

24<sup>th</sup> January 2018

## Review of residents' questionnaire responses

### Process

471 questionnaires were posted or hand-delivered to all homes in the MACKPlan area. It had been decided not to offer a version that could be completed on-line, as the constraints of Survey Monkey or similar software would affect the team's ability to design an attractive questionnaire covering a complex range of issues. The team also wanted to ask as many open questions as possible and the automatic analysis of answers to such questions is not possible with such software.

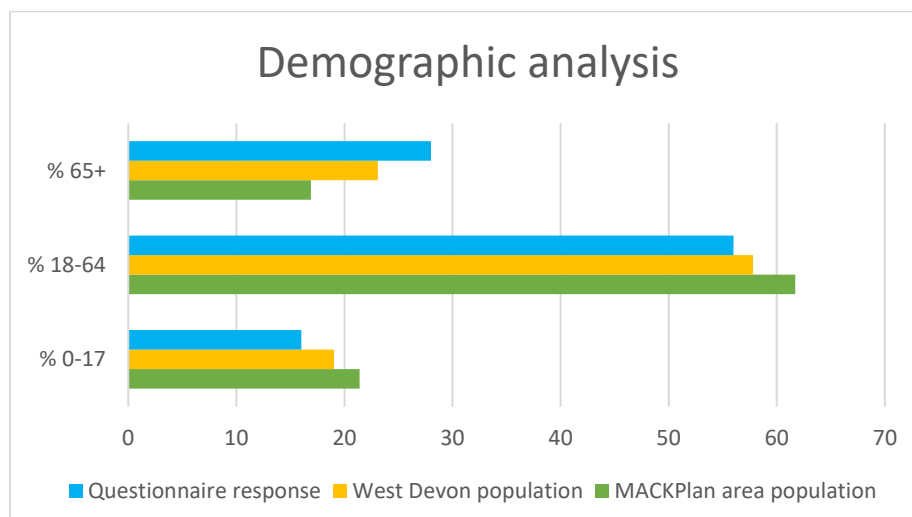
Printed copies of the questionnaires also provided an effective physical reminder to those who still had to complete them. 184 questionnaires were returned; a response rate of 39%, which compares well with that achieved by other neighbourhood planning teams.

Two team members have independently collated the data from the 'tick box' closed questions and their results were then compared and corrected where necessary. Over 1,300 comments and replies to open questions have also been reviewed and grouped under appropriate headings, in a separate analysis. All these analyses can be viewed on-line at <http://www.mackplan.org.uk/index.php?cid=153>

### Representative response

Although the response rate was high for a survey of this kind, there was still a majority of households that did not complete a questionnaire. Therefore, the degree to which the outcome can be judged to reflect the general views of local people, is influenced by how much the demographic profile of those responding reflects the most recent census data.

Respondents were asked to state the age range of those in their households and as far as the adult population is concerned, the chart below shows that there was an over-representation of over 65s compared with the percentage of that age group in the MACKPlan area at the time of the 2011 census and a slight under-representation of the 18-64 age group.



That seems logical, given the likelihood that those who are retired would have had more free time to complete the survey. However, as the bulk of the respondents were in the economically active 18-64 group and their level of response is broadly in line with the size of that element as reflected in the census, it seems reasonable to conclude that the outcome of the survey has not been unduly affected by a disproportionate response from the older population of the MACKPlan area.

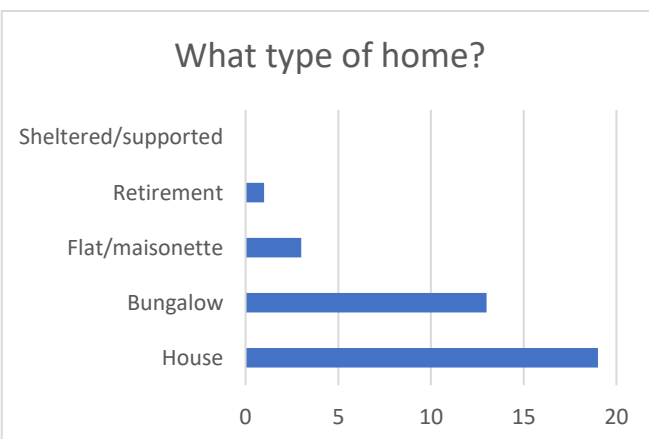
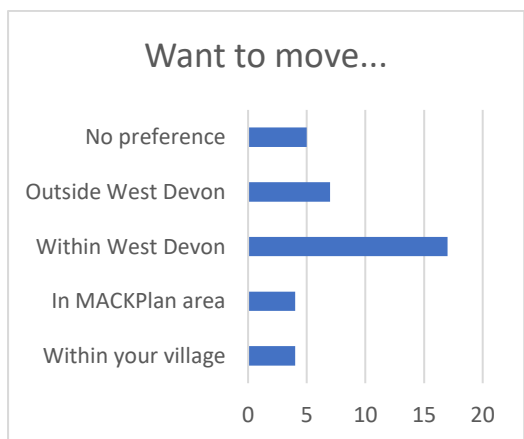
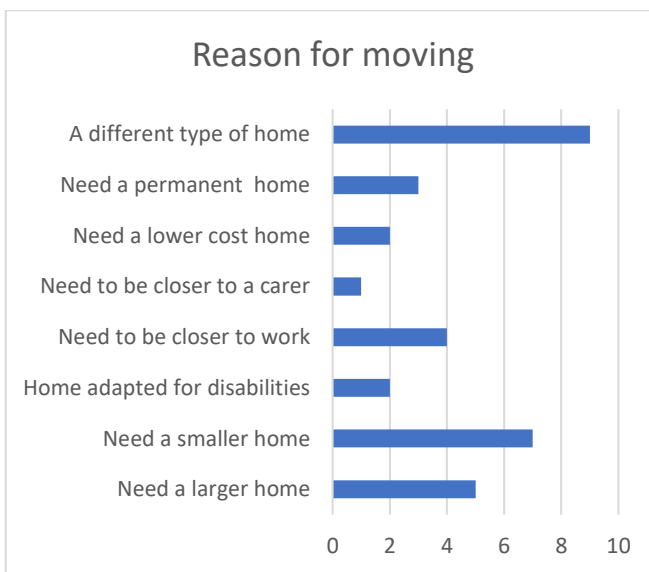
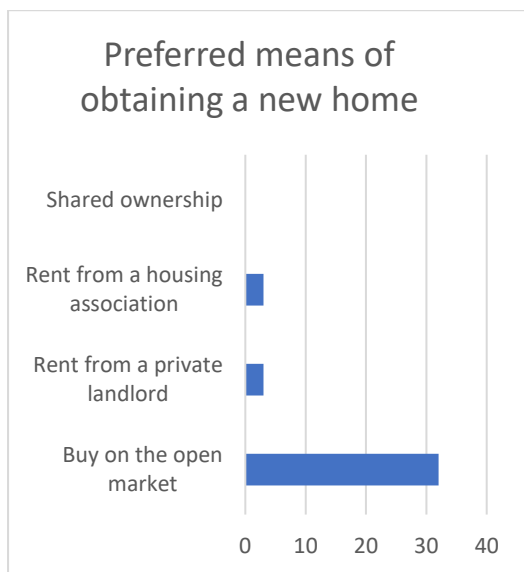
60% of respondents have either always lived here or have done so for more than 10 years, which suggests that the area has a stable population who are likely to have an interest in its future.

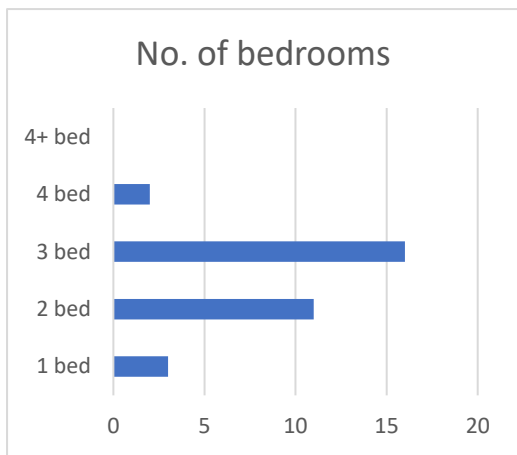
### Housing need

Three respondents said that at least one family member had moved away from the MACKPlan area during the last five years, due to difficulties in finding an affordable home in the area. All those respondents said that those concerned would want to return to the area if a suitable affordable home was available. Two of those concerned had already registered with Devon Home Choice.

37 respondents considered that everyone currently living in their home would need to move together within five years. A further seven felt that one or more family members would want to move to their own home within five years.

Of those 37 respondents, 15 expected to need to move within two years and 22 within five years. Various aspects of their requirements for a new home are set out below:





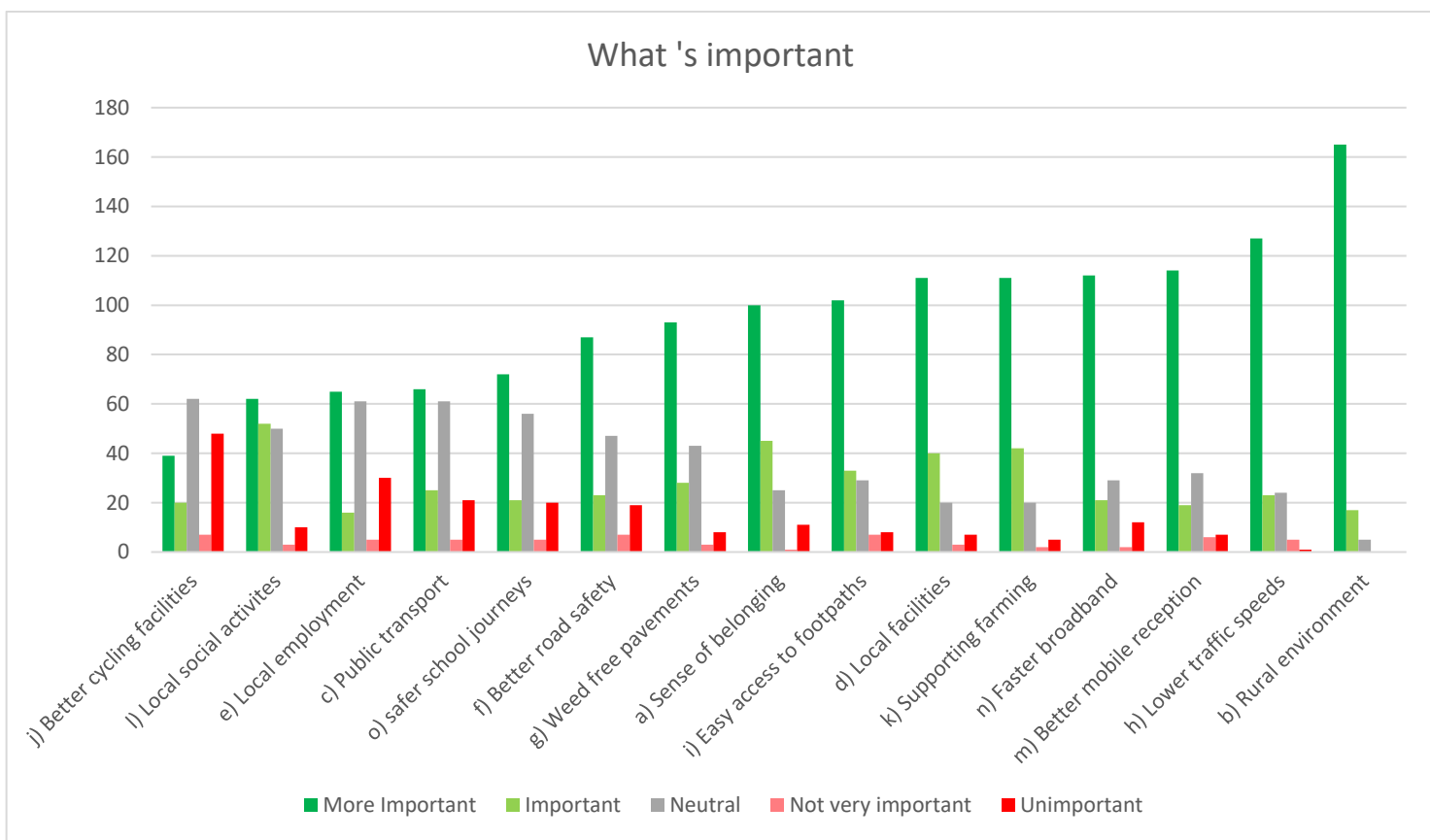
20% of respondents consider they will need to move within the next five years. The great majority intend to buy on the open market and very few want to remain in their current village or in the MACKPlan area. By far the most common type of accommodation wanted was a three-bedroomed house.

However, it is worth noting that the second most popular house type was a bungalow, of which there are relatively few in the MACKPlan area. It may be that if the stock of bungalows was increased, more residents intending to move could stay in the locality.

### What did people like or value?

Residents were asked to state what they liked about living in the area. The overwhelming majority [66%] appreciated what they felt was a beautiful, peaceful, rural area. The second most significant factor was that 22% of respondents felt that they lived in a friendly place with a good community spirit. 11% also appreciated their ease of access to open countryside, local towns and the main road network. Only 1% identified a range of other issues, such as a low crime rate.

Residents were also asked to state the degree of importance they attached to various issues that had been identified as significant in an earlier, small-scale, on-line survey. The outcome is below.



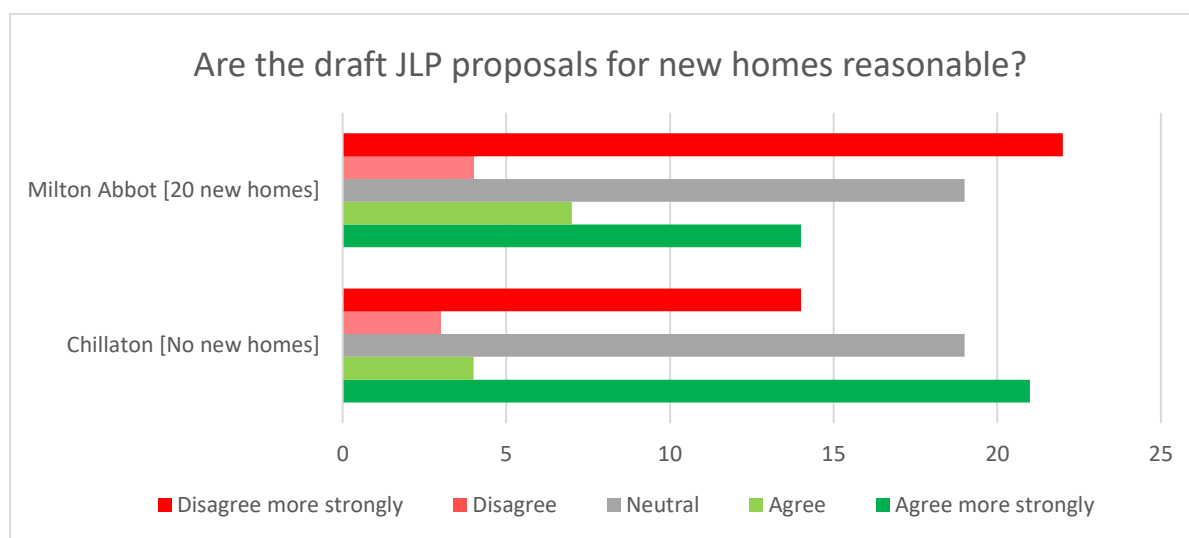
Residents were also asked to list up to three of their favourite local recreational, social or leisure activities. Of the 240 activities identified, walking [32%], eating out/pubs [15%] and cycling [9%] were the most popular.

## What did respondents want to change or improve?

Apart from a number of issues identified by only one or two people, the majority of responses to this question fell into three categories. The most popular was the re-introduction of a shop/Post Office in Chillaton and in Milton Abbott, followed by the need for better mobile reception and broadband speeds and lastly concerns over the speed of traffic in villages, the number of HGVs and other road safety issues.

## New Homes

Residents were asked if they agreed that the proposals for new homes in the draft Joint Local Plan [JLP] were reasonable. Their response was as follows:



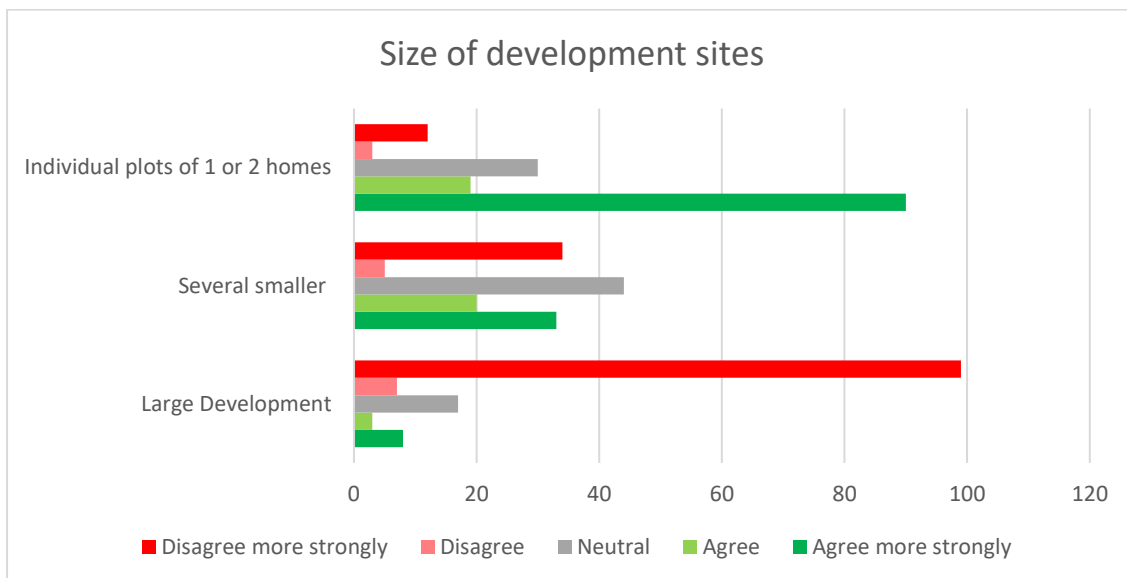
It is difficult to draw clear conclusions from this response, other than opinion is divided, that a considerable number of people were neutral and that there was significant support for new homes in Milton Abbot as well as opposition to no new homes in Chillaton. However, the largest single view in both villages was, in effect, in favour of no development in either community.

A total of 43 residents from both villages said that they did not consider that new housing was viable without better local services. 19 Milton Abbot respondents felt that 20 homes were too many or that there should be no development at all. That latter opinion was shared by three Chillaton residents, but eight others felt that Chillaton needed more homes, particularly if that would attract local services.

MACKPlan has to conform with relevant aspects of the Joint Local Plan [JLP], when that is approved, and that does have an indicative figure of 20 new homes for Milton Abbot. It is therefore necessary to look in more detail at the views of respondents on the location, scale and function of any new housing in the MACKPlan area. Further consultation will now take place regarding specific sites, to determine whether or not this requirement of the JLP can be met appropriately or not.

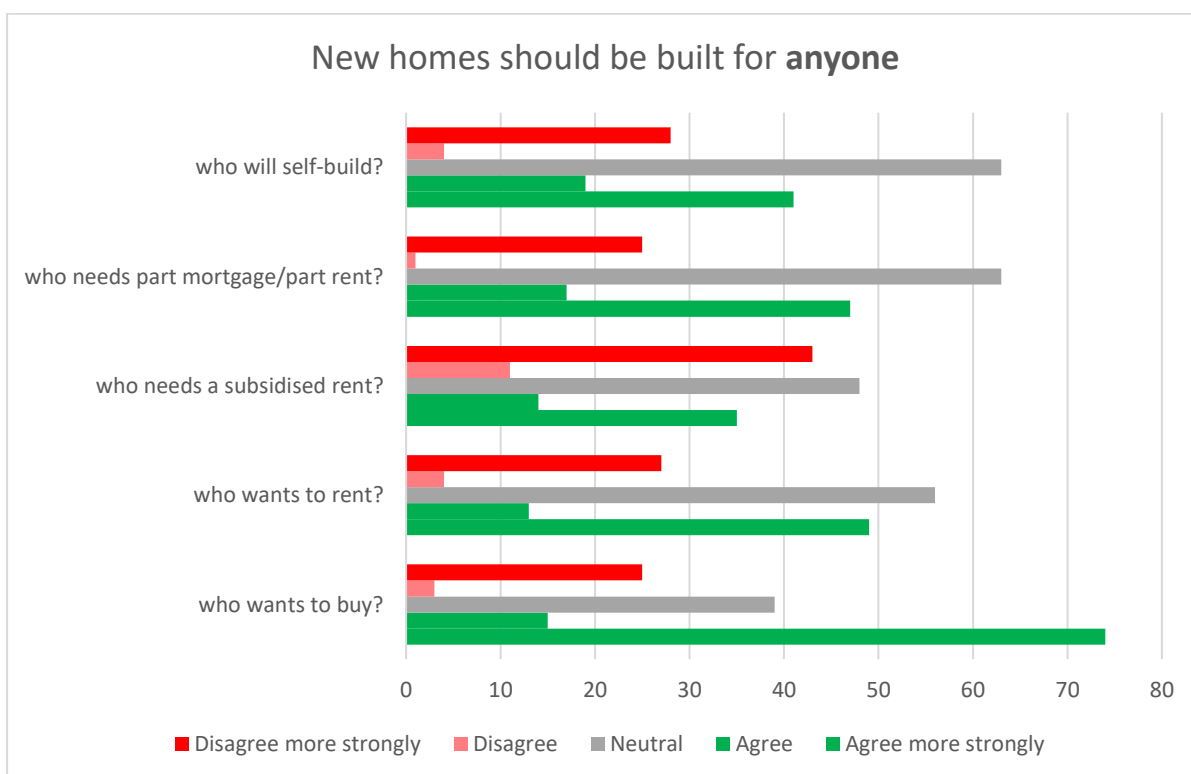
### Scale of new housing development

If development is to take place, residents in both villages favour the development of small plots of one or two homes instead of one large site, but are fairly evenly divided over the merits of several smaller sized projects, as shown overleaf.



