

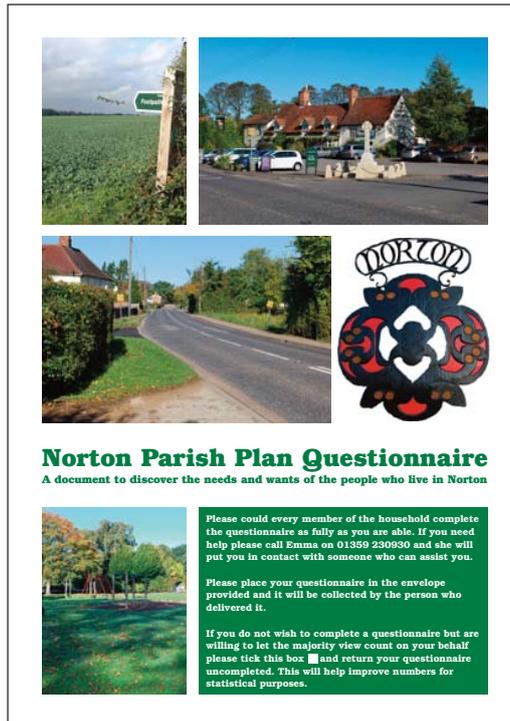


## **Norton Parish Plan Output and Action Plan**





# Norton Parish Plan



## Foreword

The Parish Plan is the culmination of a 24 month process where the Steering Group learned about residents' thoughts, hopes and aspirations for the future of Norton. The Steering Group has gone to great lengths to ensure that the views of the community are accurately reflected in the Plan.

A Parish Plan is a powerful tool and ensures villagers' views are taken into account by the Parish and District Councils and other bodies when considering a range of matters including planning applications, traffic issues and the provision of grants, services or amenities. A Plan cannot, however, guarantee that every suggested action will be achieved due to financial, legal or other constraints that occasionally may stand in the way.

The Parish Plan is a snapshot of the village of Norton as it was early in 2014. The opportunity has been taken to set the parish in a brief historical background. The facts have been checked as carefully as possible, however where there may be inaccuracies, apologies are offered.

It has been a privilege to be involved in such a rewarding exercise and the Steering Group members wish to thank everyone who has been involved in the process. Without the contribution of all the residents of Norton, this document could not have been produced.

George Irving  
Chairman  
Norton Parish Plan



# Norton Parish Plan

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Messages of Support	3
Norton – A Lay Person Potted History	4
Norton Today	6
Parish Plan Process	7
The Questionnaire Results and Action Points	9
Section 1 – Population Profile	9
Section 2 – Housing	11
Section 3 – Transport	13
Section 4 – Community Services and Safety	15
Section 5 – Local Services and Community	17
Section 6 – Environment	20
Section 7 – Public Services	21
Section 8 – Employment and Local Businesses	23
The Action Plan	25
Local Contacts	27
Acknowledgements	28



## Norton Parish Plan

### Messages of Support

“It gives me great pleasure as Chairman of Norton Parish Council to commend to you the Norton Parish Plan Report.

The potent mix of a very hardworking, dedicated committee and the overwhelming support of the people of the village has resulted in a final document that will have longstanding implications and benefits for all of us who choose to live in this favoured community.

Within the Report there are now clearly stated aspirations and concerns, which, until now, have had no means of being expressed. These will now be uppermost in the minds of the Parish Council as it seeks to reconcile and accommodate the spirit of the Report.

Implementation of the Report though is not wholly the responsibility of the Parish Council. All parishioners must now also play their part. We must all learn to 'live' in Norton and not just sleep here.

I offer my sincere thanks to the Parish Plan committee and to all the additional volunteers who distributed and later collected the questionnaires. An excellent job completed.”

**Brian Aket**  
**Chairman, Norton Parish Council**

“I am fully in support of the Norton Parish Plan. The steering group has put in a great deal of time and effort into the plan, and I am delighted that they have had such a high rate of response from the residents of Norton. I eagerly await the full results of the questionnaire and hope that major concerns of the residents can be addressed following the publication of the full Parish Plan.”

