



Kingston St Mary Community Plan

2016 Household Survey

(CPSG version -Summary Only)

Conducted by

The Community Council for Somerset

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Background

Kingston St Mary (KSM) is a rural parish and village situated 3 miles north of Taunton. Parts of the parish fall within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish comprises the communities of Kingston St Mary, Nailsbourne, Yarford, Fulford, Dodhill and Pickney. In the 2011 Census there were 921 people in 391 households.

The Community Plan Steering Group, with the support of KSM Parish Council are consulting widely with the residents of the parish to produce a new Community-led Plan. The plan will provide the basis for planning and spending across the parish over the next ten to fifteen years. It can also be used as evidence when applying for funding for new projects.

A particularly strong driving force behind the importance of producing a new Community Plan at this time is the proposed North Taunton (Staplegrove) housing development, which if it progresses fully will add hundreds of new properties in Kingston St Mary parish.

This survey is based around findings of the first public consultation exercises of parishioners and village groups.

The Community Plan Steering Group, with the help of a grant from The Big Lottery fund, commissioned the Community Council for (CCS) to undertake a survey of all households in the parish with the following aims:

Aims

- Establish what parishioners value most about living in Kingston St Mary parish
- Examine in detail transport concerns which have arisen from the preliminary public consultations
- Explore a range of other issues housing, community facilities, environment, broadband and IT use, business needs, young people's needs, community support and attitudes to crime.

Methodology

416 paper surveys were distributed to all households on the electoral role in the parish with reply paid envelopes for direct return to CCS. The survey was also available to complete online and hosted on the KSM website. In total **234 responses** were received giving a **56% response rate**.

The survey was promoted widely within the parish through word of mouth, the parish website and at a parish-wide event to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

Research was conducted between 3 – 24 June 2016 with an extension to 25 July 2016 to incorporate final late responses.

Kingston St Mary Community Plan 2016 Household Survey

Summary

Demographic data:

- 234 people participated in the survey, representing 593 household members. The 56% response rate is statistically robust and in CCS's experience this is a strong community response rate
- There is wide representation from across the parish with responses from 34 of the 40 postcodes (and 6 additional responses from 5 postcodes outside the parish – possibly past parish residents, or with strong family parish ties, or potential future parish residents)
- 2 in 3 households have lived in the parish for more than 10 years (62%), and of these 1 in 3 have been resident for 20 or more years (35%). The majority live in a single or two person household (72%)
- 45-64 year olds are the single largest group represented (around 1 in 3 the respondents - 30%). Those in the 75+ bracket are over-represented +15% when compared to 2011 census figures. Conversely younger working age people (25-44 yrs) were the most underrepresented group by -8% compared again to the 2011 census. However, the overall split between working age and retired respondents is fairly even (41% : 44% respectively)
- Around 1 in 5 are families with children aged 18 or under (21%), and of these the majority have children aged between 11-18 (14% overall).

Living in the parish

- The outstanding majority of around 9 in 10 parishioners attach the **highest importance** to the **separation of Kingston St Mary parish from Taunton and the surrounding villages by fields and countryside**. This is closely aligned with an appreciation of the parish's rural environment. Parishioners also value highly the easy access to the countryside, the community facilities (church, pub, school, village hall) and that the land in the parish is used mainly for working farms.

Transport, Traffic Speed and Volume

- Nearly all respondents own their **own motor vehicle** and use it on a daily or weekly basis (96%), and most households use 2 vehicles regularly (49%). Less than 1 in 5 **travel alone** and the most frequent journeys are made with 1 other person.

A sizeable number also **walk frequently** (57%). Bikes are used more often than car share. 30% of households answering the question use bicycles at least monthly, with 1 in 4 cycling on a daily or weekly basis (25%). There were many comments relating to the desire to cycle or walk more frequently if safety of the roads and cycleways were improved. Some people are put off walking through the village, alone or with children, for fear of accidents.

