









# Welcome to the Ashcott Parish Plan

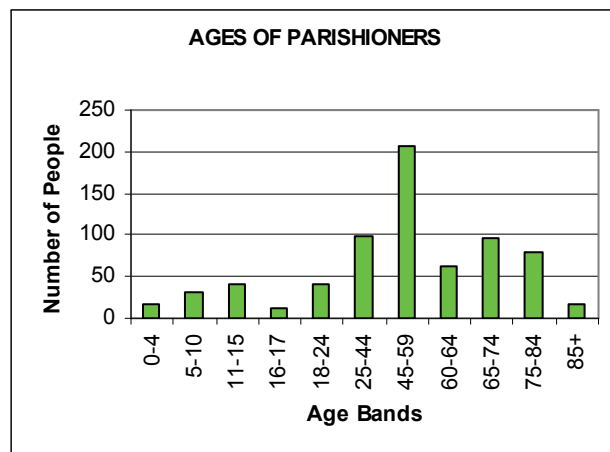
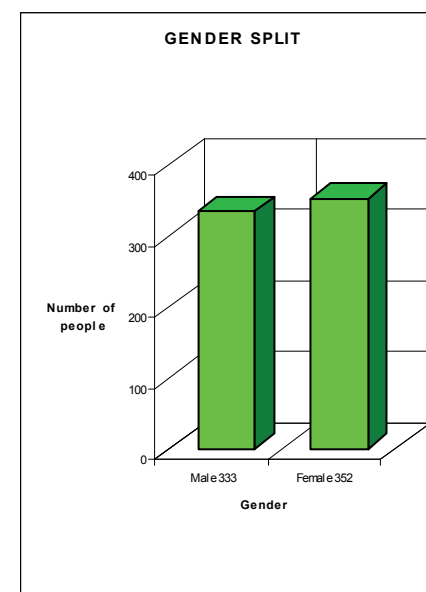
In March 2006, the Parish Council held a special public meeting to assess the interest in a Parish Plan for Ashcott.

Of the 19 parishioners present at this inaugural meeting a group of five volunteers formed the basis of a steering group. This increased to 8 by the second meeting of which, one was a youth volunteer.

The aim was to bring together the views, needs and opinions of the community in a way that gave everyone the chance to take part in guiding the future development of Ashcott Parish.

The first year was very industrious with the development of a constitution, visiting and talking to local community organisations and producing a questionnaire. Questionnaires were delivered to all 508 households by the team of 18 volunteers who also returned to collect as many as possible 308 (63%). This indicated an impressive level of commitment and interest from approximately 708 parishioners. The Steering Group would like to thank the parishioners for their support.

