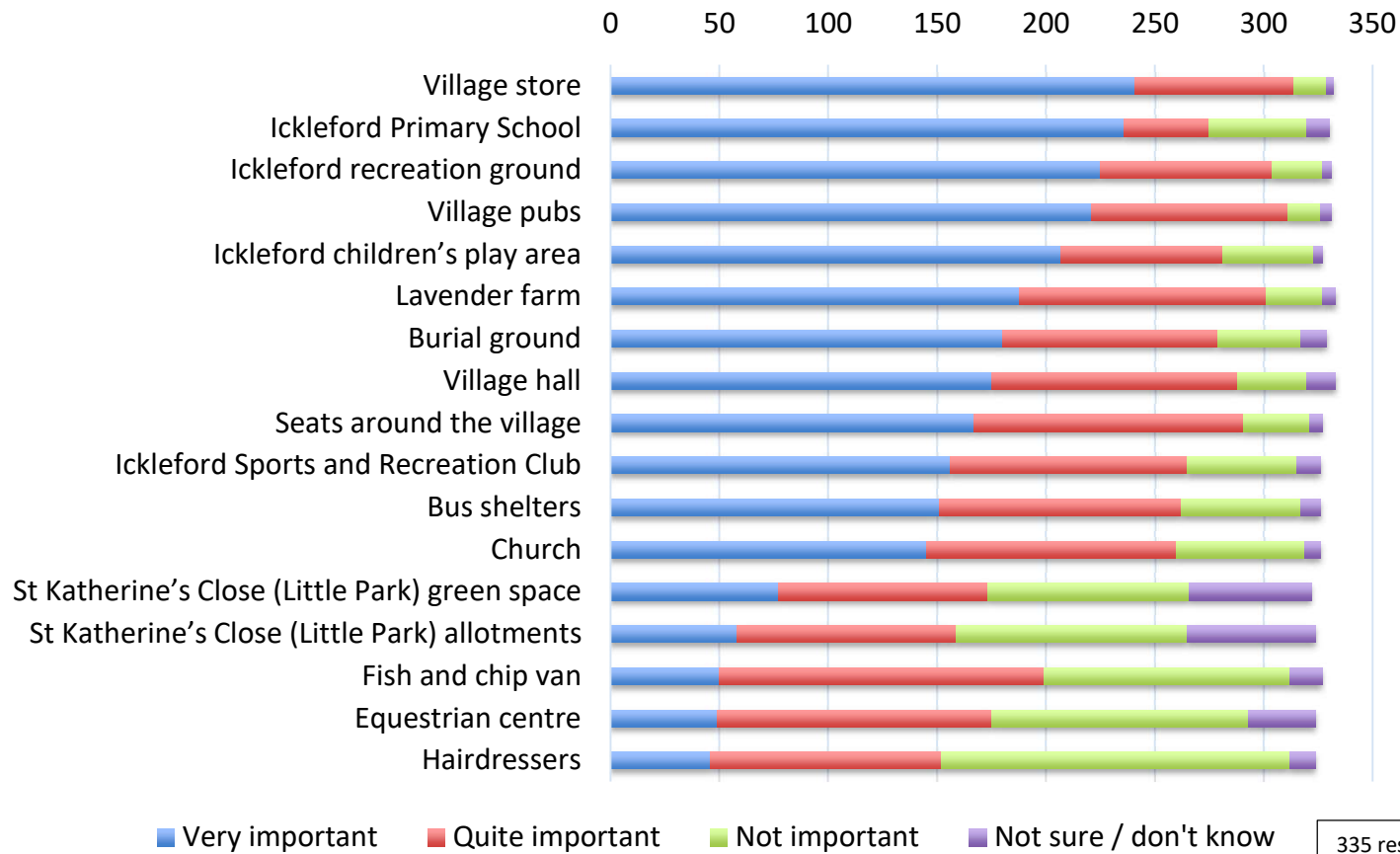
Concerns

- speed and volume of traffic
- some mentioned drug use and lack of policing
- impact of development and change

“It is a small friendly village with good community ties and facilities. It gives an entirely different feel compared to living in a town or city.”

2. Amenities and facilities - current

How important to you are the presence of the following facilities in the parish?



Very important



Very important



Amenities and facilities – wish list

Wish list

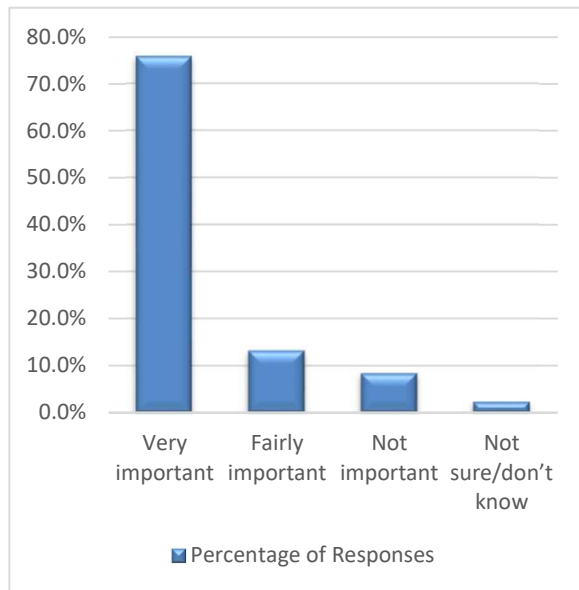
- Traffic and transport
 - parking, pedestrian safety
- Invest in environment and green spaces
- New retail
 - café/coffee shop or bakery
 - post office
 - larger shop
- New services, e.g. GP, pre-school
- Improve current facilities, e.g. Village Hall, Sports and Social Club, and School

