



2013

Southam Parish Plan



Southam Parish Council

9/4/2013

Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
A brief History	3
Background to the plan	4
Summary of results	5
Results from main survey	6
The way forward	24



Introduction

What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is a snapshot in time of our community's character and identity with priorities for action on the issues that matter most to our Parishioners.

The essential characteristic of a parish plan is that it is based on parishioners' views. It presents a real opportunity for voices to be heard about what is needed to make Southam Parish an even better place, however small scale some of those improvements might seem.

By having given every local resident the opportunity to say exactly what they value most and identify those areas of concern, the Parish Plan is an authoritative statement of the community's views and has identified what should, in a period of inevitable change, be respected and challenged. Through the household questionnaire and public meetings attended by residents, the Parish Plan is a unique source of information on the issues that matter most to local people.

The Parish Plan can therefore be used to influence those who make decisions about how (our) money is spent in Southam Parish.

Examples include:

- To attempt to secure sponsorship and grants to pay for improvements within our Parish.
- To provide a focus for community activity and organised self-help. Many other parishes with Parish Plans have been successful in obtaining significant amounts of funding precisely because of the statement of needs identified and community involvement in their Plan. Other parishes have used their Plans to work on specific projects.

Who is the Plan for?

It is for everyone concerned about the future of Southam Parish. It can also be used by Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). Both have a statutory obligation to consult the views of the community when taking any decisions on issues, especially development, that will affect our community.



A Brief History of Southam

Southam was first mentioned in the history books in 991, in the reign of Ethelred the Unready. It appears to have originated as an offshoot of Bishop's Cleeve, with the name indicating its position south of the main settlement. The village, sheltered by the Cleeve Hill escarpment and strategically placed between 2 streams that ran into the Swilgate, was a small but prosperous farming community. However, little was recorded about it until 1140, when a chapel was built as part of the wider Monastic community in the area. By 1216 it was mentioned as being a village of 25 houses in addition to the Tithe barn and the chapel. The Manor House was completed in the 1500s. By 1600 recorded numbers were still roughly the same. The 15th and 16th centuries saw a few more houses built, but Southam truly began to grow in the 20th Century, particularly after the 2nd World War, both in the heart of the village and up Cleeve Hill, including Haymes which was then a hamlet in its own right round a single farm complex. Southam's change of character from agriculture to commuter was accelerated by the redevelopment of the farmland attached to the Pigeon House and Tithe barn as the Ratcliff Lawns estate. Now, in the 21st Century, the growth continues with Noverton View expanding and becoming a welcome part of the village.

In the 15th and 16th centuries there was no demarcation, as far as agricultural communities were concerned, between Bishop's Cleeve, Woodmancote, Brockhampton and Southam, with villagers able to hold and work their 'strips' in any area. As 'enclosures' were brought into force it was noted that 'boundaries were uncertain' and farm tracks meandered everywhere! Landowners and tenants in Southam also held 'rights of common' on Cleeve Hill for animal pasture. Over time the plan of the village has changed as the main road through the village has moved progressively east. The purchase of Southam House and the Delabere estate by Lord Ellenborough in 1833 brought significant change as he funded the renovation of the chapel (now the Church of the Ascension), funded a small school and even ceded part of his estate to allow the development of what is now Cheltenham Racecourse. In later years Southam House successively became the home of the Mrs Ratcliff and her family (a daughter, Miss Ratcliff, later moved to Church Cottage and is remembered as a major benefactor of the Village), Oriel School for Girls, the Delabere Hotel and now, after much renovation, the Ellenborough Park Hotel.

Walls, GCHQ, the Coal board at Stoke Orchard, and Smith's industries, brought new residents and their families to live here. In December 1973 Bill Bawden wrote a fascinating article about Southam for Gloucestershire Life magazine entitled 'Vibrant with Life': in it he said, "The new people. By and large, they are indeed the Southam of today. They come and they go, but in a village that has no shop, no pub, no post office, no school – in fact no day-to-day meeting place at all other than the bus stop – it is remarkable to find such a highly developed sense of community." This showed itself then, as now, in a strong WI, Social Club, talented Art Group, active Church and various social activities in and around the village hall; with the regular Southam Newsletter providing the 'meeting point' for information and airing of views.

(This is a very skeletal history of Southam, but I hope it encourages you to track down all the other fascinating details, either by reading for yourself the myriad entries in the reference books in Bishop's Cleeve or Winchcombe library, or, even better, talking to the elders of our village who know so much firsthand and can fill you in on fascinating details of facts, personalities, how Southam coped with the war and even the names of all the fields!)

Linda Jones
Feb 2013

Background to the plan

With a parish Council often being seen as an talking shop and slightly distanced from it residents Southam Parish Council decided that it was time the community became more involved in the decision making process.

It was time to take stock and move things forward and find out what were the main concerns of residents and what issues were affecting them.

Having the local community more involved would steer the Parish Council to make decisions that residents want and to take action accordingly.

In order to achieve this it would be necessary to create a parish plan, a business plan if you like, to identify problems to which solutions could be found

The process of formulating the parish plan started with an informal village meeting in February 2012. As part of that meeting Elin Tattersall, Assistant Chief Executive of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council presentation to residents identifying what a Parish Plan was and what could be achieved from it.

Following group discussions at the meeting a swot analysis was developed identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the parish. A list of issues important to residents was also drawn up.

A steering group was formed to take the parish plan forward. The first step was to create a questionnaire that would identify concerns of parishioners and give a clearer idea the age range and needs of residents.

The questionnaire was delivered with the July 2012 newsletter and made available online via the Southam Today website. Residents had until the end of September 2012 to respond.

110 responses were received, approximately 25% of households.

The information received was then assessed and all comments noted. From the data the main concerns of parishioners were identified and a plan could be formulated on what issues to take forward.

The working group and parish plan compilers consisted of Steve Lennon, Linda Jones, Gill Jennings, Kevin Wilcox and Ben Thomas.

Our concerns

The number of questionnaires returned could have been greater, although the quality of the responses was good.

Many of the concerns were particular to specific areas within the parish and so there are few stand out issues that affected the parish as a whole.

Summary of results

The information on this and subsequent pages summarises the responses of parishioners to questions raised in the main survey conducted July to September 2012. Some of the principle findings are:

- Parishioners value highly Southam's position within countryside, yet its closeness to Cheltenham.
- Southam Parish is also considered a friendly community.
- The population of Southam Parish has a greater number of older residents, nearly 50% of respondents were in the over 60 age group.
- The speed of vehicles travelling through Southam was a major concern.
- There was general agreement of the need for more owner/occupier dwellings, although most respondents felt there should be no additional development. There was some agreement for single dwellings in controlled locations.
- Southam Parish was considered an area where crime and antisocial behaviour was not a significant problem
- Car boot sales were considered to have a significant impact on living in Southam.
- The Southam Newsletter is seen as a very useful publication.

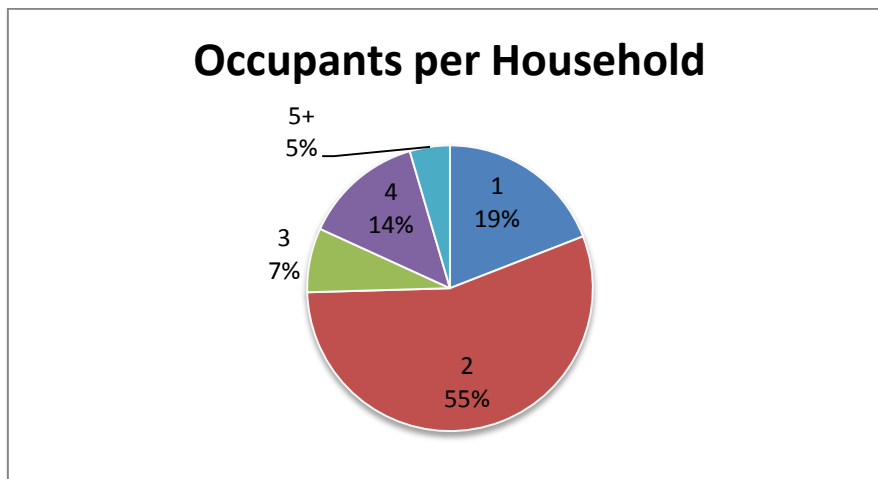


Results from main survey

The results are taken from 110 responses received.

