

Survey of Appleby Magna Residents concerning new development

Introduction

Given the considerable variation in expressed opinion within the parish of Appleby as to what consensus views were on various proposed housing developments, it was suggested to the Parish Council that a formal, neutrally assessed survey of public opinion should be conducted.

Previously, two surveys, one on the independently-run Applebymagna.org website, the other by one of the housing developers proposing extensive new accommodation, had been conducted. Both of these suffered from considerable potential objections, notably: in the first case, that those filling out the survey were not likely to be a representative sample of villagers; and, in the case of the developer's own survey, that the results had been seen and assessed only by those wishing to carry out development and therefore lacked credibility

The Council agreed to support a new survey financially if methodology and resources could be found from volunteers in the community. In the end a total of 13 individuals within the village were involved in distribution and collection of surveys.

Methodology

A draft survey was designed and a number of amendments requested by the head of the Parish Council. The survey had previously been submitted to Sharp Focus, a Market Research Society-accredited agency based in Market Harborough. This agency had also suggested numerous amendments to the original first draft in the interests of better research practice.

The final version of the survey was distributed as follows: using postcode software, a list of all Parish addresses was obtained and a label run produced. Labels in all cases featured the house number and street, only, so that changes in named individuals resident at each address would not be a cause of non-participation.

The option of multiple answers, reflecting multiple opinions within each household, was provided for, although in the event this option was not exercised in any meaningful extent.

Surveys were distributed, to be returned to the local post office sealed in the envelope provided, or held for collection. Distribution was undertaken, by teams of two in the case of 95% of households, during the period 14-19 January 2014, with a majority completed by 16 January. The majority of addresses were correctly identified and surveys delivered. In the case of three specific addresses no delivery was possible for various reasons. In a very few, mainly outlying addresses no secure post box could be identified and these survey copies were left in prominent positions as best could be achieved.

Responses received

Returns of completed surveys to the post office had reached a total of 90 before any collections door-to-door were attempted. During the period 21-26 January at least one attempt was made to collect a survey at each address in the village, with a small proportion of addresses receiving multiple attempts. In all possible cases, however, pre-printed reminder notes were put through the door of addresses where no survey had been collected. These emphasised the 27 January deadline given on the survey.

Door-to-door activity was severely limited by the extremely poor weather during this period. For that reason, some addresses in Black Horse Hill/Top Street/Botts Lane/Garton Close/Meadowbrook Court and Didcott Way were only visited on 26 January. These addresses received an amended reminder with an extra 24 hours to respond.

Roughly 60 surveys were collected by hand during this process, with the uptake of completed surveys at the post office continuing until 28 January, with the result that a final total of 263 were returned.

One totally blank survey was returned. Four surveys were returned in envelopes other than those originally distributed – we are satisfied that this is because the original paperwork was not properly collated. Two surveys were returned without an envelope – these were placed in spare envelopes before being sent for analysis.

Surveys were subsequently delivered to Sharp Focus in batches. The majority went by registered post directly from collection at the post office. In all cases, envelopes remained sealed and the contents were only seen by the market researcher compiling the results. However, validity is insured because the original address list was used to ensure that multiple returns were not received from any house, and that surveys returned did in fact come from genuine village addresses. Completed surveys will be retained by Sharp Focus until the Parish Council indicates otherwise but should not ideally be returned for viewing by anyone in the village in any case, in order to maintain the guarantee of anonymous comment given to some respondents and required under the terms of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct under which Sharp Focus is bound.