“It would be nice to have a cafe, somewhere to meet that isn't a pub. There isn't anything for 11-18 year olds to meet indoors.”

“We would love a post office please!”

3. Ickleford Primary School

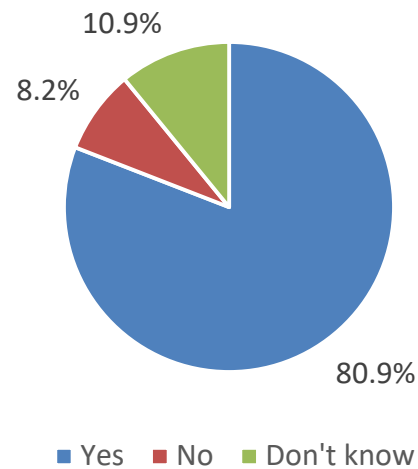
Keep school where it is?



331 respondents

How important to the character of the village do you think it is that the school remains in the existing location?

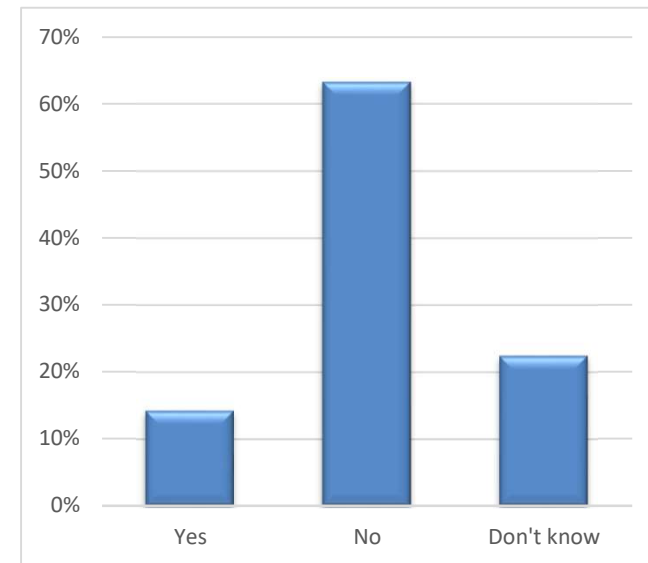
Expand/improve current site?



330 respondents

If additional adjacent land could be provided and it was technically feasible, would you support development of the current school site to either expand capacity or improve facilities?

Develop new site?



330 respondents

If new school places were needed, would you prefer to see the development of a new two-form entry school at the site east of the Bedford Road?



Ickleford Primary School - viewpoints

Strong opinions

- Position at heart of village considered integral to village character by many
- Building itself important
- Parking issues currently
- Encourage more walking and cycling
- Concern over safety and congestion at potential new site

If school were to move...

- Keep as a community asset
- Most do not want housing
- Shops, café, pre-school/nursery, health centre and recreation?

“it would be such a shame to see Ickleford school close. It is in the heart and history of Ickleford. I cannot think of a better use for the site.”

“The school should NOT move. It is an important historical site. Any child attending the school senses its history and family/village feel. At the very least it should remain as an Infant school .”