A: Your household

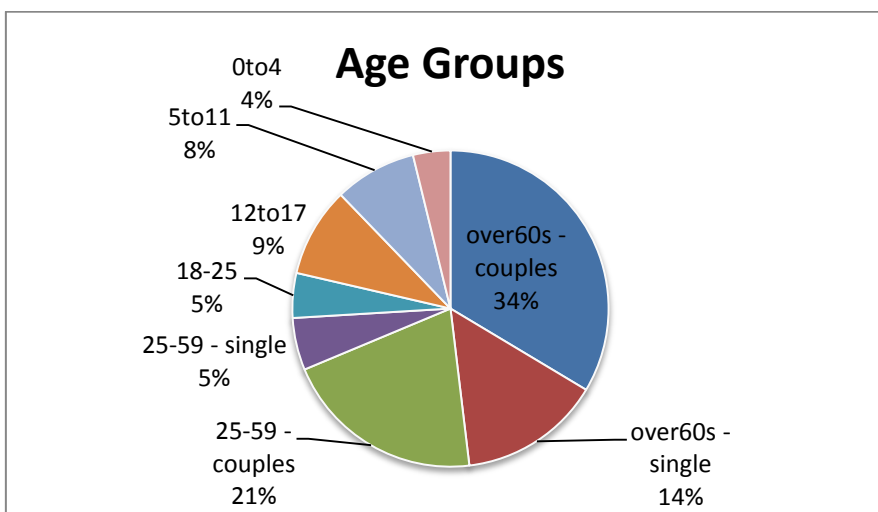
Q1 How many people normally live in your household?



Main finding:

Of the respondents, the majority of households consist of a couple or an individual living on their own with families being in the minority.

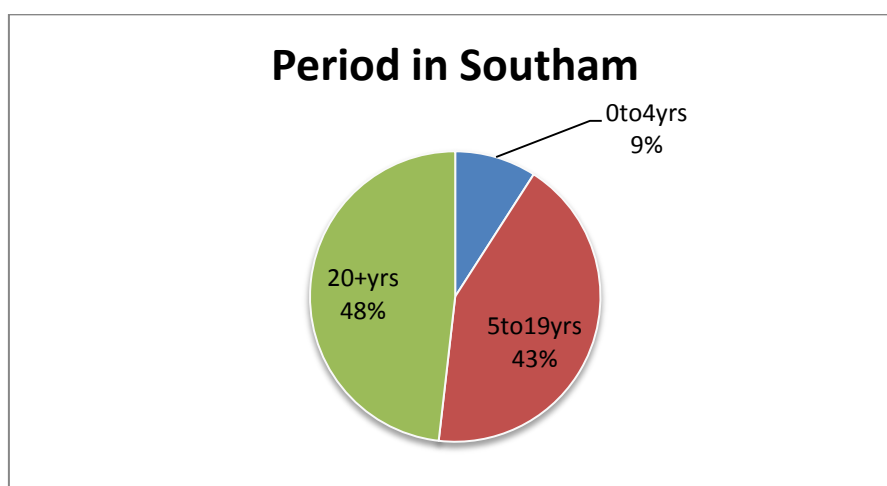
Q2 How many people of each age group normally live in your household?



Main finding:

Nearly 50% of respondents are over 60 years of age.

Q3 How long have you, as a household, lived in Southam?



Main finding:

Nearly half of respondents have been resident in Southam Parish for many years. Most of the remaining residents have been living here for a long time with those recently moving to the parish in the minority.

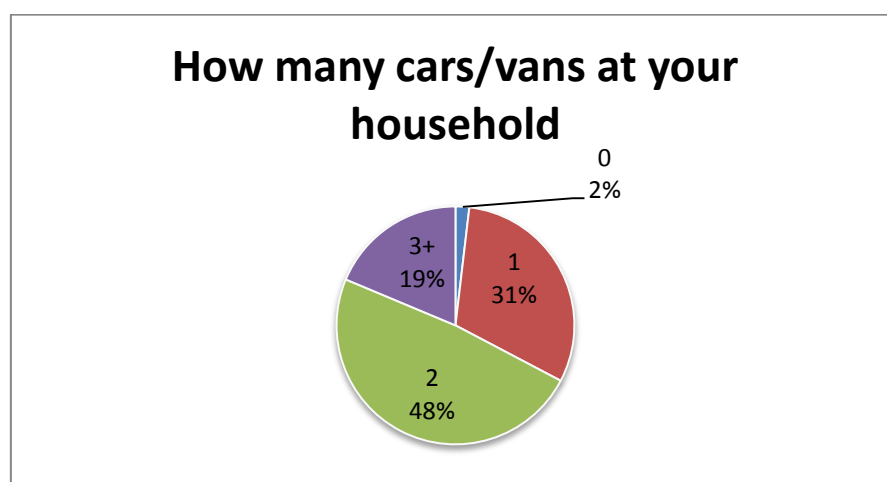
Q4 In which part of the parish do you live? Please provide your postcode.

Main finding:

There were too few postcodes given to analyse, but the core response appears to have come from Southam as opposed to Noverton.

B: Transport

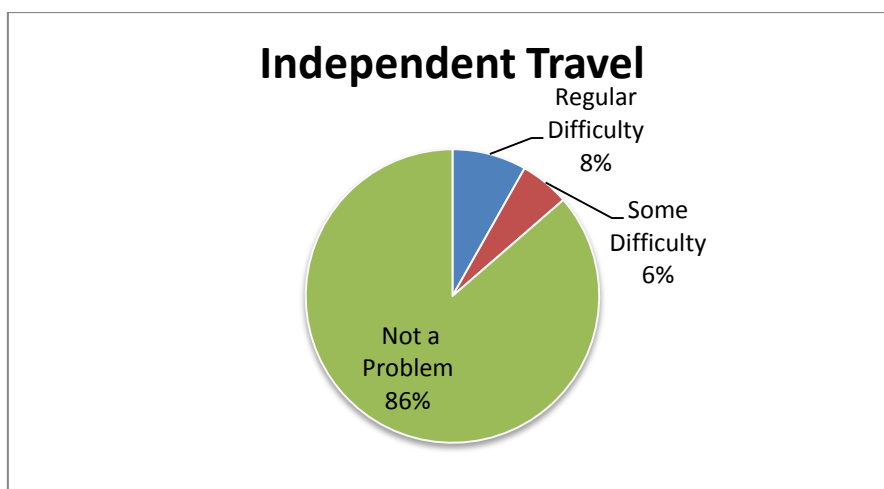
Q5 How many vehicles are based at your household?



Main finding:

The majority of households have at least two vehicles. Very few have no vehicles.

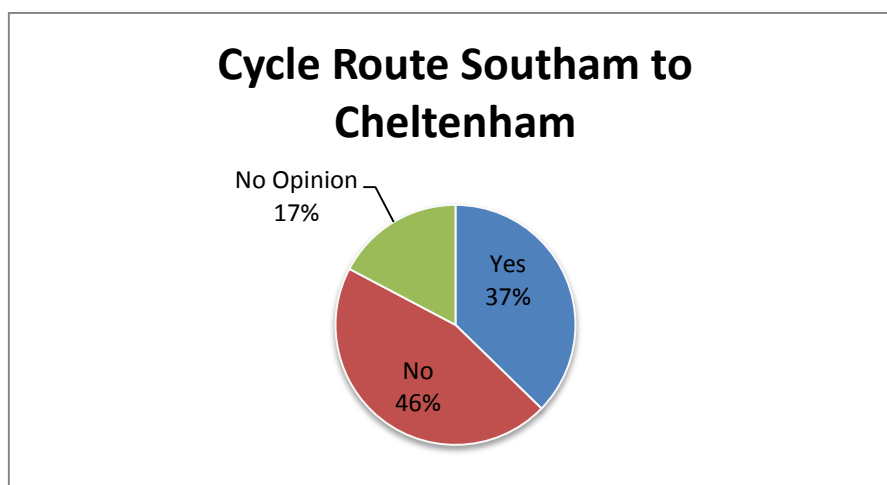
- Q6 Does any adult in your household have difficulty in getting to the following independently when the need arises?**



Main finding:

Whilst the majority of respondents have no problems travelling independently there is a core of residents who do have to overcome some difficulty.

- Q7 Would your household benefit from a designated cycle route from Southam to Cheltenham?**



Main finding:

Whilst the majority of residents felt there was no need for a cycle route to Cheltenham there was a significant number of respondents who felt a cycle route would be of benefit. This result may be due to the large number of older residents in the Parish who may have hung up there cycle clips.

Q8 How often has someone in your household used the following in the past twelve months?

