

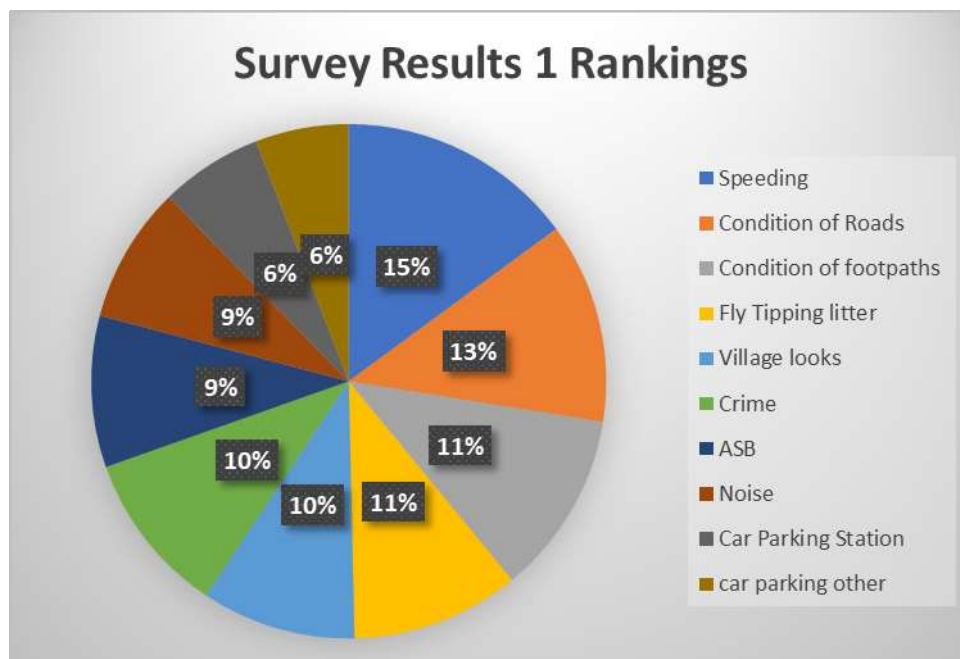


Dormansland Parish Council Residents Survey results April 2023

In the Autumn of 2022, the Dormansland Parish Council ran their first residents survey in the period since the pandemic. Data was gathered using an online survey monkey and also paper copies of the survey. These were distributed to warm hubs, local organisations as well as a stall at the Dormansland Memorial Hall Christmas Fair. The population of Dormansland is 3,407, c3,000 residents are over 14 and 100 forms were completed. As this represents a 3% return rate it cannot be considered statistically representative. The learning from the exercise would be;

1. To target a larger cross section of the resident population
2. To gain a larger cross section of the population, perhaps by targeting the school, specific households in a cross section of roads as well as targeting large events such as the carnival as well as the Christmas Fair.

The first part of the survey asked residents to rank the areas that were important to them. In the analysis points were awarded for the most important area to the least important. Some residents just ticked boxes or ranked concerns of equal importance. In such cases scores were awarded in proportion accordingly with each sheet having a maximum of 55 points. Eg Two ticks score 10 and 9 total 19, each awarded 9.5. Three ticks score 10, 9 and 8 total 27, each awarded 9. ETC.



The Parish Council has been working for the last 6 months on making the High Street safer, specifically on the replacement of the vehicle activated signs, improving signage for the school and crossing points as well as the renewal of white lines on the road surface. We were pleased to see that this was consistent with residents' number one area of concern.

The second and third areas are the condition of roads, pavements, footpaths and bridleways. If joined together these two areas would be the single largest area and account for over 24% of concern. Whilst the Parish Council is not responsible for roads and footpaths, it can lobby to arrange for repairs etc. In addition, it has been noted that there are areas of the pavements that are obstructed by bushes and we recognise that there are some areas of roads that are in a poor state. The Parish Council have been active in identifying obstacles and liaising with the relevant Council bodies. This includes removal of trees affected by ash dieback in the recreation ground boundary and, the cutting back of trees impacting the school drop off run and also foliage that obstructs road signs and pavements.