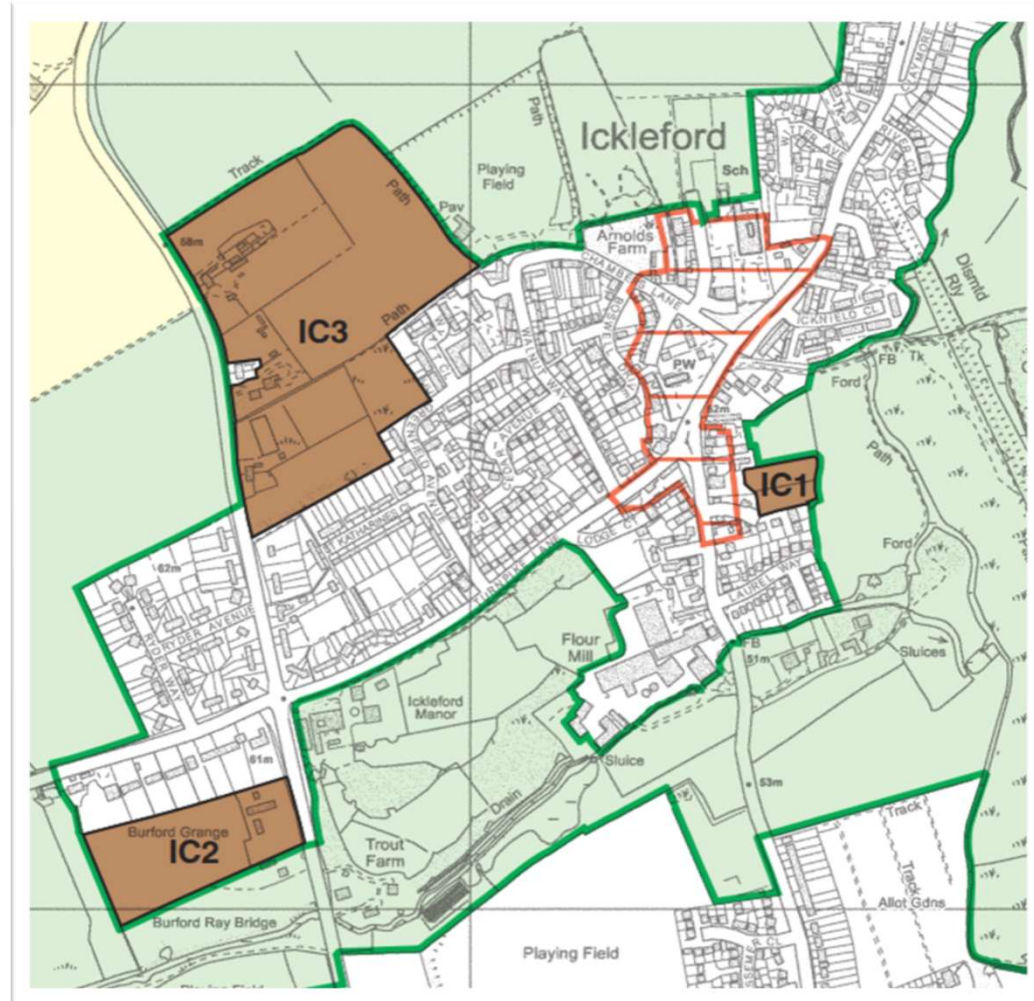
“The Vehicular Access to the existing School is very poor and not suitable for more use than it has at present.”

“More needs to be done to encourage parents to park at the sports and social club, and to encourage children and their parents to walk and cycle to school.”

4. Housing Development

New housing

- New development in the Parish and surrounding area is a source of concern for many residents
- The emerging Local Plan allocates sites for big increases in housing for the Parish
- Potential new development in the village itself includes:
 - IC1 (Duncots Close)
 - IC2 (Burford Grange area)
 - IC3 (Bedford Road)
 - possible development of the Ickleford Mill brownfield site.



From North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Proposed Submission Proposals Maps
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Housing Development – how much and where?

New housing – how much and where?

- 66% say restrict development beyond that in emerging Local Plan
- 45% say small infill developments may be appropriate
- 50% say brownfield sites should be considered
- Many want no further development at all
- Many consider some development inevitable, a few welcome it
- Housing affordability is currently an issue

“With an ageing population nationally more smaller properties/bungalows (needed) so larger family homes can be freed up “

“The style of buildings should be sympathetic to the village style”

“Empathetic, workable, infrastructure, a sustainable plan for all to enjoy the very thing that living in a village entails. Ickleford is a village not a small town.”