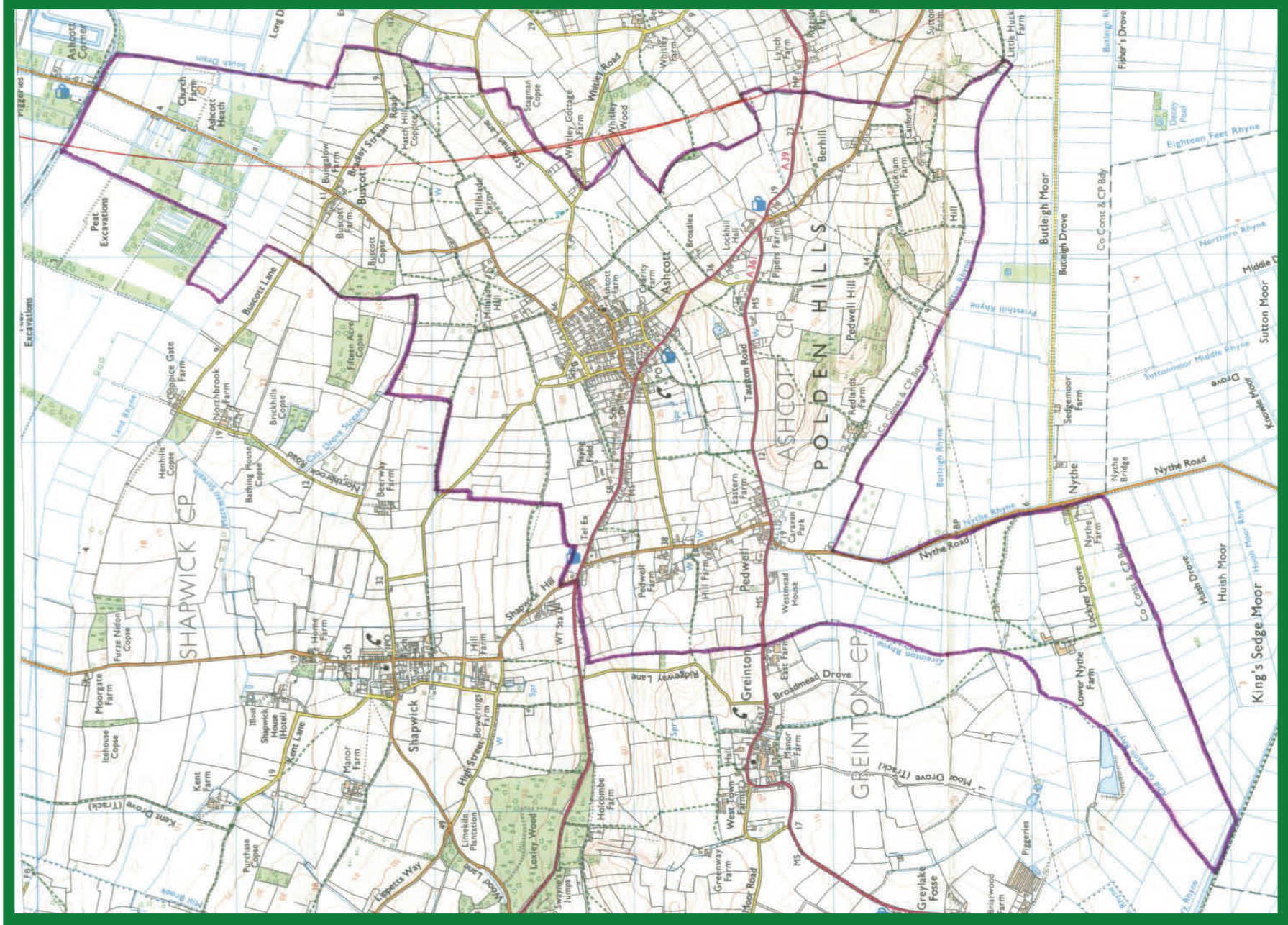
The Parish Council endorsed the findings and has taken an active part in devising the action plans that arise in each section of the Plan.



## Acknowledgements

The steering committee members wish to thank everyone who has assisted in the task of producing the Plan. Advice and information from the Community Council for Somerset  
Financial assistance from DEFRA, Ashcott Parish Council and in kind from Ashcott All Saints Church and Ashcott Village Hall  
Logo was designed by Jack Sayer  
Distribution and collection of questionnaire by the Steering committee and the What's On volunteers  
Analysis of the questionnaires by Jane Sayer  
Photographs: Margaret Trimm, Sandy Buchanan, Rhea and Jane Morton  
Drawings by Duncan Cameron  
Steering Committee Members: Jenny Lawrence (Chair), Jane Morton (Vice Chair), Freda Prime (Secretary), Joe Jenkins (Treasurer), Margaret Trimm (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Mike Ellington (Youth Co-ordinator), Jo Wren (Publicity Officer), Tom Strand, Fiona Hill, Bethan Everson, Ed Hill. (Youth Volunteers)  
Printer:





Ordnance Survey—Open Data—Ashcott Parish



## Biography

Ashcott Parish consists of the settlements of Ashcott, Nythe, Buscott and Pedwell and is located on the A39 and A361 between Street (approx.2.5 miles) and Bridgwater (10 miles) on the south eastern corner of Sedgemoor District Council. The parish has an estimate population of 855 living in 508 dwellings.

