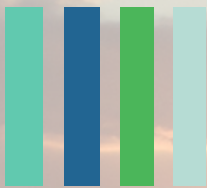


2023

Ilchester Community Consultation Executive Summary



Conducted on behalf of
Ilchester Parish Council

Delivered by



smart
communities
part of the CCS group

Background

Ilchester parish has just under 1,000 households. It is five miles between Somerton and Yeovil and has a busy B-road intersecting the village which is used as a short cut to both the A37 to Yeovil and to the main A303 trunk road heading west. A recent traffic survey conducted by Parish Council showed that around 5,000 vehicles, including HGVs, use this route daily. The RNAS Yeovilton airbase is also situated near the parish boundary, and the parish is a natural destination for some of the forces families to settle while posted at the base.

The river Yeo divides the village into two distinct areas with older housing at one end and newer housing at the other. There is also a popular primary school in this newer part of the village with around 265 children. In the last few years Ilchester parish has seen a new housing development in the newer part of the village. The property developer has now proposed building an additional 200 houses in this part of the village – adding a further 20% of housing to the parish total.

With increasing pressure on facilities, infrastructure and traffic in the parish, the Parish Council wanted to hear what directions they should be given from residents in their interactions with County Council, Somerset Highways, Planning & Development, the Environment Agency and other bodies that can positively impact the village and help alleviate further pressure. They commissioned Smart Communities Ltd (SCL), which is part of the Community Council for Somerset group to undertake this survey. The survey had the following Aims:

Aims

- Understand what Parishioners value most about living in Ilchester parish.
- Establish views on the amount of housing in the parish. Explore reasons why some feel there is a need for additional housing and the type of housing they consider is needed. Identify the main concerns around any proposed future housing development in Ilchester.
- Seek views on transport and access issues affecting residents and their suggests and preferences for addressing these.
- Explore a range of other issues relating to facilities and infrastructure what may be needed in the long term to meet the changing needs of the community.

Methodology

996 paper surveys were distributed to all households in the parish. The survey was also available to complete online and was promoted through the parish's main social media channels, through the primary school and at a face-to-face community consultation event. 192 surveys were returned by mail in the prepaid envelopes provided, and 136 survey completed online. See Appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

In total 328 valid responses were received giving a 33% response rate.

Research was conducted between 3 February to 3 March 2023. The original closing date of 24 February was extended by one week to allow for a further marketing push for the survey.

