**Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report**

**Oakley**

**March 2016**

*Completed by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity*

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This report is the property of Oakley Parish Council.

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**1. Introduction**

**1.1 About this survey**

The parish of Oakley is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan laying out its own local planning policies, which will come into force provided that the Plan passes an independent examination and is approved at a local referendum.

The Oakley Neighbourhood Plan steering group carried out a survey to identify the views of the local community. A survey form **(appendix A)** was delivered to all households in the parish. Each resident was invited to complete the survey, with additional copies being made available at the village post office should household require additional copes. A survey monkey link was also provided, should residents wish to complete the questionnaire online. Residents were asked to return their completed hard copy surveys to the village post office.

A separate questionnaire was also made available online and at the post office for young people to complete.

A total of 256 responses were received for analysis from the main questionnaire and 9 responses to the young persons questionnaire were received.

**2. About Oakley**

**2.1 Population and demographics**

In 2011 in the parish of Oakley there were 948 households containing 2,493 residents[[1]](#footnote-1). This is an increase from 2001 when there were 905 households containing 2,438 residents. The age profile (compared to Bedford Borough) is shown below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **% Oakley 2011** | **% Oakley 2001** | **% Bedford Borough 2011** |
| 0 – 4 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.3 |
| 5 - 14 | 13.8 | 15.4 | 11.6 |
| 15 - 19 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 6.2 |
| 20 – 29 | 6.4 | 7.3 | 12.7 |
| 30 – 44 | 20.8 | 22.7 | 20.8 |
| 45 – 59 | 23.0 | 25.3 | 19.5 |
| 60 – 74 | 17.7 | 11.0 | 14.1 |
| 75 – 89 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 8.0 |
| 90 + | 0.5 | 0.2 | 1.0 |

Unusually for a Bedfordshire village, there has not been much change to Oakley’s age profile over the last 10 years, other than increase in those aged 60-74. However, the age profile is slightly older than the Bedford Borough average.

**2.2 Household Composition**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **% Oakley** | **% Bedford Borough** |
| 1 person – pensioner | 10.5 | 11.9 |
| 1 person – other | 7.9 | 16.9 |
| Couple – both 65+ | 9.9 | 8.2 |
| Family – without dependent children | 32.4 | 26.9 |
| Family – with dependent child(ren) | 36.2 | 28.5 |
| Other | 3.1 | 7.5 |

Oakley has proportionally more family households with and without dependent children, and fewer people living alone, than the Borough average.

**2.3 Housing Tenure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **% Oakley** | **% Bedford Borough** |
| Owned outright | 40.9 | 31.4 |
| Owned with mortgage/loan | 44.5 | 34.3 |
| Shared ownership | 0.6 | 1.0 |
| Social rented | 5.5 | 16.1 |
| Private rented | 7.3 | 15.9 |
| Living rent free | 1.2 | 1.3 |

Oakley has higher levels of owner occupation than the Bedford Borough average, and lower levels of social and private renting.

**2.4 Dwelling Types**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **% Oakley** | **% Bedford Borough** |
| Detached house | 41.8 | 27.4 |
| Semi-detached house | 45.2 | 32.2 |
| Terraced house | 9.4 | 21.9 |
| Flat | 3.4 | 17.6 |
| Caravan/other temp. accommodation | 0.2 | 0.9 |

As with many Bedfordshire villages, there are relatively more detached and semi-detached houses, and relatively fewer flats and terraced houses, in Oakley. This is likely to mean that there are relatively fewer affordable properties on the market.

**2.5 Housing in poor condition**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **% Oakley** | **% Bedford Borough** |
| Overcrowded households | 1.9 | 7.7 |
| Households without central heating | 0.9 | 2.0 |
| Households in fuel poverty (2011) | 10.2 | 11.3 |

Overcrowding counts as a housing need for households applying to join the Bedford Borough Housing Register. In 2011 the proportion of households in Oakley classified as overcrowded was much lower than the Bedford Borough average.