Housing Development - concerns

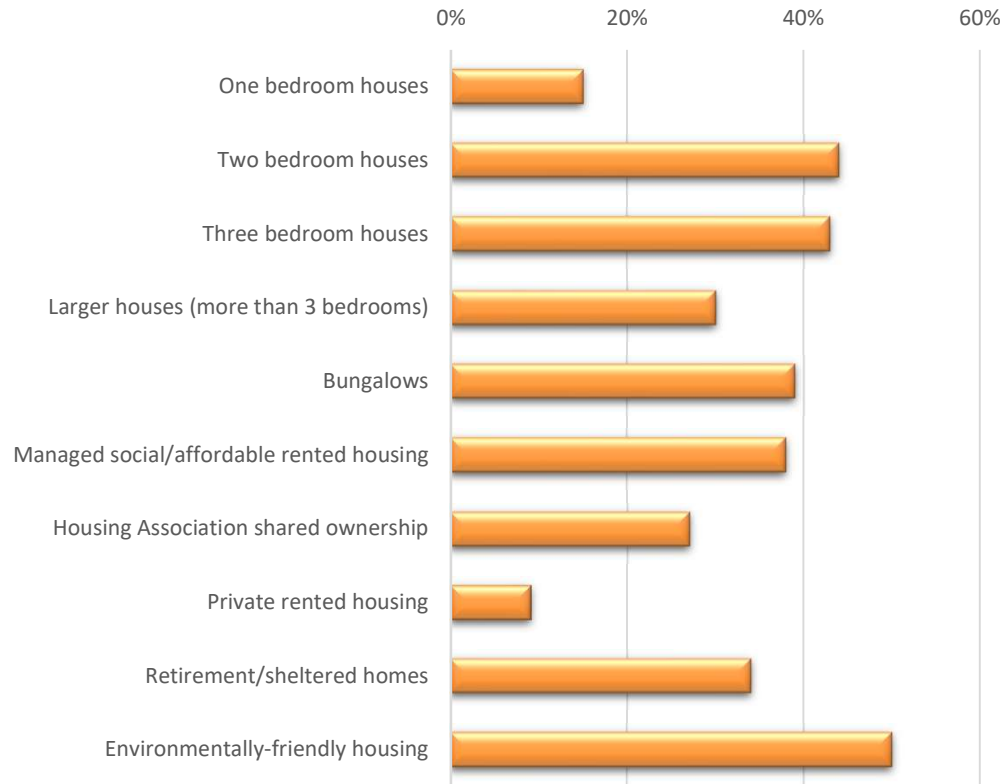
Concerns

- Fear of overdevelopment
- Insufficient infrastructure
- Potential merging with Hitchin
- Damage to village identity, character and community
- Negative effects on environment



Housing Development - accommodation types

What type of accommodation do you think will be needed in the parish in next 10 years?



NB respondents reported higher house ownership levels than found in 2011 census

The need for affordable housing may therefore be even greater than these findings suggest.

287 respondents



Housing Development - requirements

Development should be...

Well controlled
(maintain village
integrity and
identity)

Affordable for
local younger
residents, families
and downsizers

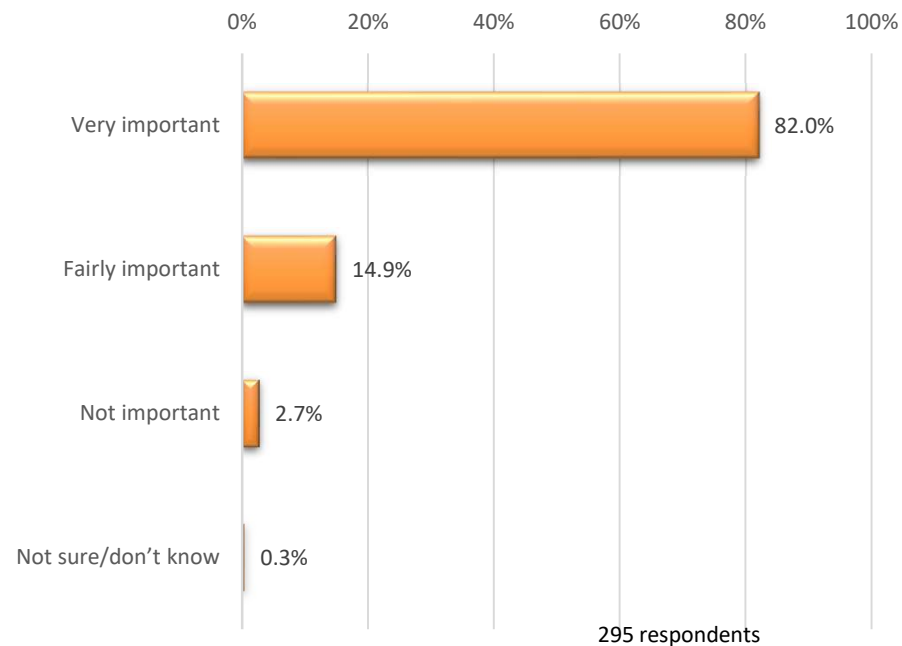
Sympathetic
to the village
character and
the natural
environment

Built to a high
standard and use
green technologies
and sustainable
resources

Made with
sufficient
resident and
visitor parking

5. Environment and Heritage

How important is it to you to that Ickleford village maintains a separate identity from neighbouring villages and towns?



Additionally:

- 88% - consider it very important to minimise impact on historic buildings and conservation area
- 90% - consider it very important to minimise impact on trees, hedges, verges, footpaths, bridleways, rivers, ponds and wildlife



Environment and heritage - insights

- Natural environment intrinsic to Ickleford's identity (footpaths, rivers, common land)
- COVID-19 lockdowns have increased appreciation of open spaces
- Path maintenance important. Better signage, information boards, more benches and bins?
- Potential conflict of use between walkers and cyclists. New cycle paths?
- Improve car parking? Good/bad?
- Dangers - Cadwell Bridge and Bedford Road crossings

"The countryside walks all around the edge of the village are beautiful, I can't pick a favourite & I'd be sad to see any of the fields built on."