Main finding:

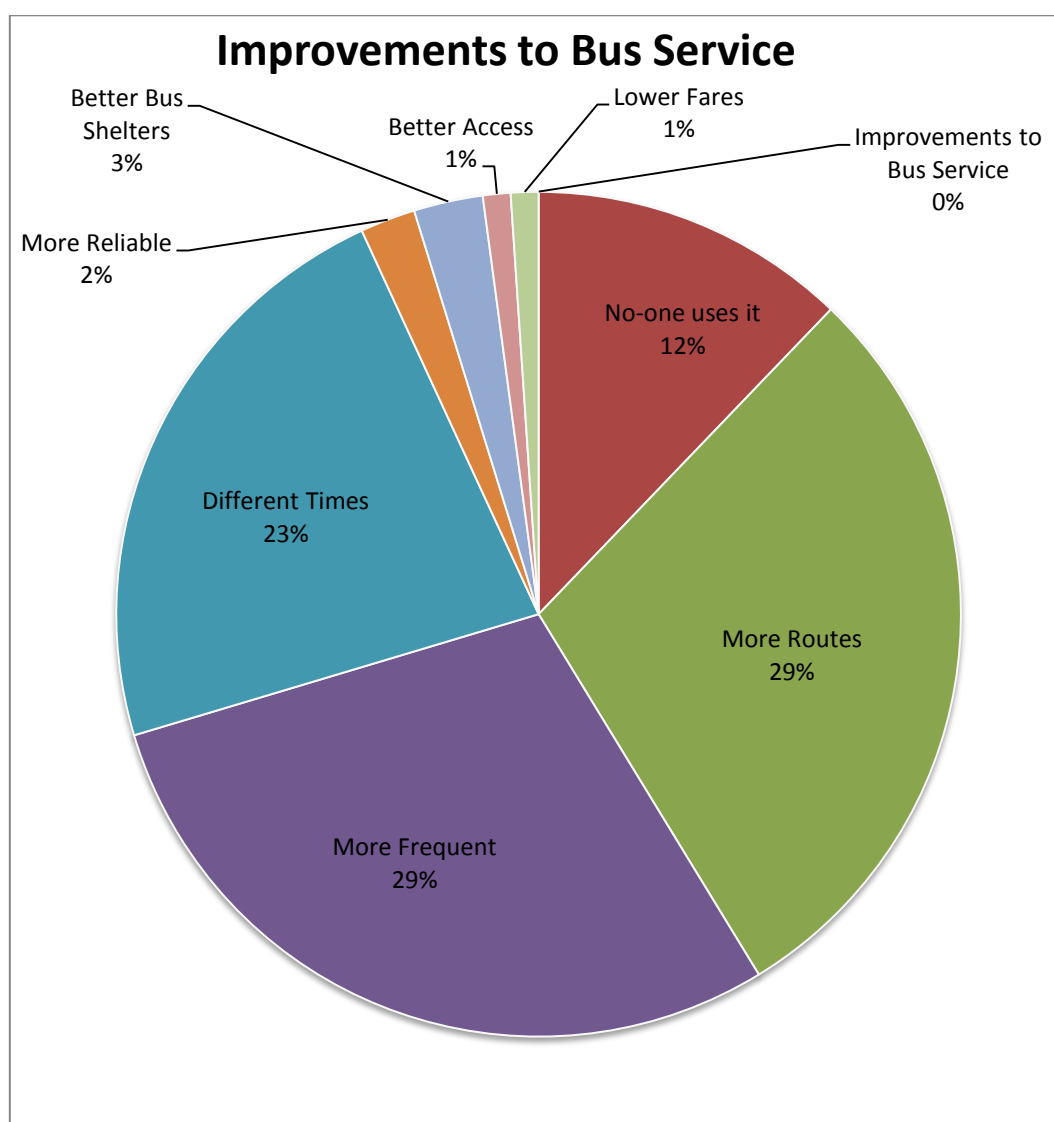
100% surveyed had not used a voluntary car share scheme.

86% never used the bus service.

14% had used the bus service.

6% used private taxi hire.

Q9 What improvements would you like to see to the bus service?

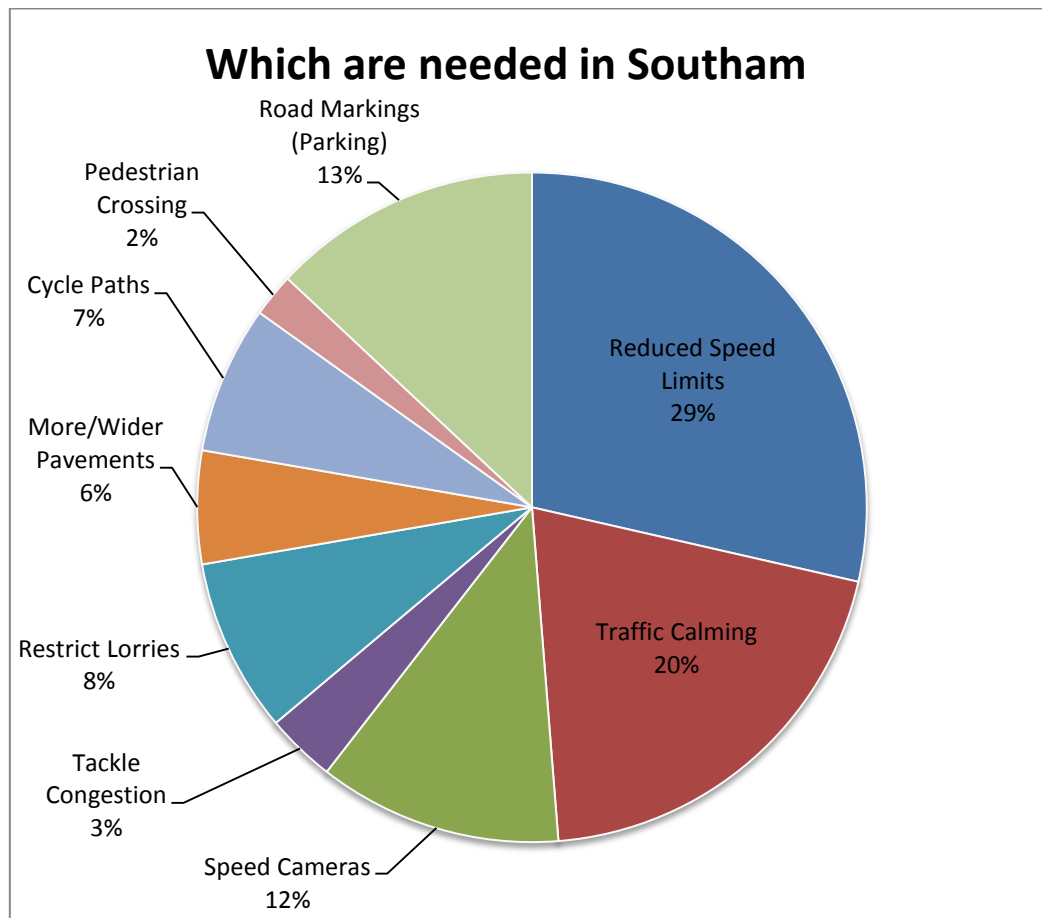


Main finding:

Residents clearly would like a bus service that was more regular over a longer period of time with a wider range of destinations.

C: Traffic

Q10 Which of the following do you think are urgently needed in Southam?



Main finding:

It was clear that traffic issues were important for many residents. Reducing speed of vehicles through the parish was the main complaint, but the need for additional footpaths and the restriction of the number of large lorries were also commented on.

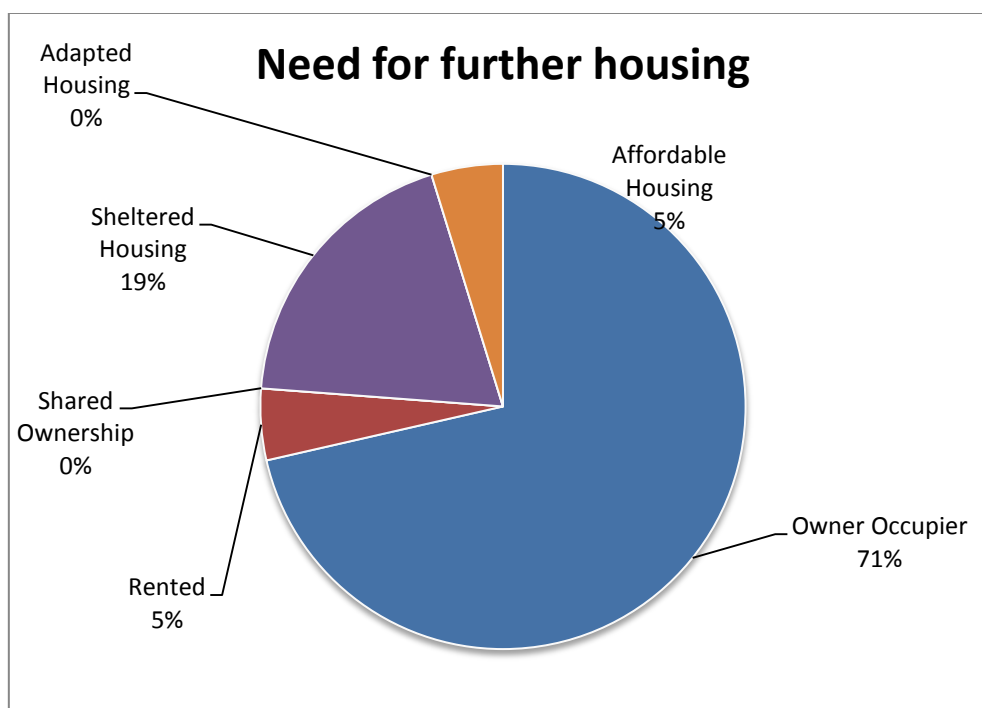
Comments made:

