



Burton Latimer Parish Plan

The Parish Plan Household Questionnaire Analysis of responses

Contents

About the Parish Plan and the household questionnaire	page 1
Who completed the questionnaire?	page 2
Analysis of individual sections:	
• Housing	page 3
• Employment & education	page 4
• The environment	page 5
• Safety & crime prevention	page 6
• Traffic & transport	page 7
• Local amenities & services	page 8
• Places of worship	page 9
• Leisure & recreation facilities	page 9
• Local government	page 10
And finally – what do local people think were the most important issues...	
• that WERE covered in the questionnaire?	page 11
• that WERE NOT covered in the questionnaire?	page 11

Warwick Hunt, on behalf of
Burton Latimer Parish Plan Steering Group

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About the Parish Plan and the household questionnaire

The Parish Plan

As Burton Latimer grows and changes, it is vital that future developments reflect the views of our local community. One way of making sure this happens is to involve as many local people as possible in the creation of a Parish Plan for the town.

Similar projects elsewhere have helped to create a sense of pride in the local community and its heritage. The evidence provided by the public in a Parish Plan can also influence decision makers – such as the town, borough and county councils – about their community's aspirations for the future.

However, Parish Plans have so far typically been developed by small and medium-sized village communities rather than towns. Burton Latimer's larger population makes it more difficult for us to do this in a way that allows the widest possible range of people to contribute – and our project therefore requires a more complex approach.

To get things off the ground Burton Latimer successfully secured a grant from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) towards the first stage of our Parish Plan project, which involved the development of a questionnaire for all Burton Latimer households.

The household questionnaire

Our household questionnaire was designed, refined and tested by a group of Burton Latimer residents before being distributed to all households in the town.

The questions were designed to give people the chance to say what they value about living in Burton Latimer and how they think the experience of living and working in the town may be enhanced in the future. For this exercise to be worthwhile, it was important to hear from as many households as possible.

The questionnaire asked 22 questions, covering 9 themes. Some of the questions asked people to assign a quality rating to specific aspects of Burton Latimer, and others provided space for people to give their views.

About this report

The following pages present an analysis of the 706 returned questionnaires completed by Burton Latimer households in February and March 2011. Each heading corresponds to a section of the questionnaire, and the responses are summarised in graphical and descriptive formats.

What will happen next?

It is important to emphasise that the household questionnaire is only the first stage of our Parish Plan project. Further work is now needed to:

- ensure that the views of all sectors of the local community – especially those of young people – have been heard. With this in mind, a separate questionnaire for young people is currently being developed
- explore in greater depth some of the areas of concern that have been exposed – for instance, through interviews, group discussions and local meetings
- consider options for change suggested by responses to the questionnaire that could benefit the local community
- review what has already been achieved on key topics since the questionnaires were completed – such as highway repairs and the introduction of a bus service connecting the town centre with the relocated medical centre and pharmacy on Higham Road
- create a plan that can focus local action to improve Burton Latimer for everyone who lives and works here in the future

Who completed the questionnaire?

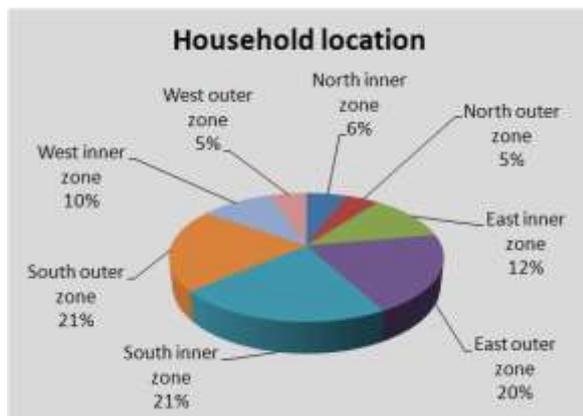
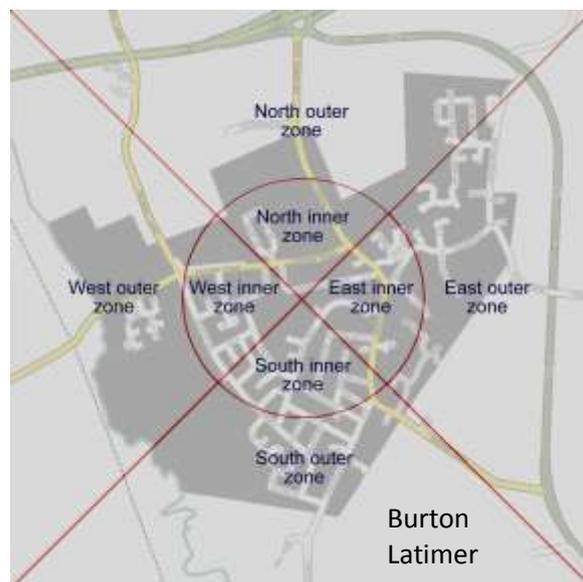
How many questionnaires were distributed – and how many were completed?