**Sarah Mansel**  
**Green Party Councillor**



### **NORTON, A LAY PERSONS POTTED HISTORY**

Whilst there may well have been 'earthworks' within the present boundaries of Norton, there is as yet insufficient evidence to support any claims and surprisingly therefore this history of Norton begins in the year 2000 AD with the selection of the Village sign now standing proudly in front of the Village Hall. The sign is an interpretation and enlargement of a horse-mount, which was found in Norton many years ago and is now on show in Moyses Museum. It is an Iron Age design and believed to be made some 2000 years ago when men rode through the sparsely populated Suffolk woodlands.

Whilst the village of Norton is referred to in the Domesday Book, there is little recorded history of the presence of any readily identified village before the founding of St Andrews Church and one can only imagine the region of North Town in the 'Dark Ages', hermits in the woods and scavengers or robbers concealed besides the travellers' paths. St Andrews Church is probably built on the site of a Saxon church and the tower and Chancel date from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. During the 15<sup>th</sup> Century the north and south aisles were added and new windows were placed in the south wall, which together with the south porch built at the same time, completed the fabric of the building that we see today. It is believed that in pre-recorded times the church was surrounded by a cluster of medieval timber cottages, the old North Town, but plagues and infestations raged through the land of the dark ages and it is likely that North Town was no exception. Whether a fire was purposely started to cleanse the village of disease or it was an act of chance will never be known but the old village burnt and those who survived re-built their homesteads away from the church, and so the village spread.



## Norton Parish Plan

It is understood that Henry VIII believed that gold may be found in Norton and sent a small group of 'gold-diggers' here. We do not believe that any gold was found but it is possible that some diggers stayed and their offspring are still privately sifting through stream or culvert. Evidence from the 35 listed buildings in Norton, including substantial timber framed barns and the 'pleasant country mansion of Little Haugh', shows the continuing growth of Norton between the times of Henry VIII and 'The Great Fire of Norton' of 1788. This well documented event showed the loss of 9 cottages, a shop with dwelling, office and bake-house, some barns and stables and in all some 20 families were made homeless, 14 of the families came from the 9 cottages. The fire was on the north side of the Ashfield Road.

One can imagine that the residents were quick to reconstruct their damaged village for, the census of some 80 years after the 'Great Fire' show there were some; 12 farms with land, 6 tradesmen like blacksmiths and wheelwrights, 4 builders, 4 shop keepers, 3 beer retailers and 2 shoe makers, as well as a tailor, a harness maker, a watch and clock maker, a rates officer and a doctor, to say nothing of the remaining multitude of labourers and servants who were counted but their job never identified. The school was built in 1865 and by then there were further chapels and places of worship, most of these buildings are standing today but it may need a keen eye to recognise some of the original features. It is however within current residents' memory when there were 4 public houses, a post office, a shoe shop and two butchers. Whilst it may seem that Norton is expanding, this is in footprint only and it could be a while before it reaches the numbers that were here some 200 years ago.



## Norton Parish Plan

### Norton Today

Norton is situated approximately 10 miles east of Bury St Edmunds. An established village of around 400 homes; it boasts a shop, petrol station, garage, pub, primary school and accommodates thriving social events at its village hall. There are 3 churches and the village shares further amenities with its near neighbours in Woolpit, Elmswell and Tostock.

Communication within the village is by the local newsletter the Norton Messenger which is delivered to all houses in the village monthly.

There are numerous clubs for people of all ages and the events are published in the Messenger and on the Norton website. The Golden Jubilee event of 2012 was well supported and has spawned the idea of an annual village fair.

During the Parish Plan process it became clear that rural living is what attracts most people to Norton in the first place. It is a peaceful location yet conveniently located for the A14.



# Norton Parish Plan

## The Parish Plan Process

### Purpose and Objectives

The objectives of the parish plan process are:

- To reflect the views of all sections of the community
- To identify which features and local characteristics people value
- To identify local problems and opportunities
- To spell out how residents want the community to develop
- To prepare a plan of action to achieve this vision

The Parish Plan is a community project. It has enabled members of the committee to identify the people requirements of the parish in growing and developing plus it provides an opportunity for all residents of the village to help shape its future. It will:

- Guide the Parish Council in its decisions
- Strengthen the community
- Provides a formal document in supporting the village views in influencing District and County Council Policies/decisions
- Demonstrate community support for new initiatives and hence improve the chances of obtaining funding
- Translate community priorities into an action plans that will be reviewed annually at The Parish Council AGM

### Steering Group

Following an Open Meeting in May 2012 at Norton Village Hall at which Suffolk ACRE presented the concepts and benefits of undertaking a Parish Plan, a Steering Group of volunteers was put together to work on Parish Plans for Norton.

