

ATHERSTONE PARISH PLAN SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

This report gives an overview of the replies the people of Atherstone gave to questions about themselves, what's important to them and what they want to happen. We've put the results in a report as this is what the majority of people wanted (see question 97).

We thank everyone who took the time and trouble to fill in the questionnaire, the results really will make a difference. Some of the results were a surprise, but many underpin local opinions we've been aware of for some time. This gives us the evidence and the backing to challenge the way things are done.

951 questionnaires were returned (almost a 25% response rate), with up to 1,853 people over 11 years of age answering the questions.

The full results can be requested by contacting Atherstone Town Council on 01827 720829.

(Please note: percentages have been rounded up).

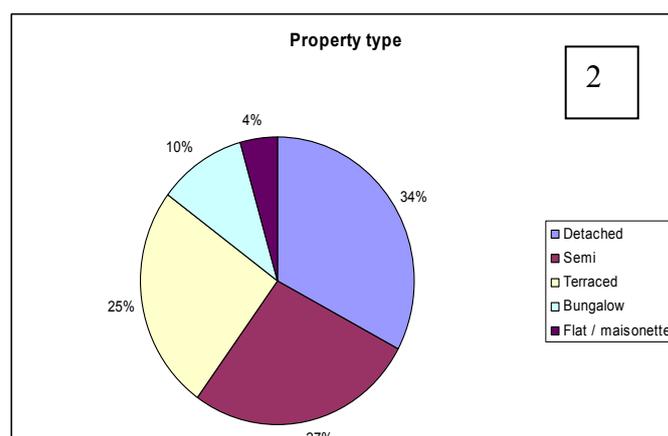
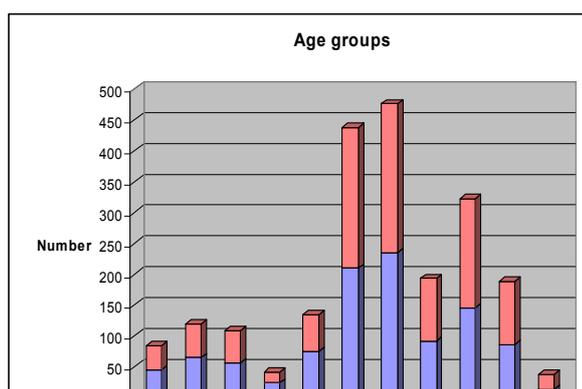
HOME & HOUSEHOLD

1. How many people normally live in your household?

2147 people live in the households which replied to the questionnaire.

2. Age groups of people living in your household

The majority of people in the households are between 25 and 59 years of age. Diagram 1.



3. Property Type The pie chart diagram 2 shows the results.

4. Is this dwelling...

82% of replies were from owner occupiers. 80 replies were from households renting from North Warwickshire Borough Council, 35 renting privately and 28 renting from a housing association.

5. What amenities does your home have?

Just over half have a computer and internet connection. 91% have a telephone landline. There are surprisingly still a small number of properties without a hot water supply, some form of heating, an inside WC, a plumbed bath and basin (unless some people just forgot to answer the question!)

6. What energy saving features does your home have?

Only 9 replies stated that their homes have no energy saving features at all. 13 properties have solar panels or a wind turbine to generate energy. 43% have cavity wall insulation and 64% use energy saving lightbulbs. Only 12% of homes use some sort of water saving device, such as a water butt in the garden.

7. Children under 16's education

3 children attend a school to cater for their special needs, and 18 children attend other types of educational facilities.

8. Over 16's education

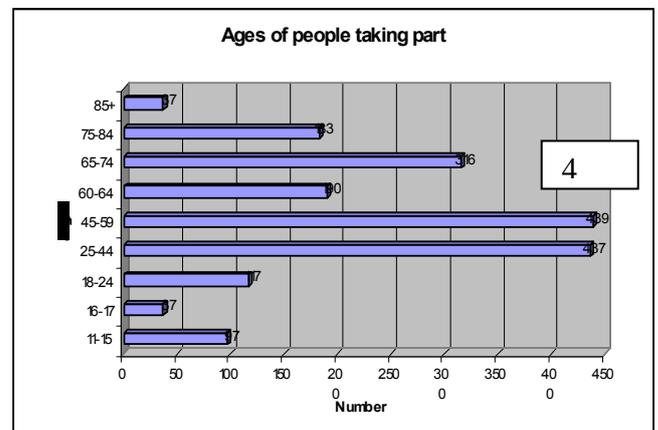
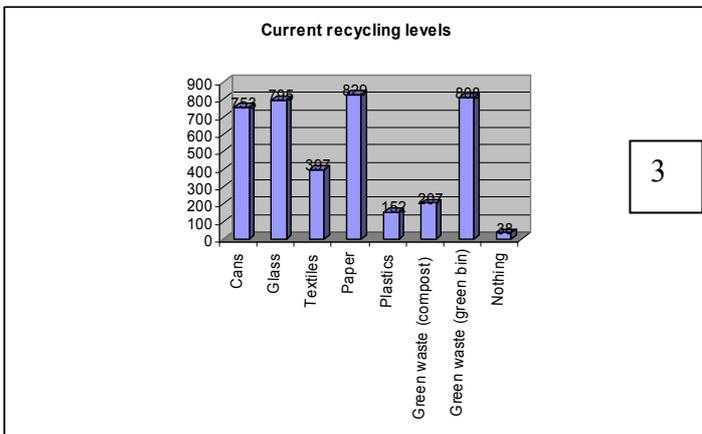
138 people aged over 16 are still in some type of education.

