



Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan

How can we improve our Parish?



1. Natural Environment

Purpose

To develop options to maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of the natural environment of the parish.

Focus

The display boards have been prepared to look at the following elements

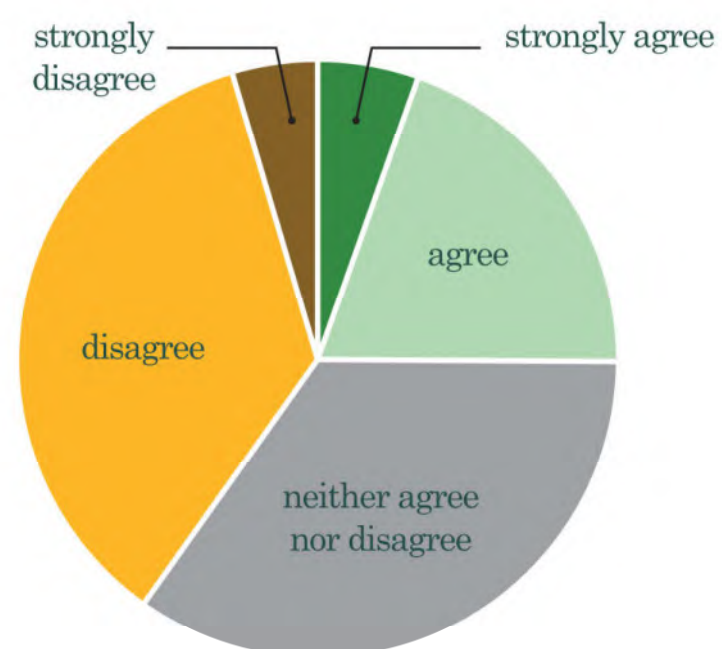
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geological features and we might avoid irreversible losses.
- Ensuring that new developments do not threaten biodiversity and positively encourage it.
- Augment and enrich existing wildlife corridors and incorporate habitat-rich wildlife areas which deliver net gains in biodiversity
- The identification of new spaces to be designated as 'Local Green Space'.

Parish Survey Results

60.3% (143 responses) selected 'Living close to the countryside' as their first-choice reason for wanting to live in Mortimer.

Would you like to see more publicly accessible open space in the Parish?

The survey highlighted that many people were indifferent to the provision of more open space. As proximity to the countryside is clearly important, it was felt that this should be explored further.



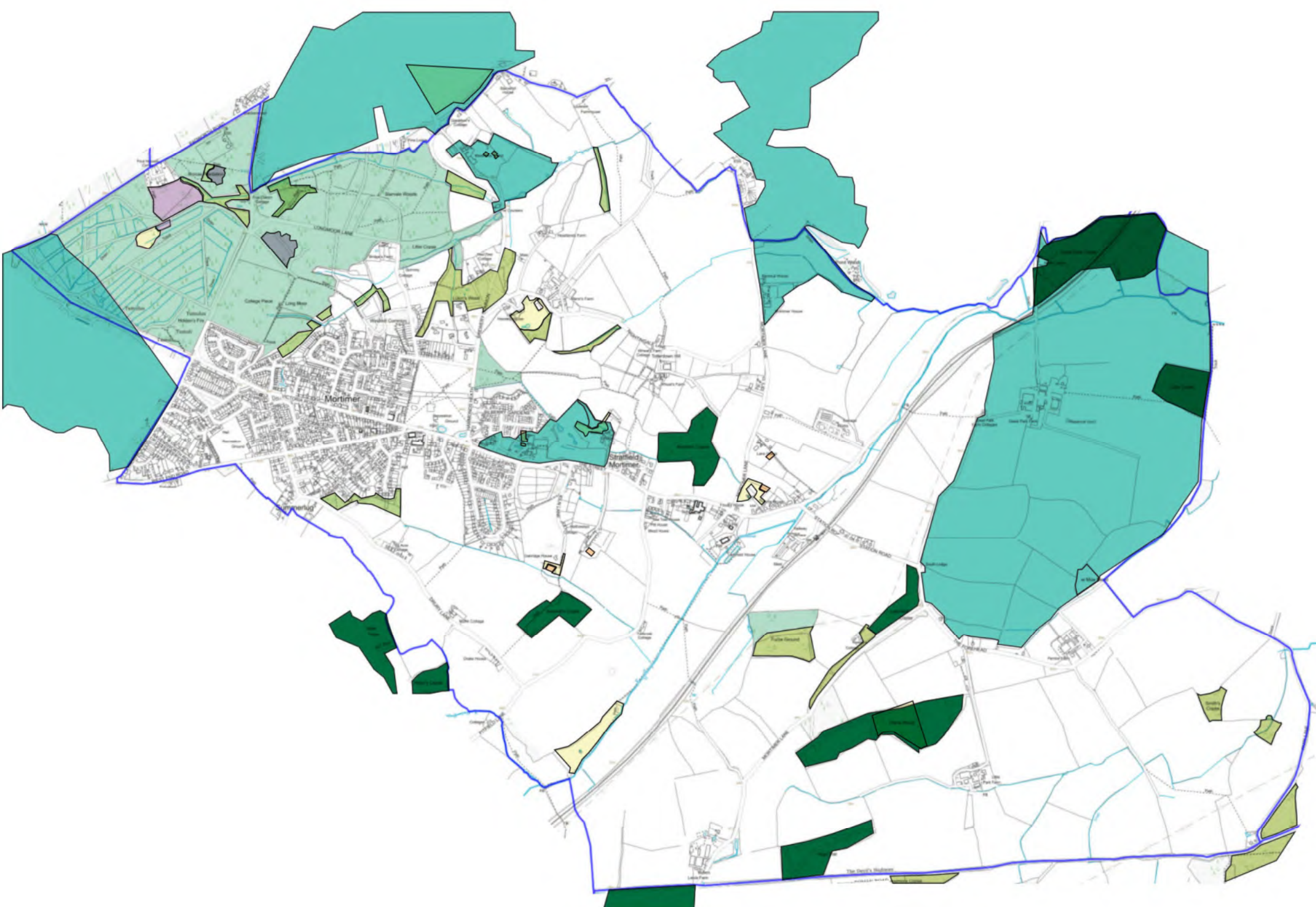


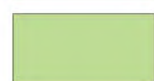
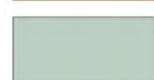
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Natural Environment



-  Parkland
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat
-  Mixed Priority Habitat
-  Lowland heathland Priority Habitat
-  Traditional orchard Priority Habitat
-  Other woodland
-  Public Right of Way

This plan highlights many of our natural assets in the Parish. We have numerous Priority Habitats, areas of Parkland and Ancient Woodland.

Q10.1 Do you think people are aware that these exist and should we do more to protect these areas?

Q10.2 Are there more areas which should be protected? If so where?