Members of the Steering Committee were:

Elizabeth Adams  
Paula Blackmore (Vice Chairman)  
Ellis Blackmore (Youth Representative)  
Emma Brennan (Secretary)  
Adrian Browne (Treasurer)  
Andrew Burt (Media Officer and Parish Council Representative)  
Peter Farago – Until September 2013  
Stephen Hill – Until March 2013  
George Irving (Chairman)  
Gavin Philp – Until December 2012  
Sue Philp – Until December 2012  
James Portway  
Ian Ross  
Heather Oliver  
Martin O'Shea  
Gary Walton



### Timetable and Methodology

The Steering Group was formed in the summer of 2012 and Officers were appointed to manage the process. In November 2012, the Steering Group met with Suffolk ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) to outline the requirements of the project and provide the method for obtaining funding for the process.

The project was split into two stages

- 1) The programme involved canvassing the opinion of the community prior to the development of the questionnaire.
- 2) The questionnaire was developed, highlighting the key interests of the village, which were then delivered to and collected from every household in the village.

The project was communicated via a number of channels including Facebook, Notice Boards and the Village Newsletter. This was to ensure as many people were informed as possible.

#### **Stage 1:**

Parishioners and Stakeholders were invited to complete a short survey, which was delivered via the monthly village newsletter, e mailed or sent by Royal Mail to all interested Stakeholders.

Responses were completed and placed in collection boxes located throughout the village.

On receipt of the responses, a Needs Analysis team (sub section of the Steering Committee) provided feedback on the key issues highlighted, which provided an insight into how stage 2 should be conducted.

#### **Stage 2:**

In stage 2, survey data was obtained through questionnaires, containing 52 questions, distributed and collected by hand (one per household). At the time the questionnaires were distributed, the following statistics were as below:

406 houses in the village

13 were empty

Total houses delivered to: 393

Completed forms returned: 290

Blank but returned 10

No returns: 62

The return rate was 76.3%, which was a remarkable response.

The households, which responded, represented 738 residents.

The data obtained was collated using a computer programme known as Survey Monkey. Some of the questions included comments and these have been taken into consideration within the report.

The results of the questionnaire were collated and presented at an exhibition style event in the village hall on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2014.



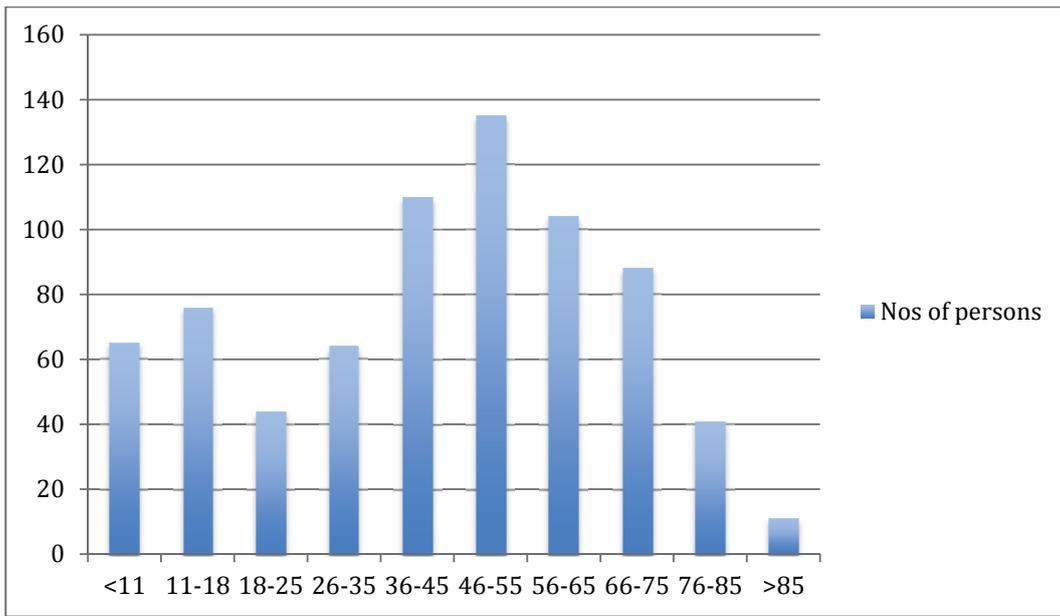
## The Questionnaire Results and Action Points

### Section 1 - Population Profile



There were 740 people including children living in the 290 households who returned the forms. The population is split evenly between the sexes with 50.4% female and 49.6% males.