9. How many roadworthy vehicles are kept by your household?

The 951 households have 1119 cars, 51 vans, 47 motorbikes, 2 lorries, 438 bicycles and 2 adapted vehicles using the roads.

10. What do you recycle?

Recycling levels are high except for plastics (16%) and textiles (41%). Diagram 3.



PERSONAL SECTION – TELL US ABOUT YOU AND WHAT YOU THINK

PEOPLE

11. Gender

Responses were fairly evenly split between males and females, 48% / 52%.

12. Age

The majority of people answering the questions were aged 25 – 59. We were pleased that young people and elderly people also took part so we can see what their needs are. Diagram 4.

13. How is the quality of life in Atherstone compared to 10 years ago? 1,762 replies.
 A fifth of people didn't know as they may not have lived here then or were too young to know. 32% thought quality of life was the same, 20% better, and 26% worse.

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

14. Status 1,814 replies.
 48% are employed, 32% retired, 8% in full time education, 4% permanently sick or disabled, and 3% unemployed.

15. In what type of area is your work? 828 replies.
 A quarter of employed people work in retail or the service industry and a quarter in local government. 12% work in transport / communications.

16. Where do you work most of the time? 902 replies.
 The majority, 37%, work in Atherstone either at home or at premises. Some people (15) travel over 100 miles out of Atherstone to work. The rest work between 5 and 40 miles away from the town.

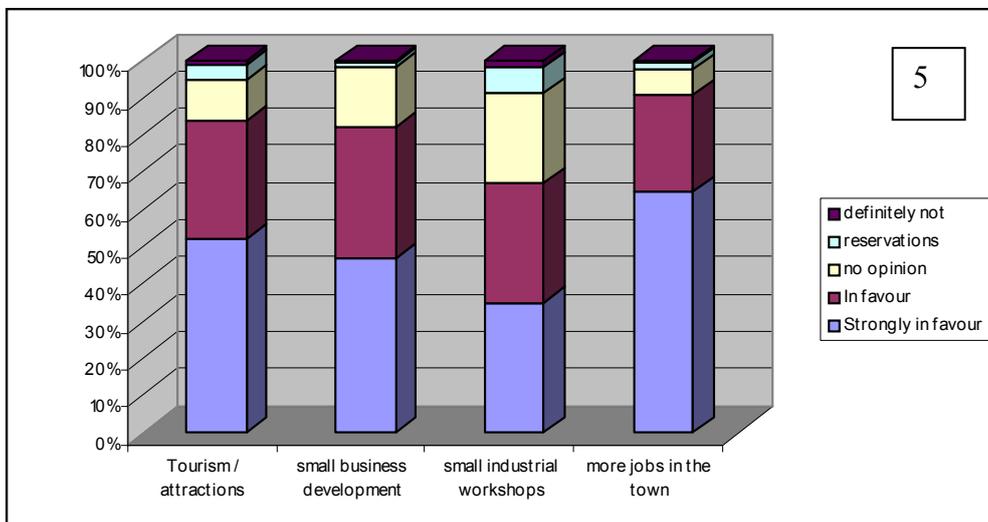
17. What is the nature of your work 897 replies.
 A quarter of the people are professional or technical. There were a few 'other' but nothing significant.

18 What is or would be your main means of transport to work? 1,118 replies
 The most popular means of transport is the car and then walking (as over a third work in the town).

19. Running a business 97 replies
 97 people run their own business, 68% of which are based in the town.

20. Which advice on aspect of running a business would you find useful 695 replies
 Many more people answered this than actually run businesses now. There may therefore be people who would like to work for themselves but need more information and support. The need for advice was evenly distributed.

21. What should be encouraged in Atherstone? 1,518 replies
 The majority of people would like to see all the initiatives encouraged.