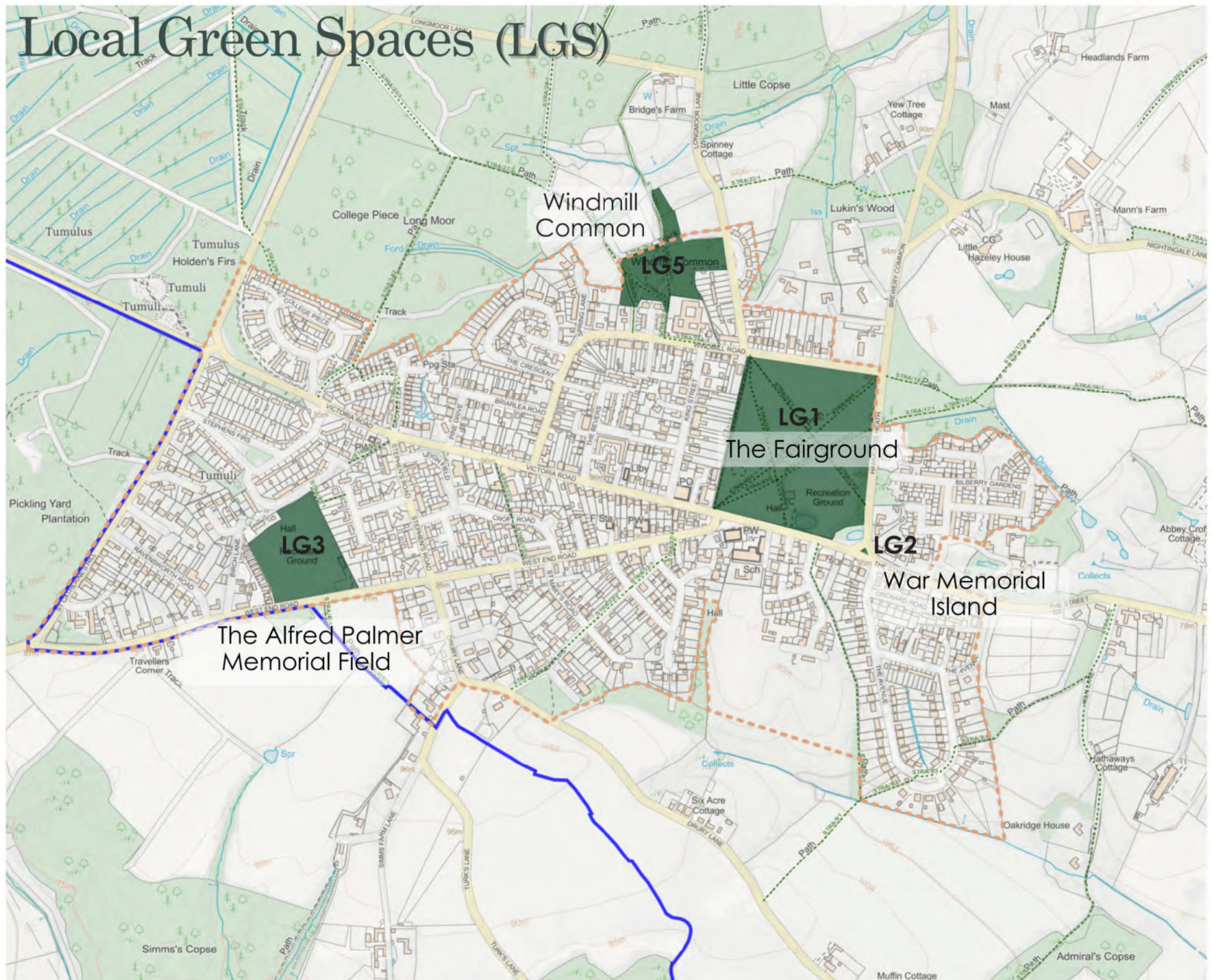
Q10.3 Should we include policies to encourage wildlife corridors between areas?

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Local Green Spaces (LGS)



What is a Local Green Space?

- The above map shows the current Local Green Spaces in the current Neighbourhood Plan.
- Communities can protect areas of land that are of value to them.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) publishes criteria by which an area of value to the local community can be protected. These are known as a Local Green Space (LGS), which can be designated via a neighbourhood plan.
- Once the NDP is adopted or 'made', the LGS is subject to the same development restrictions as Green Belt, ruling out new development except in special circumstances.

Q11.1 What do you think about the existing LGS in the existing NP - should there be more?

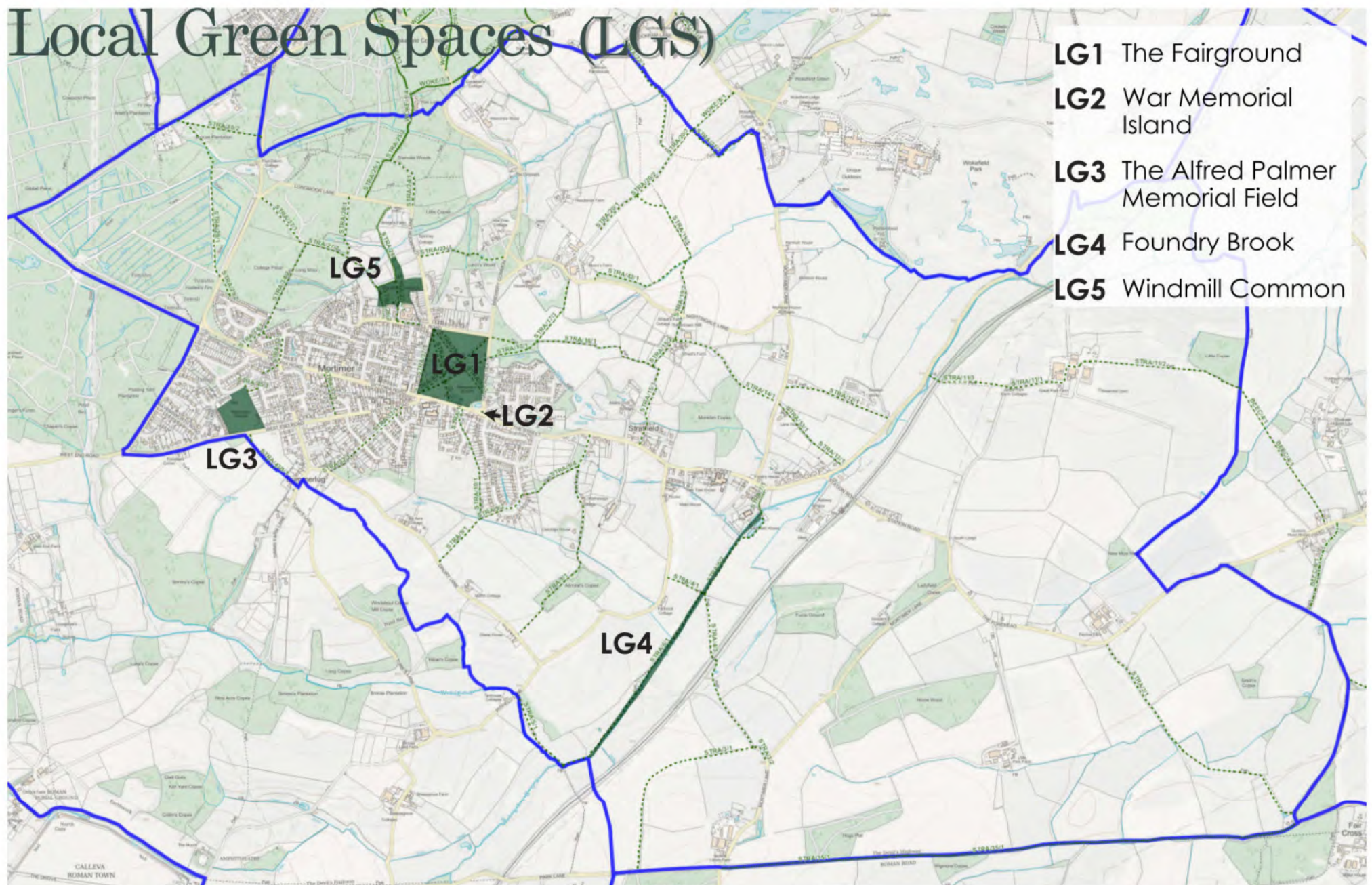
Q11.2 Where would you like the potential LGS to be located within the main village? Also see the wider parish plan on Board 12

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Local Green Spaces (LGS)



Q12.1 Where would you like the potential LGS to be located within the wider parish?

Which Areas Can be allocated as a LGS?

The criteria (in the NPPF) for designating a Local Green Space include:

- is the space in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?
- Where it is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance; (for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife)?
- is it local in character and not an extensive tract of land?

Once suggested, we will be working alongside our independent consultants using a recognised methodology to assess whether or not the proposed spaces meet the government criteria.

An independent Examiner will review the assessment and any comments you make and have the final say on whether or not a space is designated.

It should be noted that a LGS does not give the right of public access to spaces where it does not exist already. This is particularly relevant for private enclosed sites or those with wildlife or visual amenity value.

Designation is similar to that of 'Green Belt' designation, where the land can only be developed in very special circumstances.

This will mean that the land will remain open and continue to contribute to the character of the area.

A site cannot be nominated if there has been planning permission on the site or it is allocated for development.



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Purpose

To develop options to maintain and strengthen local distinctiveness and sense of place that enhance the character and quality of the street and natural landscapes within the village.