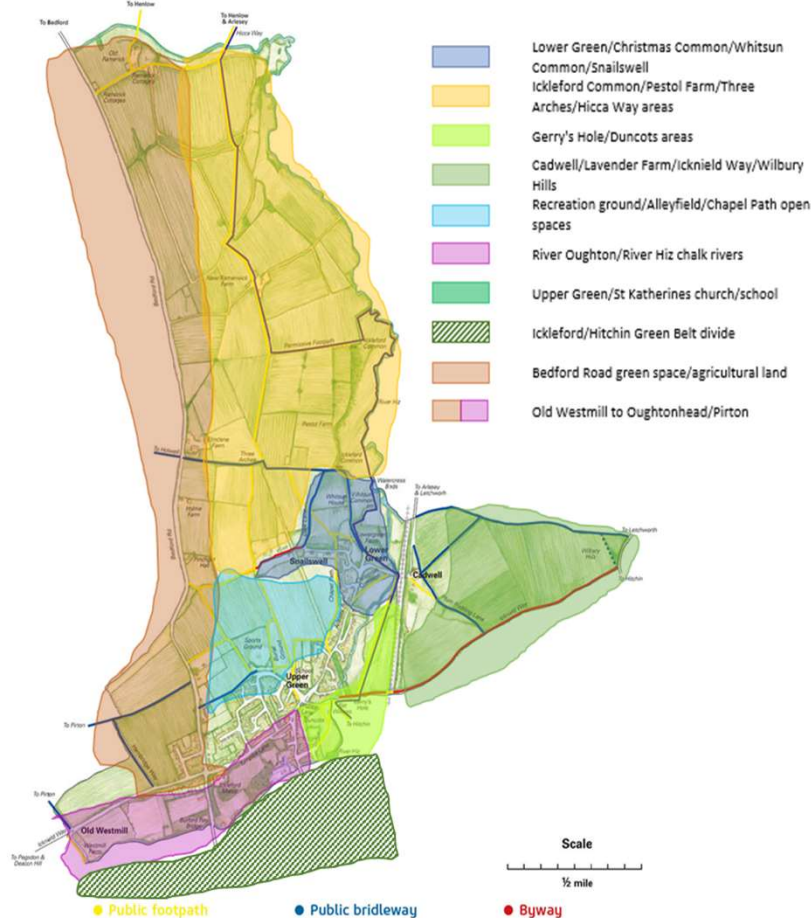
"All the footpaths and bridleways around Ickleford are used by our family for walking, running, cycling, picnics."

"Ickleford Common and its beautiful views and its wildlife is a true gem."

"Would be great if additional walks could be opened up along the river or to surrounding villages. Also cycle paths that would allow safe access to the greenway and other cycle routes. safe cycle route (as much off road as possible) linking Hitchin and Stevenage."

Environment and Heritage – areas of importance

The Parish of Ickleford



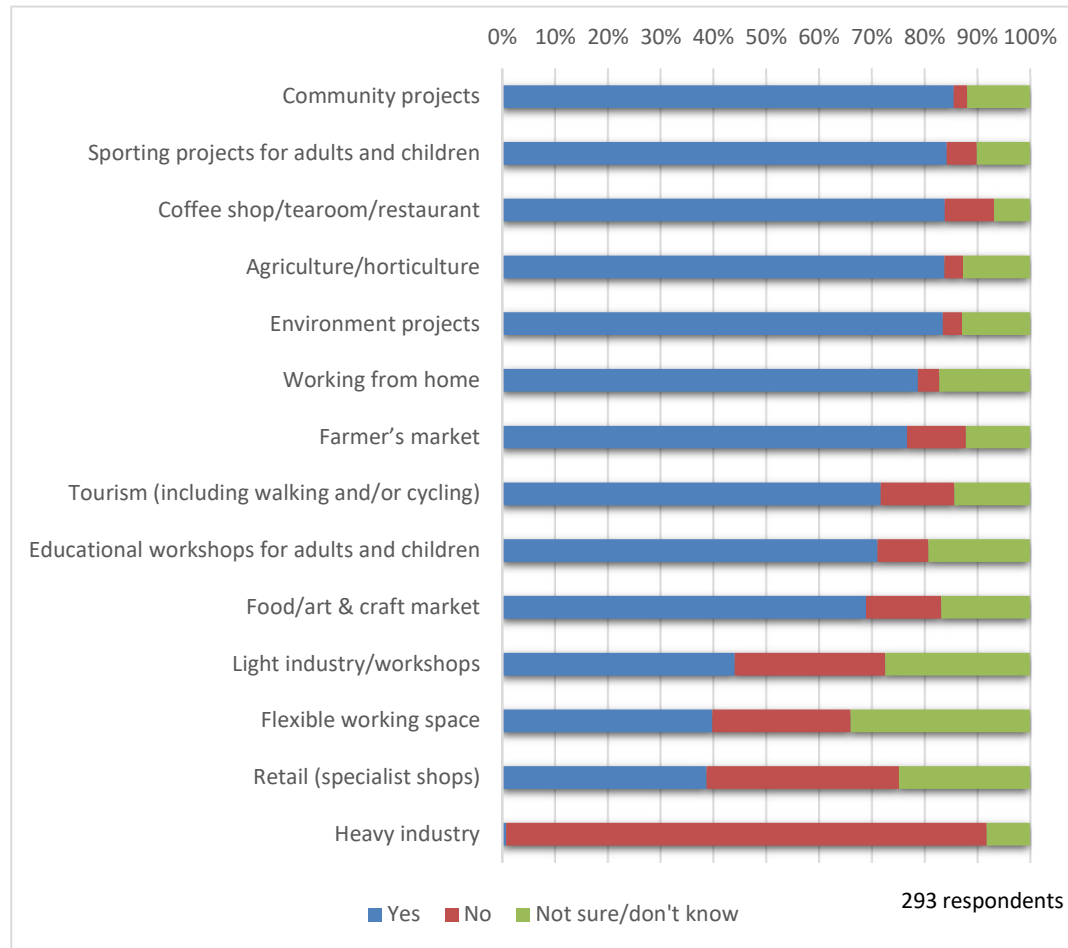
Footpaths and bridlepaths throughout the parish are important to residents

“The walks around the village are a wonderful asset - Gerry's Hole to Wilbury and Lavender fields, Chapel path to Snailswell and the Commons. These cannot be interfered with - the importance of such outdoor space/natural environments has been recognised as extremely important this year.”