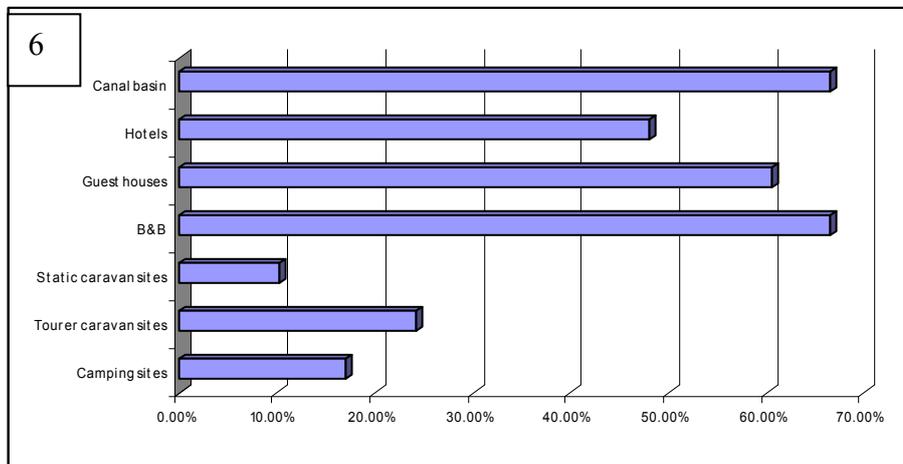
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22. Should more overnight tourists be encouraged? 1,636 replies

Only 8% didn't agree with this, with 65% being in support.

23. If tourists are encouraged, what should be developed? 1,127 replies

These responses show what types of tourist accommodation residents would like to see.



TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

24. Use of bus service 1,454 replies

Buses are used mostly for shopping trips, with 18% using them for social and leisure purposes.

25. Rating the bus service 954 replies

People felt that the service's worst aspect is the cost (22%). Overall people found the service good to reasonable.

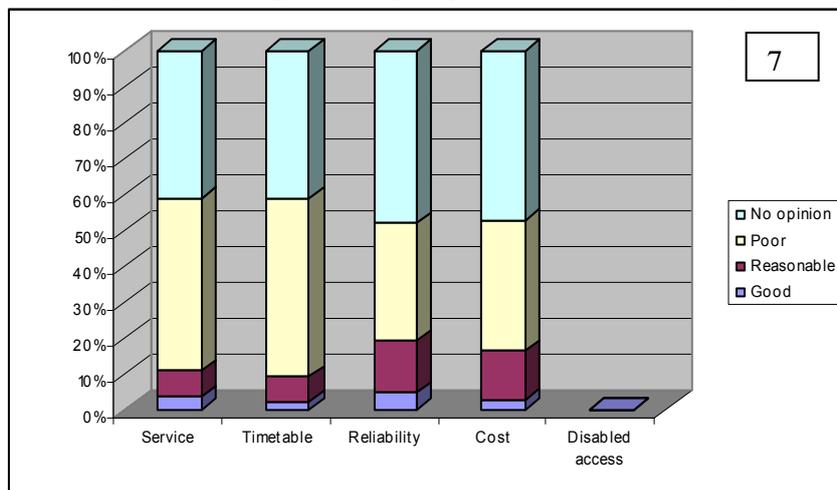
26. Bus service improvements 1,127 replies

Half the people had no opinion on how the bus service could be improved. 29% thought the cost could be improved. Improvements in routes and timetables were wanted.

27. We regret that this question regarding the community bus service could not be analysed.

28. Rating the train service 1,147 replies

Of those people with an opinion, the great majority found the service poor in every respect.



29. Train service improvements 1,357 replies

A third had no opinion, over half want more frequent and local services, and over a third want more national services, a better timetable, lower cost, and better reliability.

30. Taxi services 1,680 replies

79% say the taxi services are adequate.

31. Vehicle Sharing 1,444 replies

Over half the people replying do not share vehicles with other people for any reason. 36% share for social and leisure purposes, 23% for shopping trips, but only 5% for school trips and 8% for work.

32. Where do you park your vehicle? 1,379 replies

72% park off road at home or in a garage. 12% park on the road.

33. Do you have problems parking in the town? 1,202 replies

Just over a third never have a problem, however, 47% occasionally have problems and 18% often find parking a problem.

34. Are there enough disabled parking bays in the town? 1,465 replies

26% don't believe there are enough and 31% believe there are. Analysis is needed as to whether those people who don't think there are enough are those with disabilities.

35. Multi storey car park 1,570 replies

84% would not like to have a multi storey car park in the town.

36. Paid parking 1,472 replies

83% would not be prepared to park in Atherstone.

37. User friendly pavements? 1,727 replies

47% think the pavements are not user friendly to people with disabilities, pushchairs or wheelchairs.

38. Are there any major danger spots on the roads in Atherstone? 1,636 replies.

1049 people believe there are danger spots in the town.

The main areas identified as hazards are

- 115 Mini roundabouts
- 149 Parking on double yellow lines
- 70 Several road junctions
- 39 Witherley Road by the school
- 33 Sheepy Road
- 65 Coleshill Road – parking and visibility at junctions

39. Traffic calming 1,605 replies

65% of people do not want any more traffic calming measures.

EDUCATION

40. What training / classes do you attend in Atherstone? 131 replies

- 49 people attend computer training.

46 people attended other classes, namely, Digital photography, Yoga/fitness. Theatre workshop/music/dance classes, Family research, First aid, Hockey and Crafts.

41. If classes were provided what would you want 527 replies

The most popular classes would be gardening, followed by photography, languages, cookery, music / instruments, and car maintenance.