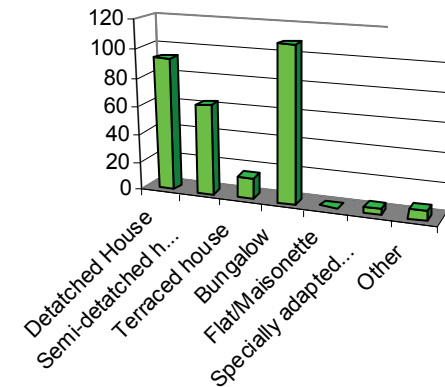
Ashcott has some historical buildings that includes the All Saints Church and is supplemented by post war-housing development. The housing ages and types are shown in Graphs 'Types of Dwelling' and 'Ages of Dwellings'.

The parish has a well established primary school, originally sited next to the church in the High Street. It then moved to the bottom of what is now School Hill and in 1986 a new school opened on the site on Ridgeway, Ashcott. The school building itself was extended in 2008 to eliminate the need for mobile buildings.

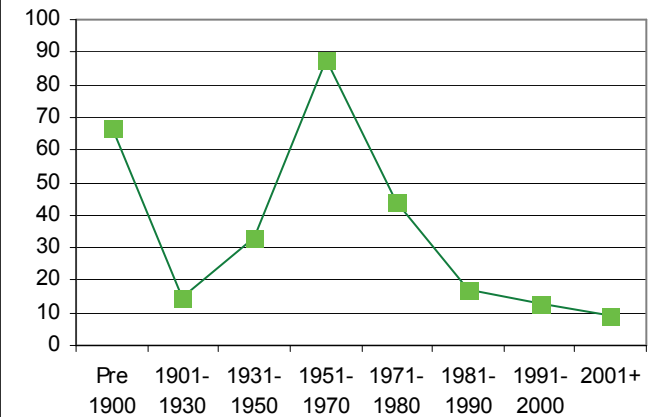
The Ashcott Village Hall is situated next to the church on the site of the School, then Church room. The original building was taken down in 1987 and the new hall built on the site. The entrance of the hall is constructed from the porch and doorway dating from 1852 salvaged from the old building. The hall is well used by the community.



### TYPE OF DWELLING



### Ages of Dwellings





How the Parish Plan developed—the events and surveys which shaped it.

**How it All began:**

The Parish Appraisal Sub Committee was formed as an outcome of a Public Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006 where Andrew Freeman from Community Council for Somerset encouraged those present to take the process forward

A Sub Committee met for the first time on Monday April 10<sup>th</sup> 2006, in the Village Hall Committee Room.

The main focus of the work was to canvas the views and opinions of the entire parish by initially visiting all the local organisations to raise awareness and identify needs.. The questionnaire was developed and circulated to every household in the parish. and good response ensued, some 62.2% returns. An additional questionnaire was devised for young people, by young people of the parish and delivered by them.

The committee worked closely with Katie Calvert, Field Officer for the Community Council for Somerset which proved helpful.

Between April 2006 and November 2007 the bulk of the initial work was carried out, with regular monthly meetings and publicity which resulted in a huge amount of information to collate. During 2008, the collation of the raw data took place and a spreadsheet completed with respondents views and comments in readiness for the next phase of the work.

Jane Sayer, was employed to undertake the important but time consuming analysis of the raw data. Jane's work produced the findings from which action points have been selected.

Updates were placed in the 'What's On' to maintain a profile for the work as it progressed..

The action plans listed in this summary have been presented and adopted by Ashcott Parish Council.



# Communications

From the questionnaire 69% of respondents felt they are sufficiently aware of what is going on in the parish and 71% would like to know how to find a particular contact.

Although nearly a quarter get their information from 'What's On there is a need to improve the circulation.