- Speeding traffic in Southam Lane, New Road needs traffic calming
- Pavements and Cycle Paths from the Bottom of Ratcliffe Lawns down to entrance to racecourse would make it safer to walk and cycle
- Bottleneck in School Lane caused by inconsiderate parking
- Congestion caused by car boot sales
- Pavements along B4632 (Cleeve Hill) overgrown
- Crossing B4632 to bus stop hazardous
- Vehicles come too close to cyclists on main road
- Cycle Path B4632
- Speed cameras along New Road are needed
- Mirrors needed on corners in New Road

- **Pavement all way along in New Road, Southam Lane/Kayte Lane to ease walking access to Cleeve (alternatively cycle lanes down these routes) Most Popular comment**
- 40mph limit down Cleeve Hill Road past Ellenborough Park
- Reduce HGVs Southam Lane (or restrict 7am-9.30am 4pm and 6pm) and New Road
- Better road maintenance Cleeve Hill Road and traffic calming down hill
- Traffic sweeps round bend from B4632 into Southam Lane at speed VAS needed here also double white lines needed from Ellenborough Park to Haymes Drive
- Clearer road markings
- Poor traffic management on race days and car boot days (Kayte Lane particularly affected)
- Adoption of the remaining portion of Spring Lane (a distance of 100 yards before it joins Cleeve Conservators land at the top of Rising Sun Lane.
- No Speed Bumps please
- Camber of road (School Lane/Southam Lane)

D Housing and development

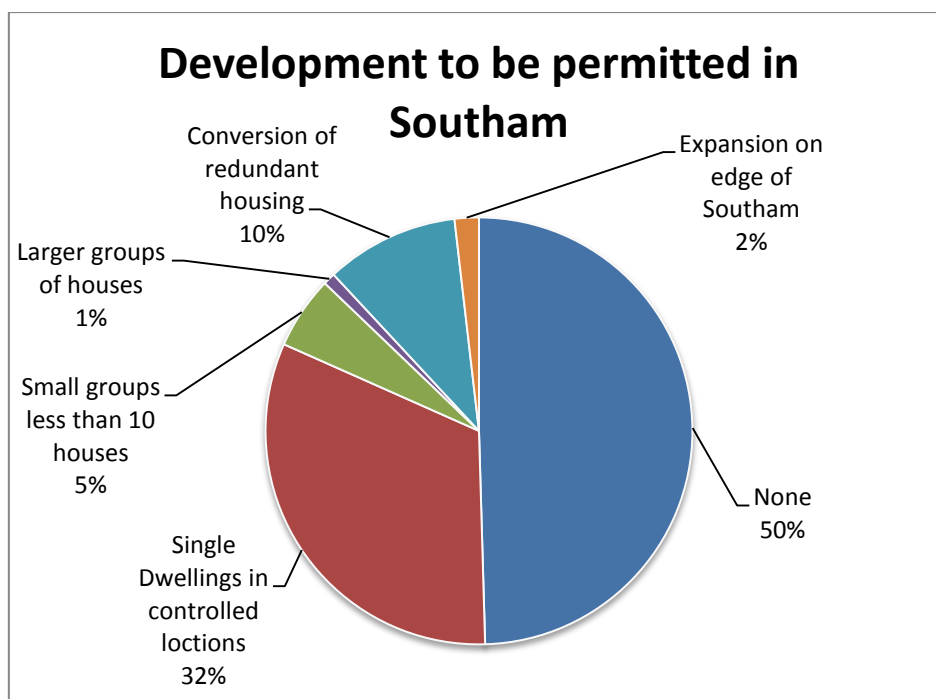
Q11 Do you think there is a need for more of the following types of housing in Southam?



Main finding:

Whilst it was clear that respondents felt that there was a need for more housing in Southam Parish any such housing should be predominantly owner/occupied.

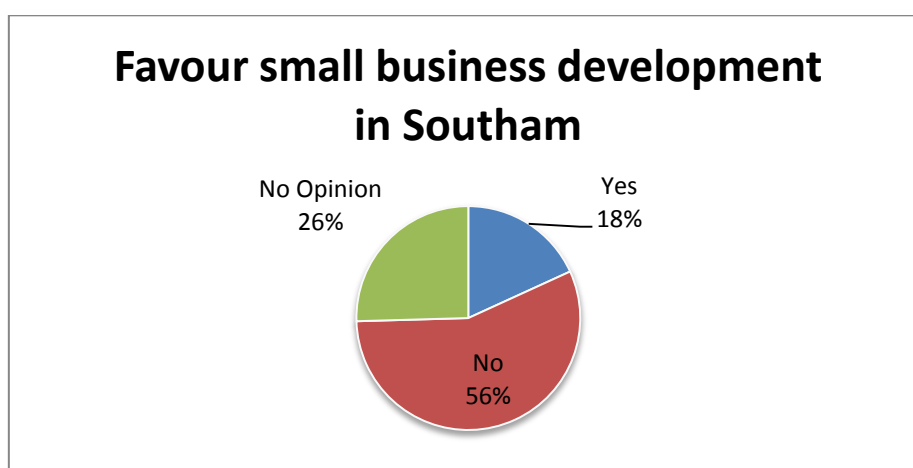
Q12 What type of housing development do you think should be permitted in Southam?



Main finding:

Despite Q11 identifying a need for additional housing, the majority of residents felt that there should not be additional development. Where respondents did agree development should be allowed most felt that it should be limited to single dwellings in controlled locations.

Q13 Would you favour small business development in Southam? (E.g. workshops, offices, service units)



Main finding:

There was little appetite for small business development within Southam Parish.

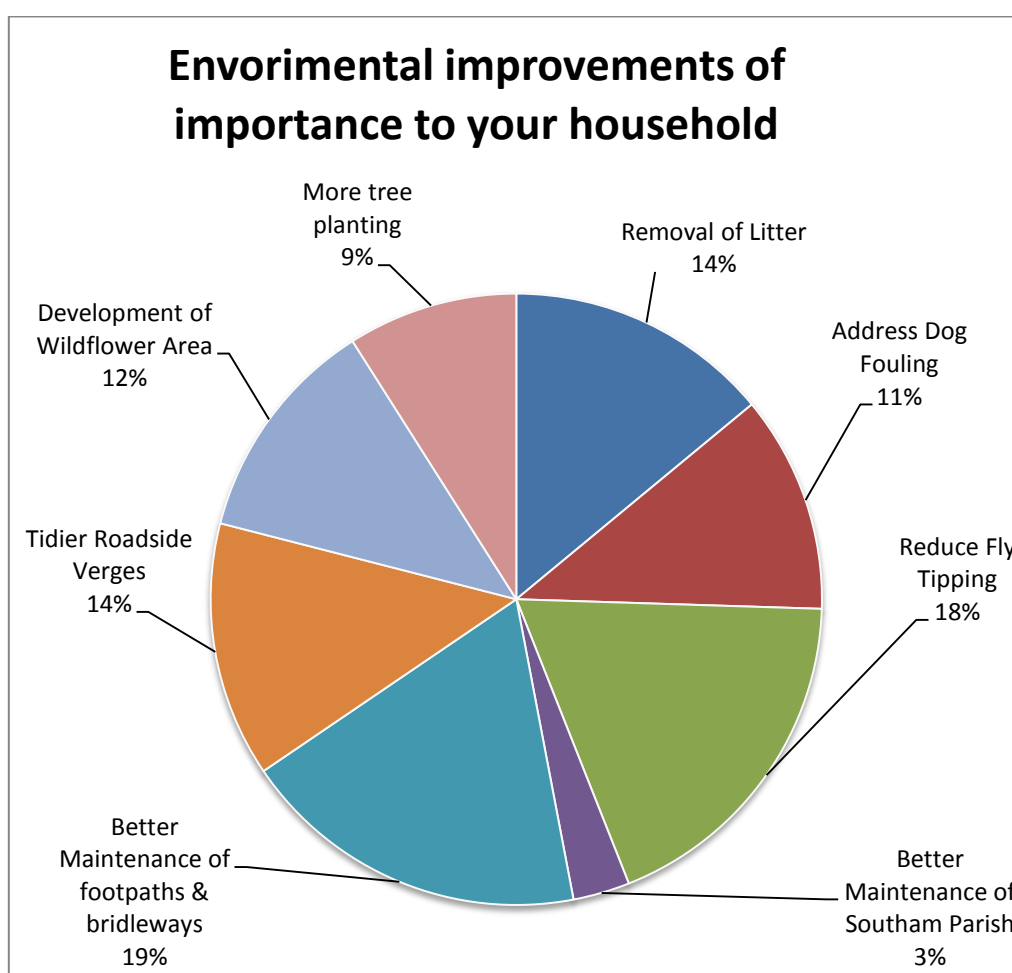
Q14 Do you have any views in relation to planning, or other issues that affect your home or any part of the Parish?