There was a variety of 'other' responses, but the most popular was art classes

42. If you have not attended classes what were the reasons 1,141 replies

42% haven't attended any classes as they weren't interested. 28% found the times inconvenient, 19% found them too expensive, and the classes weren't appropriate to 18% of people. There were only two 'other' responses – ill health and limited range

HOUSING

43. What do you think of the number of houses built in the last 10 years? 1,662 replies.

See diagram 8.

44. Do you think Atherstone can accommodate more new housing? 1,713 replies

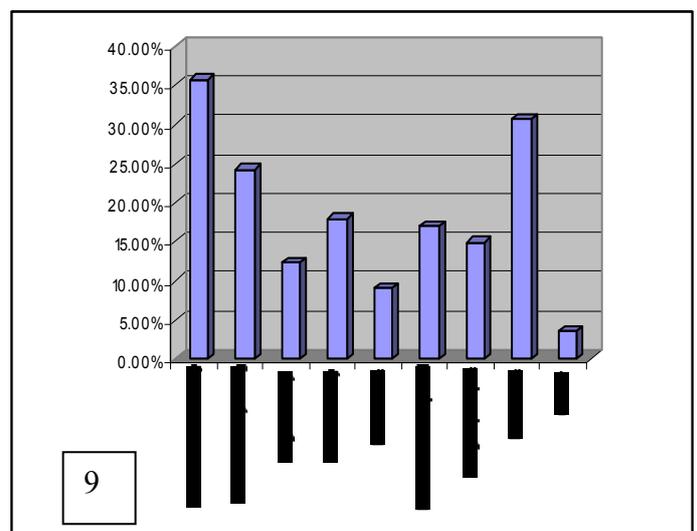
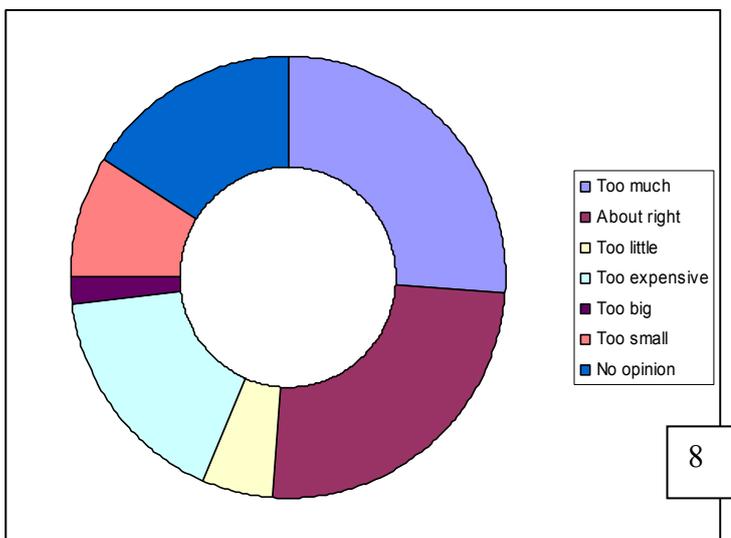
59% don't believe Atherstone can.

45. What kind of housing does the town need? 1,552 replies

See diagram 9. There were not many 'other' responses but they were varied from low cost rent to purchase only.

46. What kind of housing development would be acceptable in Atherstone? 1,540 replies

60% want redundant buildings in the town to be converted. 22% do not want any more housing development. Again there were very few 'other' responses varying from conversions of building similar to those between Church Street and Long Street, to building on Greenfield sites.



47. Difficulties with getting to health services 1,391 replies

The majority of people have no trouble getting to a chemist, doctor, dentist or optician. The hospitals caused slightly more problems, and further analysis is needed to see who is affected.

48. How do you rate the medical services used in the last year? 1,552 replies

87% rate their doctor as good or reasonable. Local hospitals scored 41% as good or reasonable. Around a third of people hadn't used the services (except for a doctor or hospital).

49. Health problems / disabilities 1,679 replies

22% of people have a health problem or disability which affects their day to day living.

50. Assistance 334 replies

58% have help from friends or relatives with gardening, 51% have help with shopping, 44% have help with housework.

51. What improvements to medical services? 1,422 replies

52% would like a Medical one stop shop, a third think that no improvements are needed, and 25% would like alternative therapies.

There were very few 'other' answers to this question, varying from more GP appointments to more counselling for children and bereavement, and concerns that the GPs and dentists will not be able to cope if the housing continues to expand.

EMERGENCY AND OTHER SERVICES

52. What do you think of the police coverage of Atherstone? 1,754 replies

60% think coverage is poor, 29% think it is reasonable.