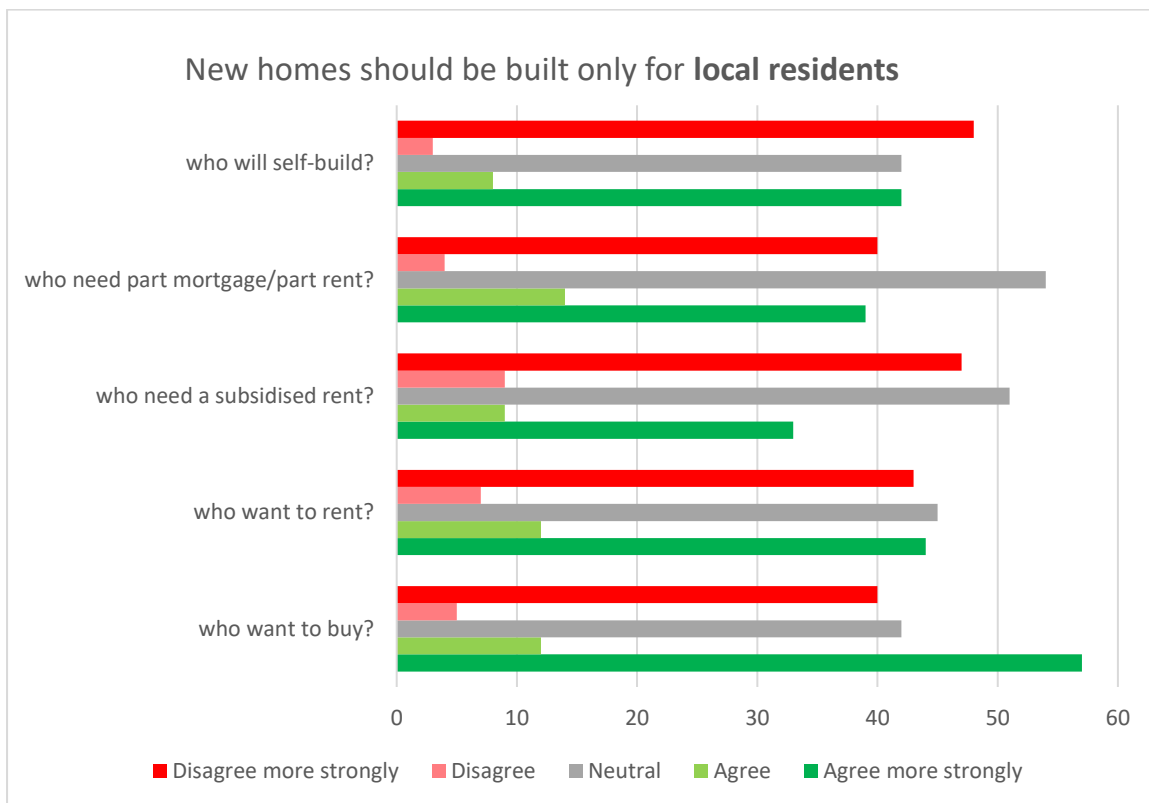
Who are new homes for?

Residents were asked to consider for whom new homes should be built, both as regards ownership and rental options and whether or not there should be any differentiation between people with a local connection to the MACKPlan area and anyone else.



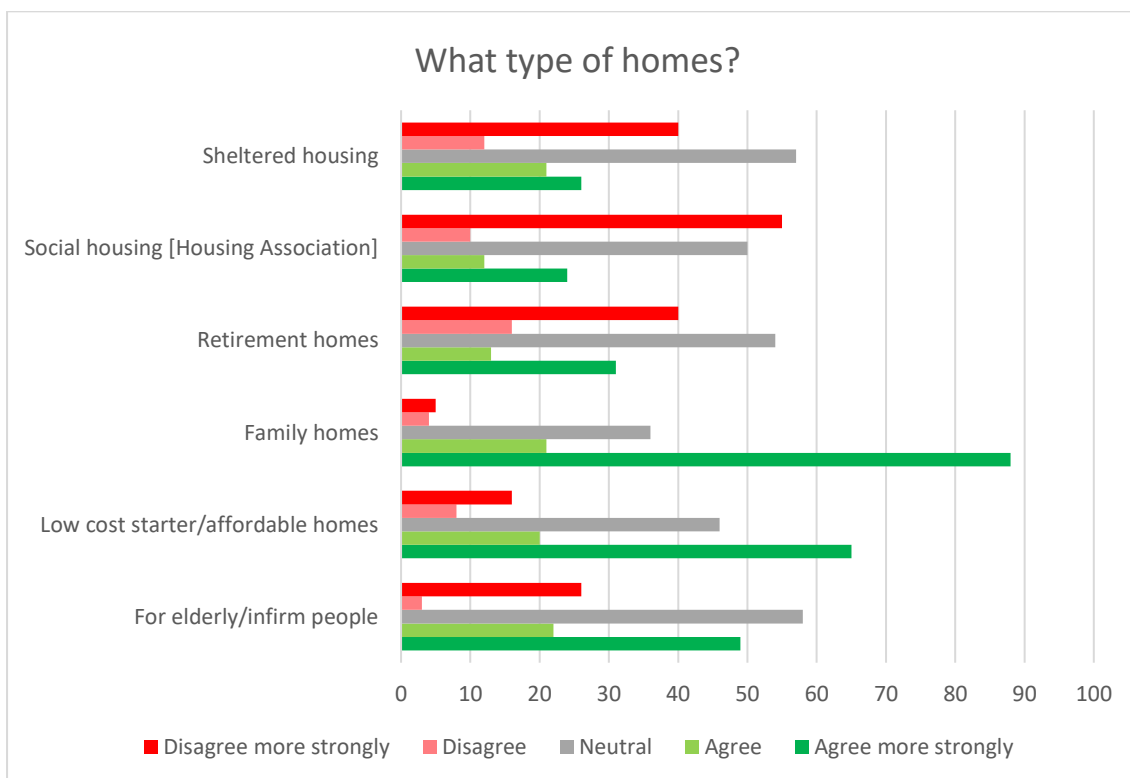
There was most support for those wanting to buy and the least for those needing a subsidised rent. There were a significant number of people who didn't express a view on this issue.

The analysis of responses to the same options, but restricted to those with a local connection [shown overleaf], shows that there was a high number of people who strongly disagreed with any option. Perhaps that should be taken together with the comments also received on this issue, where in each village there were more residents in favour of no restriction, compared with those who wanted new homes for local people only.



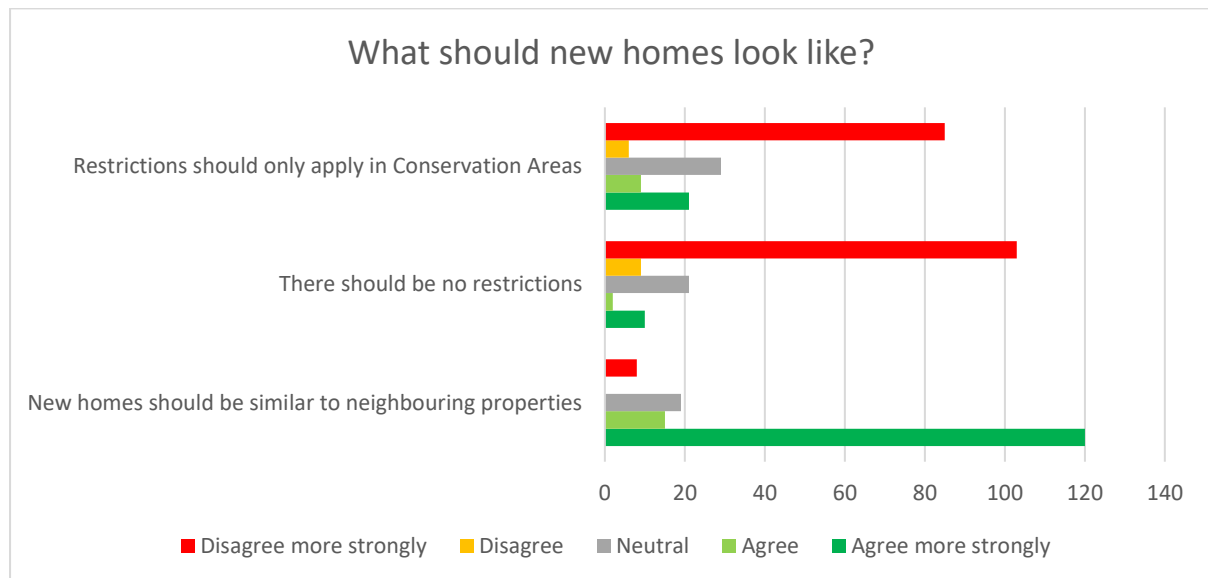
It may therefore be reasonable to conclude that there is no strong desire to restrict the sale of new homes to local people, but that concern over the lack of local facilities may be reflected in the slightly higher level of resistance to providing housing at subsidised rents for anyone wishing to move here

As shown below, there was a clear preference for family homes, followed by low cost starter/affordable housing. The resistance to social housing and to accommodation for elderly and infirm people may again be reflected in the concerns expressed by residents in both villages that there are inadequate local facilities, especially public transport and care services.



What should new homes look like?

It was assumed that most people would like to see well-designed homes that suit their surroundings, but residents were asked to consider how far MACKPlan should influence the way new homes look.