Comments made:

- Planning by stealth becoming the norm
- Lack of enforcement
- Need adoption of Noverton by Tewkesbury Borough Council

E: Environment

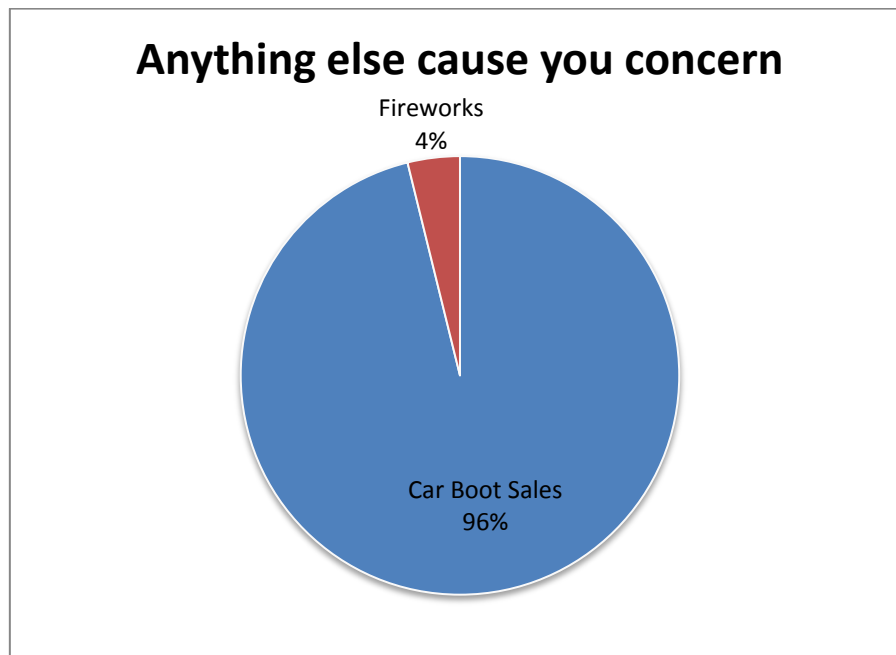
Q15 Here is a list of possible environmental improvements that could be undertaken or progressed in Southam.



Main finding:

There was general support to try and progress a number of environmental improvements to Southam Parish.

Q16 Does anything else relating to the local environment in which we live give you cause for concern? If so please let us know.



Main finding:

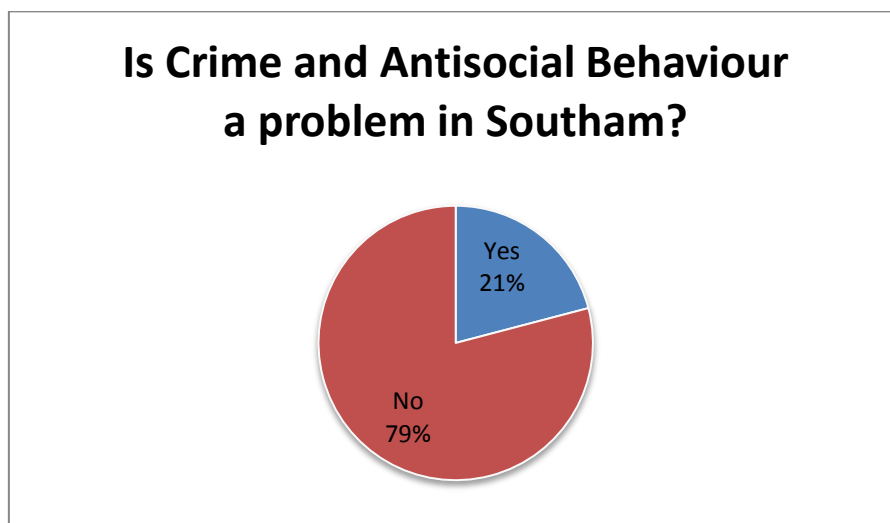
By far the main cause of concern to the residents of Southam Parish is the high number of car boot sales. Fireworks at the Ellenborough Hotel was also raised.

Comments made:

- Flytipping
- Bridlepaths not maintained
- Dog Fouling on footpaths
- Trees not inspected or maintained
- Overgrown verges
- Need community energy plan
- Too frequent mowing of verges destroying habitat
- Gypsies and Travellers leaving debris in laybys
- More regular ditch clearance needed (by landowners)
- Better water pressure

F: Crime and antisocial behaviour

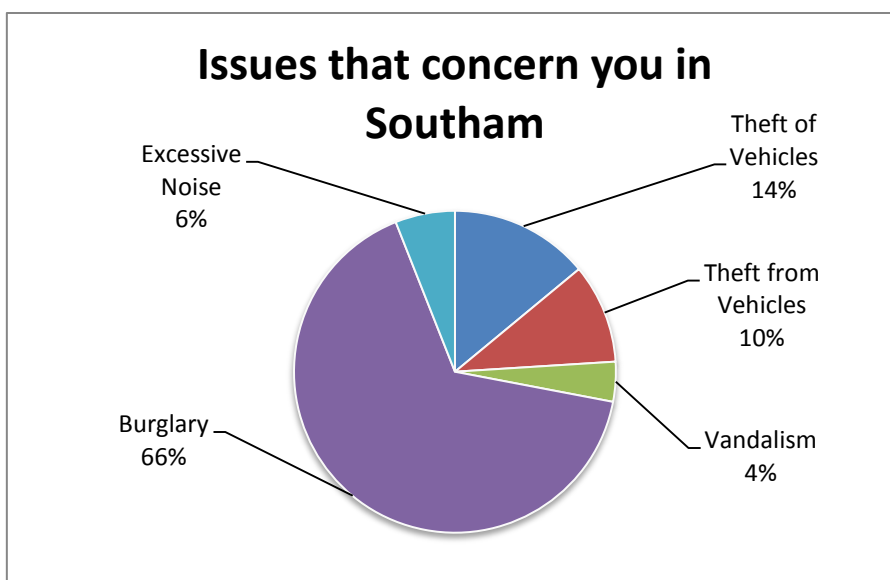
Q17 Do you think that crime and antisocial behaviour are a problem in Southam?



Main finding:

Southam Parish is primarily considered an area fairly free from crime and antisocial behaviour.

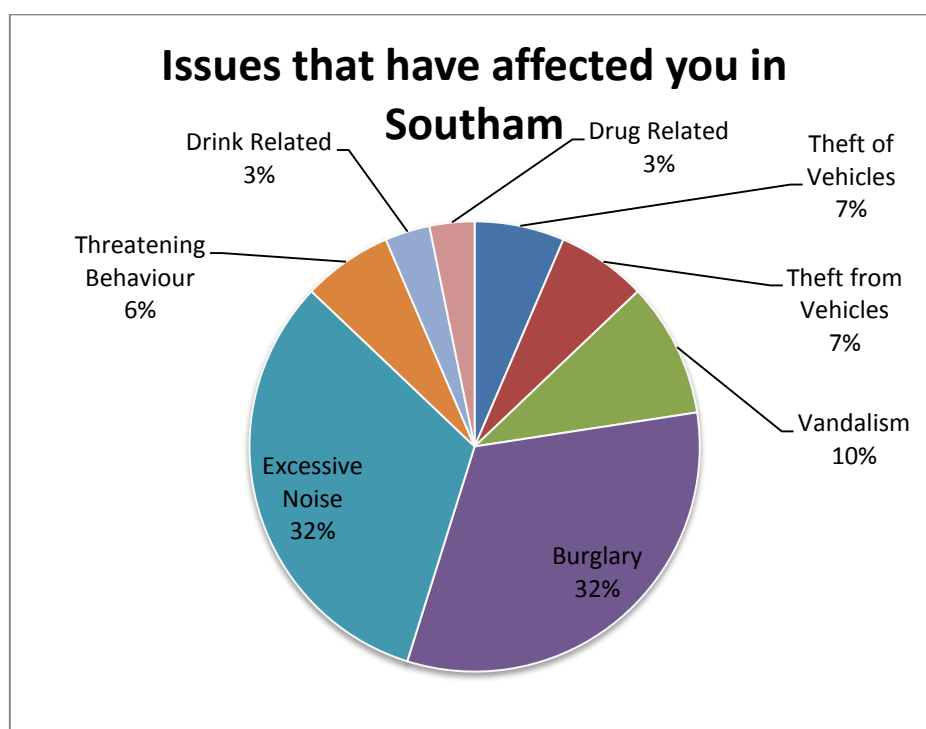
Q18 Please tick the issues that particularly concern you in Southam, and indicate whether your household has been personally affected in the past five years.