The Parish Plan questionnaire was delivered by hand to all 3,200 Burton Latimer households in February 2011. 706 completed questionnaires were returned – making a response rate of 22%.

Where do households that completed the questionnaire live?

Householders were asked to locate their home on a map of Burton Latimer that had been divided into four sectors (north, south east and west), with each sector being subdivided into “inner” and “outer” zones.

Overall, the 706 completed questionnaires were returned from household locations in a pattern that reflected the relative amount of housing in each sector. This suggests that the responses have come from a geographically representative sample of the town’s households.

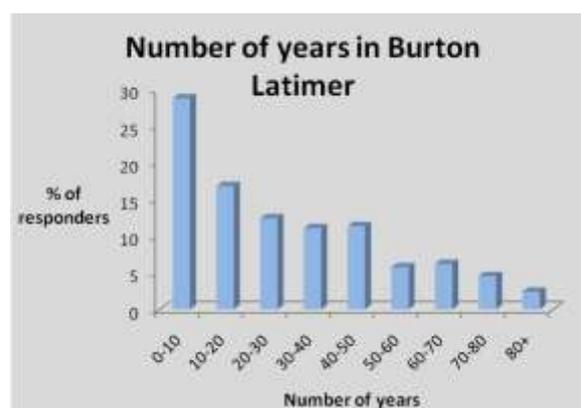


75% of returned questionnaires were from households in the south (43%) and east (32%) quadrants of Burton Latimer. New housing developments planned for land off Higham Road, Cranford Road and Hawthorn Road will reinforce the trend for the town’s residential areas to extend further into these two sectors.

How long have members of households who completed the questionnaire lived in Burton Latimer?

30% of respondents indicated that their household consists entirely of people who have lived in Burton Latimer for less than 10 years.

A further 40% of households stated that their longest-standing member has lived in the town for between 10 and 40 years; and another 30% declared a 40-plus year local residency for at least one person (and in 3% of cases, this extended to over 80 years!).



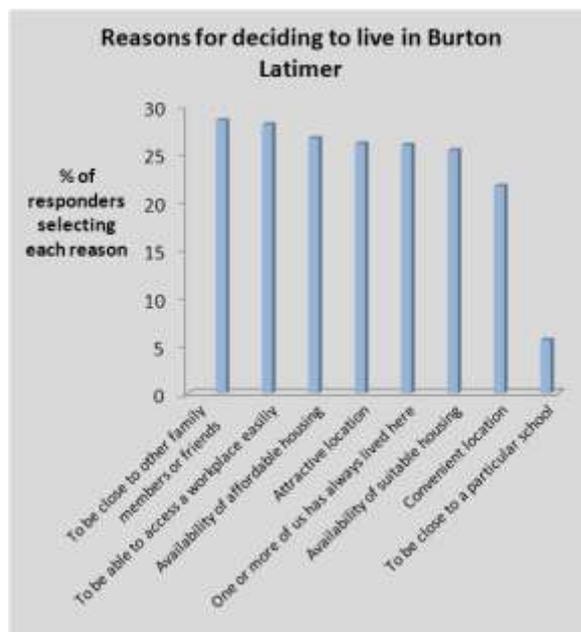
Housing

Housing – and housing development – in Burton Latimer was highlighted as the most important topic covered by the household questionnaire.