Where central heating is not present, fuel poverty is statistically significantly more likely. The level of households in Oakley without central heating is under the Bedford Borough average, however the level of fuel poverty is similar to the Borough average.

**2.6 People on low incomes**

3.5% of people in Oakley are classified as “experiencing income deprivation”, well under the Bedford Borough average of 12.1%. 5.5% of working age people were claiming DWP benefits in August 2012, below the Bedford Borough average of 13.4%; and 11.3% of people over 65 were claiming pension credit, well under the Bedford Borough average of 21.0%.

**2.7 Health and disability**

Limiting illnesses and disabilities can affect the type of housing that people need in order to remain independent. 9.0% of those aged 65 and over in Oakley are claiming Attendance Allowance (a non-means-tested benefit for severely disabled people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care), well under the Bedford Borough average of 15.7%. The proportion of the population claiming Disability Living Allowance is 2.4%, under the Bedford Borough average of 4.2%.

12.5% of people have a limiting long-term illness, under the Bedford Borough average of 16.0%.

**3. The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire results**

**Question 1a.**

Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the following were to them on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very important and 5 being least important. All elements were allowed to carry to same level of importance if the respondent wanted.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Landscape** | **Importance (%)** | | | | |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| The river, river bridges and river valley areas that surround much of our village and the associated fields and meadows. | 87.8 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 8.3 |
| The views to and from the village over open countryside. | 72.2 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 2.6 | 7.8 |
| Wooded areas such as Browns Wood and Judges Spinney | 57.7 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 6.3 | 7.9 |
| Open spaces separating Oakley from Clapham and other villages | 69.2 | 8.4 | 8.4 | 3.6 | 6.4 |
| The open and rural feel of our village characterised by the hedge and tree lined principal roads - the open frontages in the centre of the village and the Village Green | 66.0 | 8.8 | 8.8 | 3.6 | 7.6 |

As respondents were able to select 1 (very important) for all landscape areas if they wished, all areas have scored very highly on the importance scale. The river, river bridges and river valley area received the highest number of ‘very important’ ratings, followed by views to the open countryside. Wooded areas such as Browns wood and Judges Spinney scored the lowest number of ‘very important’ responses.

A number of other suggestions were supplied for alternative locations for protecting and these have been included at the end of the report in **appendix 1**.

**Question 1b**

Respondents were asked how strongly they felt that the following areas should be included within the Neighbourhood Plan.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Open Space** | **Strongly Agree %** | **Agree %** | **No particular opinion %** | **Disagree**  **%** | | |
| Allotments & Community Orchard (143) | 44.6 | 24.9 | 13.7 | 16.9 | | |
| Browns Wood (131) | 44.4 | 25.6 | 11.6 | 18.4 | | |
| Copse/woodland in Westfield Road (134) | 32.7 | 31.5 | 18.7 | 17.1 | | |
| Field between Station Road and railway (133) | 44.4 | 23.8 | 12.5 | 19.4 | | |
| Grange Close green (140) | 44.7 | 24.8 | 12.6 | 17.9 | | |
| Green space between Church Lane and the river bridges (142) | 55.4 | 16.3 | 5.2 | 23.1 | | |
| Judges Spinney (132) | 46.6 | 22.1 | 12.9 | 18.4 | | |
| Land adjacent to river at Oakley bridges (141) | 60.2 | 14.1 | 1.2 | 24.5 | | |
| Linch Furlong (144) | 39.7 | 27.5 | 19.4 | 13.4 | | |
| Lincroft School playing field (139) | 49.0 | 18.5 | 10.0 | 22.5 | | |
| Middle Farm garden/orchard (135) | 32.9 | 23.7 | 29.3 | 14.1 | | |
| Middle Farm paddock (136) | 34.7 | 21.8 | 28.2 | 15.3 | | |
| Oakley Sports & Social Club playing field (138) | 57.0 | 13.7 | 4.0 | 25.3 | | |
| Village green (137) | 59.6 | 13.5 | 2.9 | | 24.1 |