From the Discover Ickleford Walk the Parish map produced by Ickleford Parish Council. Based on Ordnance Survey Material © Crown copyright. Hertfordshire County Council LA 1000 19606 2005

6. Economy

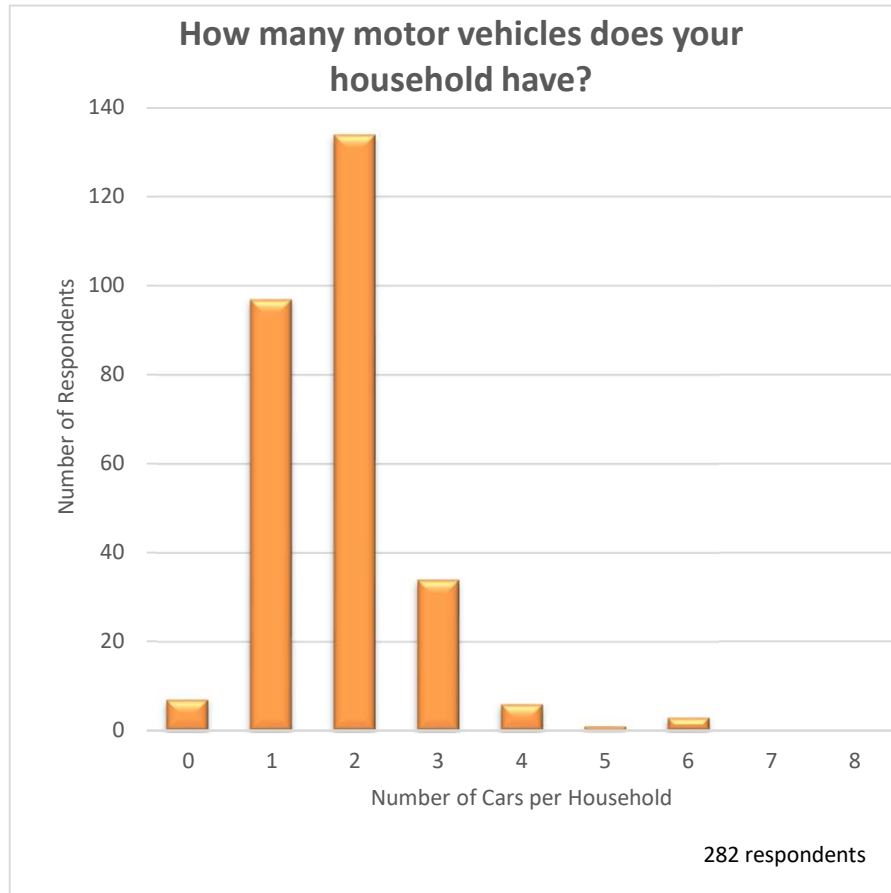
Should any of the following activities be encouraged in the parish of Ickleford?



Suggestions

- Flexible office and workshop space (with good communications)
- Local enterprise subsidy
- Better public transport
- More shops/post office
- Café/bakery
- Community events
- Promotion of local skills and services
- Address traffic issues (including safe cycle routes to local towns)

7. Transport



Higher car ownership levels than 2011 census
 - Underrepresentation of certain households?
 - Implications for public transport?

- 98% use car at least once a week and 64% use every day
- 75% walked every day
- 64% rarely or never use the bus. Only 5% travel by bus once a week or more
- 11% cycle daily, 26% weekly
- 9% use train every day, 11% once a week and 13% once a month*

* The survey was conducted during the November 2020 Covid lockdown which may have influenced the public transport response

Transport - safety concerns

Are you concerned about any of the following?

287 answered

*Percentage who consider
this a major problem*

Traffic speed	66%
Traffic volume	65%
Pedestrian safety	54%
Cyclist safety	53%
Pedestrian use of Cadwell Bridge	84%
Bedford Road roundabout (31% consider it a minor safety issue)	51%



*"The Turnpike Lane
roundabout is an
accident waiting to
happen."*



*"We are very concerned about
access to the lavender farm
under Cadwell bridge as we
live a 5 minute walk away and
simply don't want to risk our
lives walking there!"*

Transport - further traffic comments

Concerns around roads and traffic was a major issue across the whole survey

Link made between increased development and increased traffic

Requests:

- Widen narrow footpaths
- Pedestrian crossings on Bedford Road and Turnpike Lane
- Improved traffic calming, e.g. average speed cameras, 20mph limits and upgrading existing measures

“the humps do not calm traffic...those people who want to speed do, they do not slow those down who are speeding. We walk along the paths to school and they are narrow, with the amount of traffic and speed of traffic it can be scary.”