Summary of Main findings

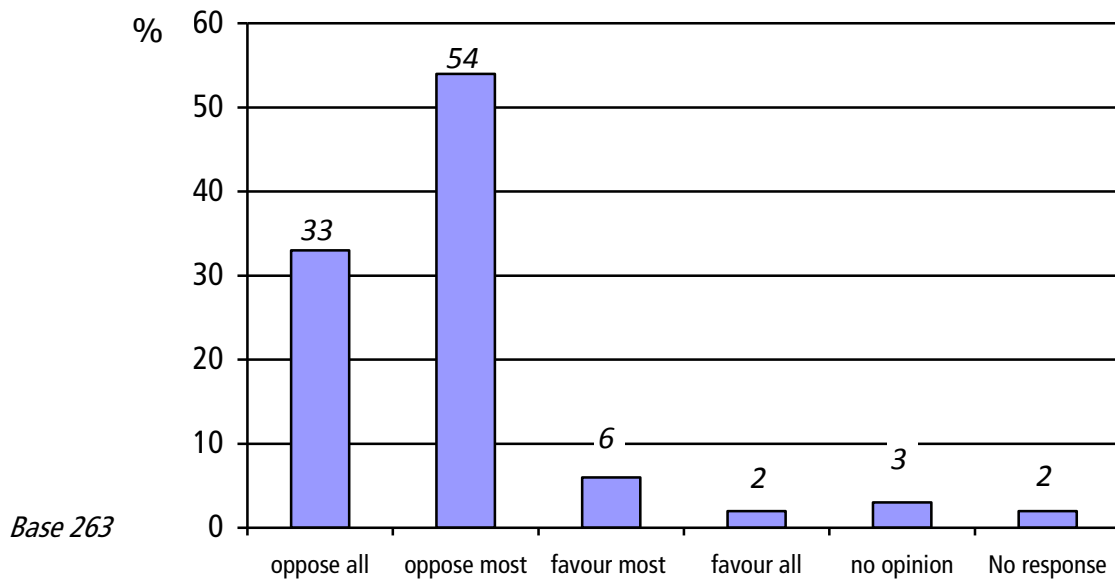
Most villagers appear content with only very modest levels of development – the modal range is 16-25 houses over five years. Not one respondent feels that building 100+ new houses in five years is reasonable.

There is a considerable degree of opposition to the proposed developments with almost nine in ten (89%) of villagers saying they either oppose all or most of the development

Flooding and drainage appear to be major issues and the substantial majority (88%) of residents express concern about additional traffic being generated; three-quarters (75%) say that they are 'very' concerned

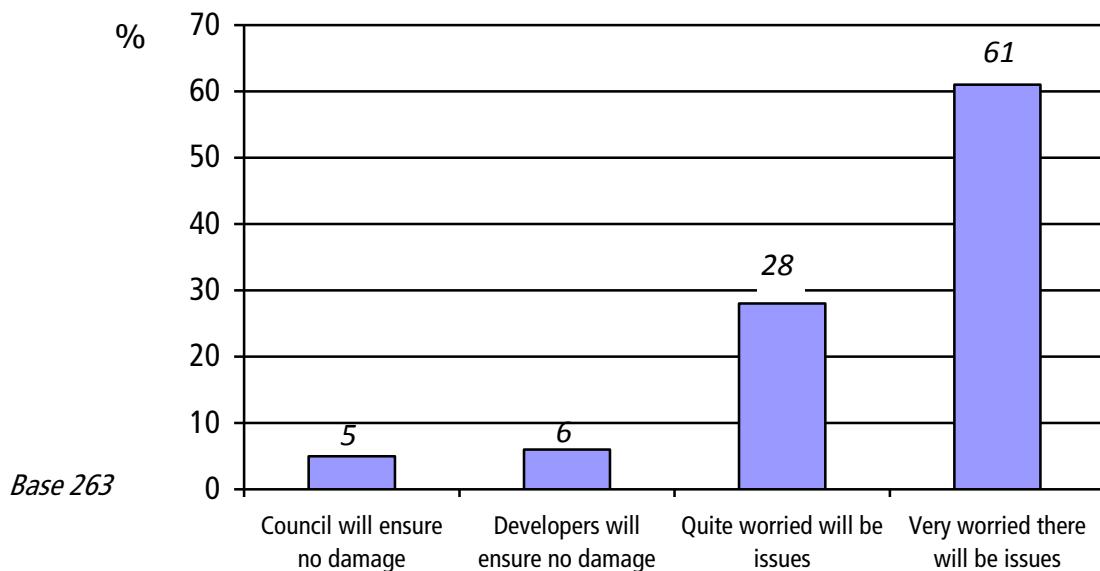
Unless otherwise indicated, charts are based on percentages of the 263 returned questionnaires. Totals may not sum 100 due to rounding

Q1. Given what you know about the various developments that are proposed for Appleby, which statement is closest to your current opinion of them?