The top 3 open space areas that respondents felt should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan were:

1) Land adjacent to river at Oakley bridges

2) Village Green

3) Oakley sports and social club playing field

**Question 2a**

Respondents were asked to indicate how important they felt it was to retain the following areas over the coming decades.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of/ Description of building or area** | **Very important %** | **Important %** | **No particular opinion %** | **Not important %** |
| Area of College Farm,  St Marys Church and  Oakley Twin Bridges | 88.8 | 8.4 | 1.6 | 1.2 |
| Lovell Homes | 62.8 | 27.2 | 8.8 | 1.2 |
| Area of Oakley House  and the Drive | 43.8 | 34.5 | 17.3 | 4.4 |
| Wooded Character of  Church Lane | 59.4 | 33.3 | 6.1 | 1.2 |
| Westfield Farm and  Westfield Road | 43.3 | 34.7 | 17.6 | 4.5 |
| Sports Field and  Village Hall | 78.0 | 17.2 | 3.6 | 1.2 |
| Duke of Bedford Cottages  High Street | 59.7 | 30.7 | 8.1 | 1.6 |
| Methodist Church | 44.9 | 27.9 | 21.1 | 6.1 |
| Oakley War Memorial | 72.0 | 24.0 | 4.0 | 0.0 |
| Duke of Bedford Cottages  Station Road | 59.3 | 29.8 | 10.1 | 0.8 |
| Brockwell and open area | 29.6 | 30.8 | 32.0 | 7.7 |
| The open aspect of the  1970s Houses in the core of  the village | 45.6 | 30.4 | 18.0 | 6.0 |
| The open aspect of  Parsonage Close | 35.9 | 27.4 | 30.7 | 6.1 |

When looking at the amount of respondents that ranked the retention of areas as ‘very important’, the 13 areas listed ranked as follows (ranked from highest number of responses to lowest):

* Area of College Farm, St Marys Church and Oakley Twin Bridges (with the most responses)
* Sports Field and Village Hall
* Oakley war memorial
* Lovell Homes
* Duke of Bedford Cottages High Street
* Wooded Character of Church Lane
* Duke of Bedford Cottages Station Road
* The open aspect of the 1970s Houses in the core of the village
* Methodist Church
* Area off Oakley House and the Drive
* Westfield Farm and Westfield Road
* The open aspect of Parsonage Close
* Brockwell and open area

When looking at this ranking it also needs to be taken into account that some areas scored a higher ‘important’ ranking than others, giving them a high combined overall level of important to respondents.

**Question 3a**

Respondents were asked to indicate how many properties they would like to see built in Oakley between now and 2032.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **None (%)** | **Up to 20 (%)** | **Between 20 and 50 (%)** | **Between 50 and 100 (%)** | **More than 100 (%)** |
| 16.7 | 22.5 | 44.1 | 14.3 | 2.5 |

The majority of respondents (44.1%) felt that between 20 and 50 homes was the most suitable number. 39.2% of respondents wanted to see less than 20 properties and 16.8% wanted to see more than 50 properties.

**Question 3b**

Respondents were asked how important they felt new housing development would be in Oakley for a number of factors.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very important %** | **Quite important %** | **Not important %** | **No particular opinion %** |
| To enable local young people to remain living in the parish | 42.9 | 40.8 | 11.0 | 4.9 |
| To support local businesses and community groups and facilities | 16.5 | 44.2 | 29.3 | 8.3 |
| To help provide funding for infrastructure such as roads and other services and facilities e.g. schools | 20.5 | 31.8 | 37.7 | 9.6 |
| To meet housing need | 22.6 | 43.6 | 26.8 | 6.2 |
| To increase vibrancy of the village | 8.7 | 26.1 | 51.0 | 12.0 |
| To enhance village culture and social mix | 7.1 | 28.2 | 47.3 | 14.5 |
| To enable older people to move into more suitable accommodation for their needs | 29.5 | 46.3 | 16.8 | 6.6 |