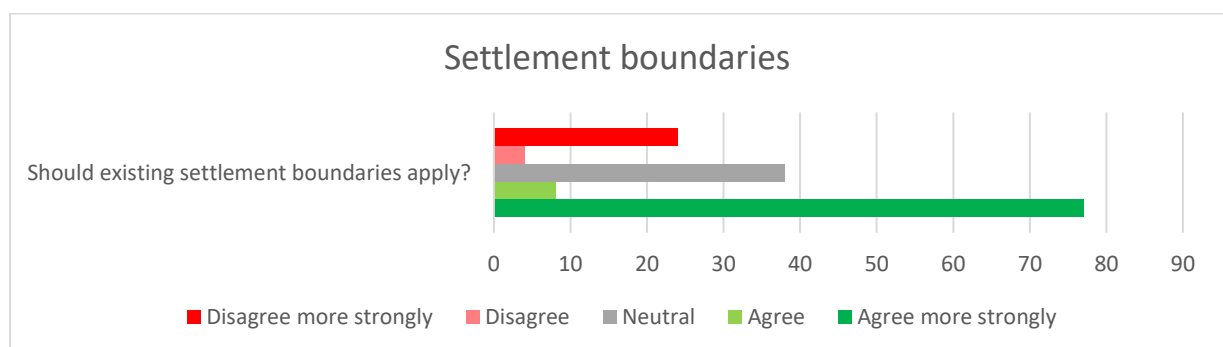


The chart shows a very strong preference for new homes to be built in a similar style to those in the surrounding area and that the application of such restrictions should not be limited to conservation areas.

Should there be settlement boundaries delineating the built area of villages?

Settlement boundaries have been reviewed in the draft Joint Local Plan, with the intention that larger settlements like Milton Abbot should have one, but that Chillaton should not. The implication being that the absence of a boundary means that all development in Chillaton would, in future, be treated as though it were taking place in the open countryside. However, as a boundary for Chillaton had been included in the draft JLP and this had not been clarified by the time the questionnaire was prepared, residents were asked to consider the current settlement boundaries of both villages.

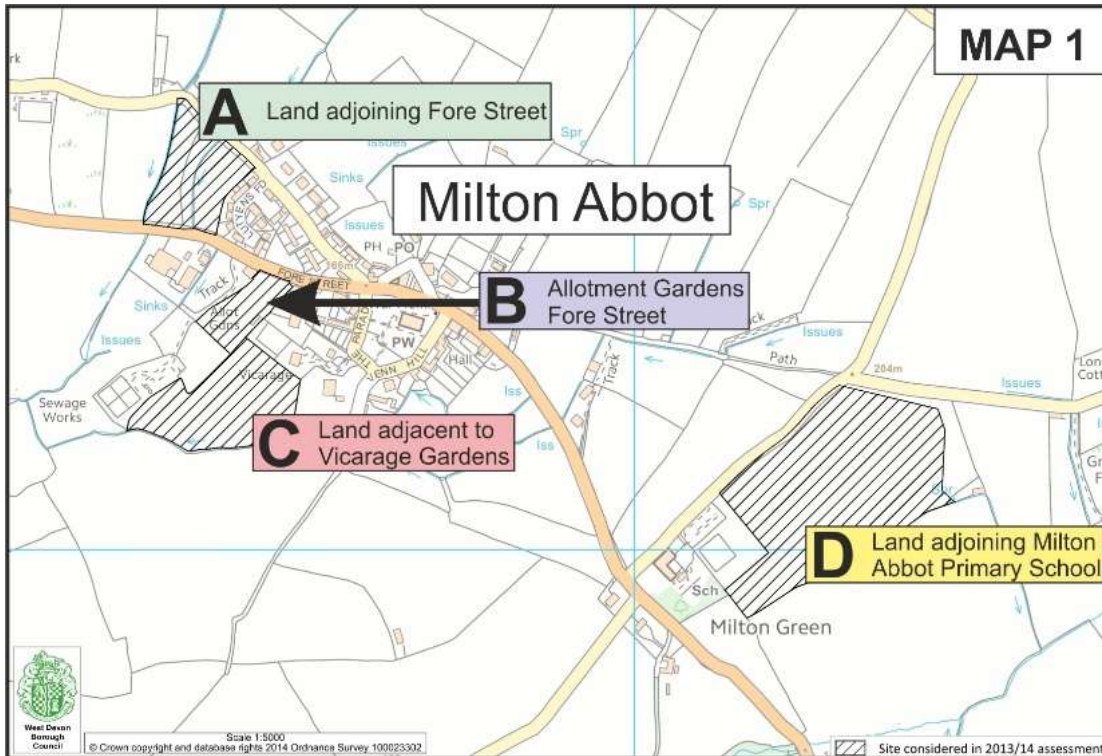
The result is shown below, but although it looks clear cut, it should be borne in mind that a number of residents felt that the boundaries were arbitrary or unduly restrictive and there was a sense that it was more important to judge a proposal on its merits, than simply whether it was in or out of a settlement area.



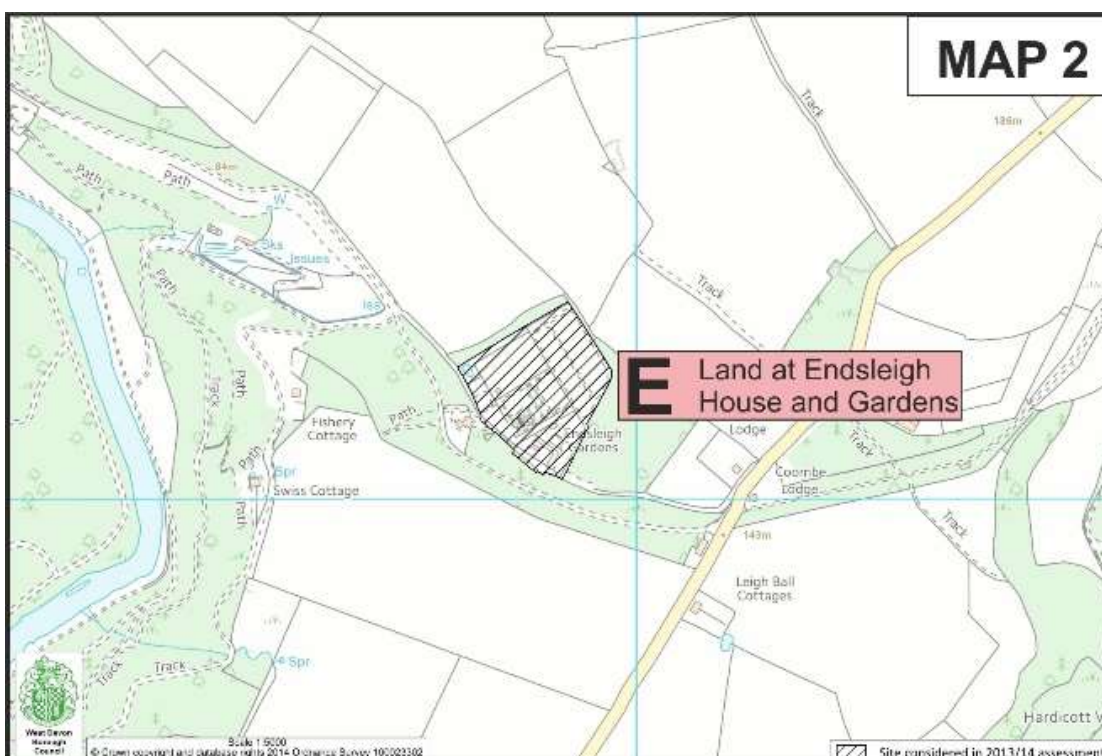
Nevertheless, the majority of respondents did state that they wanted to see the current boundaries maintained.

## Potential development sites – Milton Abbot

In 2013, West Devon Borough Council issued a 'Call for Land'; to identify sites that might have potential for housing development. MACKPlan residents were provided with the assessments of both Borough and Parish Councils on the suitability of the sites that this exercise identified and their views were sought on the Borough Council's assessments. *Only those residents living in a particular village were asked to comment on proposals for that village [Chillaton or Milton Abbot].* The sites identified in Milton Abbot village are shown below:

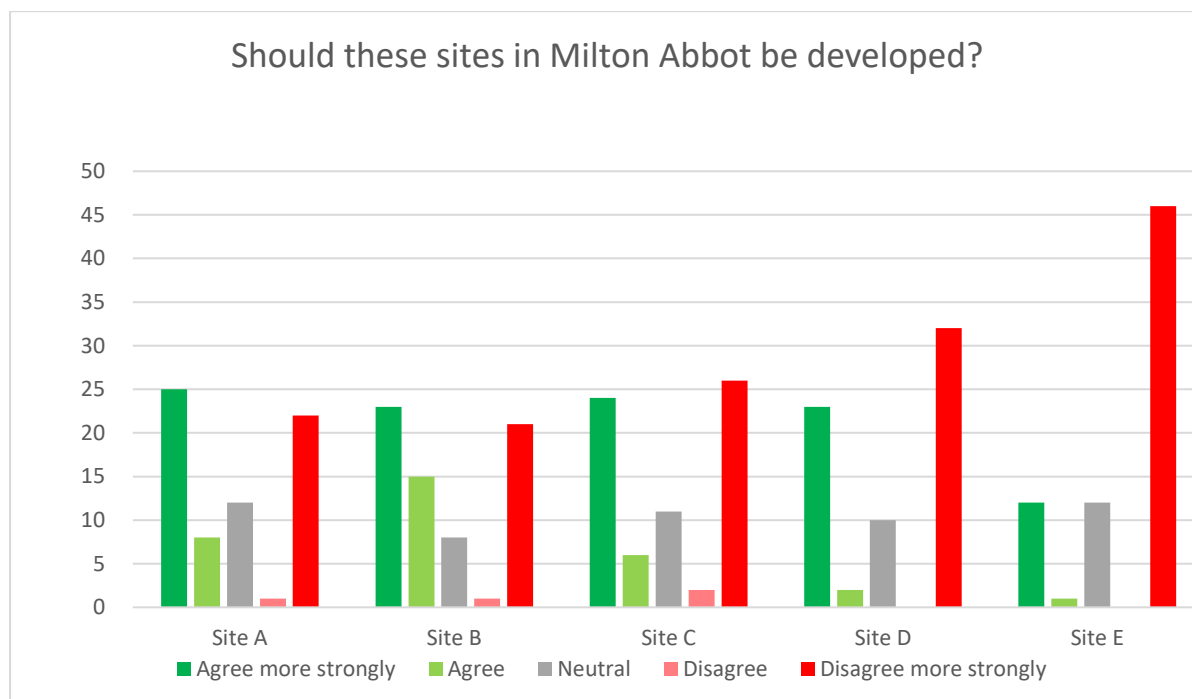


There was an additional site put forward at Endsleigh Gardens, as shown below:





Because the Borough Council's assessments were sometimes in favour of development and sometimes not, respondents' views are shown in the charts below as to whether or not they were in favour of development, in order to give a consistent colour key across them.