Main finding:

Despite a fairly low level of crime and antisocial behaviour, burglary was a worry for a large number of respondents, followed by vehicle theft and noise pollution.

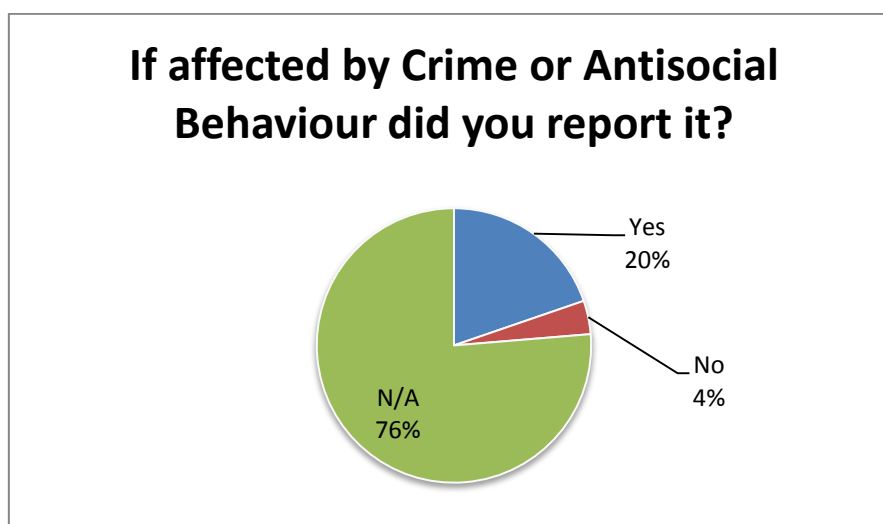
Q18 Cont.



Main finding:

Of those respondents concerned with crime and antisocial behaviour, burglary and excessive noise were the main issues that they had been personally affected by.

Q19 If you have been affected by crime or antisocial behaviour in Southam in the past five years, did you report the incident to the police?



Main finding:

The majority of respondents were not affected, but of those who were, the majority reported crime or anti-social behaviour that affected them.

Q20 Are you satisfied by the police service provided to Southam?

Main finding:

The data provided was incomplete with a large proportion not giving an answer. However 45 of the responses did indicate they were satisfied with the police service.

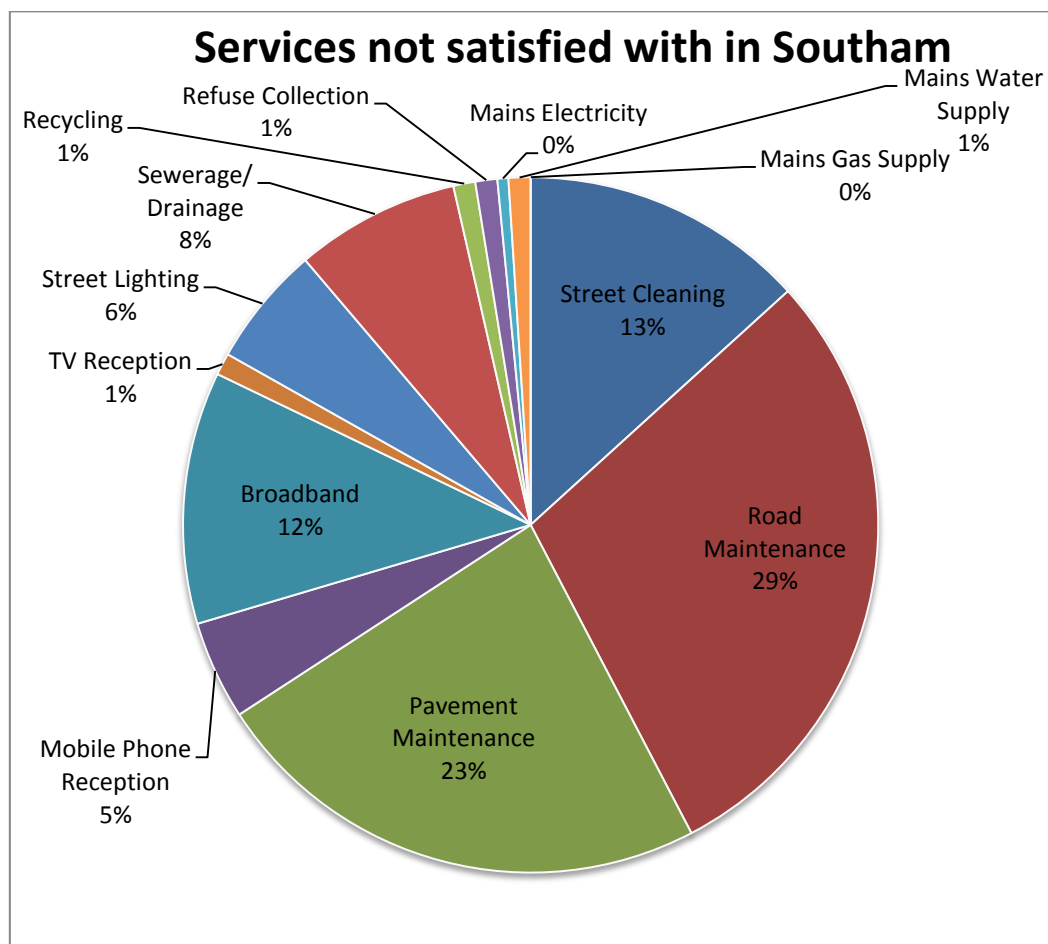
Q21 Neighbourhood Watch schemes exist in some parts of the parish. Do you think that an extension of the scheme would be of practical value in your area?

Main finding:

Respondents in postcodes 3NY, 3QE, 3PA and 3NX would like an extension to the neighbourhood watch scheme.

G: Services

Q22 Are you satisfied with the following services in Southam?

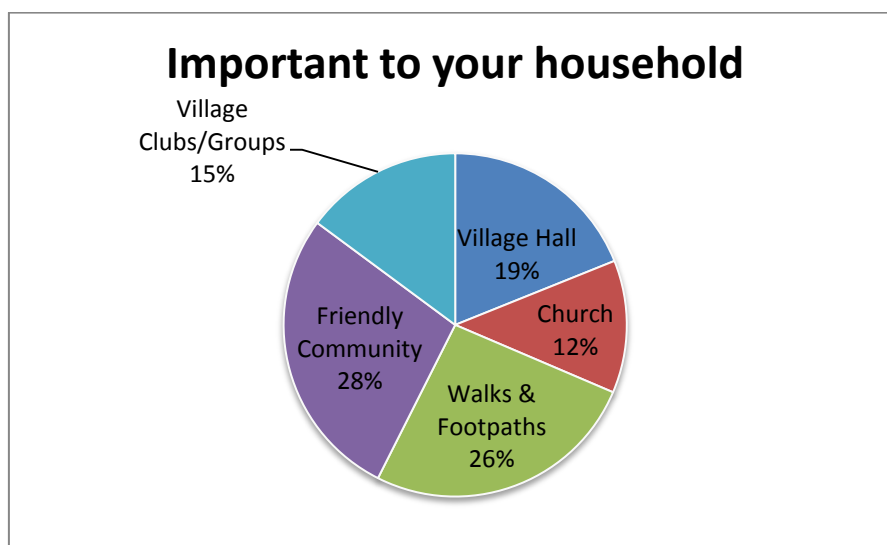


Comments made:

- More frequent street cleaning needed
- More frequent drain flushing Cleeve Hill Road
- Address the flooding in Kayte Lane

H: Community life

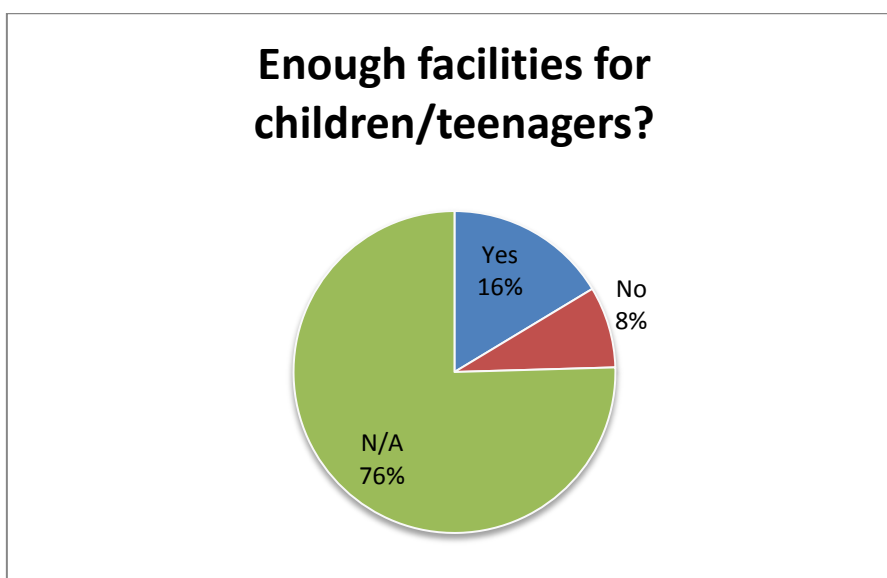
Q23 Which of the following in Southam are important to your household?