‘To enable local young people to remain living in the parish’ came out as having a high level of importance amongst respondents. 42.9% of respondents felt that this was ‘very important’ and 40.8% rated it as ‘important’. ‘To enable older people to move into more suitable accommodation for their needs’ and ‘To meet housing need’ also scored highly with 75.8% and 66.2% of respondents ranking these as either ‘very important’ or ‘important’. ‘To enhance the village culture and social mix’ was ranked the least important element with 47.3% of respondent rating this as ‘not important’.

**Question 3c**

Respondents were asked in respect to future housing in Oakley, how concerned they would be about the following impacts.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Concerns me a lot %** | **Concerns me a little %** | **Does not concern me %** | **No particular opinion %** |
| Impact on the environment (flooding, drainage, sewerage etc.) | 71.8 | 24.6 | 3.2 | 0.4 |
| Impact on views of the entrances and exits to and from Oakley | 73.7 | 23.5 | 2.0 | 0.8 |
| Increased parking needs | 81.3 | 14.6 | 3.7 | 0.4 |
| Access problems due to increased traffic and congestion | 88.7 | 9.7 | 1.2 | 0.4 |
| Adequate infrastructure (community and services e.g. schools, roads, water etc) | 78.1 | 18.2 | 3.2 | 0.4 |
| Pressure on school places | 59.4 | 22.4 | 14.6 | 3.7 |

‘Access problems due to increased traffic and congestion’ provided the highest level of concern followed by ‘increased parking needs’. All impacts rated very highly with the vast majority of respondents being very concerned about the impact of new housing on all elements of the parish. ‘Pressure on school places’ came out with the lowest level of concern but this is probably due to it having a direct impact on a lower number of people within the parish.

A number of other suggestions were put forward as areas of concern and these have been included in **appendix 2**. The top concerns identified from ‘other’ concerns suggested were focused around traffic congestion in the village and risk of loosing the countryside feel.

**Question 3d**

Respondents were asked to specify what type of housing they would most want to see, if new housing was built in Oakley over the next 17 years. They were asked to rank their preference on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Order of Importance** | **1**  **%** | **2**  **%** | **3**  **%** | **4**  **%** | **5**  **%** | **6**  **%** | **7**  **%** |
| **Type of housing** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bungalows e.g. for older people | 25.1 | 16.1 | 25.1 | 12.8 | 9.5 | 4.9 | 6.6 |
| Small starter homes/ homes for older people (1-2 bedrooms) | 32.2 | 25.2 | 18.2 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 5.4 |
| Small family homes (2-3 bedrooms) | 23.2 | 30.3 | 18.7 | 10.8 | 5.8 | 2.9 | 8.3 |
| Large family homes (4+ bedrooms) | 8.5 | 6.8 | 15.7 | 14.8 | 12.7 | 11.9 | 29.7 |
| Homes for people with specific housing needs (such as sheltered complexes for older people) | 8.0 | 15.6 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 16.8 | 8.8 | 10.5 |
| Homes with designated office or workshop space (live/work units)\* | 0\* | 0\* | 0\* | 0\* | 0\* | 0\* | 0\* |
| Apartments | 2.1 | 1.7 | 5.6 | 6.4 | 9.0 | 15.8 | 59.4 |

(\*The data was not inputted into survey monkey for this element of the questions so analysis was not possible)

The table shows the percentage of respondents who selected which ranking for each housing type.

When summarising the data the types of properties ranked in the following order of importance:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ranking** | **Type of property** |
| 1 (most important) | Small starter homes/ homes for older people (1-2 bedrooms) |
| 2 | Small family homes (2-3 bedrooms |
| 3 | Bungalows e.g. for older people |
| 4 | Homes for people with specific housing needs (such as sheltered complexes for older people) |
| 5 | Large family homes (4+ bedrooms) |
| 6 | Apartments |
| 7 (least importance) | Homes with designated office or workshop space (live/work units) |

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group and Parish Council have commissioned BRCC to undertake a separate Housing Needs Survey to assess the housing needs of the local population in more detail. The Housing Needs Survey report is available to view separately to this document.