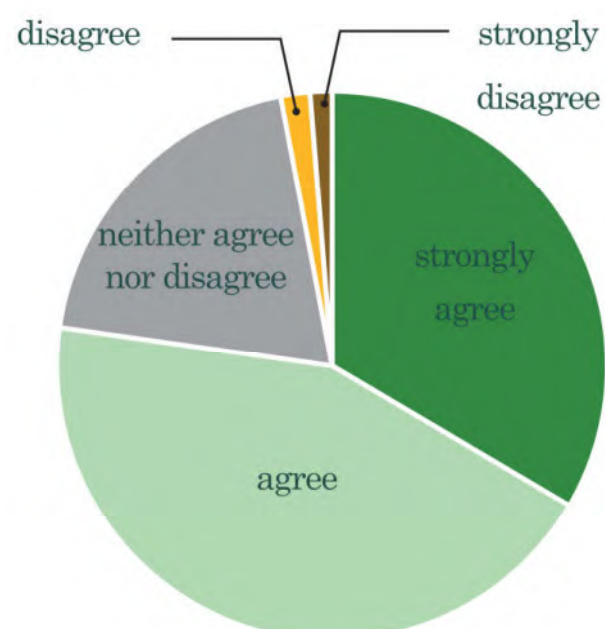
Key Focus

- Design Guides and Codes for new developments (housing, car parks, green spaces etc) in the Neighbourhood Plan -
 - to address climate change - higher temperatures and heavier rainfall.
 - development of individual streets or areas within Stratfield Mortimer
- To use the guide, aims and policies as set out in 'Living with Beauty' report.

Parish Survey Results

Thinking about any development of any type in Mortimer that could take place in the future, would you support policies which promote good design, in addition to the use of high quality and sustainable materials?

The survey highlighted that the majority of people either strongly agreed or agreed



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2. Landscape and Streetscapes

What is a Design Code?

A design code sets out a number of rules for new developments in a simple concise and illustrated way which are specific to your parish area.

The aim is that the area is analysed in terms of what makes it special or appealing and these elements along with a series of other factors are used to create a Code which reflects your area.

The National Design Guide was published in 2019 and sets out the characteristics of well designed places and demonstrates what good design means in principle and in practice.

It supports the NPPF and is intended to be used by local authorities, applicants and local communities to establish the design expectations of the Government.

It identifies ten characteristics which underpin good design, which are shown in the adjacent illustration.



The Government produced a National Model Design Code in 2020 and whilst much of it relates to a more urban environment than Mortimer, there is a lot of guidance that can be used at Parish level.

We have set out some examples of Design Codes that we have worked on with our other Neighbourhood Plan groups and we will be asking for your input in creating one for the new Neighbourhood Plan.

The report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission is entitled Living with Beauty and promotes health, well-being and sustainable growth. It concluded that

“At present we are in a vicious circle of unpopular and unsustainable new development, often in the wrong place, an instinctive opposition to new housing in practice... and a political debate about development and planning which, at its simplistic worst, has been unable to break out of a false polarity of either ‘blaming developers’ or ‘blaming planners.’ People have lost confidence in both the industry and the regulators.”

They recommend a move to a “virtuous circle of a simple and predictable regulatory approach to land use planning, under effective democratic control” It is considered that this will lead to a higher proposed of new developments which are beautiful and popular, with higher levels of civic pride.

Q14.1 Do you think we should prepare a Design Code for the Parish?

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2. Landscape and Streetscapes

Current NP Design Policies

Q15.1 The following are policies within the current NP relating to Design - should we keep these, modify them, remove them or place them within a wider Design Code?

RS4 The rural edge of any development will be carefully designed and landscaped to blend into the surrounding rural landscape rather than creating the effect of a hard edge.

RS6 Residential developments on windfall sites within the MSB will be supported as long as they are well-designed and comply with the policies of this Plan.

HD4 The density of homes on new developments shall:

- where they abut existing residential areas, be similar in character, scale and grain of that/those existing developments (densities as in 2014)
- respect the semi-rural nature of the parish and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness with uniform houses and plots being avoided
- diminish as the development approaches the open countryside, blending in seamlessly.

GD1 In order to provide high quality developments in the Parish, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- New developments on allocated and windfall sites will be designed to deliver the Building for Life 12 principles
- New development will consider the amenity of existing residents adjacent to the new development
- Any new development within the settlement boundary will be encouraged to prepare a Site Design Brief, including community

involvement, which reflects the policies set out in this Plan. This brief would then be included in any planning submission after consultation via the parish council. For any housing development proposals outside the settlement boundary, in addition to satisfying the requirements of WBC policy C1, the applicant shall prepare a Site Design Brief, including community involvement, which reflects the policies in this Plan and will include it in any planning submission after consultation via the Parish Council.

GD2 In order to provide high quality developments in the Parish, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters

- The use of street furniture will be minimised.
- Dwellings should face, rather than back onto, the public open space areas
- Parking design and layout should be provided in line with Manual for Streets. In particular car parking should be located close to the main access to the dwellings, and should be overlooked by habitable rooms
- Garages must be large enough to be usable

GD5 In order to develop homes which meet the requirements of 21st century lifestyles and improve the overall quality of the housing stock in the parish while remaining sympathetic to the older building styles at the heart of the village, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- New developments on allocated and windfall sites will be designed to the Lifetime Homes standard
- The adoption of energy management technology will be encouraged in all new developments
- Innovative designs which respect and are in sympathy with the rural vision of Mortimer and the vernacular style of the surrounding homes will be encouraged
- All dwellings shall be no more than two storeys in height, or three storeys where roof space is utilised; any apartment

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buildings should respect the scale of the surrounding houses

- There will be a mix of house types, with an emphasis on smaller starter homes and units that are suitable for local residents who wish to downsize.
- An appropriate amount and type of affordable housing must be provided, in accordance with the policies HD1 to HD4 of this plan (see page 24).
- For developments of more than 10 dwellings the minimum areas of usable, publicly accessible open space will be 4.3 ha per 1000 population in accordance with WBC saved policy RL1. The plan will seek larger areas as is appropriate to maintain the rural nature and vision of Mortimer.
- The layout of any development should incorporate informal courtyards and avoid uniform house types and plot sizes in keeping with the size of the development.
- Sufficient space must be provided for the storage and collection of refuse and recycling for each dwelling
- House types should be in sympathy with the local vernacular, where appropriate, as illustrated by the images below:



GD6 In order to complement the Building Design and Style parameters by carrying through those elements into the hard and soft landscaping, all developments of any sort shall comply with the following parameters:

- Brick or natural boundaries and/or landscaping will be preferred, rather than standard fencing panels.
- Any local pattern of trees and hedgerows will be reflected in the landscaping which will feature native trees.
- Environmentally friendly features - such as bat boxes and hedgehog gates- shall be specified in any ecology strategy and included in the landscape and building design.
- An integrated SUDS drainage strategy will be adopted, as part of these landscaping measures, taking account of sewage system capacity, flood risk and water quality.

Q16.1 When you think of the character of the buildings in Mortimer, what comes to mind? Is there anything else you can identify as a local characteristic?

Q16.2 Are there any architectural details on buildings that you really like - if so which details or buildings?

Q16.3 Are there any buildings which you think detract from the local area - if so why?

Q16.4 Which building materials do you like or dislike?

Q16.5 Are there any paint colours which you think you should see more or less of?

Q16.6 Do you feel new homes have sufficient sized gardens to meet the needs of occupants? Should there be a minimum size for gardens on new builds or development of an existing plot?

Q16.7 What kind of boundaries such as different types of fences, hedges or walls do you think suit the area?

Q16.8 Are there trees in the parish which should be protected

Q16.9 Do you want to see more trees and native vegetation in new development?

Q16.10 Do new developments provide sufficient parking for residents?