Why have local people chosen to live in Burton Latimer?

Responses to this question were evenly spread across the range of reasons offered (see graph). In the free text section, the most frequently mentioned features that people value about living in Burton Latimer are:

- Burton Latimer is a small town, with a friendly atmosphere and a strong community feel
- it is surrounded by attractive countryside, which helps to create a pleasant and peaceful environment within the town
- the town is in a convenient, central location, with good road and rail links
- local shops provide most of our basic needs, and neighbouring larger towns are within easy reach for other items
- there is a good range of local amenities within the town – such as the library, post office and medical centre
- there are good bus links – especially to Kettering

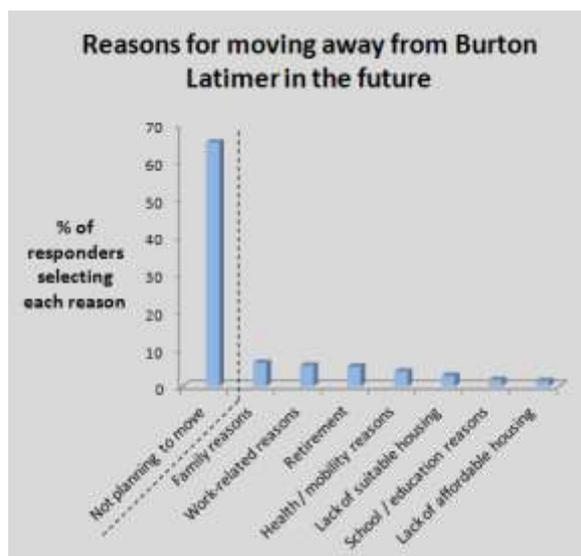


How many local people are considering moving away from Burton Latimer – and why?

Most people (65%) indicated that they do not expect to move away from Burton Latimer within the foreseeable future.

Of those who said they may consider leaving the town (35% of all responses), a quarter indicated that this would most likely be for family reasons, and a fifth for either work-related reasons or retirement – although in many cases they also said that they currently had no plans to make such a move.

In the free text responses, the most frequently mentioned factor that may encourage these people to move away was recent change (for the worse, in their view) in Burton Latimer – with over-development of housing, and detrimental effects of recent planning decisions on the character and feel of the town being the main concerns highlighted.

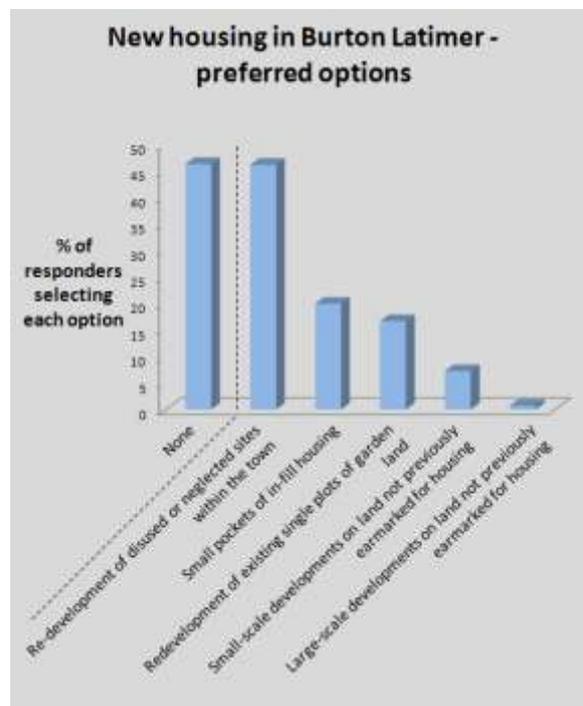


New housing in Burton Latimer – what do local people think are the options?

Planning permission has already been granted for over 700 new dwellings to be built in Burton Latimer. With this in mind, almost 50% of respondents indicated a preference for no additional housing development in the town.

For those who were prepared to consider additional housing, the re-development of disused or neglected land within the town was by far the most acceptable option. Small pockets of in-fill housing and the re-development of small plots or garden land also receiving some backing – but there was negligible support for further large-scale development schemes.