**Question 3e**

Respondents were asked which type of housing tenure was needed in any new housing in Oakley (respondents were able to tick more than one option)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Housing Tenure** | **% of Responses** |
| Homes for sale on the open market | 81.4 |
| Private rented homes | 19.4 |
| Affordable homes i.e. for rent or shared ownership through a Housing Association | 44.3 |
| No particular opinion | 9.3 |

There was a very high level of support for homes for sale on the open market. This was followed by affordable homes such as rented or shared ownership through a housing association.

Respondents were asked for any additional comments. These have been included in **appendix 3**.

**Question 3f**

Respondents were asked if there was anything regarding location or design that they feel is important when it comes to new housing developments in the parish. All responses have been included in **appendix 4**.

The most frequent comments were relating to ensuring that any further development in in keeping with the existing style and character of the parish and highlighting concerns over traffic and parking.

**Question 3g**

Respondents were asked to consult the map included with the questionnaire and give their views about the potential sites for more housing in Oakley.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Site ref no. and description** | **Strongly Agree %** | **Agree %** | **Disagree %** | **Strongly Disagree %** |
| Proposed site 166 – Land rear of 38 High Street (Dwellings 8) | 6.8 | 36.0 | 27.5 | 29.7 |
| Proposed site 167 – Land at Lovell Road (Dwellings 8) | 11.9 | 52.8 | 20.0 | 15.3 |
| Proposed site 168 – Land at Westfield Farm (Dwellings 15-20) | 10.9 | 29.7 | 28.0 | 31.4 |
| Proposed site 169 – Land north of Church Lane (Dwellings 20-22) | 3.4 | 14.0 | 35.7 | 46.8 |
| Proposed site 170 – Land off Station Road (Dwellings 312) | 11.6 | 10.7 | 24.4 | 53.3 |
| Proposed site 171 – Land opposite the Bedford Arms (Dwellings 25) | 5.4 | 30.3 | 33.6 | 30.7 |
| Proposed site 344 – Land at Lovell Road (Dwellings 15) | 11.8 | 46.0 | 25.3 | 16.9 |
| Proposed site 345 – Pavenham Road  (Dwellings 10) | 10.0 | 50.4 | 20.8 | 18.8 |

Proposed sites 167, 344 and 345 were favoured, with the highest number of respondents selecting ‘Agree’. There were the highest number of respondents who ‘Strongly Disagree’ for sites 168, 169 and 170.

**Question 3h**

Additional sites that were put forward by respondents for new housing have been included in **appendix 5**.

**Question 3i**

Respondents were asked to select their 3 priorities for the scale of development that they would prefer to see in the parish.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale of future development** | **Priority 1**  **%** | **Priority 2**  **%** | **Priority 3**  **%** |
| Conversion of redundant or empty or derelict buildings | 75.5 | 13.0 | 11.6 |
| Development on individual plots, including in gardens of existing houses | 12.6 | 35.7 | 51.8 |
| Small sites (less than 10 homes) on the edge of the village | 36.2 | 42.5 | 21.3 |
| Medium sites (10 -20 homes) on the edge of the village | 13.7 | 37.7 | 48.7 |
| Larger site (more than 20 homes) on the edge of the village | 14.0 | 10.5 | 75.6 |

The top 3 priorities based on number of responses received are:

* Conversion of redundant or empty or derelict buildings (163 responses)
* Small sites (less than 10 homes) on edge of village (88 responses)
* Development on individual plots, including in gardens or existing houses (74 responses)