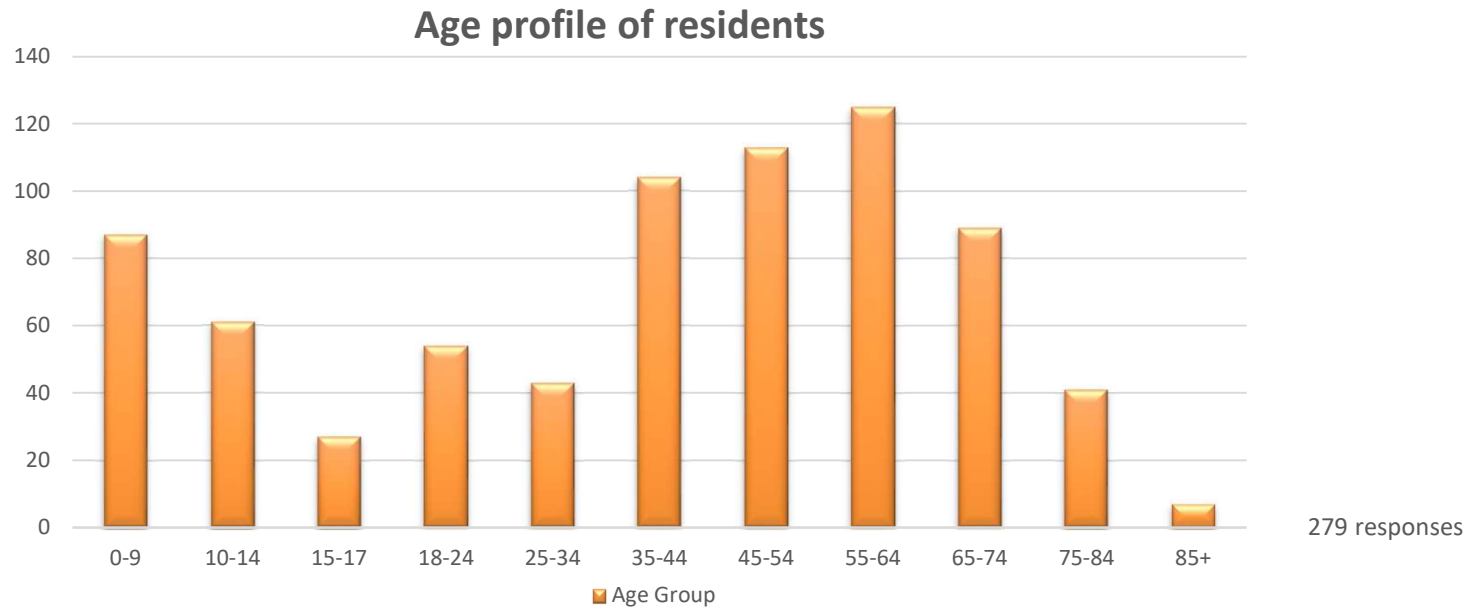


Transport – cycling, buses and footpaths

- Traffic speed and volume a barrier to cycling, requests for new and safe cycle routes
- Buses not well used by respondents:
 - not frequent enough
 - too expensive
 - other routes required, e.g. to local train stations
- Great appreciation of rural footpaths, their upkeep is important

“... the bus service in the morning is useless for village children attending schools in Hitchin as the timings (every hour) mean that the kids would be late for school! This means parents having to drive the kids, adding to traffic, pollution and unnecessary journeys”

8. About Your Household – age profile



Very similar findings to 2011 census
(see table for comparison)

Age	Census 2011	Ickleford NP 2020
0-17	20%	24%
18-24	6%	7%
25-74	64%	63%
+75	10%	6%