There is a considerable degree of opposition to the proposed developments with almost nine in ten (89%) of villagers saying they either oppose all or most of the development

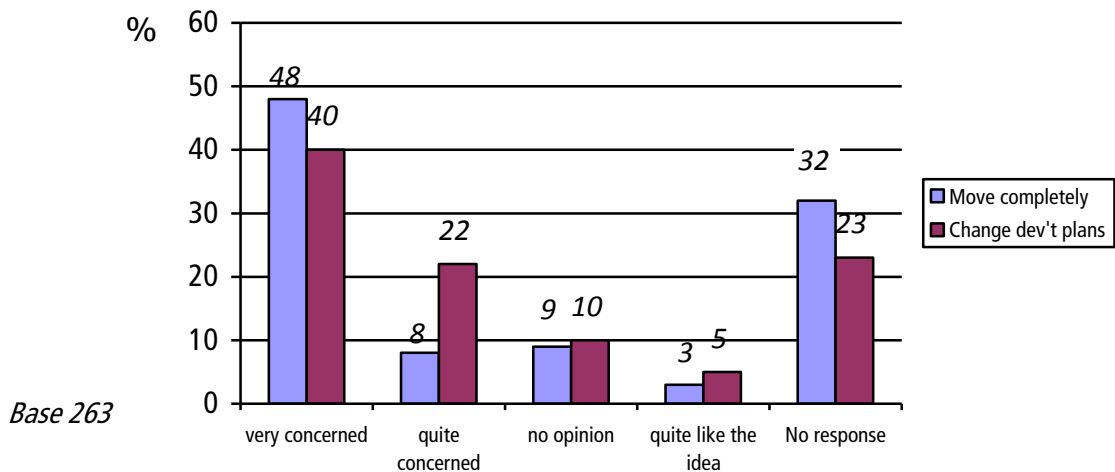
Q2. Many villagers are already concerned about flooding and drainage issues. The arrival of large numbers of new houses could make this problem worse. Reassurances have been offered by some of the developers that this will not be the case. Of course, these reassurances cannot be proved correct in advance.



Flooding and drainage appears to be a major issue (some respondents made unsolicited comments explaining that this was already a problem. Nine in ten (90%) are either quite- or very worried about the matter

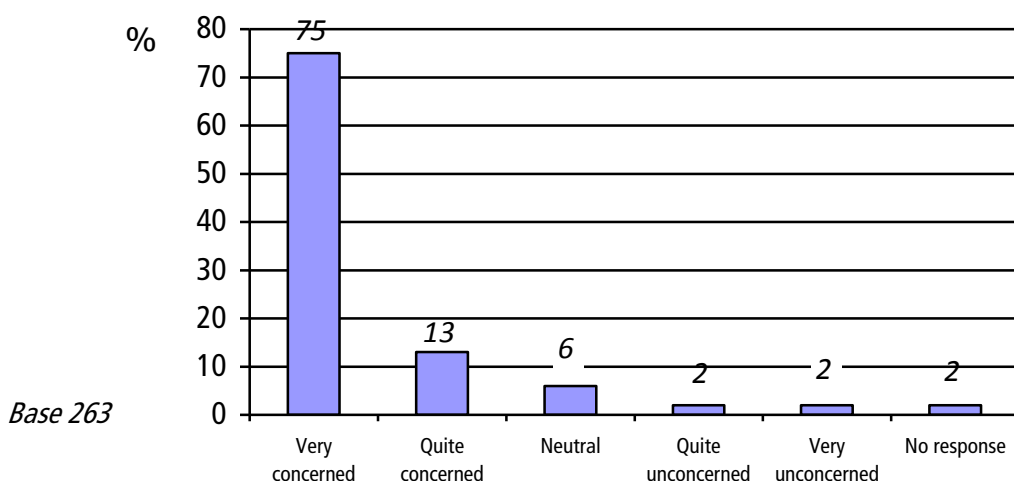
Q3. Any large increase, such as 50 or more houses, might have a knock-on effect on the local school. Current expansion plans are intended to benefit current students and village residents rather than accommodating new children.