**Table 2: Age distribution of the population of Norton**



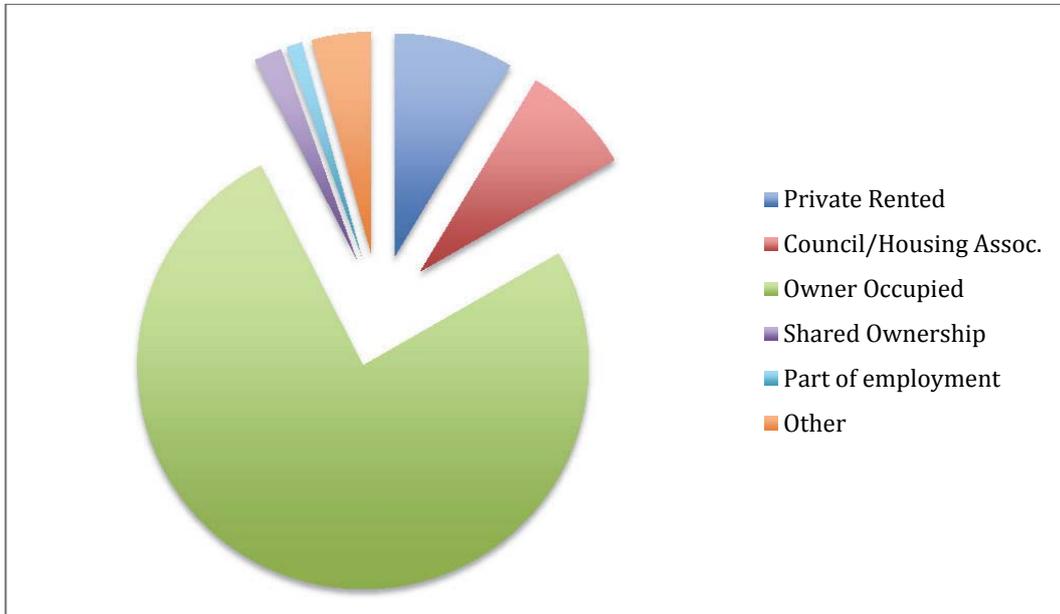
It is quite noticeable from Table 2 that the main age range of the population in the village is between 46 – 55, however overall there is approximately a 50:50 split below and above the age of 46. It should be noted there is a large number of the population aged under 18 and it raises the question of whether the village sufficiently caters for the needs of this age group.

The distribution of the population is split evenly throughout the village, but there are issues on the outskirts of the village in that a number of the parish feels that they are not part of the main community.

The greatest feedback of the questionnaire was received from Ashfield Road/Prospect Road and residents from the area between Ixworth Road to Halls Lane.

**Table 3: Home Ownership in Norton**

Table 3 highlights that the majority of the housing (75.9%) in the village is owner occupied.



Other features of the survey found that there was an even split on the types of education followed by the under 21s in the village, with 40 students progressing to further education (College/University).

The number of roadworthy vehicles kept by householders in the village was evaluated and 52 % of the responders had two cars. There were approximately 23% of the households that have over 3 cars linked to their property.