**Question 3j**

Respondents were asked to consider the preferred locations of any future development.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Strongly Agree %** | **Agree %** | **No particular opinion %** | **Disagree %** |
| Next to existing housing | 12.7 | 43.7 | 24.9 | 18.8 |
| On ‘brownfield’ sites (land which has been previously built on) | 46.5 | 39.6 | 6.1 | 7.8 |
| On ‘greenfield’ sites (land that has never been built on before) | 1.4 | 8.7 | 5.9 | 84.0 |
| On ‘greenfield’ sites only if there are no ‘brownfield’ sites available | 6.9 | 33.6 | 8.3 | 51.2 |

Over all brownfield sites and land next to existing housing were preferred by respondents. A very high number of respondents 84% (184 respondents) did not want to see greenfield sites used for new housing. A higher percentage of respondents agreed that greenfield sites could be considered only if there were no brownfield sites available.

**Question 4a**

Do you use the mobile library service?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 8.6 |
| No % | 91.4 |

**Question 4b**

Respondents were asked if they would like to use the mobile library service more but were unable to do so

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 12.6 |
| No % | 87.4 |

**Question 4c**

Respondents were asked if they felt that the Borough Council should advertise the mobile library service more widely to residents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 53.6 |
| No % | 6.7 |
| No opinion % | 39.8 |

**Question 4d**

Respondents were asked if their household has any problems caused by the mains water, sewerage supply or surface water in the village?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 19.9 |
| No % | 80.1 |

Respondents were asked to detail these problems. These have been included in **appendix 6**.

**Question 4e**

Respondents were asked if they have any problems with other utility services in the village

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 13.0 |
| No % | 87.0 |

Respondents were asked to detail these problems. These have been included in **appendix 7**.

**Question 4f**

Respondents were asked of they use recycling facilities in the village

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 89.2 |
| No % | 10.8 |

**Question 4g**

Respondents were asked if they would like to use the recycling facilities more but are unable to do so.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 12.5 |
| No % | 87.5 |

Respondents were asked to provide further details. These have been included in **appendix 8**

**Question 4h**

Respondents were asked if they would like more / different recycling facilities in the village?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes % | 29.3 |
| No % | 70.7 |

Suggestions for additional recycling facilities included bottle banks, garden waste and having additional sites around the village for recycling so that it is more accessible.

**Question 4i**

Respondents were asked to indicate how valuable they felt the following amenities were.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very important %** | **Quite important %** | **Not important %** | **No particular opinion %** |
| Village Hall | 81.2 | 16.7 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| The Old School | 39.8 | 42.7 | 8.7 | 8.7 |
| Sports & Social Club and Sports Field | 68.0 | 26.6 | 2.9 | 2.5 |
| Post Office | 91.9 | 6.9 | 0.4 | 0.8 |
| The Green | 64.5 | 28.2 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Allotments | 38.7 | 39.1 | 11.9 | 10.3 |
| St Marys Church | 63.1 | 29.1 | 1.6 | 6.2 |
| Methodist Church | 45.1 | 34.0 | 9.0 | 11.9 |
| Pre- School | 72.6 | 15.2 | 2.5 | 9.8 |
| Lower School | 80.1 | 10.4 | 2.1 | 7.5 |
| Lincroft School | 74.8 | 13.9 | 2.9 | 8.4 |

The facilities that received the highest levels of respondents rating them as ‘very important’, were the Post office, the Village Hall and the Lower School. All amenities listed received the highest number of responses rating them as either ‘very important’ or ‘important’, showing they all provide valued facilities to the community.

**Question 4j**

Respondents were asked if there were any facilities that they would like to see more of in the next 17 years.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Allotments (%) | 15.3 |
| Leisure facilities (%) | 8.5 |
| Picnic areas (%) | 9.6 |
| Play areas for young people (%) | 23.7 |
| Public seating (%) | 29.4 |
| Sports facilities (%) | 7.3 |
| Other (%) | 6.2 |

Play areas for young people and Public seating received the highest number of responses. Additional suggestions that were put forward have been included in **appendix 9**. The top 3 ‘other’ suggestions put forward reiterated the demand for public seating and improved play facilities but also showed a demand for improvements to be made to pubic footpaths and cycle ways.