If the school needs to expand to accommodate new village children there might be a need for it to move completely or change its development plans. Indicate your views:



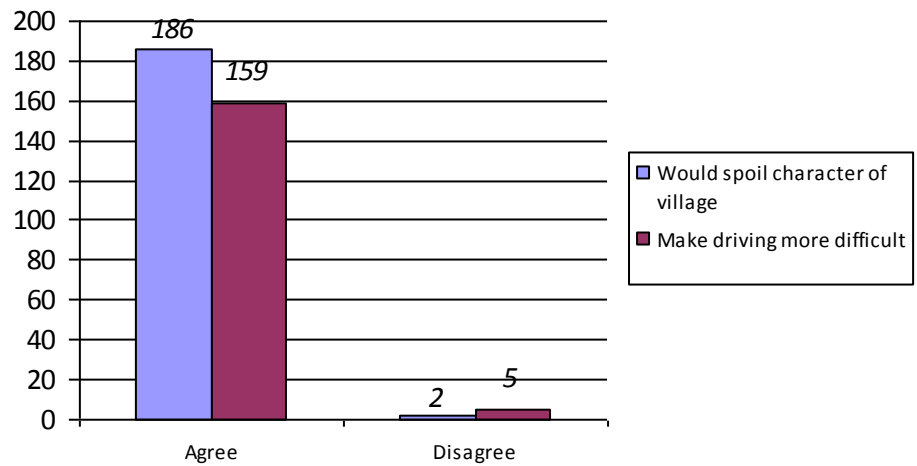
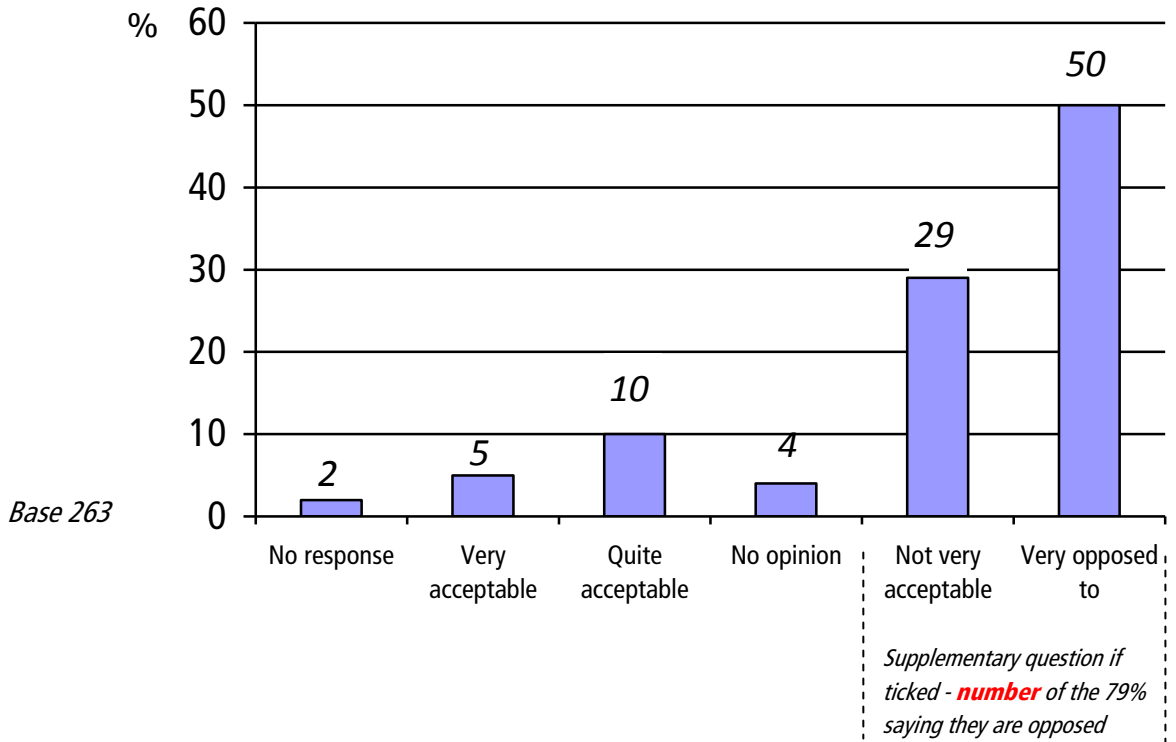
Although there is a substantial degree of non-response to this question (probably due to there being no school aged children present in many households) those who did express an opinion were concerned about both the idea of moving the school and changing its development plans.