- Overall usage of **public transport** appears low, with under 1 in 10 regularly using the bus service. For households with changing future transport needs, the majority appeared to be looking toward the **bus service** initially to meet their needs. Many parishioners commented on the bus service in the survey and generally the current service is seen as inadequate across all age groups. Improvements would be an increased frequency of buses both during the week and a service run at weekends (particularly Saturday). Bus times are also an issue seen as key to the success of the service: some rely on the bus for work while others would consider using the service for work if there was a later bus back from Taunton in the evenings.
- The **volume** and **speed** of vehicles travelling through Kingston St Mary are of paramount concern (68% and 63% respectively being **extremely** or **very concerned** about this issue). Further investigation shows those living along the main road through Kingston St Mary Village, or who live on roads feeding directly onto the main road have the greatest levels of concern. Three quarters of all respondents suggested **permanent, flashing speed signs** (75%) and a **20mph speed restriction through Kingston St Mary** village (74%) as potential solutions to address vehicle speed. The majority also wish to see a **pavement** through the village (65%). **Average speed cameras** are also seen as a viable solution by the majority (54%). There were many suggested locations for all these solutions which are summarised within the Speed and Volume section in the Findings.

- **Road maintenance** is also an issue of concern (47%) as are **accidents and injuries** (24%). Specific traffic hazards raised were Parsonage Lane, Mill Cross junction, Church Lane junction, King's Hall entrance and parked cars around Kingston Garage, the village hall and the school.
- A sizeable majority would like to have **off-road pedestrian and cycle routes** joining Kingston St Mary village and the wider parish with North Taunton (69%). Many of them own bikes. A similar number would extend this to **safe cycle routes in the parish** as well, although this is of less importance overall. Over half the respondents who answered this question commented on safety issues, the health and leisure benefits of walking and cycling and the potential for traffic reduction. Average bike ownership is 2 per household with 9 in 10 households overall owning bikes.

Facilities

- The **Pub** is considered the most important facility in the parish by the largest majority (71%). There were some suggestions for improvement through restaurant expansion, extended opening hours in the afternoons at weekends and making the pub more of a central focal point of the community. Others felt that more locals/local groups need to support the pub, however, some commented that the pub appears to cater for a narrow section of the community, which in some people's view does not include families, and is perceived as less welcoming.
- The **village hall, playing field and the Spinney** are all closely aligned with the pub in relation to their level of importance to parishioners. For the **playing field**, many would like to see tennis courts which may be combined with a multi-use games area e.g. netball, basketball. This would provide activities within the village for children and young people who cannot easily access facilities outside the parish. **The Spinney** path maintenance would be welcomed particularly to combat winter mud, and the introduction of a bin for dog litter. Improvements to the **village hall** might focus on parking, modernisation, addressing damp problems, broadband availability and consideration of a new village hall facility which is covered later.
- For more than half the parishioners, **local businesses** are important (55%). These respondents outnumber those that **use** local businesses (46%) by a gap of 9%. The majority use the pub and garage and a range of local tradesmen.
- In terms of new parish facilities, a **village shop run by volunteers** is the most popular choice for 2 in 3 households who would use the shop on a weekly or daily basis (65%). Whilst a **farm shop** attracts slightly more overall support than a **general store**, respondents are more likely to use a general shop more regularly. 2 in 5 respondents would use a **village café** regularly either weekly or more often.

There appears to be no consensus over where a new facility would be built, with various locations in the centre of KSM village or land close to the school being popular options. The school location is frequently mentioned for a multi-purpose facility (shop, café, farm shop). The pub is also suggested, mostly for a shop facility which may incorporate post office services. Those suggesting the church and village hall appear to have a preference for a shop or café.

- Opinion is divided on whether the **church could be used for more village/parish activities** with just under half of all respondents in support of this proposal (47%). However, a sizeable proportion of respondents are unsure on this issue (42%). Suggested uses are for more concerts, musical activities, increasing the flexibility of the space by moving church pews, more social events, meetings, talks, activities for children and young people and for the arts.
- Just under half of all respondents **do not perceive a need for a new/larger community centre** (48%). This outweighs those clearly in favour (19%) by more than 2 to 1. Around 1 in 3 households are unsure on this issue (32%). Some respondents suggested that if a new village hall were to be considered, it should be looked at alongside plans for a café or shop, both in terms of facilities and location.