Site A: Land adjoining Fore Street. There were more residents in favour of the Borough Council's assessment that this site could be developed with up to ten homes than were opposed to the idea, although a significant number of respondents did not express a view.

Site B: Allotment Gardens, Fore Street. Overall, there were more residents in favour of the Borough Council's assessment that this site could be developed with up to five homes than were opposed to the idea.

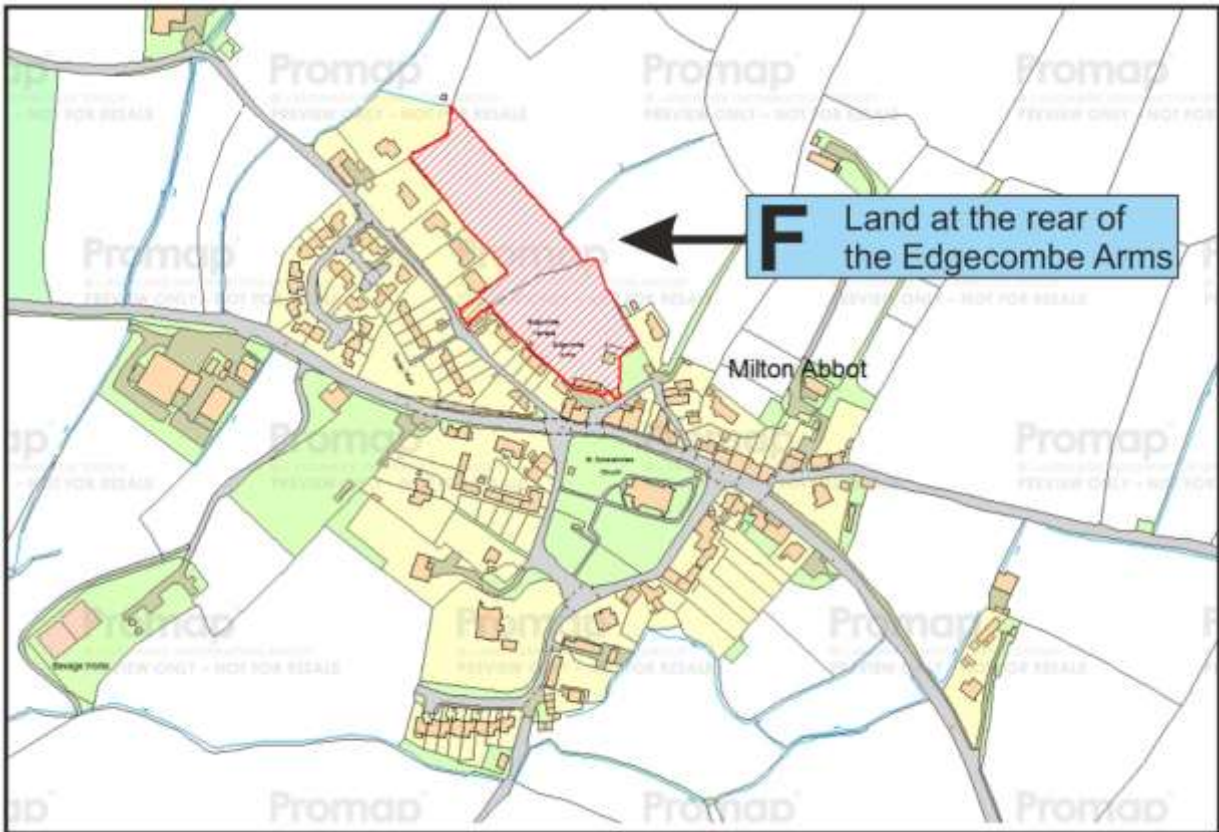
Site C: Land adjacent to Vicarage Gardens. There were slightly more residents opposed to the Borough Council's assessment that this site could be developed with up to five homes than were in favour of the idea, but only just.

Site D: Land adjoining Milton Abbot School. There was a majority strongly agreeing with the Borough Council's contention that this site was not considered suitable for development at this time.

Site E: Land at Endsleigh House and Gardens. There was an overwhelming majority strongly agreeing with the Borough Council's contention that this site was not considered suitable for development at this time.

Site F: Land at the rear of the Edgecombe Arms. Since the residents' survey, the owners of land at the rear of the Edgecombe Arms have suggested that this might form a suitable site for housing development. They have been informed that this site will be included in the next stage of the consultation process.

A plan of the site is shown overleaf.

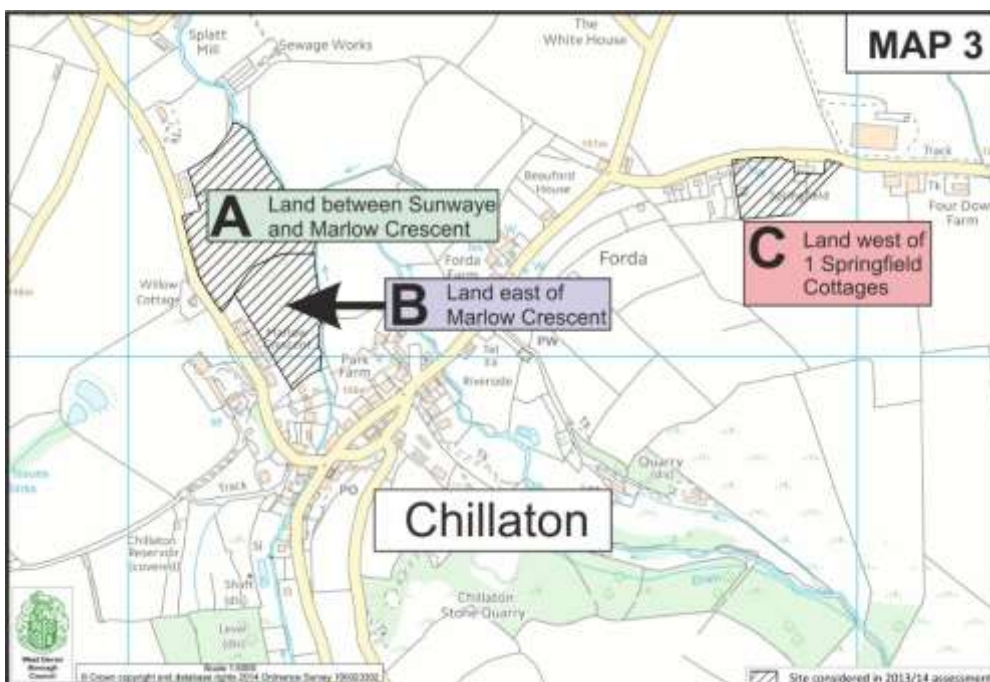


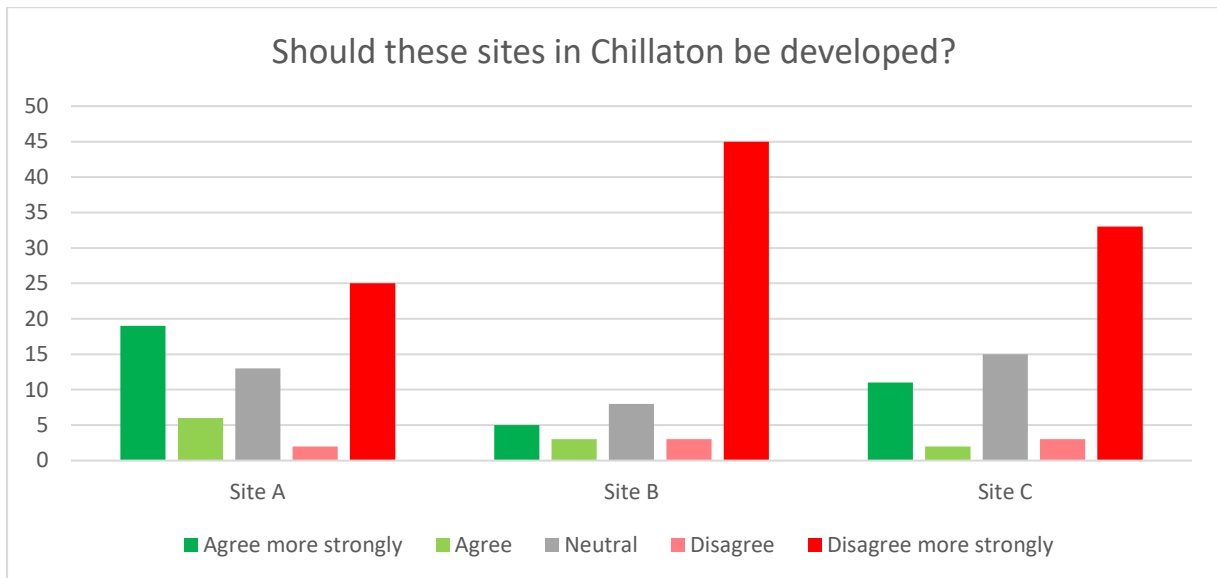
Comments by individual respondents

Several residents stated that Edgecombe Lane should not be used to serve new development, because it could not cope with more traffic.

Land behind Tamar View was suggested as being suitable for 2-3 houses and the field next to the B & B, as well as Enfield Farm, were also identified as possible sites. It was also suggested that the fields opposite site D were more suitable, because of better access to the main road and to utility services.

Potential development sites – Chillaton:





Site A: Land between Sunway and Marlow Crescent. Opinion was fairly evenly divided on the merits of the development of this site with up to ten homes, with a small majority opposed to the idea.