Q4. Every new house that is built will generate extra vehicle journeys to or from it each day, (travel to work, travel to shops, taking children to school or events, other leisure, deliveries, visitors etc). How concerned are you at the impact of extra traffic as a result of the developments you have heard of?



The substantial majority (88%) of residents express concern about additional traffic being generated; three-quarters (75%) say that they are 'very' concerned

Q5. The local Council may suggest measures like extra car parking, road widening and traffic calming humps to manage the extra cars mentioned above.



Villagers express opposition to measures such as extra car parking, road widening and traffic calming humps. Almost all agree that the reason for their opposition is that the character of the village would be spoiled and driving would be made more difficult.

Q6. In 2000 an Appleby Village Design Statement was published following extensive participation and consultation with residents. Its guidelines were adopted as statutory planning guidance.

A number of the guidelines are reproduced below. For each one say whether you agree or disagree (or are undecided) about whether this principle is one that is important today for guiding new development in Appleby.

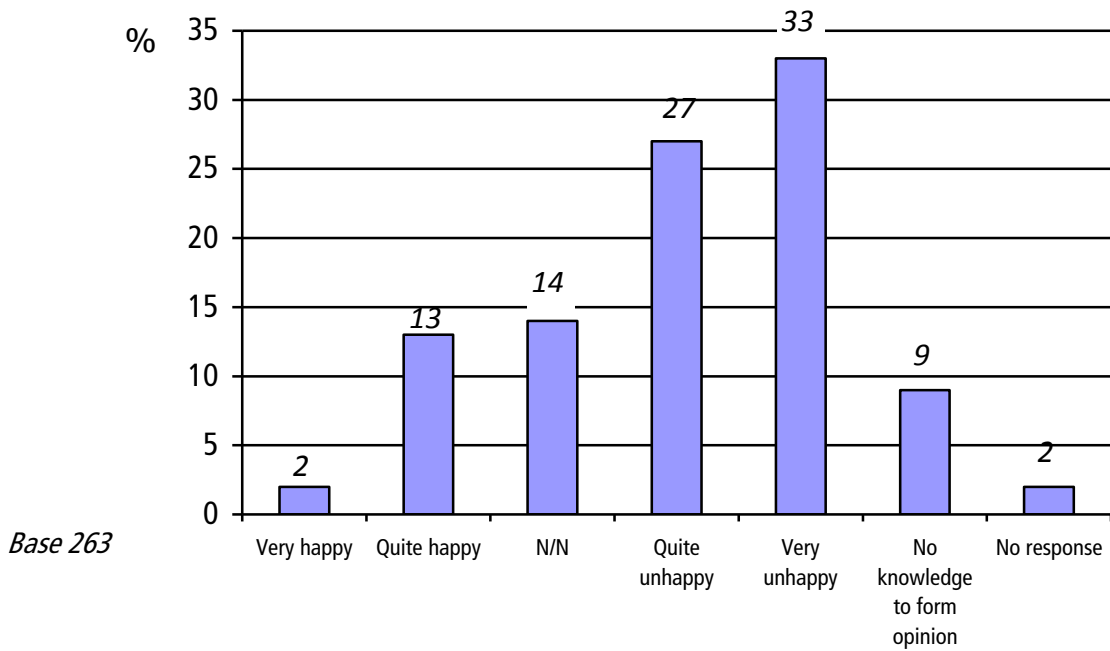
Note that percentages do not sum 100 due to non-responses