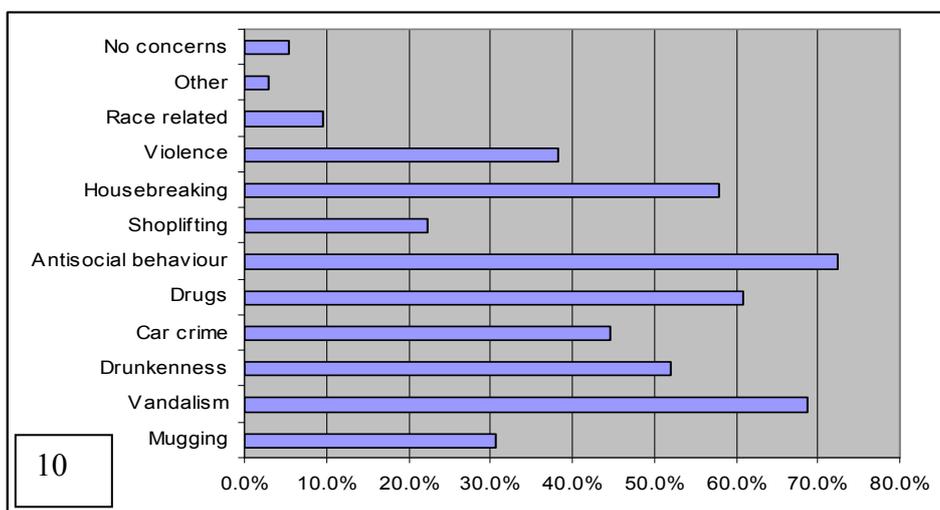
53. Would you like to join the Neighbourhood Watch scheme? 1,622 replies

35% would like to be part of a Neighbourhood Watch.

54. Which crimes & anti social behaviour concern you in Atherstone? 1,630 replies

Antisocial behaviour, vandalism, drugs and housebreaking are the highest concerns.

A few 'other' concerns were: Intimidation, noisy motor cycles, dog fouling, loud music, cars on Co-op car park after closing, litter/fly tipping, vomit on pavements.



55. Is there any area in Atherstone where you feel unsafe? 537 replies

This was one of the most answered free-text questions. The most responses were that people feel unsafe in the town centre and alleyways at night. Indeed, anywhere at night. There appears to be no real fear of being anywhere in the daytime.

56. What measures are needed? 1,621 replies

80% believe that a greater police presence is needed. 67% feel that more activities for young people would help, and 53% would like wider CCTV coverage. 49% believe that more consultation is needed between local people and the police.

RETAIL AND OTHER SERVICES

57. How often do you use... 1,594 replies

The Co-op is used most often of the town's supermarkets. 25% never use the library. 100 people use the post office every day.

58. Do you shop outside Atherstone because... 1,338 replies

80% shop elsewhere because there is more choice. 49% find goods cheaper elsewhere and 24% find it easier to park elsewhere.

59. Do you encounter any problems whilst shopping in Atherstone? 1,041 replies

194 people often have trouble with obstructions on the pavement such as placards, tubs and shops' goods. 259 people would appreciate more seating. 289 people experience problems with the height of shelving.

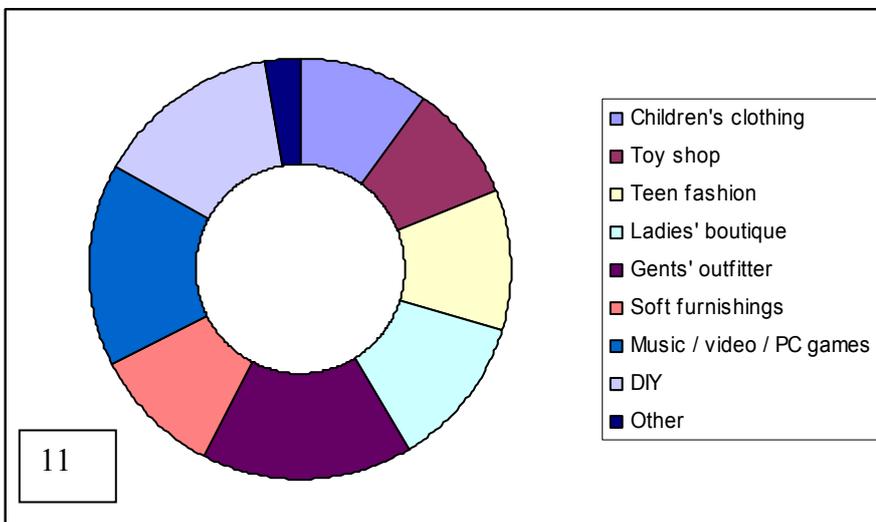
The main 'other' responses were around inconsiderate parking and insufficient disabled parking.

60. Do you use any of these delivery services 1,377 replies

30% have takeaways delivered, and 22% have newspapers delivered. 46% don't use any delivery services. There were only a few 'other' responses: Organic veg box, Butcher, Potatoes, Eggs, Fresh fish, Internet shopping, Office supplies.

61. What type of shops do you feel are missing in Atherstone? 1,452 replies

There was a large and varied 'other' response to this question with a lost of requests for high street brand shops such as Woolworths, Matalan, M&S etc. Also requests for good quality shops for shoes, clothes and food.



62. How often do you use... 1,393 replies

174 people use the leisure centre weekly, but 53% never use it at all.

140 people use the swimming pool weekly, but 48% never use it at all.

63. Are you aware of what is on offer? 1,537 replies

55% aren't aware what is available at the QE school, 40% don't know what they can access at the memorial hall and 24% don't know what's on at the leisure centre.