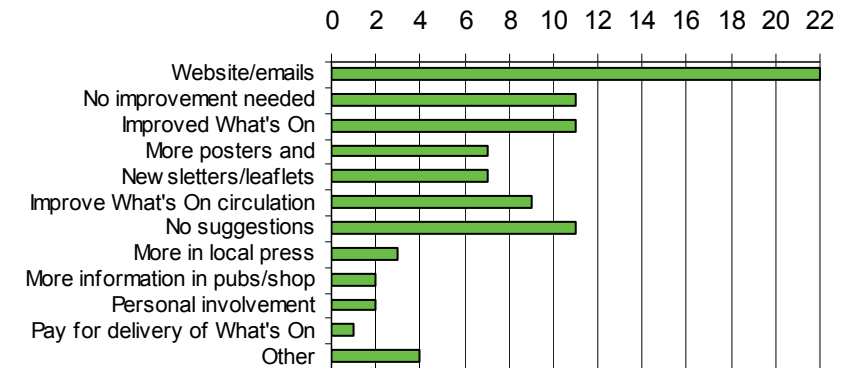
There is a clear need to improve the content and awareness of an Ashcott website as only one person gets information from this source, yet 24% of respondents suggest using a website and emails. 61% of parishioners have access to the internet and 48% would appreciate online information.

Mobile phone coverage in the parish is patchy and although the public phone box is little used it is a valued resource and essential to some parishioners

The two parish notice boards are well used as are others at the school, church and village hall



How you thought communication could be improved



Aim: Improve communications within and to and from the Parish			
How can we achieve our aim?	Action required	Who?	Target
Promote what the Parish Council does and who the Councillors are.	*Produce information to be circulated to all households via 'What's On' and placed on the Ashcott website *Discuss the possibility of publishing report in local press, Polden Post.	Parish Council	Update monthly
Improve circulation of 'What's On'	Actively seek more volunteer deliverers and try to cover the whole of the Parish so that every household receives a copy each month	Village Hall Committee	Completed February 2011 Review annually
Ensure parishioners have good access to information regarding the Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve awareness of Ashcott website</li> <li>• Ensure website has up to date information</li> <li>• Publicise website through 'What's On and Notice boards</li> <li>• Explore the need for ICT courses in the Parish (also see page 9)</li> <li>• Utilise existing email distribution lists to circulate information</li> </ul>	Parish Council Volunteers Parish Organisations	Website established and regularly updated www.ashcott.net



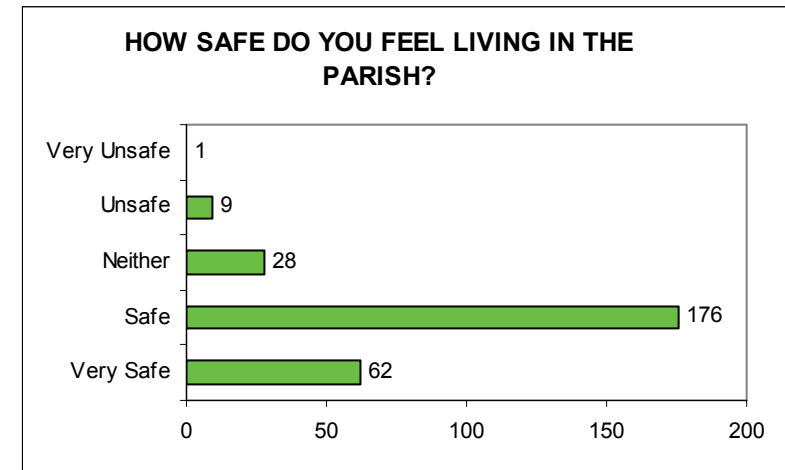
# Community Care and Safety

## Summary

Most respondents (87%) feel either safe or very safe around the parish. However those who feel unsafe cite unlit areas at night as the main causes of concern, with the Playing Field and Kings Lane area of Ashcott the next unsafe areas. There is a need for further police presence and promoting neighbourhood watch schemes as many commented on the lack of police patrols.

The questionnaire reveals that 62 people consider anti social behaviour a problem, while 138 consider burglary and theft a problem.

The 'Miles & Hurman Trust' and the 'Here to Help Scheme' running in the parish helps 66% and 63% respectively, of respondents. When asked only 11 parishioners felt isolated at home.