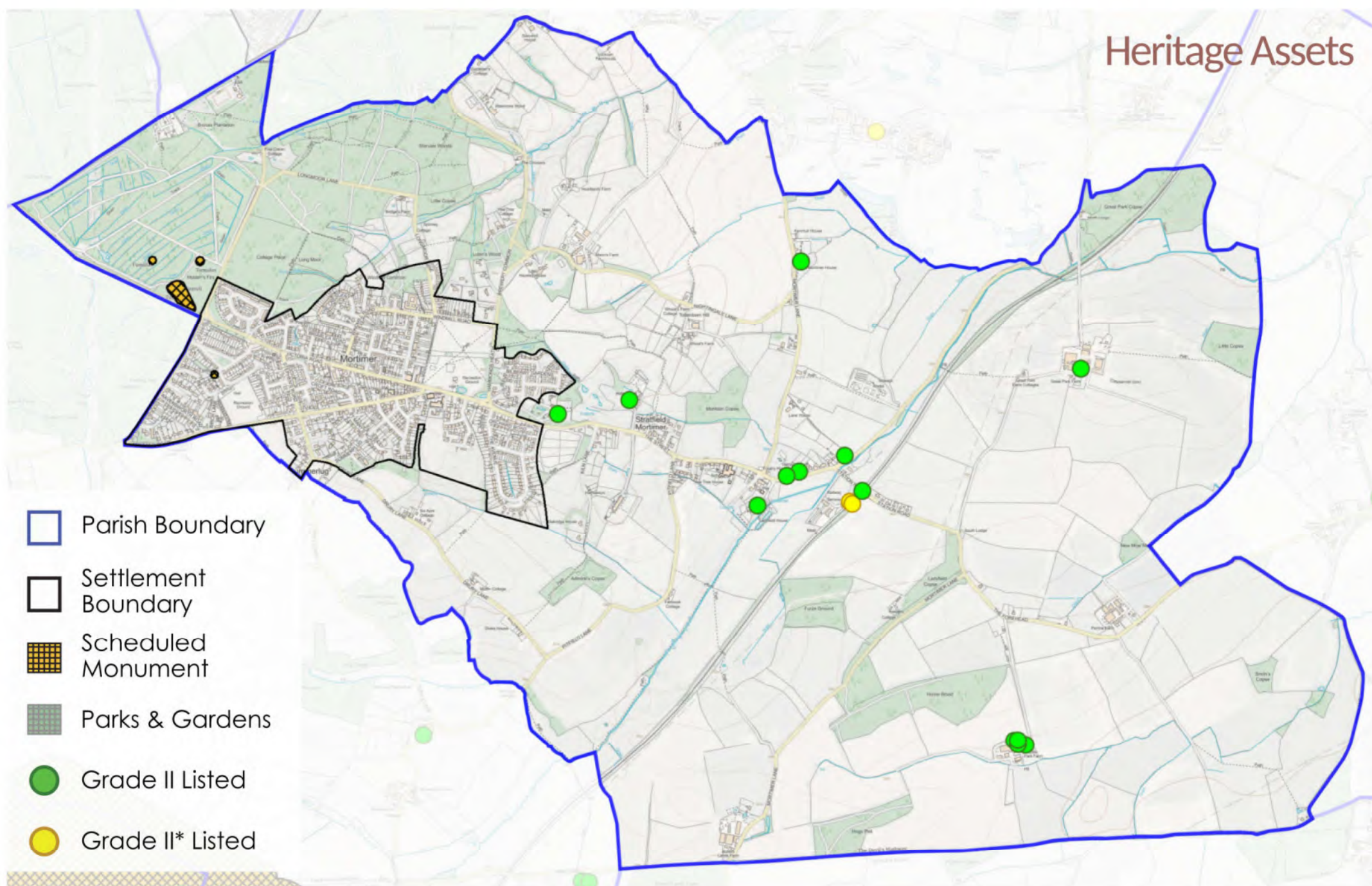
Q16.11 Do new developments provide sufficient public open space?

Q16.12 Do you have ideas of how the amount of green infrastructure and character of green space should evolve?

Q16.13 Is there anything you would like to see more of or less of?

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Local Heritage

The map above shows the nationally designated listed heritage assets, within the parish these include 13 Grade II, 2 Grade II* buildings / structures and 4 scheduled monuments.

In addition to these, the community can propose locally significant heritage assets, known as non-designated heritage assets. These can be buildings, monuments, sites, place or landscapes with significance to be noted in planning decisions.

- The criteria for designation includes:
- Archaeological interest
- Architectural interest
- Artistic interest
- Historic interest

Views

The Neighbourhood Plan can also designate important views which should be protected. These can be both rural, countryside views or urban views, particularly of heritage assets.

Q17.2 Are there any views within the parish you think are important? If so where are they from and where or what do they look towards?

Q17.1 Please list any locally significant heritage assets that you would like to see identified?



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3. Highways & Transport

Purpose

To develop options to improve:

- road, cycle, and pedestrian safety
- car parking

and to

- promote more sustainable transport choices.

Focus

Three principal themes emerged from the questionnaire together with specific concerns:

- Pedestrian Safety – traffic speed, to station, to Burghfield, parking on pavements, lack of pedestrian crossings
- Cycling safety – traffic speed, lack of cycleways, to Burghfield, to station
- Parking – schools with emphasis on St Mary's, and at the station

Considerations

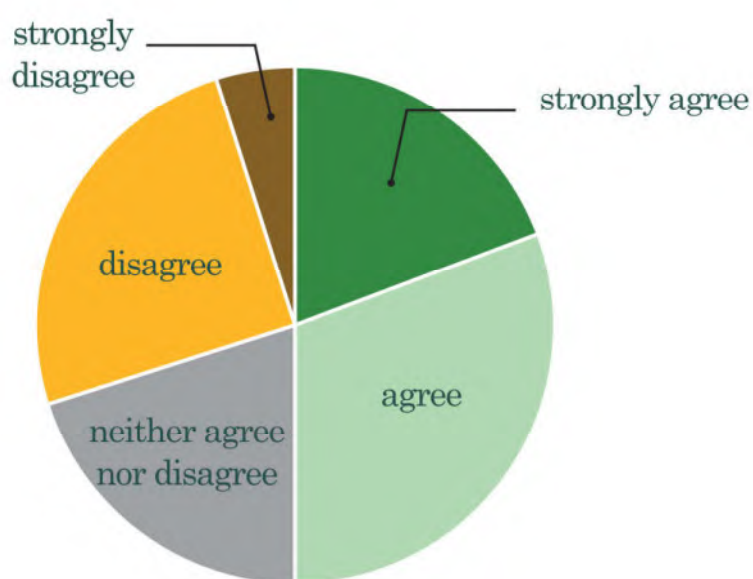
The workshop shall address the following issues which West Berkshire Council and the Examiner may wish to see have been considered.

- Reducing the need to travel and promoting more sustainable transport choices
- Improving road safety, reducing accidents, and helping reduce traffic speeds
- Avoiding placing further pressure on local parking.



Parish Survey Results – Traffic & Transport

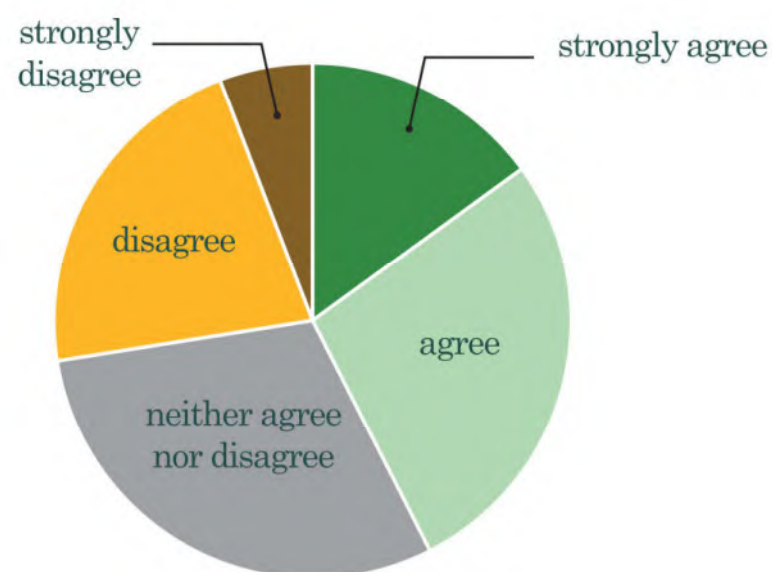
Do you think road safety for pedestrians is a problem in the Parish?



Main issues:

- Traffic speed (49)
- Pavement down to St Mary's School and Station (22)
- Pavement to Burghfield (14)
- Parking on pavements (10)
- Pedestrian crossings (9)

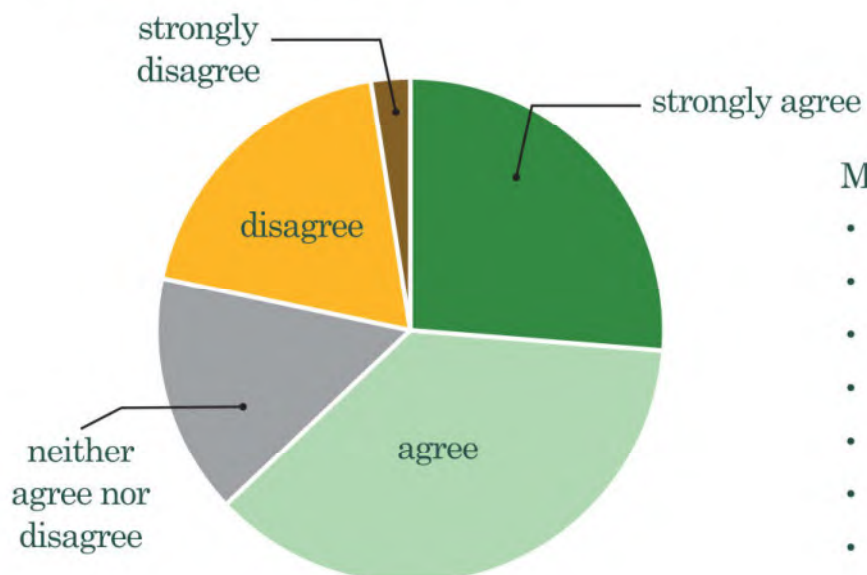
Do you think road safety for cyclists is a problem in the Parish?