Main finding:

Respondents felt that the ability to be able to walk in the surrounding countryside was of particular importance as was Southams friendly community.

Q24 If you have children/teenagers, are there enough facilities for them in Southam?



Main finding:

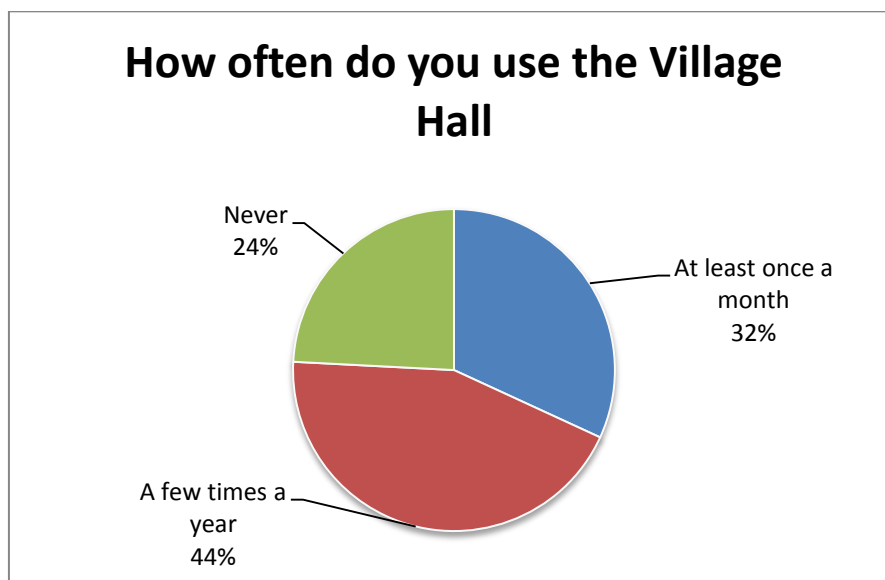
Of the respondents with children the majority felt that there were enough facilities for children.

Q25 Is there any additional club or society, leisure facility or activity that you would like to see in Southam?

Comments made:

- Monthly lunch club
- Kneedlework/craft sessions
- Broadband /Internet Café
- Gardening/Walking Club
- Interesting lectures/educational classes
- Table Tennis
- Zumba/keep fit/aerobics
- Bridge Club

Q26 How often does anyone in your household use the village hall or attend an event there?



Main finding:

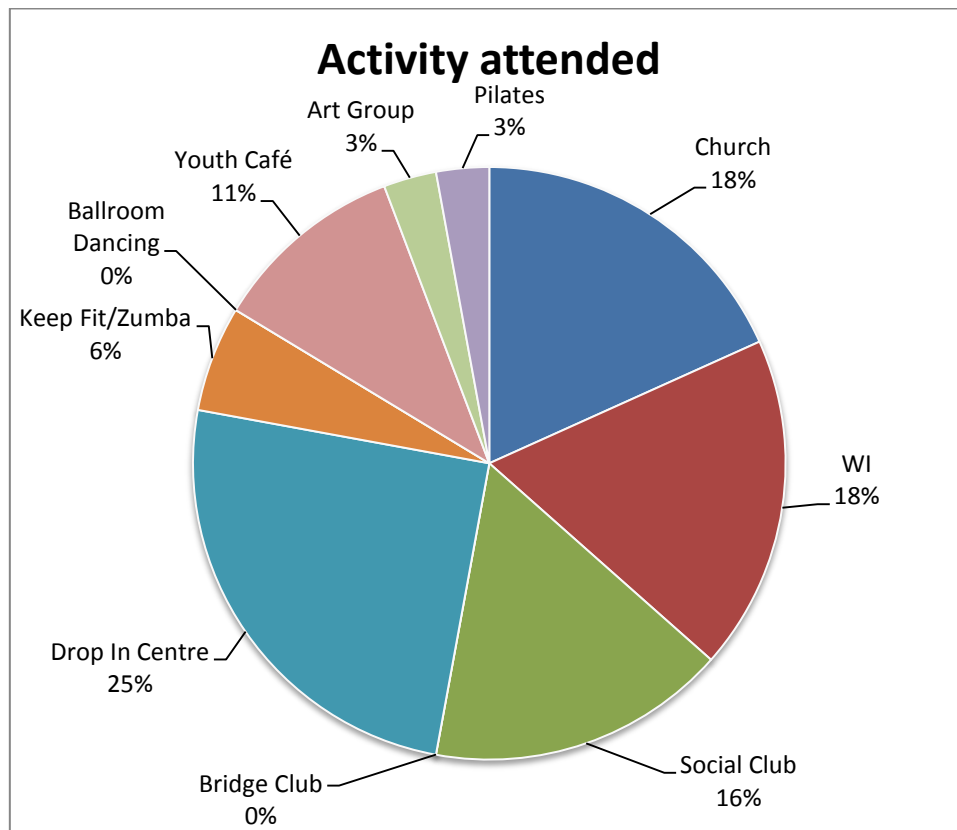
The majority of residents do use the hall during the year with a good proportion using it regularly.

Q27 What would make you use the village hall more?

Comments made:

- Less restrictions on usage

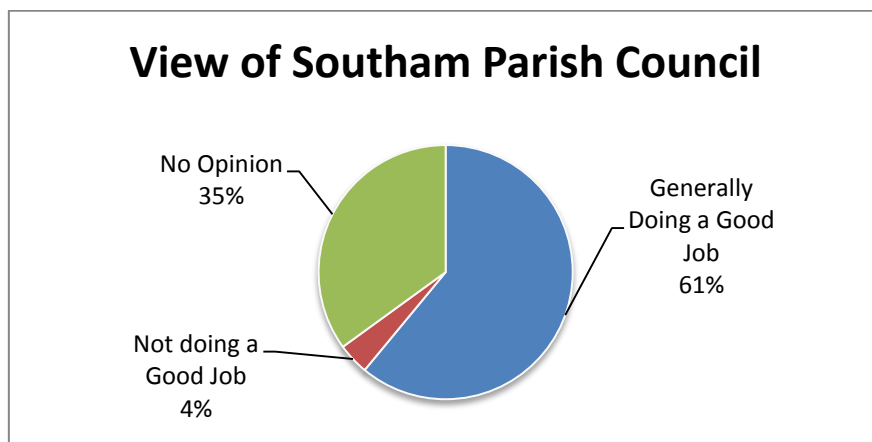
Q28 Which of the following do members of your household regularly use or attend in Southam?



Main finding:

There is a good spread of activities that are attended in Southam Parish.

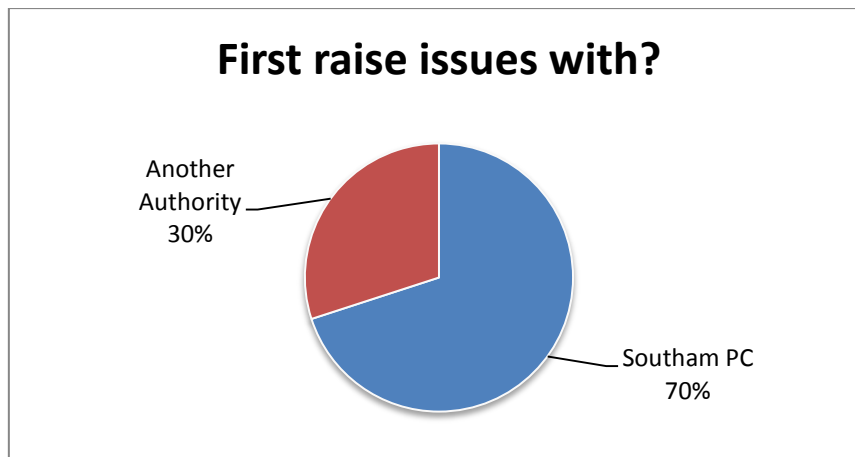
Q29 What is your view of Southam Parish Council



Main finding:

Most respondents felt that the Parish Council were doing a good job.