**Considering business development in Oakley**

85% of respondents stated that they do not work within Oakley. When asked about the distances that respondents travel to their place of employment, education or training. 10.5% travelled less than 2 miles, 18.9% between 2 and 10 miles, 9.7% between 10 and 20 miles, 12.3% over 20 miles and 48.7% of respondents stated that this was not applicable to them, this figure is reflective of the high level of retired individuals that completed the questionnaire.

**Question 5b**

Respondents were asked how important they feel Oakley is as a place of work.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very important (%)** | **Quite important (%)** | **Not important (%)** | **No particular opinion (%)** |
| 10 | 21.7 | 29.6 | 38.7 |

The majority of respondents either felt that Oakley as a place of work was either not important or they had no opinion on the issue.

**Question 5d**

Respondents who ether had or wished to set up a business in Oakley were asked which of the following they felt were important factors.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes %** | **No %** | **No particular opinion %** |
| Local employees | 44.8 | 11.5 | 43.8 |
| Better parking | 50.5 | 9.1 | 40.4 |
| Faster broadband | 71.2 | 2.7 | 26.1 |
| Local business community support | 45.2 | 8.6 | 46.2 |
| Better mobile phone signals | 54.9 | 10.8 | 34.3 |
| Availability of start-up premises | 35.7 | 17.4 | 46.9 |
| Better transport links to Bedford | 30.5 | 25.3 | 44.2 |
| Better transport links beyond Bedford | 25.8 | 29.0 | 45.2 |

Of those that responded faster broadband and better mobile phone signal were seen as the most important factor for local business.

This question was only answers by 117 respondents and was skipped by 139 respondents. Of those that did respond to the question a high proportion responded that they had ‘no particular opinion’ on many of the factors. This indicates that this topic was not seen as a priority issue for the vast majority of respondents.

The responds from respondents when asked about their usage of local businesses (e.g. Post Office, Hairdressers, cleaners etc.) was higher with 239 people answering this question. 35.6% of respondents stated that they used local businesses daily, 55.2% once a week, 9.2% once a month and no respondents stated that they never used local businesses.

The post office, local shop and pub were the most frequently mentioned when asking people which local businesses they used.

**Question 5g**

Respondents were asked what other types of businesses they felt were needed in Oakley. The most frequent suggestion was that there were no additional facilities needed. The next more frequently suggested facilities were a café / coffee shops and a chemist or pharmacy. The full list of responses has been included in **appendix 10.**

**Question 6a**

Respondents were asked if they considered the volume of traffic in the village to be a problem. Overwhelmingly, 92.8% of respondents did feel that traffic volume in the village was a problem.

**Questions 6b and 6c**

Respondents were asked if there were any highways or footpaths in the village which they had concerns about. Most frequent responses included: the twin bridges, the High Street, Station Road and Church Lane.

**Question 7a**

Respondents were asked if they felt that the dual use walking / cycle track along Lovell road that have been included in the Borough council programme is needed as a matter of urgency. 55% of respondents said ‘yes’ compared with 17.9% that said ‘No’, however 27.1% of respondents stated that they had no opinion.

**Question 7b**

Respondents were asked if new cycle tracks or footpaths were needed elsewhere in the village

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes %** | **No %** |
| Cycle track | 39.7 | 60.3 |
| Footpath | 45.9 | 54.1 |

The majority of respondents felt that there was not a need for additional cycle track and footpaths in the village.

**Public Transport**

58.5% of respondents do use the bus service in the village. 78.3% of respondents were satisfied with the bus service that is provided. The most frequent suggestions that were put forward on how the bus service could be further improved were to increase running times later into the evening and fares need to be cheaper to make it more cost effective for people to travel by bus.