Main issues:

- Speed of Traffic (25)
- Cycleways (17)
- Route to Burghfield (16)
- Road Surface (9)
- Route to St Mary's Schools and Station (8)

To what extent do you think vehicle parking is a problem in the Parish?

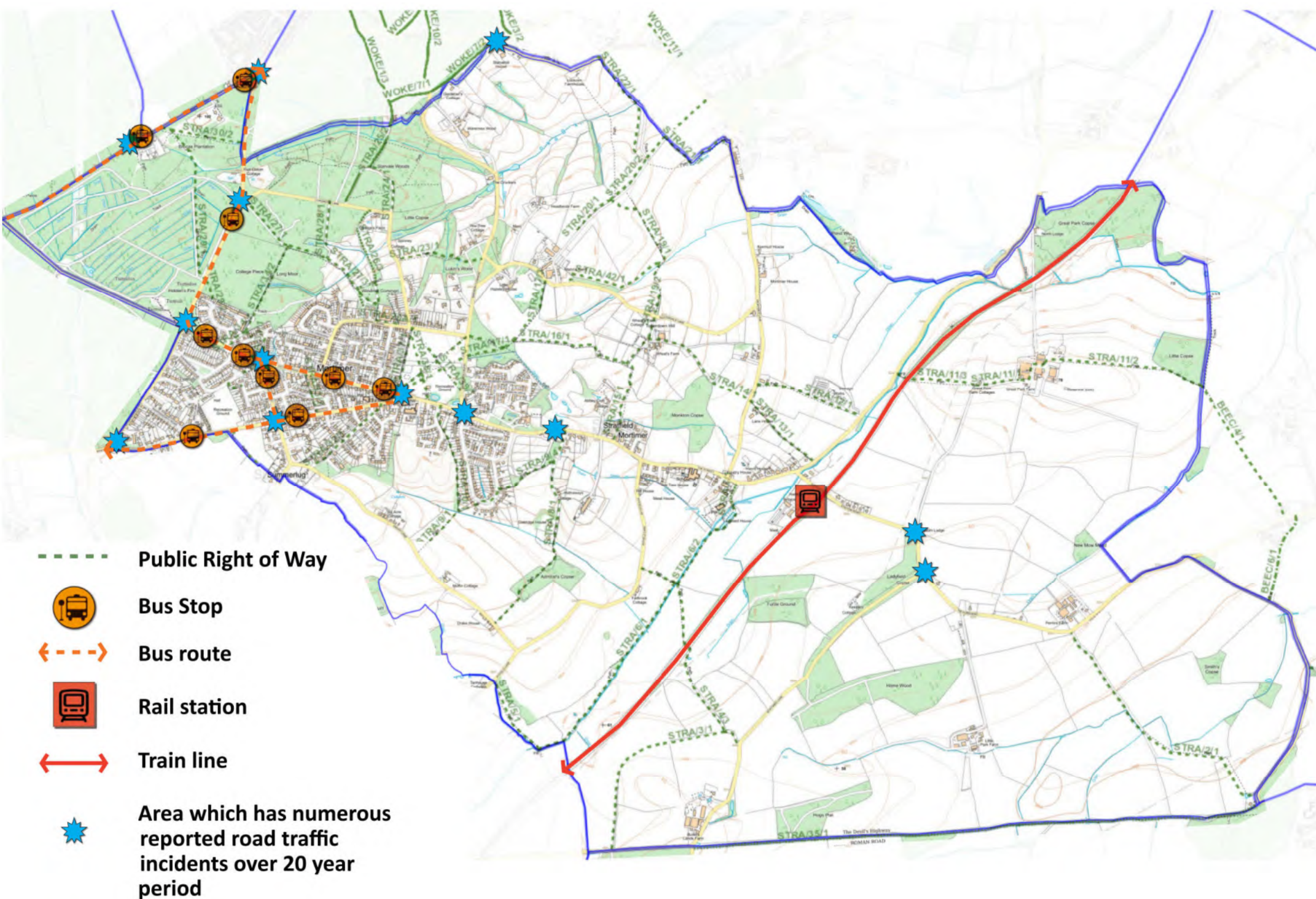


Main issues:

- Schools in general (63)
- St Mary's School specifically (36)
- Parking in the centre of the village (15)
- Pavement parking / unevenness (9)
- Doctors (7)
- Parking on double yellow lines (5)
- St John's School specifically (3)



3. Highways & Transport



Q20.1 Should we look at policies to support road safety impacts arising from new development?

Q20.2 Are there areas where we need to improve existing pedestrian and cycle access to encourage people to not use their vehicles? If so where?

Q20.3 How could we improve walking and cycling routes and or make them more safe and convenient to use?

Q20.4 Do you think traffic calming measures are required? If so where and what type?

Q20.5 Are there quiet, narrow lanes within the Parish which should be protected from being urbanised or widened? If so where?

Q20.6 Should have more street lighting in the Parish? If so where?

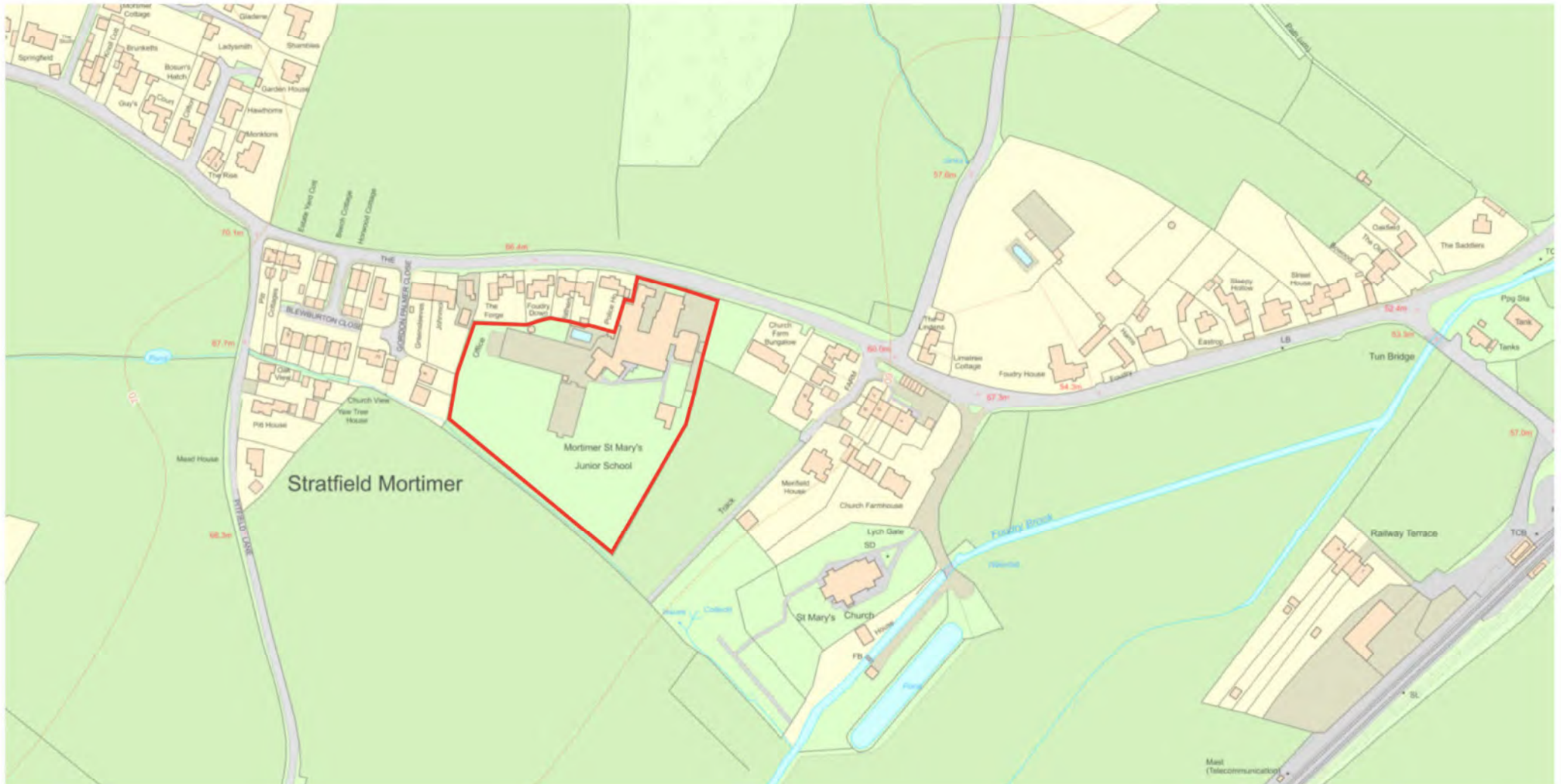


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3. Highways & Transport



Q20.7 Should we support new off-road parking proposals or car parking area for the junior school?