<b>Aim:</b> Maintain and continue to promote the feeling of Care and Safety in the Parish			
<b>How can we achieve our aim?</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Target</b>
Promote the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to ensure parishioners in their local area are kept up to date with information</li> <li>Circulation of information on notice boards, Ashcott website and 'What's On'</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators Police	Ongoing
Ensure ongoing contact is maintained with Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform residents of when and where the PCSO will be visiting the parish</li> <li>PCSO to provide an update of any concerns to the Parish Council meetings</li> </ul>	'What's On' co-ordinator Police	Monthly updates
Reduce the feeling of isolation throughout the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the 'Miles &amp; Hurman Trust'</li> <li>Reminding parishioners of the work of the 'Here to Help Scheme'</li> </ul>	Miles & Hurman Trustees Ashcott Parochial Church Council	Twice yearly 6 monthly



# Education and Life Long Learning

## Summary

The majority of the young people of the parish are of primary and secondary school age and attend the schools for the catchment area i.e. Ashcott Primary School and Crispin School.

Younger children attend the well established Parent and Toddler Group or the local Preschool, Cheeky Chimps sited in the school ground.

Youths and adults tend to look outside the parish for their education and learning opportunities.

Cheeky Chimps offer breakfast and after school clubs for school age young people each week day during school term.

Ashcott Children's Activities provide holiday playschemes for a week at Easter and another in August each year where the young people can learn and develop new skills.



Ashcott Primary School



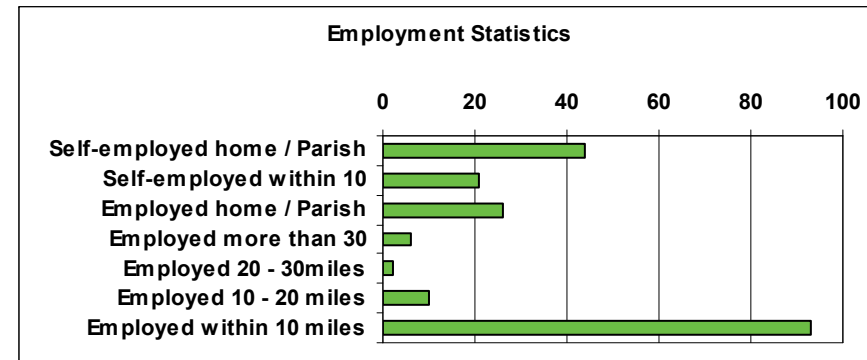
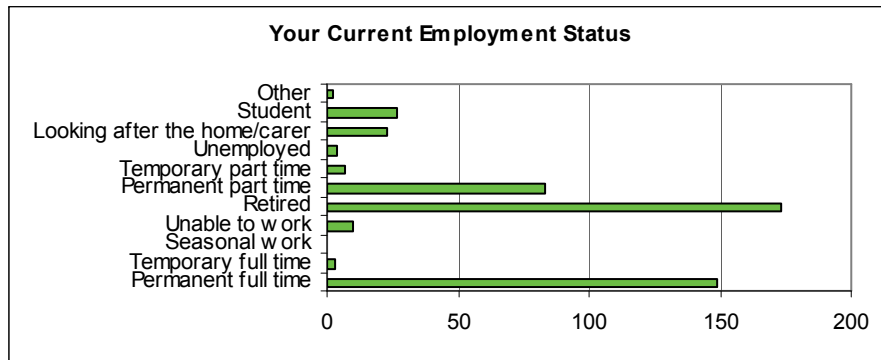
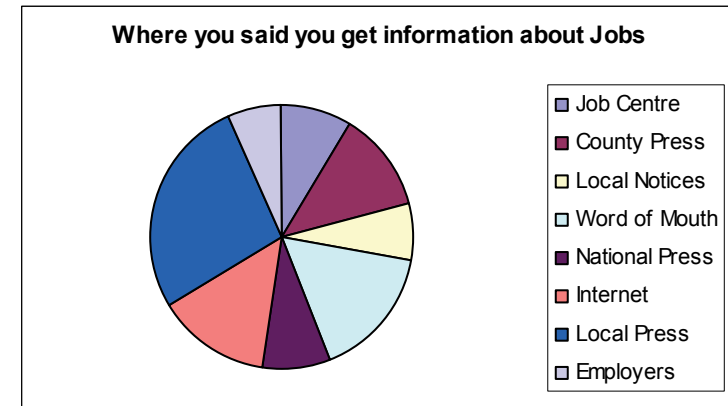
Cheeky Chimps.