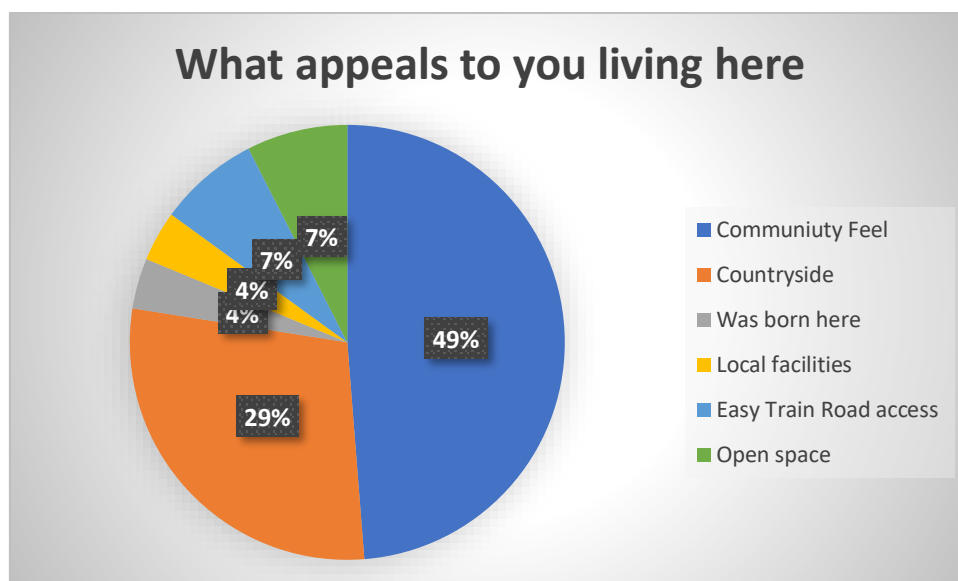
The Parish Council is active in supporting the village to look attractive and has invested in wild flower meadows and additional grass cutting, weed killing as well as a programme of tree planting.

Proposed actions

It is recommended that the Parish Council consider the issue of fly tipping area and litter in the next 4-year session of the Parish Council. It was noted that some local Parish Councils pay for a 'litter picker' and the disposal of rubbish. This would be considered in a future meeting, alongside more regular litter picks.

We asked residents what appeals to you about living here?

'I love the sense of community and everyone says 'hello' when they walk past'



Overwhelmingly what residents like most about living here is the community feel. Given this was a free form area of text it was exciting to see so many rank the community feel of Dormansland as the reason they live here.

The countryside was the second biggest area, with many citing the local walks and being so close to open fields as being the main asset of living here.

'I like the church and that it is quiet. I like the open spaces and the people'.

Other areas that were mentioned was the closeness to the M25 and Gatwick airport as well as having a shop, post office and nice pubs.

'It is a village and seems a caring community. Convenient for railway, M25 and Gatwick'.

The Parish Council is pleased that it's the community that is important to people. Over the last twelve months the Parish Council has worked to support bringing the village together specifically through the Platinum Jubilee and Coronation celebrations, including the organising and lighting of the beacon and the planning and delivery of the marking of the passing of the late Queen. The Parish Council sees itself as integral to the enhancement of village life through supporting the environment and green spaces, supporting and preserving the green belt and supporting local causes through its grant policy and delivery. In the last financial year the Parish Council chose to exceed its grant budget in order to support local causes and we were able to do this having made savings in other areas.

'Community and its spirit.... Feels small and safe'

Proposed actions

There were no specific actions that have arisen as part of this section other than future Parish Councillors to continue to be cognisant of the importance of community. It was noted, that communication is seen to be integral to creating community spirit. In the last two months the Parish Council produced a newsletter and it is proposed that this continues a couple of times a year as well as regularly contributing to the Village Voice, Community news and social media.

'Being part of a friendly community in a semi-rural location'

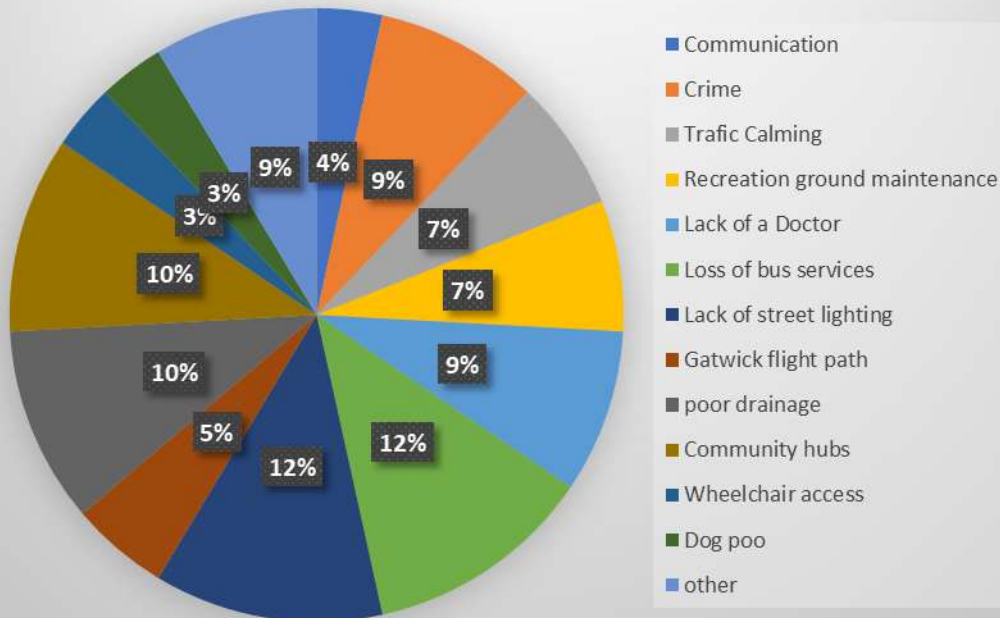
What other issues are important to you?