Q20.8 Where would you think would be the preferred location for a new school car park?



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4. Homes & Housing

What does the current NP say about housing?

The current NP focuses upon the site allocation for 110 new homes reflecting the West Berkshire Development Plan Document at that time. The Neighbourhood Plan contained many detailed policies relating to the site and how it was to be developed.

What does the emerging Local Plan say?

At the time of writing, the emerging Local Plan does not require the new Neighbourhood Plan to allocate any open market housing, but leaves it to communities to decide. This however does not mean that there is no requirement for any new housing.

There may well be a requirement for housing for local people specifically or a need for affordable housing in the Parish for example. Further survey work is needed to ascertain what this need might be.

Purpose

To investigate options to provide housing for local people. The options should consider the requirement to be responsive to climate change.

What is community-led housing?

Community-led housing projects are led by community groups determined to make sure that new homes are built and empty homes and buildings can be brought back into use to meet local housing needs. Projects are usually developed by or in partnership with a community organisation, and the local community organisation owns, manages, or stewards the homes in a manner of their choosing.

Community-led housing helps to:

- Create affordable housing for people in need including unemployed people, single parents, young people looking to buy their first house, and key workers
- Support older residents to downsize
- Make sure there is high-quality housing available in the local area

Key Focus

It will be necessary to

- Establish the quantity and type of housing needed by local people
- Identify options for their supply including location with focus on enabling allocation for local people researching the use of a Rural Exception Site and/or Community Land Trust
- Develop Building Design Codes for sustainability and future proofing for climate change.



4. Homes & Housing Parish Survey Results

Do you want or need to move out of your current property but remain in the Parish?

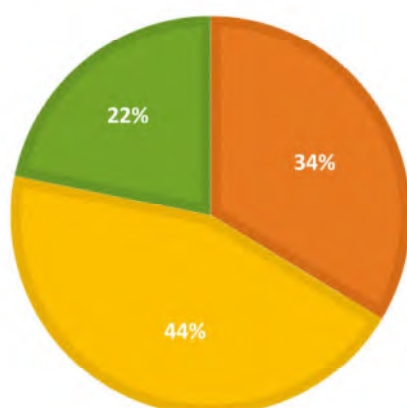
The survey highlighted that the 21.5% of respondents would like to move within the Parish either now or in the next 5-10 years. Many respondents stated that their current property was too big or costly/ difficult to maintain.

The majority of respondents were couples or families with children, which would determine the type of housing highlighted.

The following charts highlight the need for different types of housing identified in the parish survey.

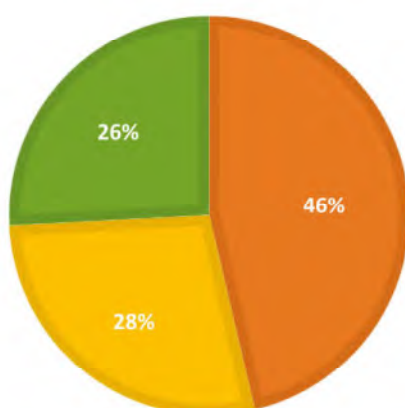
OPEN MARKET HOUSING

Yes No N/A



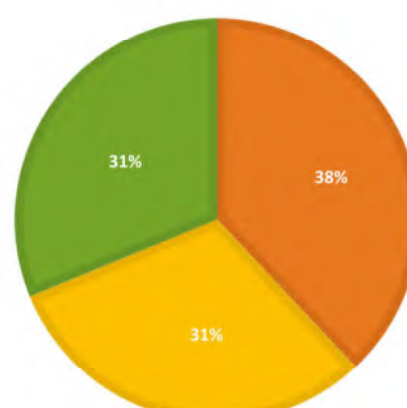
AFFORDABLE FOR RENT

Yes No N/A



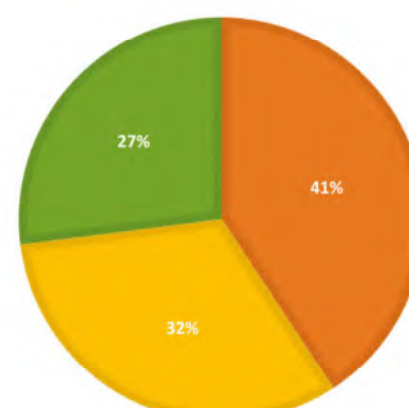
AFFORDABLE FOR SHARED OWNERSHIP

Yes No N/A



AFFORDABLE FOR SALE AT DISCOUNT

Yes No N/A



NOTE These housing requirements responses do not provide any data on the numbers required. A recurring comment throughout the responses to the questionnaire was the opinion that there should not be a significant growth in housing.



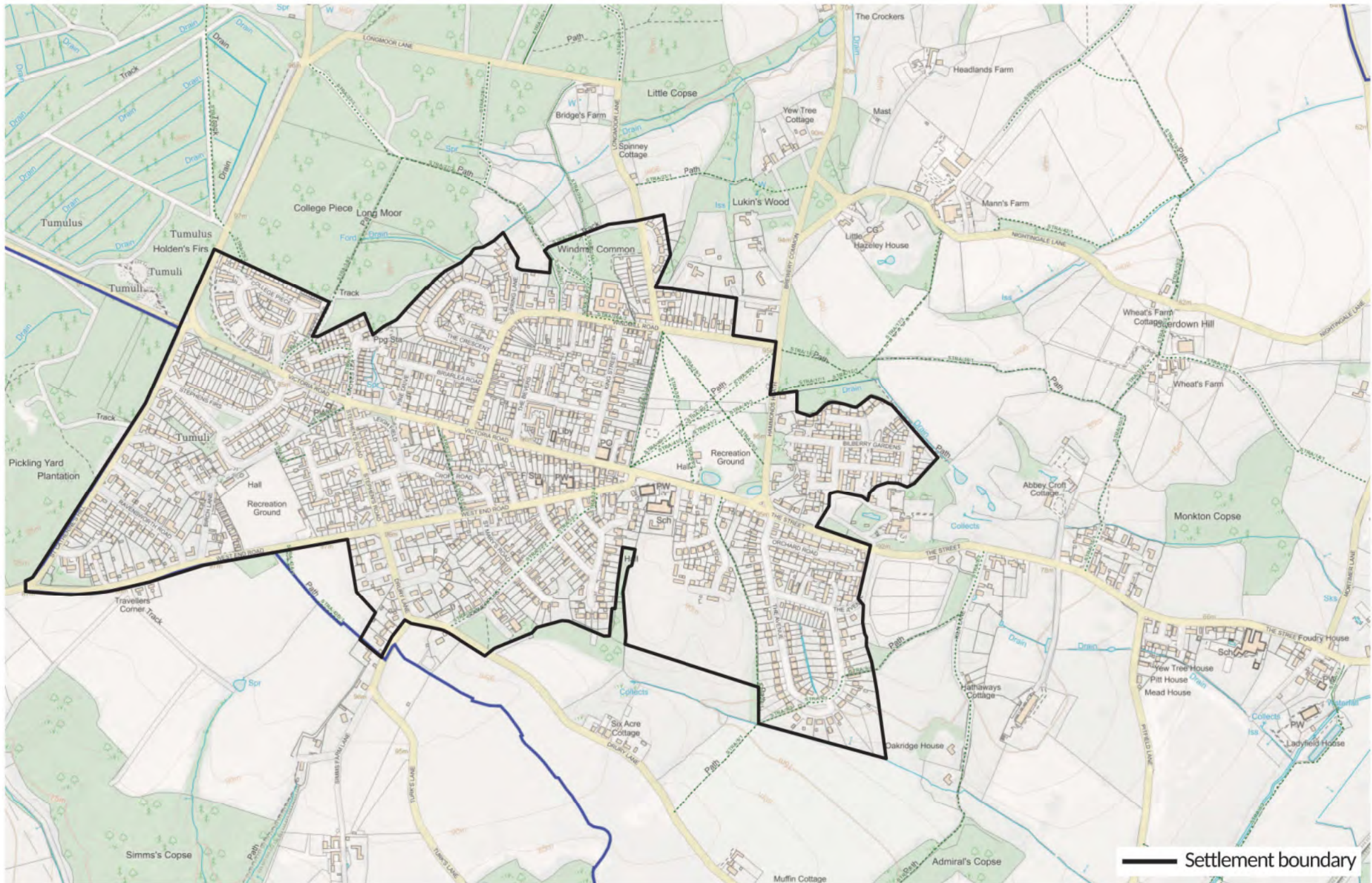
A substantial theme was the need for homes for the elderly (42 comments).