SPORT

64. Which new sports clubs/activities would you attend? 1,310 replies

The main responses stated:-

- 65% said they wouldn't join any new clubs or activities.
- The most popular would be badminton with 257 people wanting this facility.
- 114 would like skittles
- 109 squash.

There was a surprisingly low 'other' response to this question but this was covered later in the questionnaire when asked what would people like at QE school and what is needed for young people. The main requests were for Ten pin bowling. Fitness related activities such as pilates, yoga, tai-chi/martial arts. Football training, running club and Swimming club

65. If you do not take part is it because of..... 1,314 replies

- 51% don't take part simply because they don't want to.
- 151 find it too expensive,
- 40 say there's not enough publicity of what's available,
- 135 find the opening hours unsuitable.

Very little 'other' response such as no time, age, not enough facilities.

66. Does Atherstone need the following 1,383 replies

- 54% want an outdoor sports centre,
- 53% want extended indoor sports facilities,
- 29% want a skateboard park.

The 'other' response was varied and included: Children's play areas, Snooker Hall, Astro-turf pitches, Ballroom/salsa dancing Running track and Large Community Building

67. How could sports facilities in Atherstone be improved? 456 replies

This had one of the largest 'free text' responses and was very varied. The following are the most popular: There were several responses which were also relevant to other questions such as 69

- Indoor sports centre
- Well lit outdoor sports centre
- Astro turf – football and hockey
- Better opening hours at leisure centre
- Badminton & Squash
- Youth clubs / teenage activities - need to canvas opinions
- Spa / sauna / slides in pool which needs to be larger and warmer
- Running track / cycle / BMX track
- Children need more to do
- Better selection of activities for people
- More awareness / advertising and more affordable activities
- Skateboard Park

SOCIAL AND ENTERTAINMENT

68. How often are facilities used? 1,617 replies

62% never use the QE school out of hours. 30 use the children's play areas weekly and 188 less frequently. 191 never frequent the pubs or restaurants.

69. What new clubs/activities would you attend? 628 replies

A third would go to a gardening club, rambling club and musical activities. Although there were not many 'other' responses (25) several of the responses to question 67 were relevant to this question and will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Action Plan.

70. Are the following youth activities in Atherstone... 1,155 replies

The majority of people had no opinion, which may indicate they haven't any experience of the activities. 100 people felt the youth club was good or reasonable and 70 felt it is poor. Almost all people with an opinion thought the scouts, guides, football and marching band were good / reasonable.

71. How can we involve young people in reducing the problems caused by youths in Atherstone?

685 people gave their free-text opinions. The response was varied with the main view being that they need things to do and should be consulted so that the right things are provided. The most popular views were

- 75 More police presence/ASBOs/Community Service/Youth Workers
- 19 Youth forum
- 15 Theatre Workshop/better facilities/community building
- 12 Cinema/shows/live bands
- 9 Involvement with Army/Sea Cadets/Guides/Scouts/Marching Band
- 9 Decent play areas
- 7 Stop underage drinks/cheap drinks

72. How would you like to see the QE School used for the benefit of all Atherstone residents?

The 343 free-text responses to this question were varied with the most popular replies:

- 92 Use school sports facilities evenings and weekends
- 68 Meeting rooms / activities / community facility / extended schools
- 54 Concerts / drama productions / bands / cinema
- 43 Evening classes /holiday use
- 31 Social / discos / dancing
- 19 Art groups / crafts
- 10 Over 50/60's groups

There were also a few comments that the building should remain just as a school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

73. Where do you usually get information about Atherstone events? 1,556 replies.
The majority of people find out by word of mouth, in the local paper, and the free paper. Only 6% use the internet and 11% feel they have difficulty accessing information.

74. Do you read... 1,522 replies
51% read every issue of the Atherstone Herald, 38% read every issue of Grapevine, 31% read every issue of the Atherstone Tribune and 28% every issue of Atherstone-Z.

75. Do you think local newspapers should include more items... 1,407 replies
96% feel they should have more items on events taking place in Atherstone. 43% would like more leisure items, and 25% want more arts and sports coverage.

76. How often do you use the town's information services? 1,439 replies
21% access information via the internet more than 10 times a month. 55% use the library and 23% read the notice boards on the market square.

77. Does Atherstone need.. 1,101 replies
67% want a local information point, and 58% think a tourist information point is needed. 41% would like a town map and a third want more notice boards and brown tourist signs.