Three quarters of the comments received on this topic covered fears about the pace, location and type of housing development currently taking place. In particular, people were concerned that housing development is running ahead of the infrastructure needed to support it (such as the number of school places) and that new and planned housing is not being built in the most appropriate or acceptable locations – as identified by past local consultation exercises.



The need to provide affordable housing for younger people – and for older residents wishing to downsize – was also highlighted. More fundamentally, many people said that by growing too big, Burton Latimer risks losing its character – and compromising the very features that attracted them to the town in the first place (see page 3).

Employment and education

Where do people who live in Burton Latimer work?

40% of respondents indicated that the question was not applicable to their situation – but it was impossible to determine whether this was due to ill-health, disability, continuing education, voluntary retirement, or enforced unemployment.

Of the remaining respondents, twice as many households have members who work outside Burton Latimer compared to those with town-based workers – and half of the town-based group work from home.



What do local people think about Burton Latimer's future education requirements?

Half of all respondents mentioned the need for more school places – for all ages – if the town's population grows to the size implied by recent housing plans. There was particular concern that the two local primary schools would not be able to cope with an increased population, and the need for a secondary school to serve the town was also noted.

Others highlighted the need for more after-school activities and holiday clubs. Meeting the wider learning needs of local residents – including the provision of adult education (for example, through evening classes) – was also mentioned as an issue to be considered.

The environment

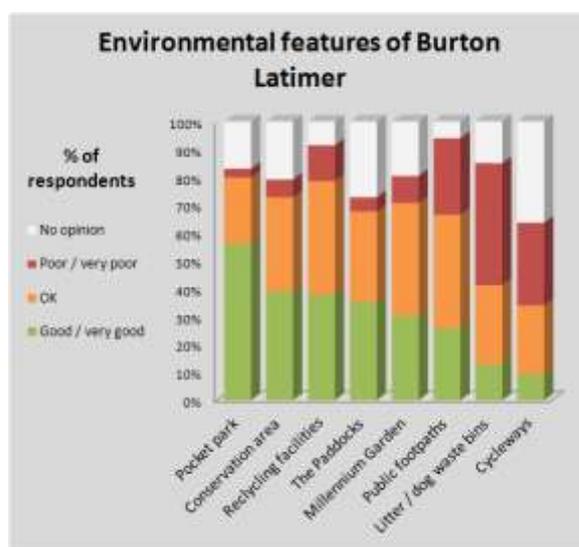
What do local people think about the environment in Burton Latimer?

The state of Burton Latimer's environment was regarded as one of the top five most important topics by those who responded to the household questionnaire. Those aspects attracting the highest levels of satisfaction were the Pocket Park, the conservation area and the Paddocks. Recycling facilities were also regarded favourably – though with room for some improvement.

Three aspects of the town's environment were rated particularly poorly – these being the amount of litter and dog fouling, the state of public footpaths and the provision of designated cycle-ways.

In the free text responses, the main suggestions for improving the town's environment were:

- Action on dog fouling and litter – such as the provision of more litter and dog waste bins
- Improvements to pavements and footpaths – including a general tidy-up, hedge-trimming, and better wheelchair access
- More designated cycle paths
- More tree-planting
- More information / publicity about green spaces, environmental attractions, and sustainability
- Tidying and better general maintenance of the town centre area, including the millennium garden
- Improved energy efficiency – such as using solar power for public buildings, installing energy efficient street lamps, and reducing the amount of street lighting (either the number of lights, or the duration)
- More seats in the pocket park and paddocks



- More recycling facilities – especially for items not collected by Kettering Borough Council
- Greater protection from development for the surrounding countryside, especially the Ise valley