Finally, respondents were asked ‘The 3 best things about living in Oakley’, ‘The 3 worst things about living in Oakley’, ‘My main hope for the future of Oakley is…’ and ‘My main fear for the future of Oakley is…’. A large number of free text data was returned for this question and this has been included in **appendix 11.**

**Demographics of respondents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adult living alone | 17.2% |
| Adult living in a property with other adults | 9.2% |
| Couple | 47.7% |
| Family with young (pre-school or primary school age) children | 8.8% |
| Family with older (secondary school age) children | 10.0% |
| Family with grown up children living at home | 7.1% |

The vast majority of responses were from households made up from couples. Followed by single occupancy households. When this is compared to the household composition of the Parish (section 2.2), a high proportion of residents in the village are families with dependant children (36.2%) but a lower proportion of responses were received from this demographic.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| <18yrs | 0% |
| 18-35yrs | 4.2% |
| 36-50yrs | 17.7% |
| 50-65yrs | 35.7% |
| Over 65yrs | 42.4% |

The vast majority of responses (78.1%) were completed by respondents aged 50years and over.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employed or self-employed full time | 31.9% |
| Employed or self-employed part time | 16.0% |
| Temporary or seasonal employment | 0.4% |
| Unemployed/unable to work | 1.7% |
| Retired | 49.6% |
| Looking after the home/carer | 3.4% |
| Student | 0.4% |

Almost half of the responses received were from retired members of the community followed by those that were in full time employment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Less than a year | 2.1% |
| 1-5 years | 8.4% |
| 6-10 years | 10.5% |
| 11-25 years | 28.3% |
| More than 25 years | 50.6% |

Over half of the respondents to the questionnaire have lived in Oakley for more than 25 years.

All postcode data supplied has been included in **appendix 12.**

**4. The youth questionnaire results**

A separate questionnaire was made available online and for collection at the post office for residents aged 18 and under to complete. 9 Responses were received to this questionnaire.

When asked what they liked about living in Oakley, most popular responses included the green spaces, the social club and the community (people).

Suggestions on what could be improved included, provision of affordable housing and improved play and sporting equipment.

When asked 100% of respondent said that they would like to remain living in Oakley in the future.

When asked about the level of new housing that respondents felt that Oakley should take over the period of the Neighbourhood Plan, 62.5% of respondents felt that 100 to 150 units would be most suitable. This is in line with the current suggestion from Bedford Borough Council but far in excess of the number suggested by respondents to the main questionnaire. Starter homes and 2-3 bed homes were put forward as the preferred type of housing.

When asked about additional leisure or sport facilities that were needed, a 3G surface pitch was the most popular suggestion. Overwhelmingly 100% of respondents felt that there was no need for any new shops or business in the village.

**5. Conclusions**

The predominant views of those responding to the survey can be summarised as follows:

* Oakley should receive some housing development (between 20 - 50 homes) over the next 15 years
* These homes should be dispersed across a number of individual homes through the conversion of redundant or derelict buildings or small development (up to 10 homes) on the edge of the village, with an emphasis on infill and brownfield sites
* Most of the homes should be 1-2 bedroom starter homes / homes for older people. Some allocation should be made for 2-3 bedroom family home and bungalows for older people (an alternative to the latter would be houses built to Lifetime Homes criteria).
* Most homes should be offered for sale on the open market, with the addition of some affordable properties (for rental and shared ownership). Provision of some of these affordable properties specifically for local people could be made through a rural exception site development.
* The protection of areas of the village including College Farm, St Marys Church, The Twin Bridges, The Sports Field and the Village Hall is a high priority.
* Any further development should seek to address concerns over traffic congestion and parking in the village and also provide adequate supporting community facilities such as school places, road improvements and water and sewage considerations.
* The overall village and rural feel of Oakley must be protected, along with existing character.
* Broadband speeds are also an issue for a significant minority of residents / businesses

1. 2011 census data – other data also from this source unless otherwise specified [↑](#footnote-ref-1)