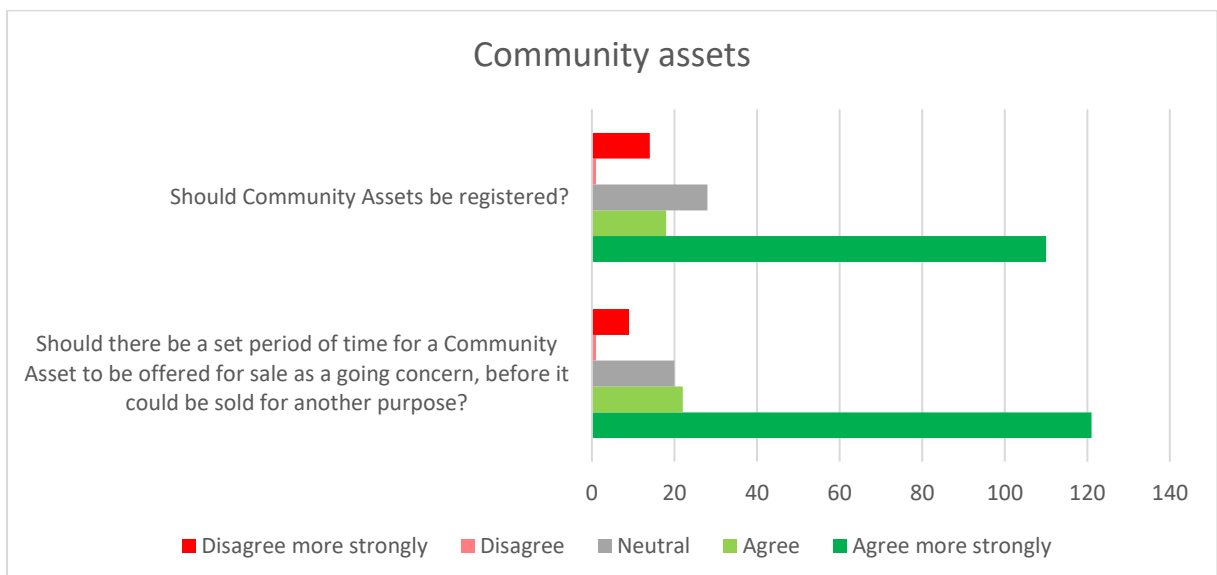
Site B: Land east of Marlow Crescent. There was overwhelming support for the Borough Council’s view that this site is not suitable for development at this time.

Site C: Land west of 1 Springfield Cottages. There was strong support for the Borough Council’s view that this site is not suitable for development at this time.

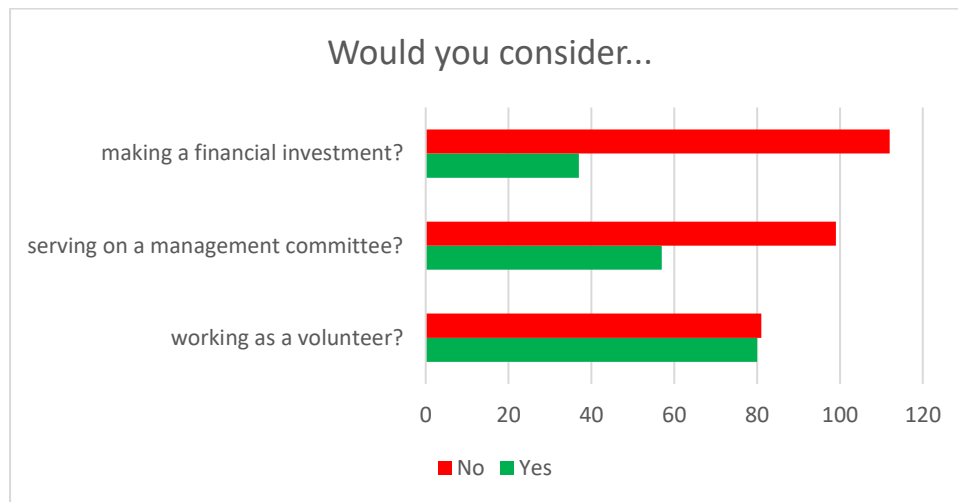
Each of the ‘*Important open spaces within settlements*’ in Chillaton had a comment that suggested that the landowners would be prepared to see housing development on these sites.

### Local amenities

Residents were asked to consider whether safeguards should be in place to create a degree of control over the sale of local facilities regarded as community assets. Their views were:



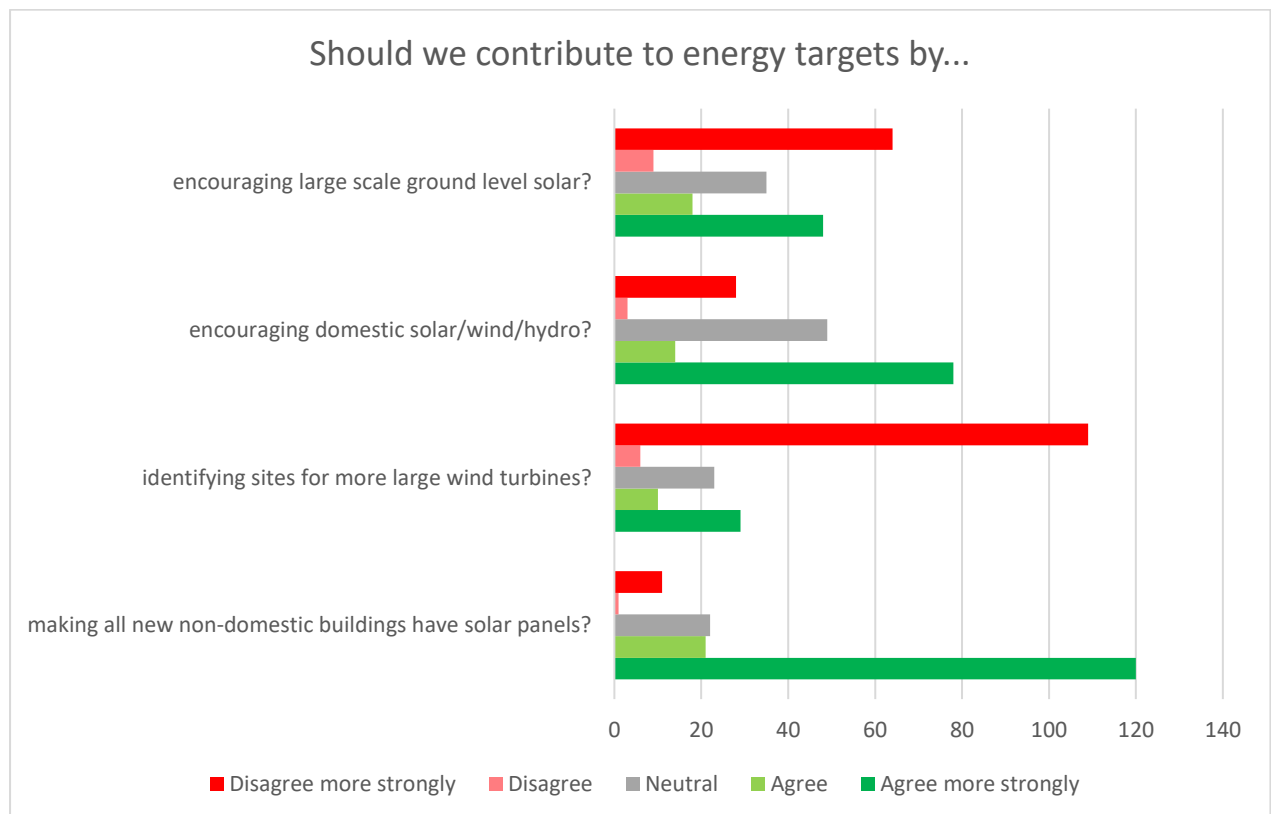
Residents were also asked if they would be prepared to support existing facilities or help provide new ones in various ways, as follows:



Understandably, with no specific project in mind, this was a difficult issue to respond to, but it does give an indication that a number of residents would be prepared to give serious consideration to some form of support to maintain or provide local facilities.

### Generating renewable energy

MACKPlan will need to demonstrate how it contributes to meeting Government targets for renewable energy production. Residents were asked how those targets should be met.

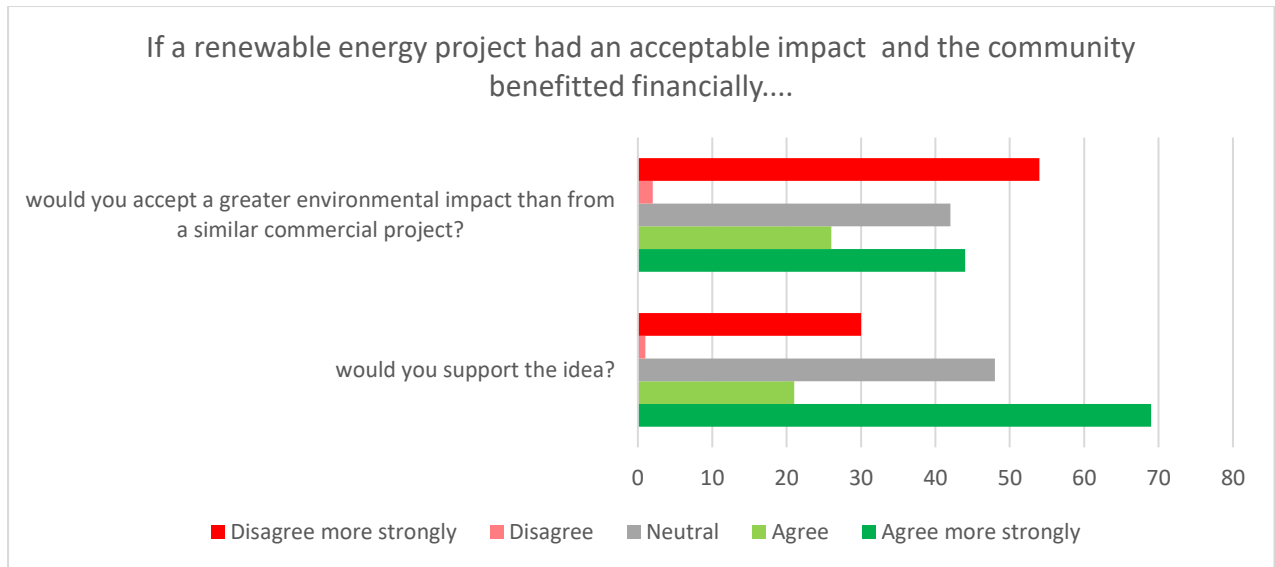


There was a clear preference for solar panels on all new non-domestic buildings and some encouragement for more domestic scale renewable energy generators, plus strong opposition to more large wind turbines.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when asked to identify suitable sites for large turbines, some respondents used that as an opportunity to make their general views known, so ‘at sea’ ‘nowhere’ and ‘everywhere’ were popular choices. One resident identified Borough Cross and Rams Down as suitable sites.