About Your Household - employment

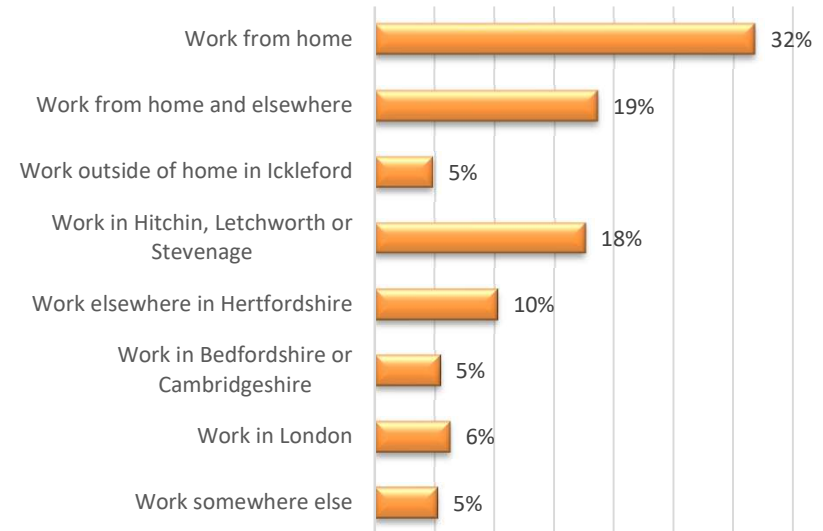
Employment Status



Percentage in Group

276 responses

Place of work



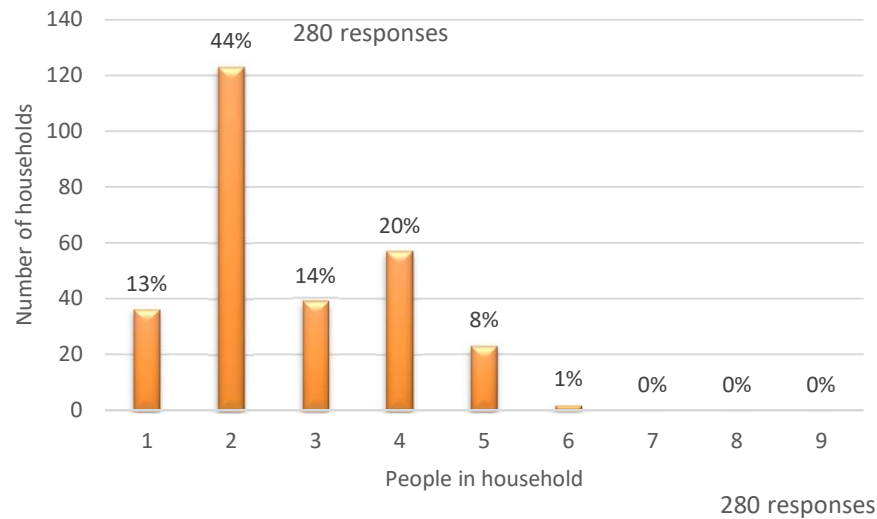
Percentage in Group

195 responses

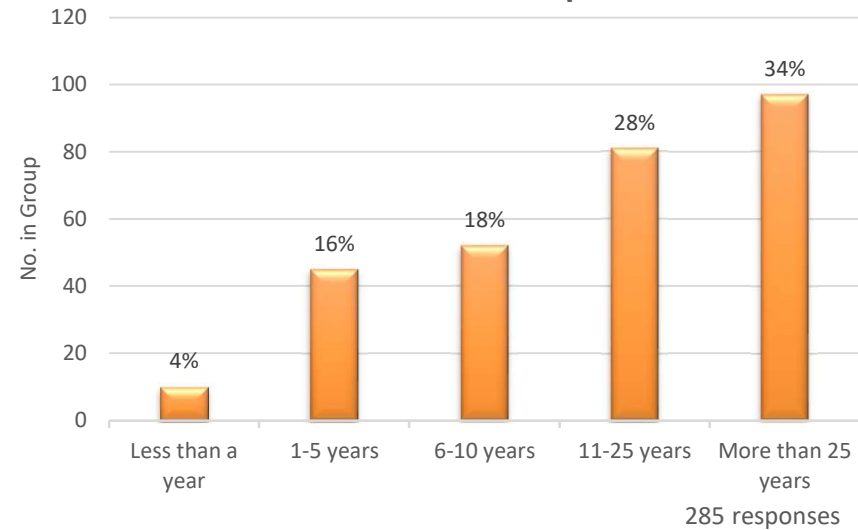
32% working from home. This will include those who normally do so and those doing so due to COVID

8. About Your Household – occupancy and tenure

People in household



How long has someone from your household lived in the parish?



89% own their own home. This is a higher level than found in the 2011 census (see table for comparison)

Tenure	Census 2011	Ickleford NP 2020
Owned	64%	89%
Social rented	24%	5%
Private landlord or letting agency	10%	4%
Other/Living rent free/Prefer not to say	2%	2%

9. Respondents' final comments

Echo rest of survey

- Desire to keep character of the village, maintaining its sense of community, strong village centre and separation from Hitchin
- Concerns over traffic
- Great appreciation of the village, its community and countryside
- Concerns over impact of new development
- Suggestions include: pond, communal tree planting, clearing river, village police officer, scouting field and lodge in the south east corner of Ickleford Common, and community village events

“We very much appreciate our village and particularly so during this time. We wish to see its essence retained but allow it to continue to thrive. With proper planning and consultation this should be easily achievable.”

“Keeping the village’s essence /character whilst also trying to future-proof it, is a delicate balancing act. However, it is important to try to keep its history and character. Far too many lovely villages have been swamped by towns such as Stevenage and Luton. Homogenisation of Ickleford into a suburb of Hitchin must be avoided at all costs.”

“It's not that long ago that many of the properties in Ickleford were fields (or smaller homes than they are now) if earlier generations had complained then many families would not have the joy of living in this lovely community. I do hope that they current residents give others the opportunity of living here too.”



Thank you and further information

A big thank you to all those who took part in this survey, providing valuable feedback to help guide the future of Ickleford



Further information on the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan, including the full survey results, can be found at: icklefordnp.com