78. Phone boxes 1,574 replies
92% never use a phone box.

79. Is the number of phone boxes... 1,537 replies
13% felt that the number of phone boxes were inadequate

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

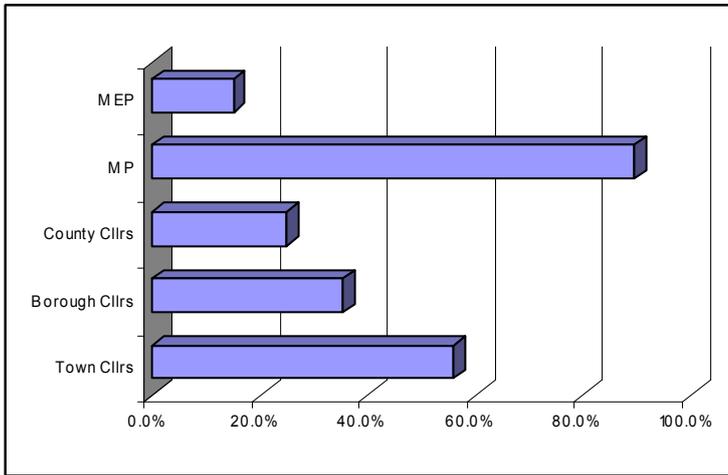
80. Have you attended a meeting of Atherstone & District Forum? 1,581 replies
92% haven't attended.

81. Have you attended a meeting of Atherstone Town Council? 1,636 replies
89% haven't attended.

82. Have you attended the Annual Parish Meeting? 1,628 replies
97% haven't attended.

83. Would you like more information about the Town Council's activities? 1,581 replies
42 % would like more information provided.

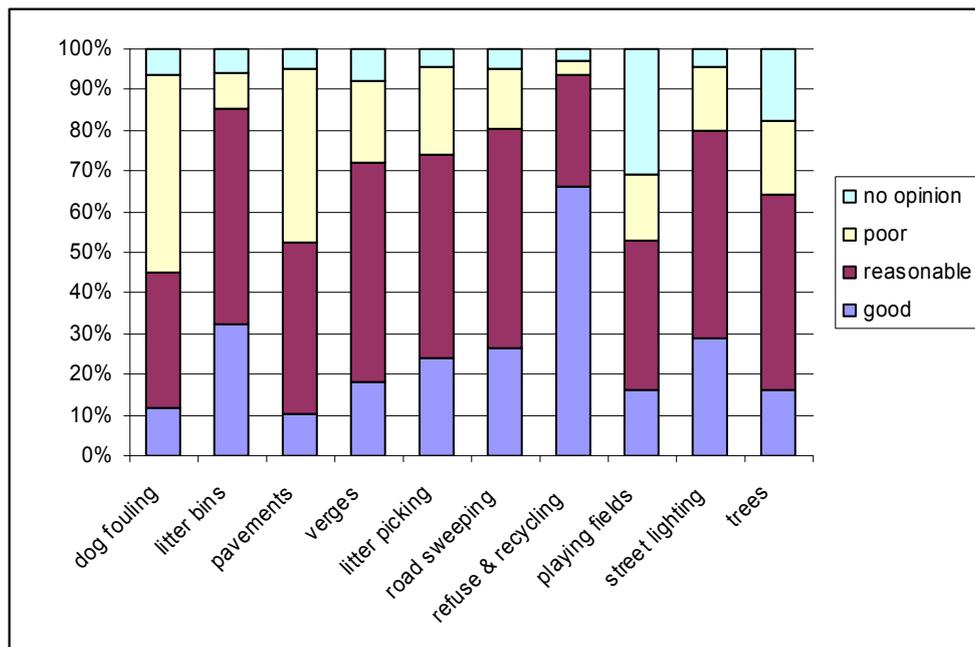
84. Do you know who your council / government representatives are? 1,054 replies



85. Do you feel your elected representatives are sufficiently aware of local concerns and feelings? 1,343 replies

People feel that Town Councillors are the most aware, and MEP and County Councillors are least aware.

86. What is your opinion of public services? 1,552 replies



87. Rate the public toilets 1,442 replies

The toilets rated poor across every issue, the worst being the number available.

88. Is sufficient publicity given to planning applications affecting the town? 1,574 replies

56% do not think there is sufficient publicity given.

89. Are you satisfied with the way the planning system is implemented? 1,527 replies

33% are dissatisfied and 21% satisfied.

90. Would you like to see local places of worship used for other activities? 1,408 replies

The majority of those with an opinion are in favour of them being used for

- Concerts,
- Meetings,
- Playgroups
- Lunch Clubs.

There were a few 'other' responses such as Youth development, Mother and toddler groups, Painting classes and it was suggested that St Mary's Church should become the hub of the community

91. Are you an active member of a local church 380 positive replies

39.5% are members of St Mary's church, 20% members of St Benedicts Church, 11% members of Trinity Church and 29.5% were members of other churches / places of worship, some outside of Atherstone.

92. What should be done to protect and enhance Atherstone's environment?

1,537 replies.

Main replies were:-

- 60% said recycling,
- 58% said more local employment,
- 49% said energy saving
- 42% said improved public transport.
- 30% said reduce traffic
- Advice on healthier life styles

There was a number of 'other' response to this question which was quite varied, It was also duplicated with other questions in 38, 94 and 96 particularly.