Aim: Ensure that information about educational opportunities are readily available			
How can we achieve our aim?	Action required	Who?	Target
Provide access to relevant information on courses and classes being run locally in Ashcott and across Somerset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to all Somerset Colleges on the village website</li> <li>Adverts in the 'What's On' about learning opportunities in the parish</li> <li>Ask Colleges and Somerset Skills and Learning to provide copies of course brochures which can be accessed via the Post Office and Stores, Village Hall, Church, Public Houses etc.</li> </ul>	Ashcott website  Relevant Organisations  Parish Council	September 2011  Monthly  Ongoing
Provide access to ICT Training for organisations and individuals in the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility study of IT needs and other classes that could be held at Ashcott Primary School</li> </ul>	School Headteacher School Governors Parish Council	September 2011



# Employment and the Economy

Within the parish there are a number of small businesses that are used by the parishioners including: Shop and Post Office, Housekeeping Agency, Farming, Manufacturing, Agriculture, Public Houses and Restaurants, Speech Therapist, Builders, Butcher, Business Consultancy, Craft Skills, Newspaper Deliveries, Hairdresser, Bed & Breakfast. 37% of the people employed by local businesses live in the parish.



<b>Aim:</b> Make it more feasible for people to set up businesses in the parish and to make skills known.			
<b>How can we achieve our aim?</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Target</b>
Promote parish businesses and trades people	• Provide up to date information to parishioners via 'What's On'	Local businesses	Completed
	• Enable website links to be established on the Ashcott website	Volunteers	Completed
	• Establish a network of local businesses	Local Businesses	Established
Lobby providers to improve mobile phone coverage	• Contact providers to identify causes of coverage and connection problems	Individuals	Ongoing



# Environment and the Countryside



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Aim:</b> Continuously improve and maintain the environment. Improve the recycling facilities and respect the rural heritage of the village for the present and future.</p>			
How can we achieve our aim?	Action required	Who?	Target
Promote the maintenance and safety of parish pavements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information of actual and potential problems regarding the safety of pavements in the parish to Somerset County Council</li> <li>Stop the illegal practice of parking on the limited pavements in the parish</li> </ul>	<p>Parish Council</p> <p>Police - PCSO</p>	<p>Every other month</p> <p>Monthly</p>
Promote the awareness of and maintenance of the public footpaths and rights of way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an audit each year and identify an obstructions and maintenance needs for notification to Somerset County Council</li> <li>Production of a footpath map in the information booklet and on the Ashcott website</li> </ul>	<p>Parish Footpath Officer and the walking group</p> <p>Somerset County Council</p> <p>Parish Council</p>	<p>Completed Annually</p> <p>Completed</p>
Promote the maintenance of the parish roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an audit of the road and grass verge condition.</li> <li>Investigate the potential need for additional signage relating to road use e.g. weight limit; narrow roads; speed restrictions</li> <li>Investigate the possibility of advising the makers of Satellite Navigation Systems of potential routeing amendments</li> </ul>	<p>Parish Council</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Parish Council</p> <p>Parish Council</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>Every other month</p> <p>In progress</p>
Make improvements to waste disposal and recycling in the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look into providing more litter bins and some dog waste bins</li> <li>Organise regular litter pick events</li> <li>Place information on Ashcott website about the parish bylaws</li> <li>Investigate possibility of kerbside collections or the siting of recycling units for cardboard and plastic in the parish</li> </ul>	<p>Parish Council</p> <p>WI and Parish Council</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Parish Council</p> <p>Sedgemoor District Council</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>September 2011</p> <p>Completed</p>



# Housing

## Summary

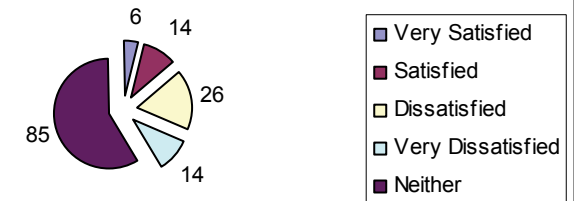
The questionnaire did not have a detailed list of questions as we had a survey done by the Community Council for Somerset