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4. Homes & Housing



The Need for New Housing?

Q22.1 Is there anywhere in the Parish you would like to see more housing - if so where?

Q22.2 Is there a need for Open Market Housing? If so how much in total is required up to 2037?

Q22.3 Is there a need for Affordable Housing for Rent? If so how much in total is required up to 2037?

Q22.4 Is there a need for Affordable Housing for Shared Ownership? If so how much in total is required up to 2037?

Q22.5 Is there a need for Affordable Housing for Sale at Discount? If so how much in total is required up to 2037?



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5. Employment

Purpose

To develop options that will encourage a vibrant and diversified local economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth.

Focus

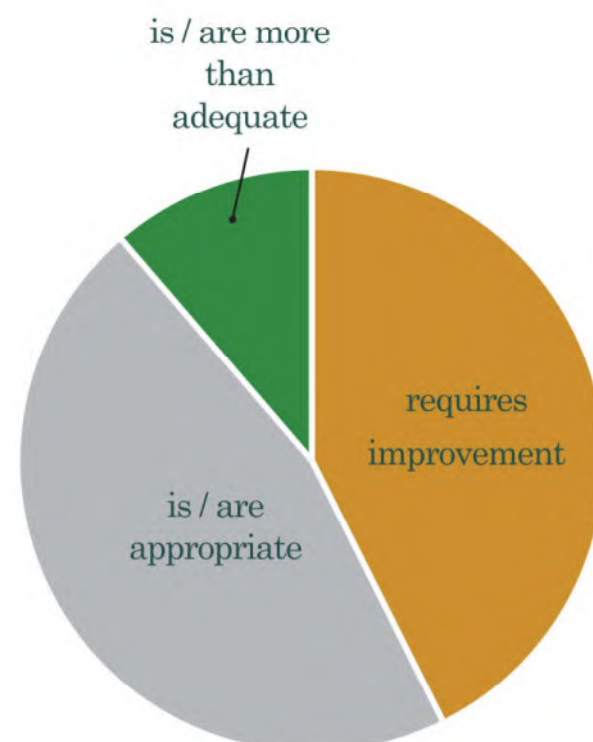
- Policies that encourage and promote an increasingly diverse range of employment opportunities for the local community
- Opportunities for people to improve their workplace skills.

Parish Survey Results

Do you feel that employment opportunities need improvement?

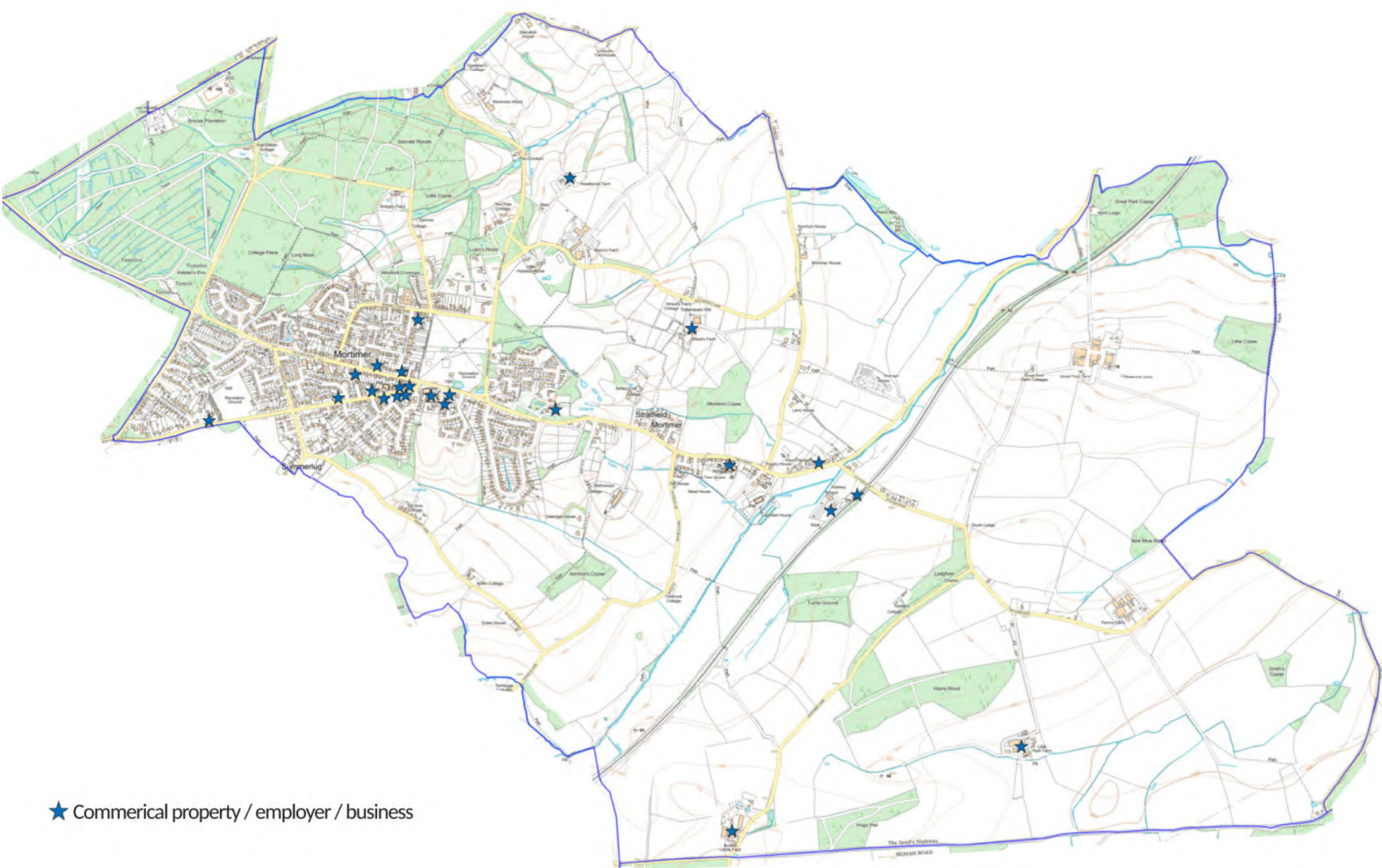
There were 261 responses to this question.

The majority thought opportunities were appropriate for the Parish. Interestingly, 54% also commented that the question was not relevant to them. This may correspond with the fact that a large proportion of respondents were retired.





5. Employment



Q25.1 Should we encourage development enabling new rural industries? If so is there any type of rural business that you would like to see?

Q25.2 Are there appropriate locations for business uses where they would not cause a nuisance with regard to traffic, noise, smell or visual impact?

Q25.3 Should we encourage tourist accommodation and visitor uses?

Q25.4 Are there sufficient opportunities for local businesses to expand?



Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan

How can we improve our Parish?



6. Community Services & Facilities

Purpose

To develop options for the provision of the services and facilities appropriate for a modern rural Parish sustaining the strong community spirit which exists.