'The uplift in crime concerns us'.

There was no clear consensus on other areas that were important. Looking holistically at the results there is a recurring theme of infrastructure in respect of transportation, lighting and drainage which accounts for 36% of the total issues commented on. As a rural community the Parish Council is concerned that loss of transportation links, particularly bus and train services will impact our community. In the last 3 months we have actively lobbied to keep the 281 bus service as this is an important link for school as well as those wanting to get to Doctors appointments in Lingfield as well as getting to East Grinstead.

'Being able to get a bus to Lingfield and East Grinstead. One hour is insufficient when appointments are so hard to come by. Please do not remove the buses'.

What else is important to you?



Two people commented on better wheelchair access. This is something that the Parish Council has started to review in respect of the recreation ground and the play area. Two Parish Councillors also visited Oxted recently to review the facilities in the Master Park playground, in order to bring ideas to The Dormansland Parish Council.

'Blocked drains which make flooding in Dormansland happen more often'.

Proposed actions

In the last 9 months the Parish Council has lobbied for the 281 bus service to be retained, the bulky rubbish collection to be reinstated and for service levels of drain clearance to be reached. It was successful on the first and last and failed on the second. The learning from this area is;

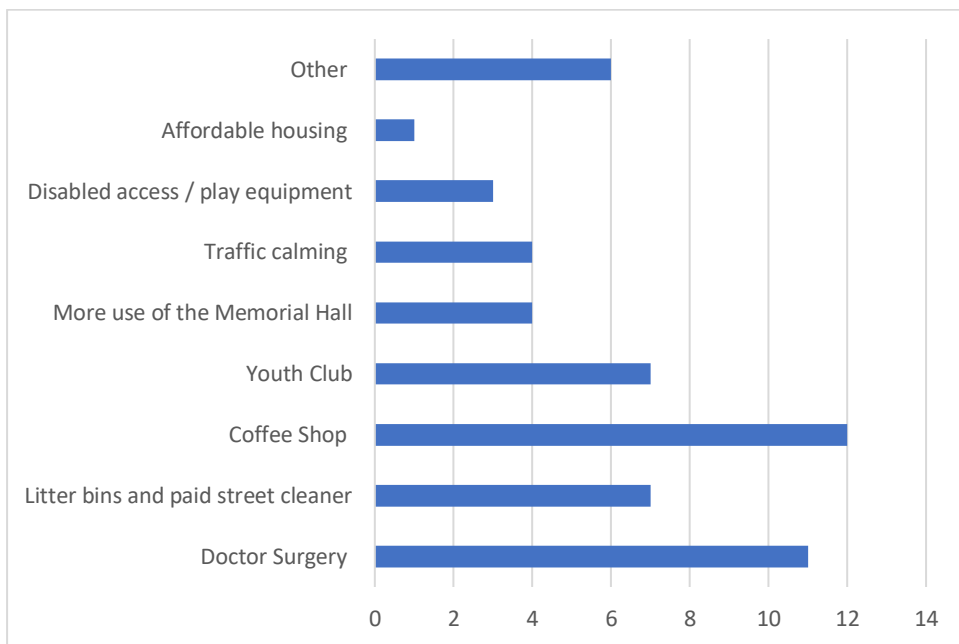
- To continue to lobby to keep service levels and report failures of service
- To communicate better with the residents of the Parish. In respect of this, it is proposed that as well as using social media an email mailing list is constituted to create progress on items and circulate issues that matter to residents

Are there any additional facilities you would like to see in the village?

The Parish Council has limited powers, but is interested in businesses being successful in the village, as well as working with District and County Councillors and local organisations for the benefit of residents.

The Parish Council will look at the litter bin situation and is already looking at traffic calming and disabled access.

Based on the results below, the Parish Council will pass the comments on the survey to Urban Saints, and the Memorial Hall as well as passing feedback to the local Doctors surgery in Lingfield.



'It would be nice to get the war memorial community hall opened for after school activity centre and a daytime community hub with Wi-Fi and printer available. And community garden to teach with gardening and wildlife activities. I'm sure it will in time as it's just opening with new trustees.'

Would you like any additional facilities for the under 10 year olds?