The parish expressed opinions on the availability and affordability of housing within the parish. Concerns were revealed regarding the lack of affordable housing for young residents who wish to remain in the parish. This was highlighted by 39% who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

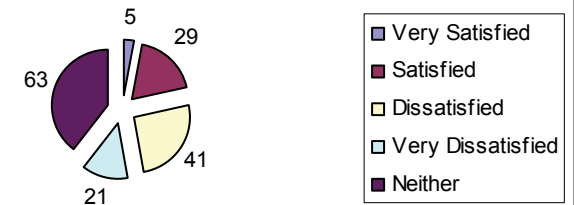
The Community Council for Somerset found that there were five households with need for affordable housing in Ashcott Parish all of whom had viable local connection to the parish.



**AFFORDABILITY TO RENT**



**AFFORDABILITY TO BUY**



**Aim:**

Provide affordable housing within the parish of Ashcott

How can we achieve our aim?	Action required	Who?	Target
Location of land for affordable housing	Investigation of possible sites in the Parish	Community Council for Somerset / Sedgemoor District Council	September 2011
Negotiations with Housing Association	Meetings and forming sub-committee	Community Council for Somerset / Sedgemoor District Council / Parish Council / Housing Assoc	September 2011



# Leisure and Amenities

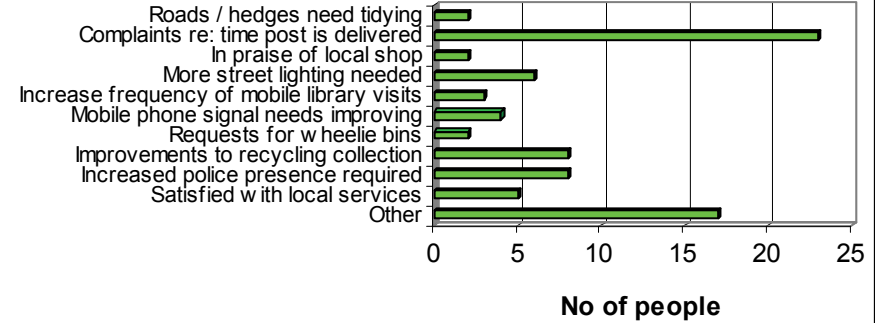
## Summary

The questionnaire asked parishioners to identify leisure activities they were part of and to make suggestions for future development. It was surprising to see suggestions of activities already available in the parish. Better advertising and communications are needed. A small number of people commented that disability or not wanting to go alone prevents them joining.

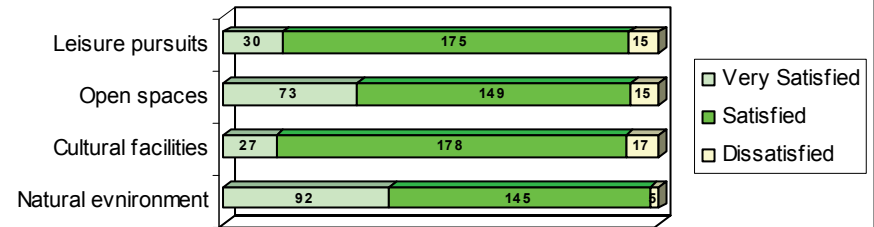
The graph to the right lists comments regarding local services. Only 5 people were satisfied with local services, others suggested improvements to: Recycling; Police presence; Telephone coverage; and Postal delivery services.



## Comments regarding local services



## Level of satisfaction



**Aim:** To be able to access leisure and other amenities that are local and will reduce the need to travel outside the parish

How can we achieve our aim?	Action required	Who?	Target
Organisational information being readily available	Leisure activities and events advertised on parish website, What's On and the parish notice boards.	Organisations	Completed Update regularly
Increase roadside recycling	Obtain wheelie bins and additional recycling boxes	Somerset Waste Partnership	Completed
Better reliable postal service	Contact with the Royal Mail delivery service to encourage earlier consistent deliveries to the parish	Parish Council Royal Mail	Monitor