Focus

- To identify the services and facilities that a modern sustainable rural parish will need in the 2030's
- To enable a diverse range of shops, cafes etc
- To support the provision of sport and exercise facilities
- To support the provision of health services
- To assist the community in connecting with others to be active, to keep learning and to contribute to community life, e.g. digital and internet services suitable for 2030s living,
- To provide the community with sufficient EV charge points

Parish Survey Results

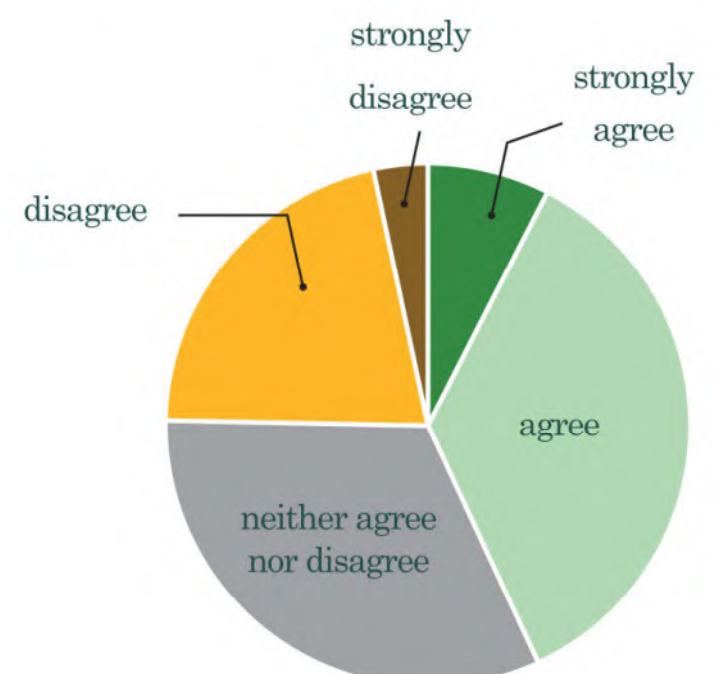
Would you like to see the centre of the village and its facilities enhanced?

There were 239 responses and over 43% either agreed or strongly agreed.

There were also 110 detailed comments on this with

- Shops, cafes and banks and facilities gaining most comments (29), followed by
- The Street Environment (20) including provision of planters, trees (5),
- Community Facilities (20) including 10 for provision of public toilets,
- Health Facilities (5)

A number of suggestions were made to improve the environment of the village centre.



6. Community Services & Facilities



Q28.1 What changes would you like to see to the village centre?

Q28.2 Are there any community services and facilities you wish to see retained or enhanced?

Q28.3 Which new or additional services or community facilities would you like to see?



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7. Climate Change & Energy

Purpose

To develop options to improve community wide renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Focus

- Do we want to promote a community energy generation scheme(s) to generate energy sustainably and economically at a community scale?

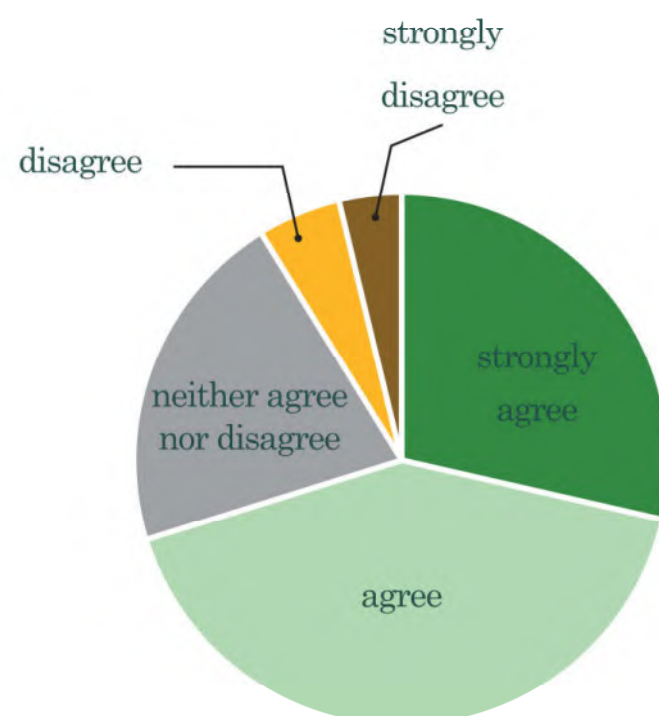
Parish Survey Results

Would you like to see more renewable energy generation in the Parish?

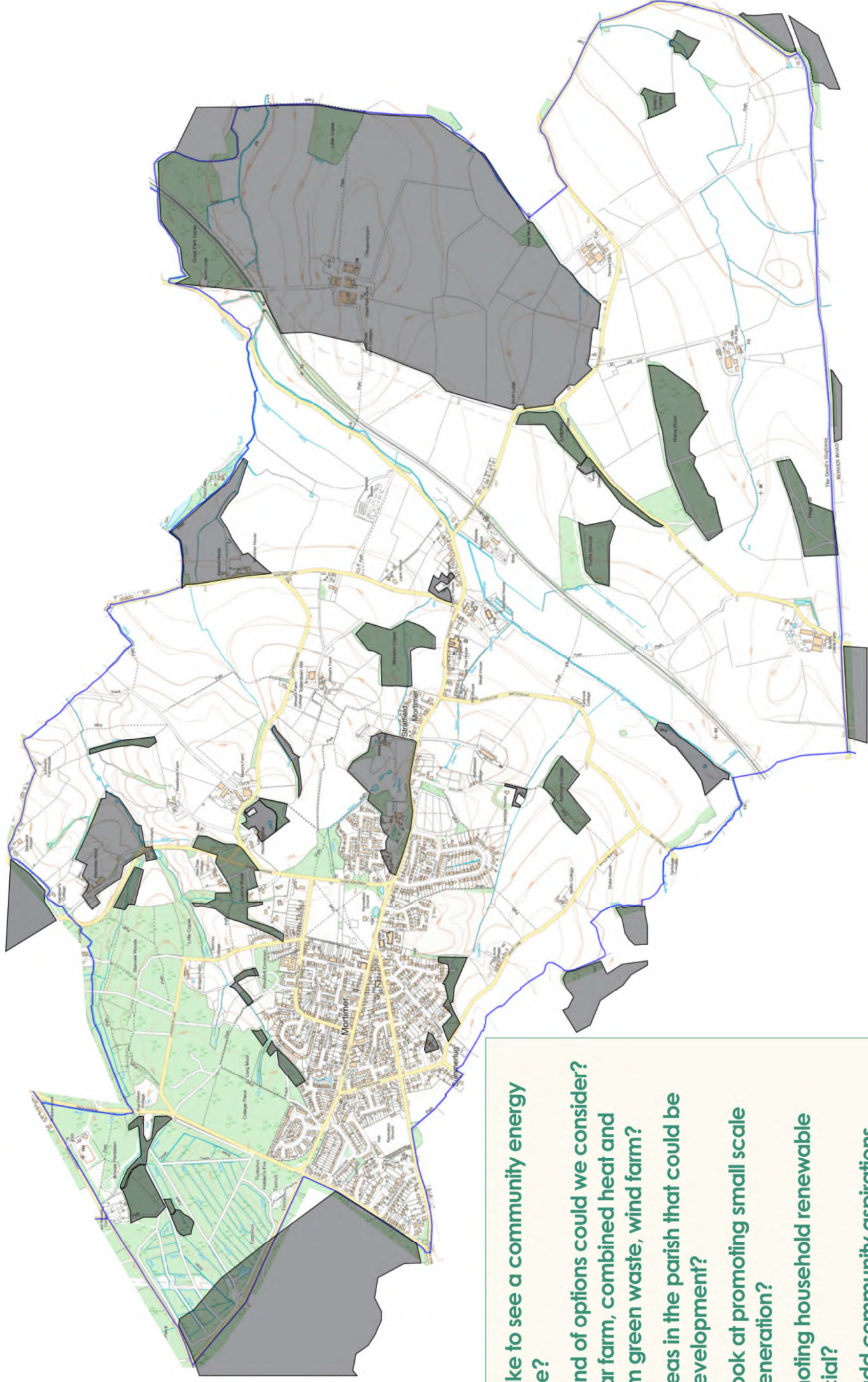
There were 238 responses and over 70% either agreed or strongly agreed.

There were also 144 detailed comments on this with 85 comments relating to a preference for solar energy, 31 for wind turbines and 19 for heat pumps.

The idea of a community energy generation scheme was also popular, with 47 comments on this.



7. Climate Change & Energy



Area covered by environmental designation

- Q26.1** Would you like to see a community energy generation scheme?
- Q26.2** If so, what kind of options could we consider?
For example a solar farm, combined heat and power, energy from green waste, wind farm?
- Q26.3** Are there areas in the parish that could be suitable for such development?
- Q26.4** Should we look at promoting small scale business energy generation?
- Q26.5** Would promoting household renewable energy be beneficial?
- Q26.6** Should we add community aspirations relating to improving the energy efficiency of our public buildings or the bulk purchasing opportunities, of for example insulation, solar panels, etc?