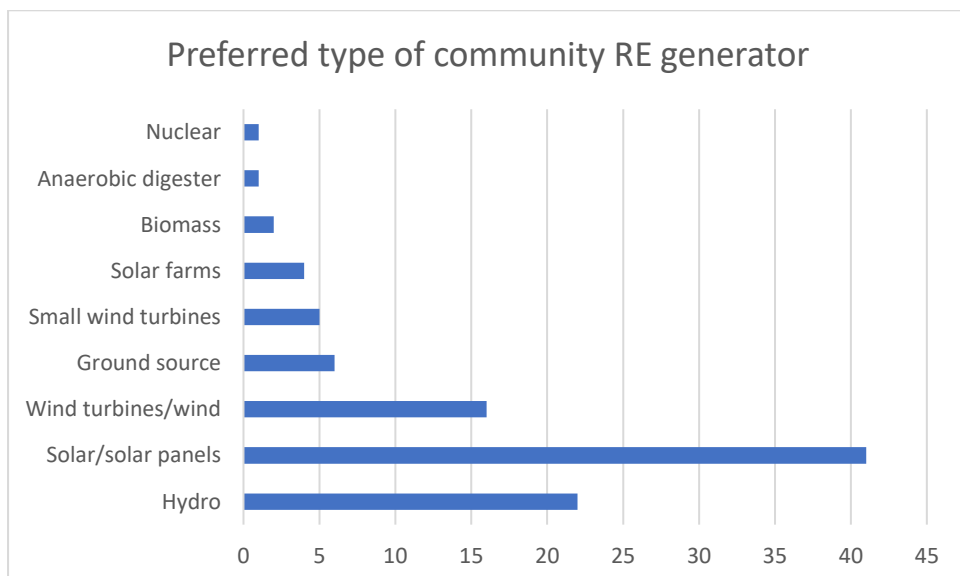
Community renewable energy schemes

Residents were asked to consider whether they would support a renewable energy [RE] project where the impact was acceptable and the community benefitted financially.



It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from these questions because there was an assumption that a community RE scheme would ‘have an acceptable impact’. With hindsight, that is a subjective assessment that individual residents may have viewed quite differently. What can be said is that there is far more support for the idea of a community energy scheme, than for a commercial one. However, there are serious reservations about accepting a greater environmental impact, simply because the community benefits in other ways.

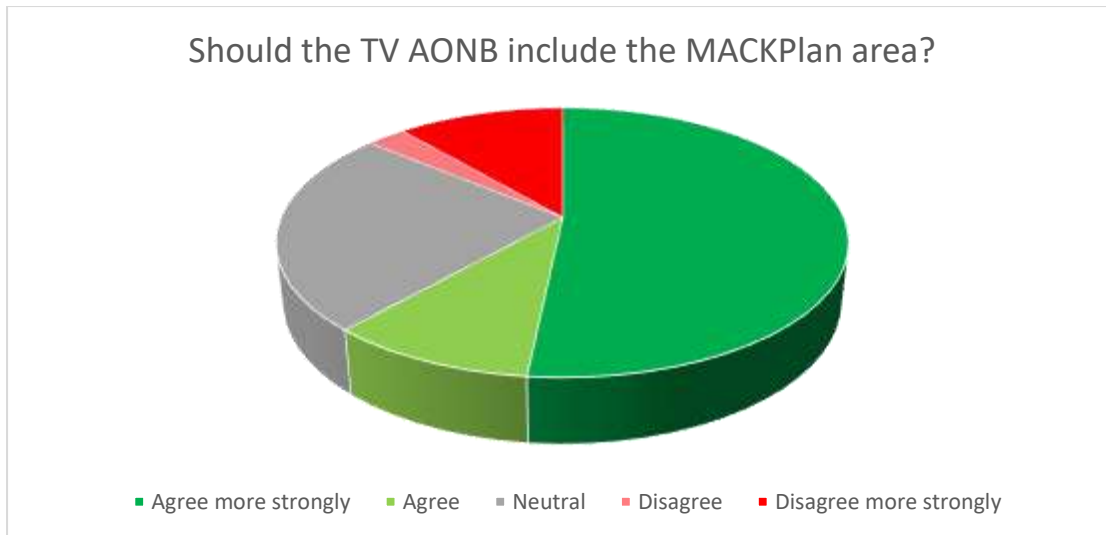
Residents were also asked to state what type of community RE project would be most suitable. The results were:



Some residents who preferred wind power did specify small turbines, the remainder did not indicate their preferred size.

### Landscape and heritage

Residents were asked to consider whether or not they would prefer to have an extension of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [TV AONB] that would offer greater protection for the landscape but impose similar restrictions on alterations to homes as apply in a conservation area.

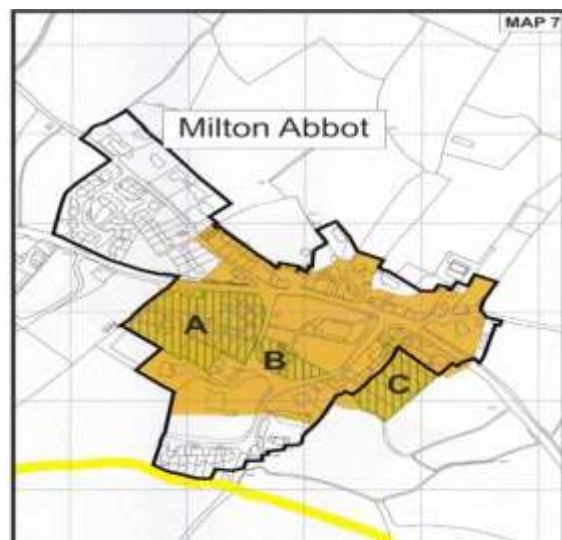
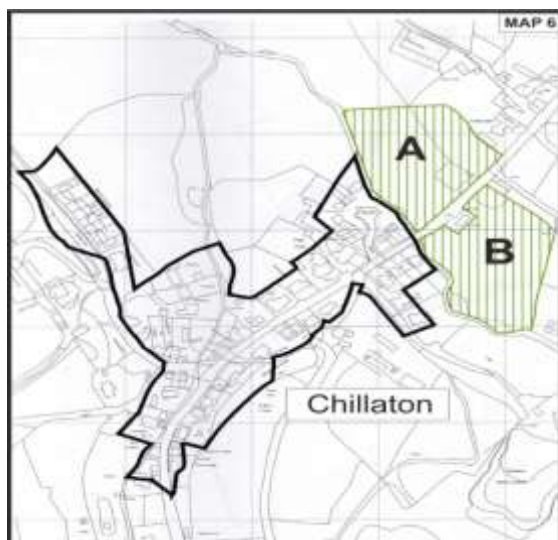


Although a significant number of people did not express a view, there was an overwhelming majority in favour of more protection for the local landscape.

### Local Green Spaces

Within the MACKPlan area are five sites that are designated in the current Local Development Plan as *‘Important open spaces within settlements’* that have some protection against development. Although the draft JLP does not provide for these designations to continue, a revision to the National Planning Policy Framework has allowed the creation of *‘Local Green Spaces’* [LGS] which, once designated, offer a similar protection.

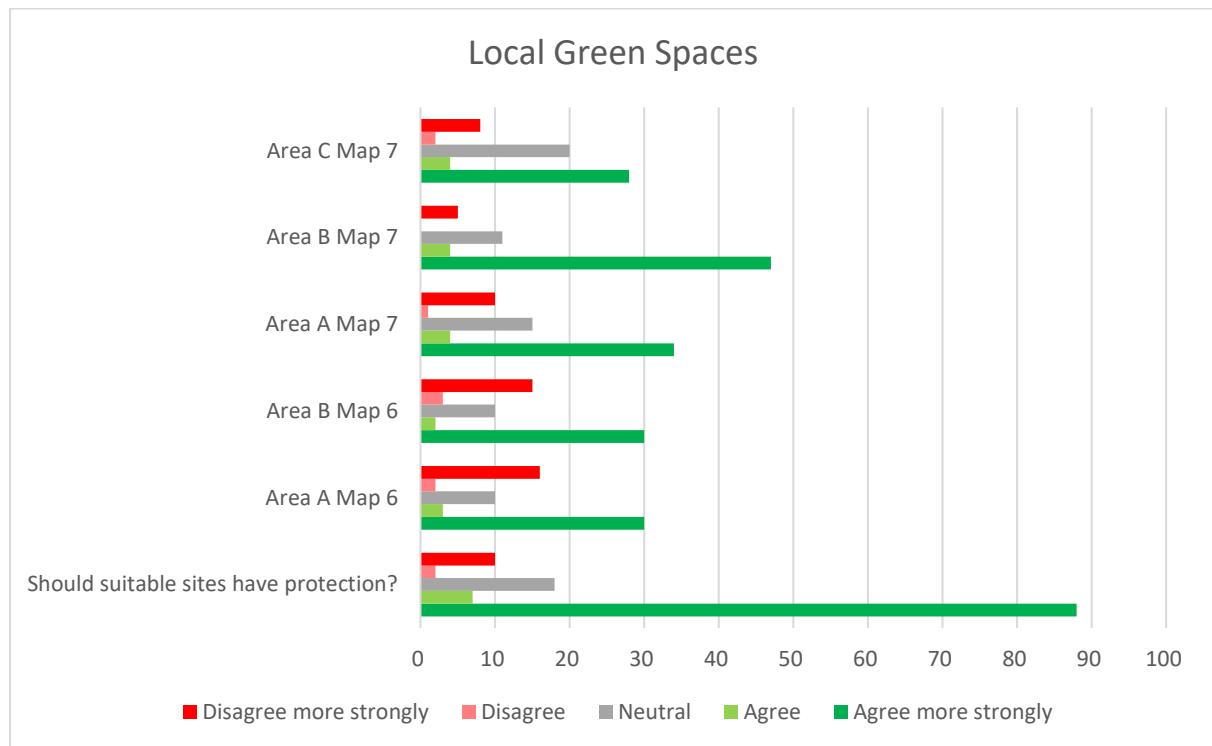
The current *‘Important open spaces within settlements’* are shown here:



Because local communities can decide, via their neighbourhood plans, which areas should have LGS status, there are strict criteria that must be met before designation can be achieved.

Residents were asked i) if they thought that open spaces that met the criteria should be given protection, ii) their views on whether those spaces currently protected should become LGSs if they met the criteria and iii) if they could identify any other potential LGS sites.

The chart below shows their response:



There was overwhelming support for the idea of LGS sites. In Chillaton, the field between Sunwaye and Marlow Crescent was also proposed, as was the area surrounding Long Cross. In Milton Abbot, Allotment Gardens Fore Street, the area next to the school, the cricket pitch field and an area adjacent to site A were also put forward.

Although the general concept was well supported, there was a significant level of opposition to the designation of the currently protected spaces in Chillaton, as LGS sites.

The criteria that have to be met were referred to in the questionnaire and many of the comments received in support of designation, quoted from them. However, simply stating 'Historic significance', for example, is not the same as producing evidence that this is the case. It is also possible that sites that do not allow public access may have a lower level of local significance than those that do permit general use.

Having regard to the views of respondents, this is an issue that will require further investigation in conjunction with the landowners concerned, local residents and the local planning authority.