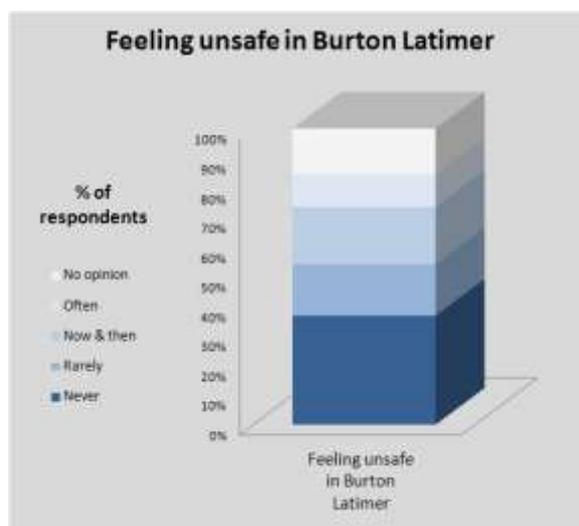
Safety & crime prevention

What do local people think about safety & crime prevention in Burton Latimer?

Safety and crime prevention was highlighted as another of the top five most important topics covered by the household questionnaire, and the responses to the question suggested that there is considerable potential for improvement.

More than 50% of respondents indicated that they never or rarely felt unsafe in Burton Latimer. However, for those that expressed a different view, the most common situations where people felt vulnerable were:

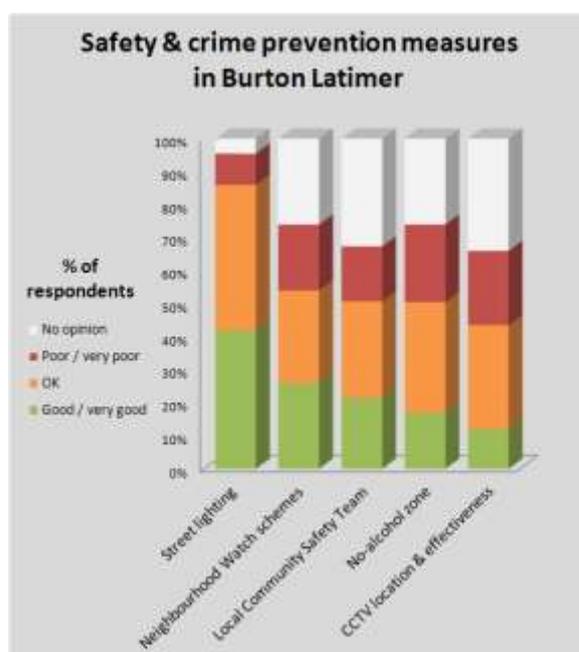
- Outside the Churchill Way shops – particularly in the evening
- Anywhere where groups of young people tend to gather
- Walking along secluded footpaths – for instance, along unlit paths and alleyways in the town, or through the Spinney
- On the King George V playing field after dark



Apart from street lighting (which was regarded as being “OK” or better by about 90% of respondents) the main safety and crime prevention measures currently in place received fairly modest ratings. However, since the questionnaires were completed, alternate street lights in the town have been turned off in a drive to save energy and reduce light pollution – so responses to this question may now be different.

In the free text responses, the main suggestions for improving safety and crime prevention in the town were:

- Better – and more effective use of – CCTV
- Better enforcement of the no-alcohol zone, and measures to limit the availability of alcohol to young people
- A more visible police & PCSO presence on foot or bike in the centre of town – especially at times and places when large groups of young people tend to gather
- Greater publicity for neighbourhood watch schemes, and support for their development in more areas
- Better lighting on footpaths and in alleyways
- Action to prevent large groups of young people from gathering – for instance, by creating alternative social activities
- Regular cutting-back of overgrown bushes



Traffic and transport

What do local people think about traffic and transport in Burton Latimer?

Traffic and transport issues were identified as the second most important topic covered by the household questionnaire. Very few aspects scored particularly highly – with the notable exception of the local bus service.

Areas causing most concern included drivers failing to observe speed limits on local roads, highway maintenance, too many HGVs passing through the town, and the poor quality of many pavements.