Broadband

- The large majority of households use **broadband** (93% on average for social, business and education purposes). Over 1 in 3 parishioners are unhappy with the service provided, and those with business needs are the least satisfied (39%). In all cases speed, reliability, services available and lack of fibre broadband in some areas all contribute to the overall view, which appears to be parish-wide.

Business

- Half the households taking part in the survey have someone who **works from home**, and around 1 in 3 work regularly in this environment. 2 in 5 of these households would welcome additional support from the parish, and overwhelmingly for those working regularly, addressing broadband issues is the primary request. Others would like local communal office space with access to standard office equipment. Space for local businesses to rent was also raised.

Environment

- The aspects attracting the highest overall **satisfaction** are levels of **air and light pollution**, with around half of all households who are **completely** or **very satisfied** – Chart 14. Conversely, half of all respondents are **least satisfied** with **litter and fly tipping** (50% who are only slightly or not at all satisfied). Community volunteer clean up days were suggested, alongside greater enforcement for the perpetrators. Litter from passing traffic, and fly tipping elsewhere in the parish were commented on.

More than 2 in 5 parishioners (44%) indicated strong dissatisfaction over **Watercourse management**. Key issues from comments were a perceived lack of maintenance by the Local Authority (LA) and private land owners of drains, ditches and watercourses. Affected locations include the centre of Kingston St Mary village, Kingston Road, Nailsbourne, Fulford and Yarford.

Verges and hedgerow maintenance and to a lesser extent **weed control** also share similar levels of dissatisfaction for around 2 in 5 parishioners. Overgrown verges on Parsonage Lane and Kingston Road are seen as a hazards to road users. Weed control by the LA is particularly sought in Sawyers Leigh where respondents commented that lack of maintenance affects the road surface and on Bay Hill.

Dog mess outside the school, in The Spinney, on footpaths, in the church yard and on Pickney Lane prompted suggestions for more dog bins, better education for dog owners and enforcement of fines for dog littering. Additionally 2 in 3 parishioners do not feel that **dogs should be allowed to use the playing field**.

Housing

- A small majority of households feel the parish is in need of more **affordable housing** specifically for local people who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market (55%). A sizeable proportion of respondents also feel that there should be provision of **low cost/starter homes for purchase** (45%).

1 in 3 would like **Eco-friendly housing** to be a consideration in future developments in the parish. While a slightly smaller number felt the parish needs more **retirement housing** and **sheltered housing**.

Community Assistance

- Overall just under half the households would welcome some assistance, and **garden maintenance** (38%) and help with **small household maintenance tasks** (29%) would be the most welcomed. Unsurprisingly those needing the most help are retirement age 65+ years.

Help with **daily household tasks** and **transport outside the parish** are broadly similar in terms of the level of need. While **Transport within the parish** and **shopping** are sought by fewer respondents.

Crime

- Kingston St Mary appears on the whole to be a safe place to live for more than 2 in 3 respondents who are not overly concerned about crime in the parish (64%). However, for those with concerns some mentioned actual incidents of theft/burglary, mainly from outbuildings/sheds or farm-related. A few raised the lack of police presence and while there appears to be active Neighbourhood Watch in some areas, others may be less well served, and may welcome more contact/updates.

Young people

- The largest response relates to young people between 11-18 years (51%), and the overwhelming majority of those answering the question feel there is **little or nothing to engage this age group** in the parish (88%). Figures are also similar for Primary school age children, while the majority feel Pre-school age children would largely appear to have their needs met (73%).

The majority of young people would use is a **cycle/running track** (54%). A **woodland adventure** area and an **indoor meeting place/café** are also closely aligned popular choices. Further investigation shows that in all aspects, with the exception of bike/scooter ramps and the homework group, the age groups most likely to engage are **primary school children 5-10 year olds**.

From the list of suggested facilities provided, all age groups are likely to use a cycle/running track, however older children (11-18) appear to prefer bike/scooter ramps and a woodland adventure area. Younger children's preference is for an indoor place to meet or a youth club

Other sports activities and **organised clubs that young people suggested** include: tennis (7), football (5), cricket (2), Archery (2), theatre club (2), Brownies/Scouts/Guides, choir, cycle club, fly fishing, field sports, gardening, indoor clubs (pool, darts, short mat bowling), rounders, tag rugby, woodland school, yoga.