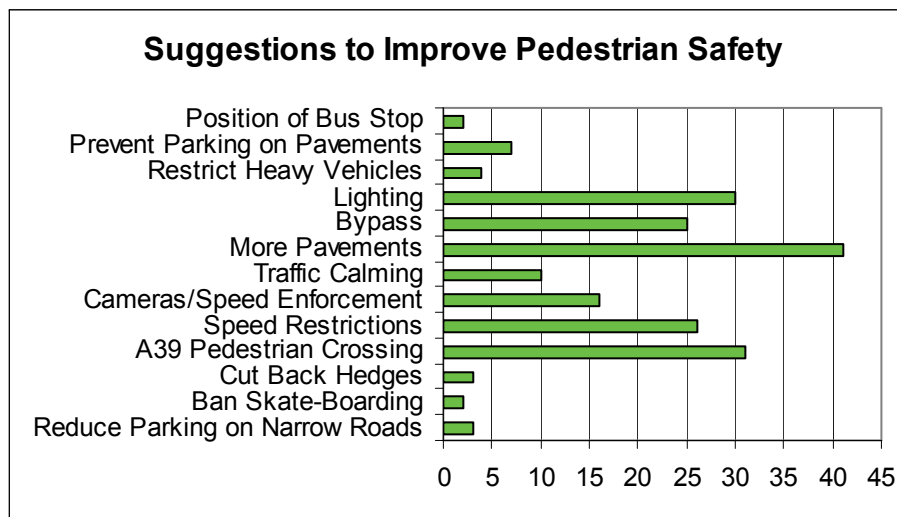


## Traffic and Transport

The A39 runs through the centre of Ashcott village and is a main trunk road to and from the M5 to the west. The A361 runs through Pedwell in the south of the parish. These 2 main roads join at the Pipers Inn junction. The trunk route takes large & heavy traffic up the unclassified road of Berhill. Many of the roads in the parish are narrow track roads where vehicles pass with extreme care.

The expansion of dwellings since 1951 have provided some pavements but many roads within the parish are too narrow to accommodate pavements. This means that pedestrians have to walk along the side of the road. Street lighting is limited to the areas of newer development.

The parish is served by local bus transport companies that have stops in Ashcott along the A39 and in Pedwell on the A361. Some services even run a circular route in Ashcott village itself.



<b>Aim:</b> Have a safe road and transport system in and around the parish.			
<b>How can we achieve our aim?</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Target</b>
To lobby the County Council Highways Department regarding the safety for pedestrians and other road users within the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to put pressure on the Highway department of SCC to improve safety of A39 and other link /trunks roads in the parish</li> <li>Improve access to and from A39</li> </ul>	Parish Council	Every other month
To lobby to reduce the speed of vehicles through the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the speed of vehicles</li> <li>Publicises the need for volunteers to join local speed watch</li> </ul>	Local Speed Watch Community Safety Partnership Parish Council	Quarterly  September 2011
To ensure that the roads within the parish are well maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report potholes, loose manhole covers, faulty road surface, condition of pavements etc.</li> </ul>	Parishioners report to Parish Council	Every other month
To maintain relationship with coach and bus contractors to ensure the ongoing service to the parish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor bus timetables</li> </ul>	Parish Council	Review May & November



# Youth



We circulated a questionnaire designed by youth volunteers to the 11–16 year olds in the parish and were pleased with the responses from 31 youths.

All but one who replied attend Crispin School in Street.

90% of respondents did not think there was enough for young people to do in the parish. We asked which activities they enjoy and the majority were outside the parish but 90% have access to a computer and the internet.

Several young people have friends outside the parish and have to travel to meet them, 66% do use public transport as well as relying on parents to transport them.

A question on the questionnaire was: Do you think an Ashcott Youth Parish Council is a good idea? 90% said yes and of those 48% said they would be willing to be a member.



Aim: To enable the young people to be actively involved in the community			
How can we achieve our aim	Action required	Who?	Target
To have an understanding of the working of local government	To set up a youth parish council	Parish Council	September 2011
To give the young people the opportunity to increase the activities within the parish	Feasibility study to explore more youth centred activities for the parish	Parish Council Voluntary Organisations Young People Somerset Rural Youth Project	February 2012