The free text responses explored some of these issues in greater detail and revealed a number of other specific concerns:

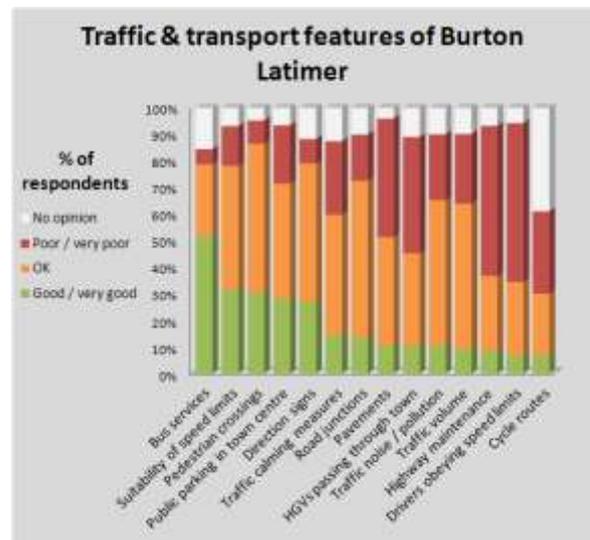
Highway & pavement maintenance – poor road surfaces and pot-holes were reported in many local roads, and the difficulty of driving during icy weather on a number of residential streets was also mentioned. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Better monitoring of road surface conditions and more timely pot-hole repairs
- More effective gritting of roads (especially side roads built on a slope) in the winter

Speeding – most principal roads in the town were mentioned as having problems with speeding traffic. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Extend the 20mph zone
- Install additional traffic calming measures
- Re-site the Finedon Road Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) speed detector so that it faces drivers entering Burton Latimer, rather than those leaving the town

HGV traffic volume – the number of HGVs passing through the town centre along High Street was a continuing concern for many respondents, along with HGVs using Finedon Road to access IVG White on their way to or from the A6 via Higham Road.



Parking – particular problems were noted in High Street (near the bank), outside St Mary's church and Meadowside school; on grass verges (in particular, along Churchill Way); along Station Road; and at junctions (notably High Street / Finedon Road). Suggestions for improvement included:

- Better enforcement of current parking restrictions
- Install disabled parking bays outside Churchill Way shops
- Replace grass verges in Churchill Way and Queensway with hard-standing
- Introduce one-way systems in narrow residential streets with residential parking

Traffic flow – the need to enforce one-way systems (for instance, in Poplar Road), and to prevent rat-runs along residential streets (such as traffic from Churchill Way estate using Newman Street as a cut-through) were the two most frequently mentioned problems relating to traffic flow.

Bus services – although the local bus services were generally well regarded, suggestions for improvement included:

- Extend the current Burton Latimer / Kettering bus timetable so that the service continues to operate until later in the evening
- Revise existing bus routes to make it easier to get from the town centre to Higham Road (and in particular, to the relocated medical centre and pharmacy) and to provide a link between Burton Latimer and Kettering station

- Review the location of bus stops (especially in High Street and Higham Road)
- Install shelters at all bus stops

Road junctions – two junctions were mentioned most frequently as causing problems: the Church Street / High Street mini-roundabout; and the A6 / Cranford Road junction. Suggestions for improvement included:

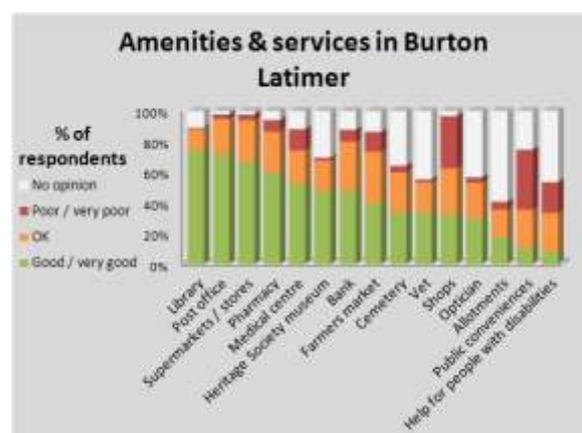
- Revise (or remove) the mini-roundabout at Church Street / High Street
- Better lighting at A6 / Cranford Road

Local amenities & services

What do local people think about the amenities and services in Burton Latimer?

In general, the amenities and services currently available in Burton Latimer appear to be well regarded – at least, by those who expressed a view. For instance, although the local allotments were rated as “OK” or better by only 35% of all respondents, this represented about 90% of those who felt able to give an opinion – which is likely to be those who use them. Similarly, the Heritage Society museum, vet, optician and cemetery received “OK” or better ratings from more than 95% of those who expressed a view.