Presentation of data

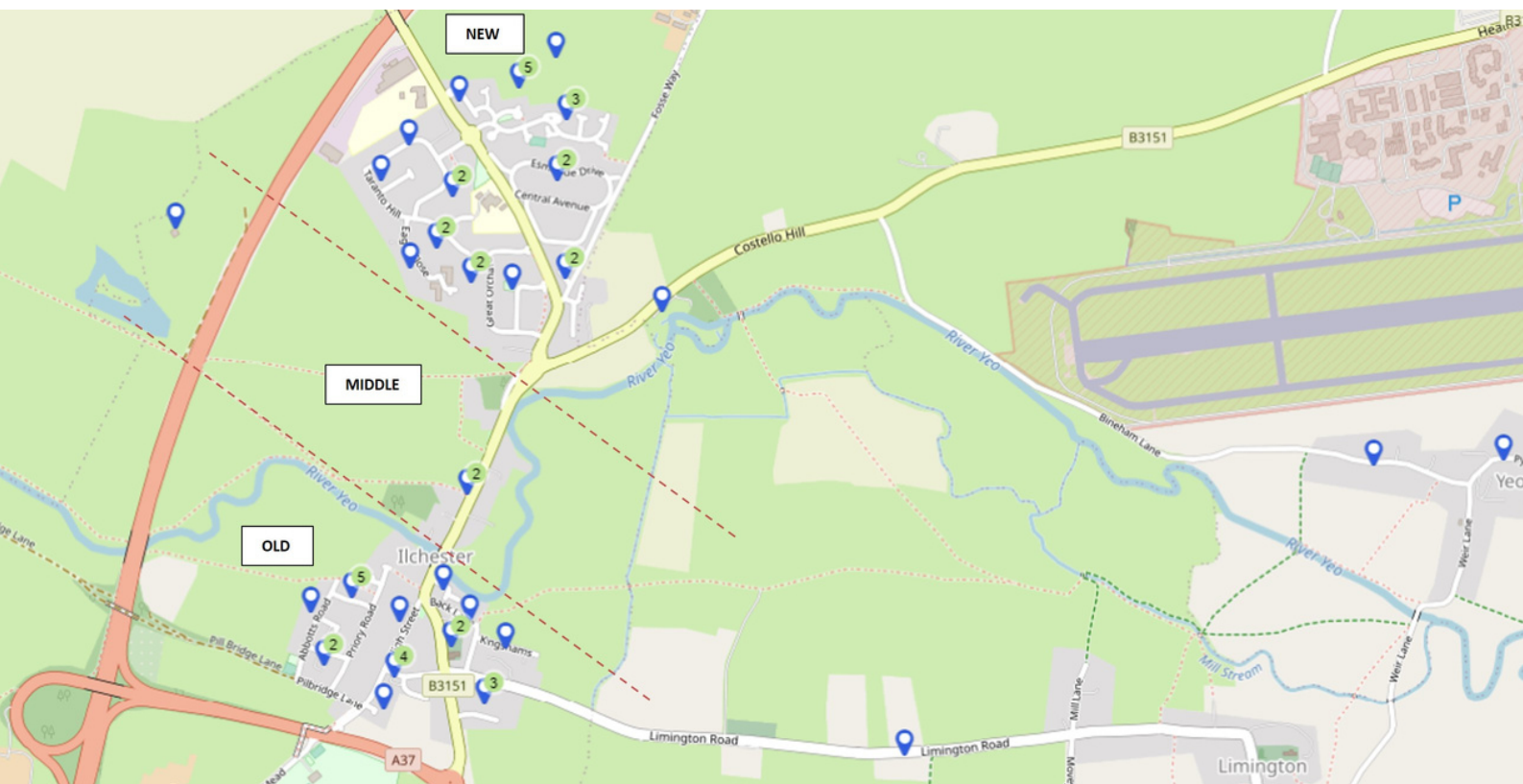
The sample size is relatively small, therefore undue emphasis should not be placed on specific percentages. Where several respondents with a particular view, or response to a question is very low, the report will normally include a 'base' (identify the actual number of responses/opinions involved). Where figures do not total 100% this may be due to computer rounding or the exclusion of 'don't knows'.



Summary

Survey Respondents

- 996 paper surveys were distributed, and 328 participated in the survey, giving a 33% response rate representing around one in every three households in the parish.
- The large majority are working age: 45-64 years are the largest group (120 respondents), followed by 25-44 years (98 respondents). 8 young people took part (aged 18-24). Those who are of retirement age comprise: 65-74 years (54 respondents), 75+ years (45 respondents).
- Responses were received from 51 out of 64 parish postcodes (the large majority provided postcodes). To help understand if there are differences in the needs of residents, in consultation with the Parish Council, postcode respondents are split into three areas shown on the map below: **Old Ilchester** (155 respondents), **Middle Ilchester** (17 respondents) and **New Ilchester** (128 respondents).



Living in the Parish

- For the majority **living in a rural area** is what they like the most about living in Ilchester parish. They also appreciate the easy access to the countryside and feeling part of a rural community. The parish's local facilities and local businesses are also positive aspects of parish life for many.