The responses varied from such things as reduction in pubs to encourage young people not to drink, control of dog fouling, CCTV to be manned 24/7, Removal of speed bumps and replace with chicanes, Promote tourism, Develop derelict buildings such as Phoenix Yard, Stop more housing,

93. Should Atherstone be kept clean and tidy by... 1,541 replies

Main replies were:-

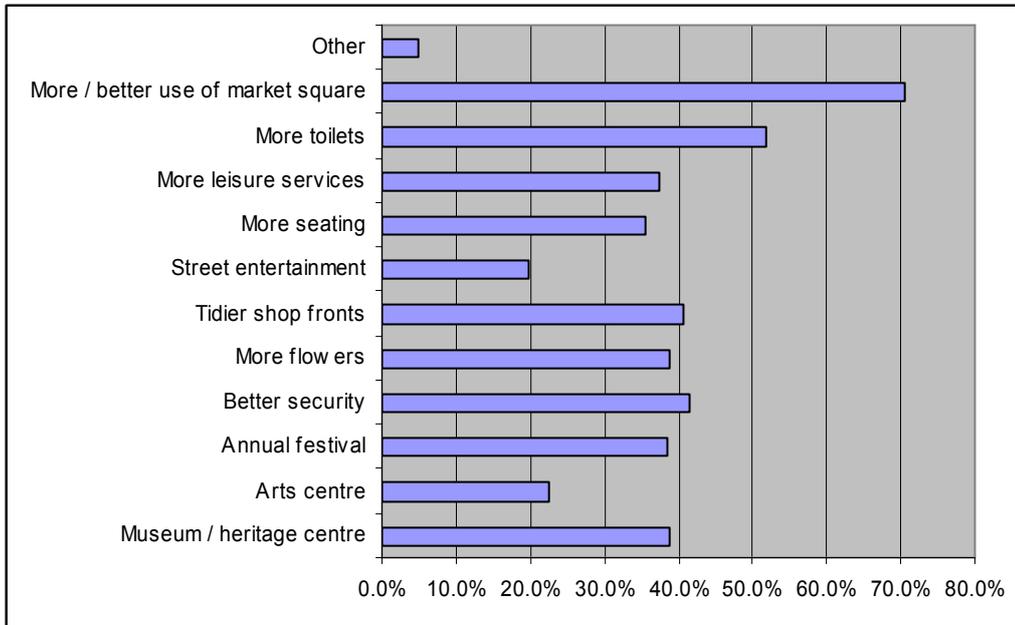
- 72% want dog warden penalties enforced and Town Warden employed to take care of litter dog fouling etc
- 40% think a spring cleaning day twice a year would help

94. What would improve the town centre? 1,443 replies

Main replies were:-

- 70% believe that the parking restrictions should be enforced.
- 54% again feel that employing a Town Warden would be a positive step.
- Around a third would like pedestrianisation
- A restriction on advertising placards on the pavements.

There was also a number of 'other' response to this question with the main being, make shop fronts more attractive – return to Market Town, keep up excellent flower planting, renovation and conservation on old buildings, more litter bins in town centre, restrict shops displaying goods on pavements and greater police presence .



95. Which of the following would improve Atherstone? 1,510 replies

'Other' included:-

- Keep in character do not change too much
- Local park
- Allow shops in Long Street to upgrade frontages
- Canal sidewalks
- Hatting factory used as museum on canal side
- Local amenities for women and young people

96. What single action would improve Atherstone's environment? 594 replies

There was a large response to this question but a lot of duplication

- Stop parking in Long Street
- Conservation of existing buildings either renovate or remove
- More police / CCTV
- Youth club activities
- Improve variety of shops high quality less empty shops
- Provide parks and riverside walkway
- Employ Traffic / dog wardens
- Bigger sports/leisure facilities and skate park
- More litter collection / cleaner streets / no fly tipping
- Art complex / hatting museum
- Encourage more recycling
- Relay pavements in Market / Church / Long Streets
- Expand / cover market square
- More flower tubs / seating / trees / enter Britain in Bloom
- Quality playground

97. How should these results be made known? 1,538 replies

90% asked for the results to be put into a public report.

98. Where should the money come from to implement the suggestions made by residents? 1,446 replies

Only 1% support higher rates to pay for improvements but suggested sponsorship, fundraising and private contributions, .

There were several 'other' suggestions from a local lottery to Government funding.

99. How would you like Atherstone to develop? 1,512 replies

67% want Atherstone to develop as a working community and 46% want it to develop as a tourist centre.

What Happened Next

The Atherstone and District Forum presented the draft action plan, which showed the things people wanted or were most concerned about, to the Town Council and this was formally adopted by the Town Council.

Atherstone town Council has held meetings with the various responsible organisations for the services involved to establish an agreed firm action plan to achieve the changes identified.

The agreed action plan is now published in this document.

It may be the most important things are the not quickest or easiest to achieve, so probably many of the less important things will be done first. However, this Parish Plan will be a strong bargaining tool to be used in negotiations to try to achieve even the most difficult of its objectives as quickly as possible.

As this is the only survey on this scale done in Atherstone to show what local people really want, we again would like to thank everyone who completed the questionnaire as well as all those volunteers involved in the distribution, collection and data analysis to have made it possible.