Overall, the amenities and services that scored particularly highly for most people were the library, post office, supermarkets and general stores. The pharmacy and medical centre also scored well – although the most common comment among the free text responses was that the relocation of the pharmacy to its new site on Higham Road had created difficulties. It was seen as being too far from the town centre, and having insufficient parking. However, others noted that the move had reduced parking problems in the High Street.



On the downside, the local shops attracted the highest “poor” or “very poor” ratings. Free text comments indicated that this was largely to do with the limited range of shops, and stressed the need to attract more retail outlets and businesses to the town.

The other two areas that received relatively poor ratings were the town’s public conveniences (which were seen as poorly signed, dirty and smelly), and the help available for people with disabilities.

In the free text responses, the majority of suggestions for improving the amenities and services in the town reflected a wish to attract more shops to the town centre, plus a dentist and a petrol station.

Places of worship

What do local people think about the places of worship in Burton Latimer and their contribution to the community?

Only 30% of households answered this question – but the free text comments were generally positive, with the churches in Burton Latimer being seen as important, and welcoming, focal points of the town for churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike. They are also viewed as being vital to the town and valued by the community – with Focus magazine, in particular, being highlighted as a good source of information about what’s going on in the town.

Those who expressed specific views on this topic mentioned the potential for building on existing inter-faith collaboration and non-denominational activities, and for finding ways of developing the churches’ roles further – such as by visiting the sick and elderly, offering a venue for concerts, encouraging groups for all ages and providing a drop-in centre.

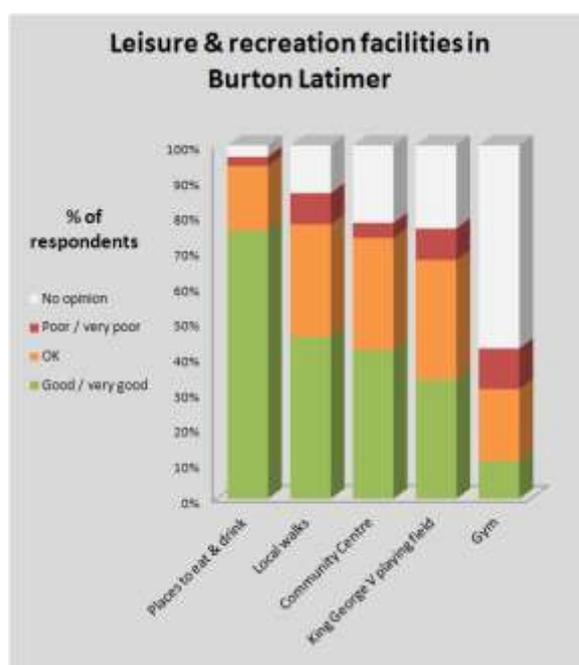
Leisure & recreation facilities

What do local people think about the leisure and recreation facilities in Burton Latimer?

In general, the leisure and recreation facilities currently available in Burton Latimer were well regarded by those who felt able to express an opinion – with the local places to eat and drink being rated particularly highly.

However, the free text responses indicated a wish to see an improvement in the range of these facilities in the town. The most frequently mentioned suggestions for future development were:

- Generate more publicity about what’s on offer in Burton Latimer – such as a welcome pack for new residents
- Publicise local walks more effectively, with associated maps and leaflets
- Encourage the development of a leisure centre with sports facilities – and a swimming pool
- Provide more youth and teenage facilities – for instance, by redeveloping disused working men’s clubs
- Identify somewhere for senior citizens to meet
- Create more play areas for children
- Set up an arts and creative centre in the town



What do local people think about the local clubs and societies in Burton Latimer?

Over 40 different clubs and societies within Burton Latimer were identified by those completing the household questionnaire. However, several respondents also expressed a wish to see more clubs for all ages (including youth clubs, and those catering for the interests of the over-50s) in the town – especially those providing sports activities for young people.