Local Housing

- All respondents have views on housing, and the outstanding majority feel the **amount of housing currently in Ilchester parish is sufficient** (77% - 254 respondents 'about right' and answering 'too many already'). Comparing these views across postcodes, it appears that the views are similar across all areas of the parish.
- The remaining 74 respondents (23%) feel the parish needs more housing (most considering a few more homes are needed). They see new housing **bringing more community facilities and protecting services** such as school. A large number are renting and want to buy 2-bed or 3-4 bed homes (30 respondents). Overall the respondents who support more housing feel Ilchester parish needs more **affordable housing** for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market, **low cost/starter homes for purchase** and **medium-sized 3 bed homes**.
- The top three concerns around new housing development are **traffic congestion, pressure on health services** and the **effect on parking**. However, other effects closely aligned are the loss of green space/rural space, pressure on school places and road and pedestrian safety.

Transport and Accessibility

- The main current traffic issues affecting residents are **speed** and **volume of traffic** and **parking availability** alongside pedestrian safety – mirroring concerns raised about future housing development. Most suggest introducing **lower speed limits** e.g. 20 mph, **electronic speed indicator signs, physical traffic calming** such as road humps and **more public parking spaces**. Improvements to public transport and better provision for bicycles e.g. cycle routes/racks should also be considered among the top suggestions.

Other suggestions not listed as answer options include speed cameras, average speed checks and community speed guns. Resident parking permits, driveway parking and public parking spaces for non-residents, increasing parking areas in Square Car Park and charging non-residents to park. Restricting access for HGVs, a roundabout on the High Street junction and upgrading existing pedestrian crossings.

- Numerous suggestions for **locations and further comments on transport and accessibility** are made. Traffic speed, particularly on the main road through the village, appears frequently – with reduced speed limits and enforcement raised. Issues around school appear to be speed, parking, visibility and the loss of the lollipop person. Pedestrian safety and upgrading to Pelican crossing/traffic lights or fully raised crossings e.g. road humps – specifically on Church Street and near school are suggested alongside improved signage for crossings. The Mead appears frequently throughout the survey, particularly for pedestrian access, lighting and junction visibility.
- Road humps are suggested by a few and the B3151 from the bridge and the Northover roundabout is proposed. Others favour pinch points and single lane priority traffic measures. Cycle routes between Yeovilton camp and Ilchester, to the shops in Ilchester as well as to Yeovil along the A37 would be welcomed.

Facilities and Infrastructure

- The outstanding majority feel **Ilchester needs a new doctor's surgery**. A sizeable number comment on the current services provided by the existing surgery, most wanting a return of doctors on site. This would provide increased access to medical care particularly for those who have no access to transport.
- The largest number **do not feel that the Rights of Way, footpaths, cycle paths, stiles and gates in Ilchester parish are well maintained** (146 respondents). Those who consider these are well maintained are closely aligned to those who do not know (89 vs. 90 respondents). General comments around overgrown and inaccessible footpaths and Rights of Way are raised further in comments, and The Monarch's Way is mentioned a number of times.
- Many feel the **existing roadside recycling/refuse collection is adequate for their needs** although some would like a place to recycle soft plastics. A large number would like **more or larger dog waste bins**, and around one in four residents would consider a **community compost scheme**. Comments include a need for more general waste bins in the village.
- The majority feel their **Broadband connection** is adequate for their needs. However, a sizeable number experience problems with signal strength, speed, reliability and access to Fibre.

Smart Communities Ltd have collected the data for this report in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018. All personal and sensitive data is stored securely and all data is anonymised for the purpose of this report. Data is captured for legitimate purposes. We securely hold data and hard copies of consultation surveys are kept for the duration of the consultation period and destroyed after the final report is signed off by the commissioner of the survey. Digital copies are retained for 12 months and deleted after this period. We respect respondents trust and protect their privacy, and therefore never sell or share this data with any third parties. If you would like to find out more about how we use data, please contact info@smartcommunities.online or call 01823 331222. Protecting Personal Data is important. For copies of our Data Protection & Privacy Policies visit: <https://smartcommunities.online/smart-policies/>



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