% saying...

a) In order to sustain the strong community spirit the rate of development should be slow enough to allow newcomers to integrate into the community.	Agree 83 Neither agree or disagree 9 Disagree 2
b) Development should respect the boundaries and compact nature of the existing development mix.	Agree 84 Neither agree or disagree 6 Disagree 2
c) The diversity of the village should be retained with new buildings integrating with the existing environment, and avoiding regimented and socially isolated developments.	Agree 87 Neither agree or disagree 6 Disagree 1
d) The rural aspect of the village seen from the approach roads should be retained by avoiding solid blocks of development visible at the boundaries. Spaces should be left to retain views into and out of the village. Natural features should be used as shielding to preserve the rural appearance.	Agree 89 Neither agree or disagree 4 Disagree 0
e) Green and other undeveloped spaces in the village, and the green corridors connecting them, both within the village and from the village to the surrounding countryside, should be conserved wherever possible.	Agree 90 Neither agree or disagree 3 Disagree 1
f) Estates of standard housing design are not appropriate in Appleby. Linear development, regular house layout and regimented design should be avoided. The existing variety of house sizes, shapes and rooflines should be maintained.	Agree 88 Neither agree or disagree 5 Disagree 2
g) Undue widening of roads at junctions should be avoided.	Agree 11 Neither agree or disagree 11 Disagree 6

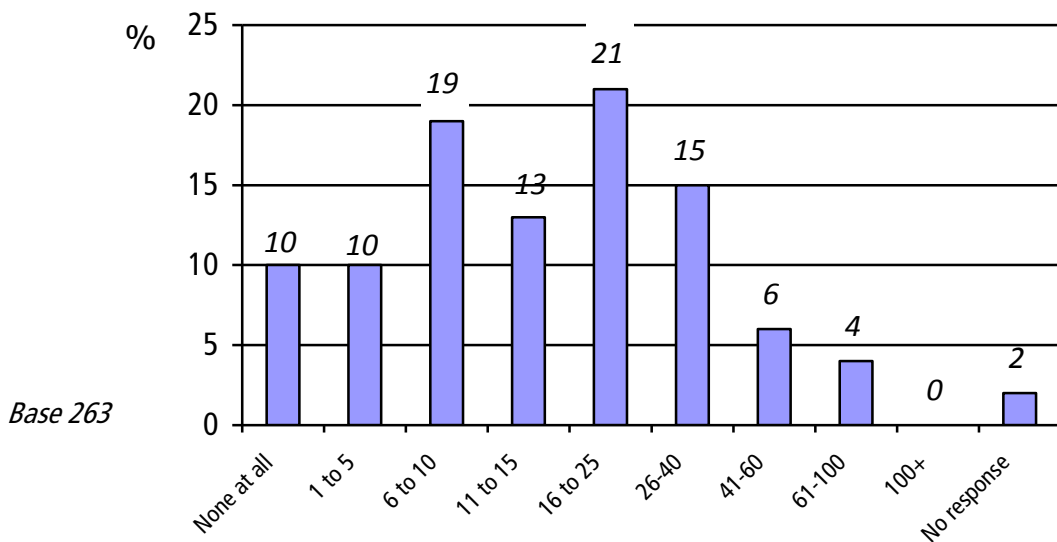
The substantial majority of residents are in agreement with all of the Design Statement guidelines

Q7. In the event that major development in Appleby does go ahead, how happy will you be with the way the process of consultation and planning appears to have operated? [Excluding this survey]



More than half of residents expressed dissatisfaction with the process of consultation compared with one in seven (15%) who felt satisfied.

Q8. How many new homes do you think it is reasonable for people to build in Appleby over the next 5 years? You may like to consider that each home will bring on average perhaps 2.5 new inhabitants.



Most villagers appear content with only very modest levels of development – the modal range is 16-25 houses over five years. Not one respondent feels that building 100+ new houses in five years is reasonable.