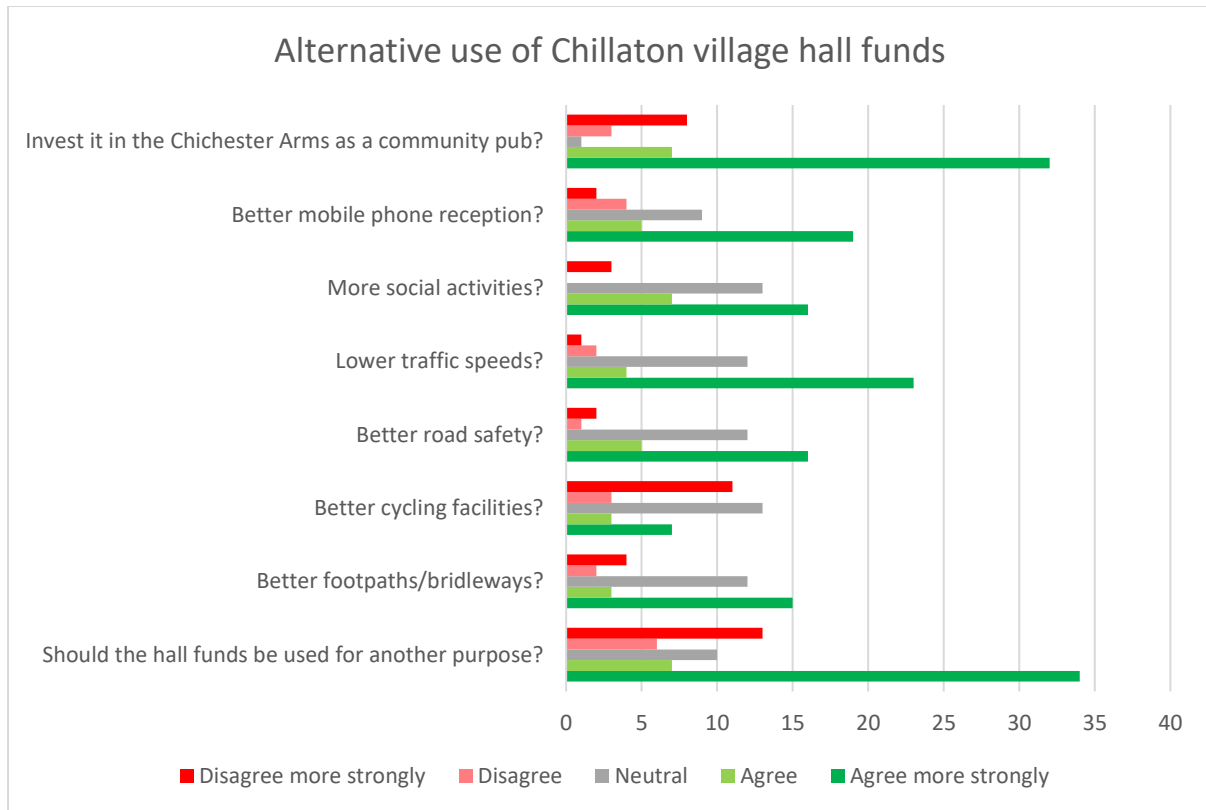
## Village Halls

Although neighbourhood plans are solely concerned with planning issues, the opportunity was taken to canvass residents' views on the future use of village halls in Kelly/Meadwell and Milton Abbot.

Opinions were also sought on the current position in Chillaton where funds from the sale of an old village hall could be put towards the cost of a new hall or perhaps used for some other community purpose.

Chillaton

Residents were asked if the £55,000 available towards the cost of a new hall should be used for the general benefit of the village instead and if so, how.



There was considerable support for the use of the funds for another purpose that benefitted the village, with investment in establishing a community pub as the most popular option, followed by measures to lower traffic speeds. An attempt to re-establish the Chichester Arms as a community pub has however since failed. Nevertheless, the above analysis may be of use to the Chillaton Public Hall Trust in their consideration of the future use of their funds.

Those who did not want the village hall funds to be used for another purpose were asked if they would be prepared to help with the creation of a new hall, in various ways:



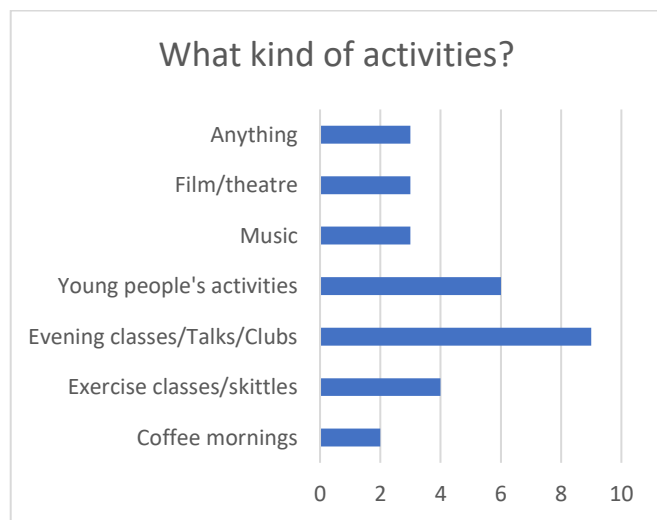
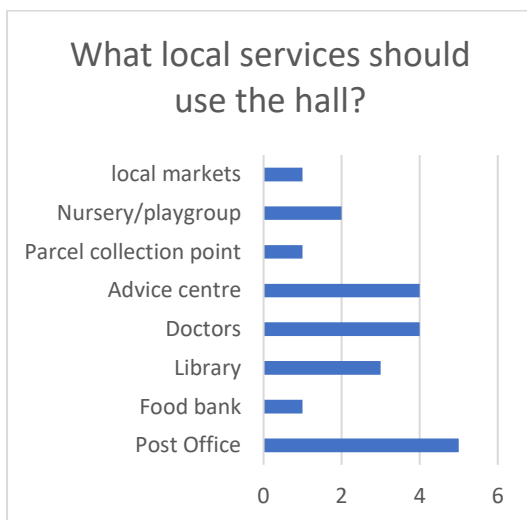


Future use of existing halls

Residents of those villages with halls were asked about their future use. Only one person did not value their hall and there was overwhelming support for their use as a base for the delivery of local services and by hirers from a wider area to generate more income.

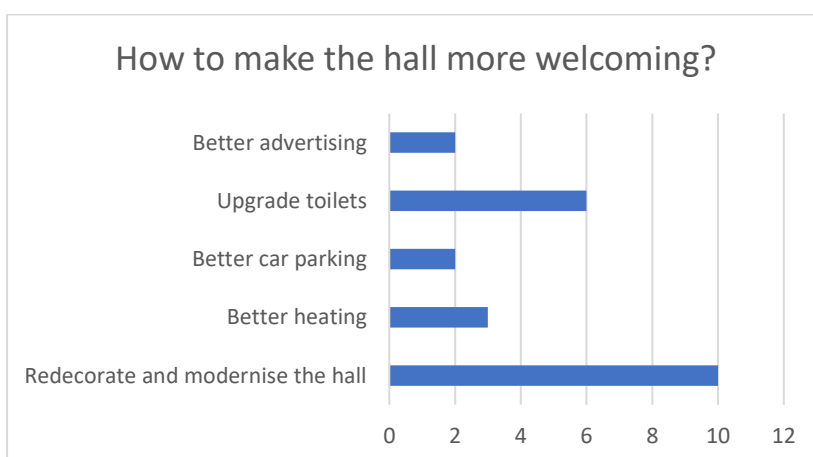
Those residents were also asked to identify the local services they thought should use their hall, the sort of activities that should [or should not] be encouraged and what should be done to increase the attractiveness of these facilities. The results are below:

Meadwell [Kelly] hall

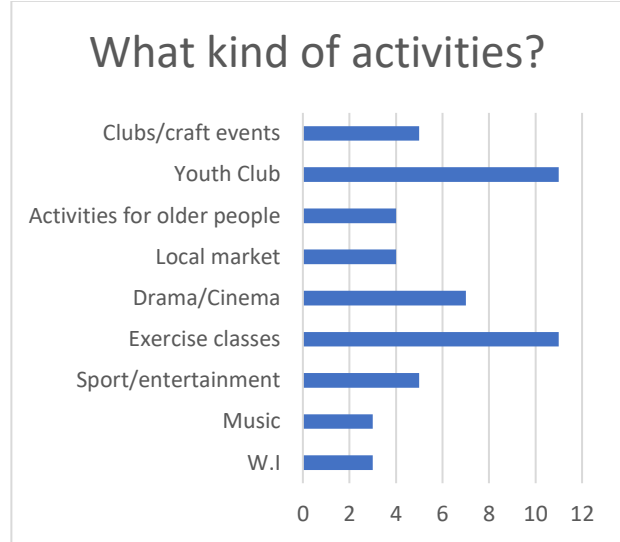


Four people said that no activity should be prohibited, but two wanted a ban on noisy late evening drinking, etc., and one resident did not want unsupervised activities for children and young adults.

Asked what would make the hall more welcoming, residents commented as shown below:

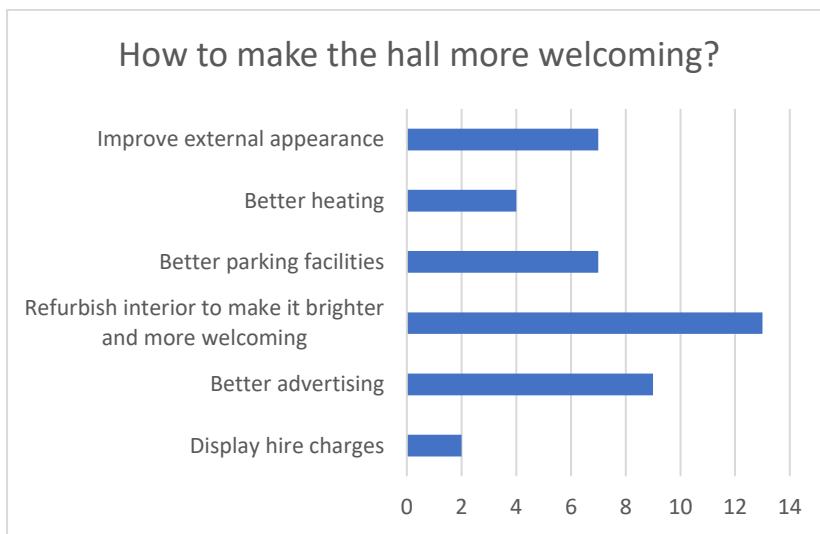


Milton Abbot hall



Six people said that no activity should be prohibited, but ten wanted a ban on late night events or loud music, etc.

Asked what would make the hall more welcoming, residents commented as shown below:



These comments will be passed to the hall management committees.