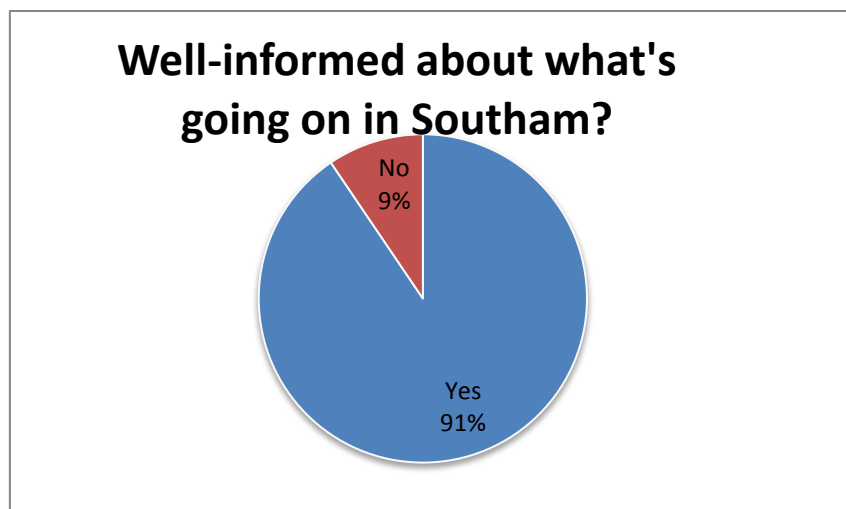
Q30 If you had a concern about some aspect of life in Southam and didn't know exactly who to take it up with, who would you normally raise it with first?



Main finding:

The parish Council is the first port of call for most respondents with concerns about some aspect of life in Southam.

Q31 Are you as well-informed as you would like to be about what's going on in Southam?



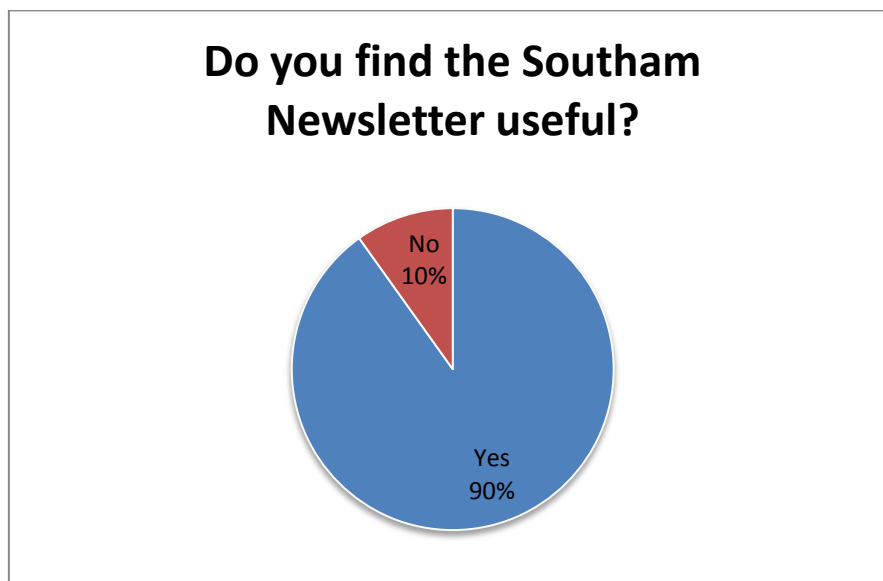
Main finding:

Most residents did feel that they were well informed about what was going on in Southam.

Comments made:

- Put planning matters in Newsletter
- Ensure distribution is before Events
- Noticeboard in Ratcliff Lawns
- Public emergency contact numbers
- TV station diverted to South West not Birmingham

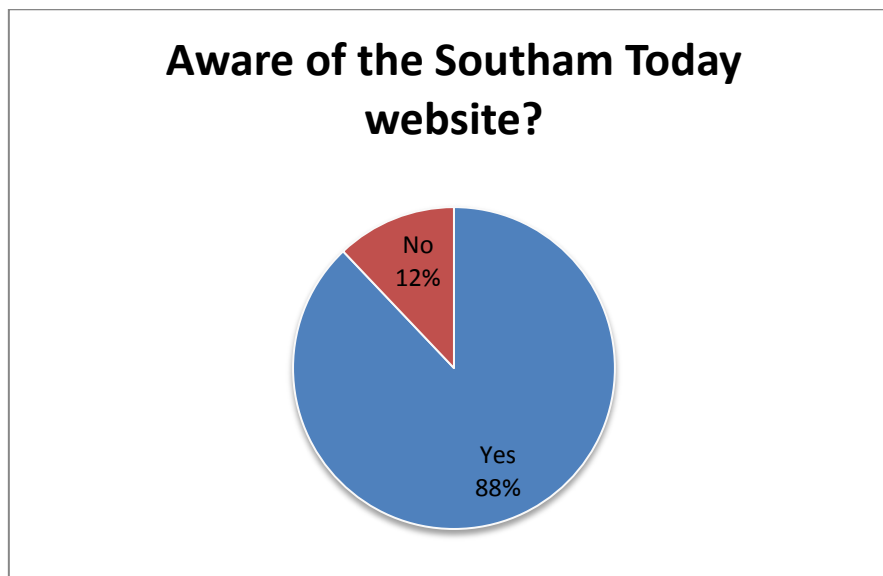
Q32 Do you find the Southam Newsletter useful?



Main finding:

The newsletter is seen as a very useful publication.

Q33 Are you aware of the Southam Today website?



Main finding:

Most respondents were aware of the Southam Today website.

Q34 Is there more that the website could do for you?

Comments made:

- Advertising items for sale
- Advertising local services i.e. Baby sitting, cleaning, catering

Q35 Name one thing that you would really like to see in Southam?

Comments made:

- Pub/Restaurant/Shop
- Community Garden with seating
- Village Sign
- Children's Play area
- Indoor swimming pool
- Landowners contribution to community
- Southam Tythe Barn as a community hall
- Footpaths along main roads

Q36 Please complete this sentence: "What we in this household really value about living in Southam is....."

Comments made:

- The views
- The peace and quiet
- Friendly community
- The open countryside
- Being close to Cheltenham

Q37 Please use this space to make any additional comments regarding any aspects of life in Southam. If your comments relate to a specific question, please state the question number.

Comments made:

Dislike of car boot sales

"They create noise disturbance, traffic and litter and should be banned on Sundays and Bank Holidays"

The way forward

On the extremely cold and breezy evening of the 25th January the Parish Plan Committee met to discuss the findings of the Parish Plan Questionnaire. The issues raised were familiar, many having been gathered at an initial Parish Plan meeting but the questionnaire certainly helped prioritise actions which could be taken forward:

The following forms the basis of an Action Plan which will need active progress.

TRANSPORT

In general the whole community had good access to services but the majority surveyed felt that they would use the bus more frequently if the service could be improved.

Action point:

- Need to assess bus service usage and if found to be sufficiently high lobby County Council for assistance in increasing frequency/routes

Action required by:

- Steering Group

TRAFFIC

Traffic was one of the major issues that arose frequently from the questionnaire with a number of recurring issues.

Action points:

- A significant number of respondents felt there was a problem with traffic speed.
- The next highest factor was lack of road markings.
- HGV traffic was also of concern.

Action required by:

- Steering Group/Parish Council/Glos County Council

Action points:

- In this category there was also concern about Car Boot sales and the associated traffic congestion.
- Cycle Paths & Pavements were requested.

Action required by:

- Parish Council/Tewkesbury Borough Council/landowners

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

There was slight support for small developments of under 10 houses (owner occupied)
But the majority of respondents were against any further housing development.
The majority of residents were also against any small business development.

Parish Council/Tewkesbury Borough Council to consider planning applications as current.

ENVIRONMENT

Action point:

- Car boot sales

Action required by:

- Parish Council/Tewkesbury Borough Council/Gloucestershire County Council

Action point:

- Litter/Fly-tipping
- Maintaining footpaths and bridleways
- Tidier roadside verges and wildflower areas

Action required by:

- Steering Group/Parish Council/landowners

CRIME & DISORDER

31 crimes had been experienced
The majority of respondents were concerned about burglary

Action point:

- Further cover by Neighbourhood Watch

Action required by:

- Glos Constabulary/Neighbourhood Watch

SERVICES

The majority of respondents raised dissatisfaction in the work carried out by Gloucestershire County Highways, in particular, road/pavement maintenance and street cleaning, but also street lighting and drainage were also seen to be lacking. Broadband speed was also an issue

Action point:

- Contact Highways in respect of road/pavement maintenance and street cleaning

Action required by:

- Parish Council/Gloucestershire County Council

COMMUNITY LIFE

The village as a friendly community was highly rated and the majority of respondents placed great importance on footpaths and walks.

Action point:

- Improving footpaths

Action required by:

- Parish Council/Gloucestershire County Council

Action point:

- community energy plan

Action required by:

- Steering Group/Parish Council

Action point:

- Water pressure

Action required by:

- Parish Council/Water company

COMMUNITY LIFE cont.

Action point:

- There were a number of suggestions for further use of the village hall and a request for less restrictions on use

Action required by:

- Village Hall Committee

Action point:

- Suggestions were made for further communication through the newsletter/website.

Action required by:

- Parish Council/webmaster/magazine editor

Action point:

- Respondents valued the setting of Southam but provided a wish list of facilities

Action required by:

- Steering Group