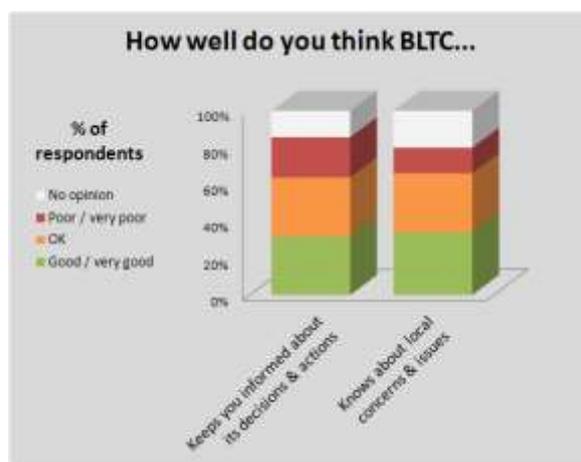
Specific suggestions for new clubs and societies included an adult choir, flower arranging, a walking club and a music society.

Local government

How well do local people think Burton Latimer Town Council understand their concerns and keep them informed?

Overall, about 65% of those who completed the household questionnaire indicated that Burton Latimer Town Council (BLTC) was “OK” or better at understanding local concerns.

A similar percentage felt the same way about how well BLTC keeps people informed of its decisions and actions – although a slightly higher proportion of people rated this aspect of the council as either “poor” or “very poor”.



How do local people contact their town councillor or the council to give their views?

Just over half of those who completed the questionnaire indicated that that they don't know how to give their views to BLTC, contact a councillor or find out what happened at a BLTC meeting.

Of those who were able to say how they would do these things:

- The most popular way of giving views to BLTC would be by email, followed by speaking directly to a councillor (for instance at the monthly farmers market), writing a letter, making a 'phone call, or visiting the Civic Centre
- Contacting an individual councillor would usually be done by email or 'phone – using details on the website or in Sounding Board
- Visiting the website would be how most respondents currently find out what's happened at a BLTC meeting, followed by reading Focus magazine or Sounding Board

The main suggestions for improving communication between BLTC and the local community were:

- Encourage individual councillors to raise their profile in the town – for instance, by being a more visible presence at the monthly farmers market
- Ensure that questions to BLTC are answered reliably and promptly
- Create more opportunities for face to face meetings with councillors – such as, by holding regular surgeries at the Civic Centre
- Use the website to stimulate discussion on specific topics and receive feedback
- Make more effective use of newsletters – including Sounding Board and other locally distributed material – to explain and promote BLTC’s role, activities and decisions
- Ensure that BLTC meetings are as transparent as possible, with the minimum number of items dealt with in the private and confidential section of meetings as possible.

And finally...

What do local people think were the most important issues that WERE covered in the household questionnaire?

Many people commented that all the issues covered by the questionnaire were important – but that having the chance to give their views was the main thing. The most frequently mentioned topics requiring action were:

- **Housing** – in particular, concerns about the scale, pace and location of recent (and planned) development within the town, and the risks of overwhelming the infrastructure
- **Traffic and transport** – including the need to address speeding, parking problems, HGV traffic and the poor state of many side roads
- **Safety & crime** – with anti-social behaviour and underage drinking being highlighted as problems, along with a need for more effective enforcement (and possibly extension) of the town’s no-alcohol zone
- **Local amenities and services** – in particular, the questions of how to attract businesses and shops to Burton Latimer, and to support them more effectively; how to enhance local facilities in the town (with the public conveniences attracting particularly strong criticism); and how to provide more help for those with disabilities
- **The local environment** – including the wish to see a generally cleaner, tidier and more vibrant town, improved (and litter-free) pavements and footpaths, and less dog fouling

...and that WERE NOT covered in the household questionnaire?

Again, many people commented that the questionnaire had not missed out any important issues. A few respondents expressed concern about what would happen next and whether it would make a difference to the town – but the most frequently mentioned topics that respondents would have liked to see more emphasis on in the questionnaire were:

- The needs of young people and the over-65s
- The role and responsibility of Burton Latimer Town Council as opposed to Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council – plus how the precept is calculated and spent
- How to preserve the town’s character and restore a sense of community