Under 10 year olds make up 8% of the populations (source 2121 census).

Of the 25 responses to this question there was no consensus over the specific activities other than expanding the current play area and mending the swings, 6 responses. The creation of a youth group, with qualified instructors to teach things such as gymnastics attracted 4 responses. Three people suggested a basket ball hoop or football goal.

'Fix swings in the park. Additional activities / equipment in the park'

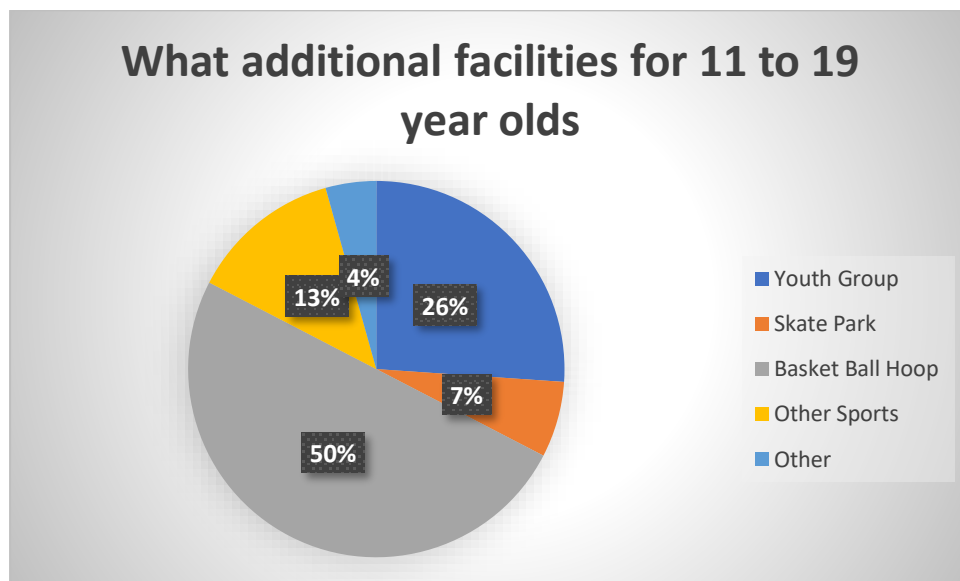
'A library in the Memorial Hall'

No specific actions proposed for this age group, but to be looked at under the wider age group up to 19 years.

Would you like to see additional facilities for 10-16 year olds?

10 to 19 year olds (16 year olds are not specifically identified) make up 10% of the residents in Dormansland (source 2021 census). More residents answered this question than the previous answer of facilities for 10 year olds.

Overwhelmingly the basket ball hoop was thought of as a good idea, with one response suggesting this could be put on the New Farthingdale Green rather than the recreation ground. Two people proposed the refurbishment of the goal posts and three a skate park.



Proposed actions

Given that under 19s make up 18% of the population it would seem appropriate to review the recreation ground equipment, for its accessibility for disabled children and to create something for the older age group such as a basket ball hoop.

The second area of interest was a youth group. The Parish Council thinks that it is important to share these findings with Urban Saints as an existing youth group and also the Memorial Hall which may have the space and equipment for a youth group.

What other matters would you like the Parish Council to focus on?

On reviewing the answers to this question, the large majority have already been covered eg the village environment, road safety and communications along with litter.

Two responses stand out as responses as not being covered in previous sections but relate to a wider sub section of the Dormansland population namely;

- Signage to indicate horse riders on the Wilderwick Road

- Suggestions have been made for tree and hedge planting in several locations and we will investigate if these are practical

There was one other surprising area, 7 responders would like the Parish Council to support community engagement and creating a more community spirit. This is slightly at odds with the findings that 49% of respondents felt that community spirit is one of the assets of living here. However, it is possible that the Parish Council are not seen as key to the community spirit.

Proposed action

The Parish Council looks to be involved in more community facing activities. For instance, entering a float in the Carnival, or helping out at the Carnival bar, running litter picks, or supporting community events such as cleaning the Memorial Hall. These can be discussed and agreed when events are proposed.

Is there one thing you would change in Dormansland to make it a better place to live?

Overall there were no new areas mentioned in this section other than;

- Plant a cherry orchard
- Create an electric car infrastructure

Conclusion

In summary, running the survey was a very useful exercise and provides an incoming Parish Council an outline of the thoughts of a subsection of the community.

Key areas would look to be;

- Traffic calming
- Youth Group
- Basket Ball hoop
- Disabled access and facilities
- Improving communication

Footnote;

Thank you to Councillor David Bright who typed in all the results for analysis.

Sources of population numbers from 2021 census.

A degree of licence has been used in the analysis eg Rural Living, a rural location, and country life have been analysed as a similar response.