**Actions:**

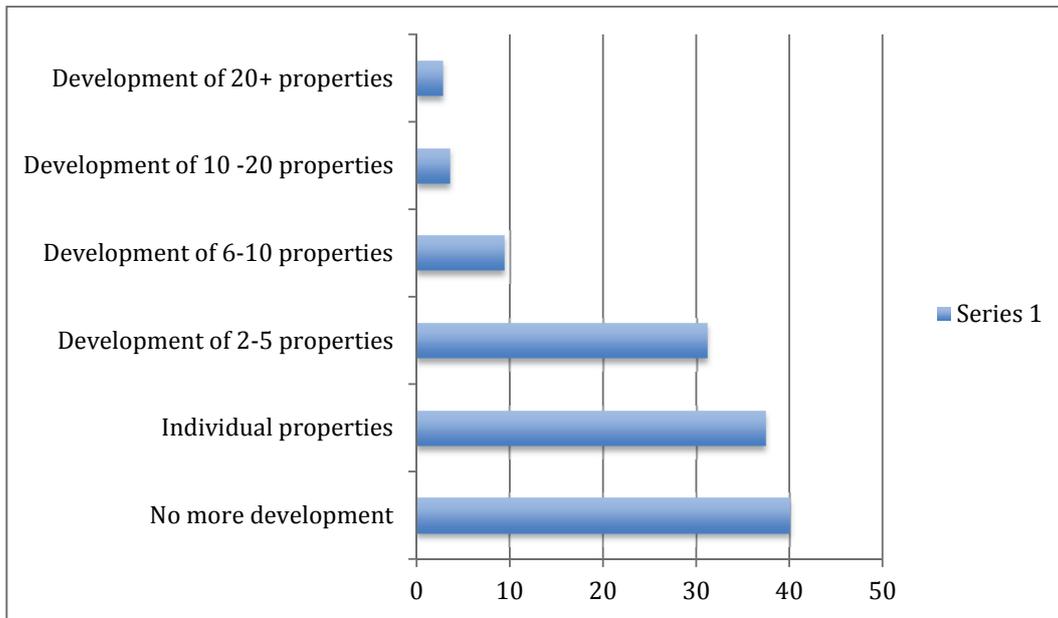
- The community to review the demands of car ownership for the future
- Review of the amenities for under 18's



**Section 2- Housing**

The following chart highlights the response to housing developments in the village.

**Table 4: Future housing development in Norton**



From the housing section this was the most answered question (87% responses) and there is a clear message that there is a resistance to any large housing development within the village. It is also noticeable that 40% of the responders did not want any further development.

Of the 467 responses to the question of the location of further development, 75% would like to see it occur within the village and only 11% would like to see Greenfield sites developed for property.

With regards to the type of accommodation, it was noticeable that there is a demand for homes for local and young people whom are first time buyers with small families.

**Table 5 – Accommodation demands for the future**

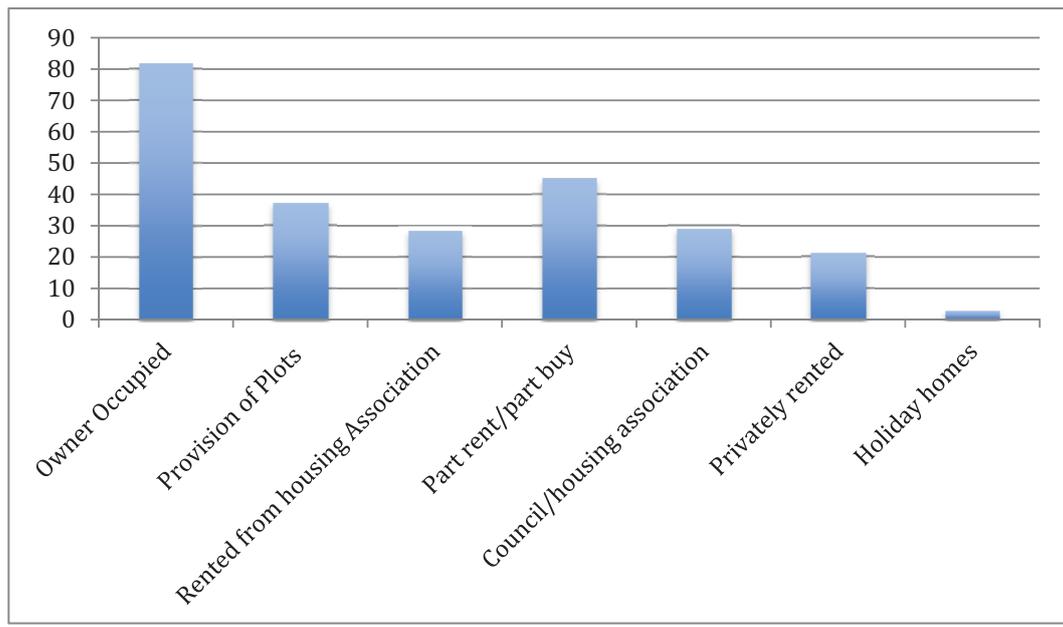
Type of Property	% Of Responses
Homes for young people	50.52%
Homes for large families	18.01%
Homes for small families	49.69%
Homes for people with disabilities	22.77%
Homes for single people	20.29%
Homes for the elderly	33.13%
Homes for local people	58.39%
Homes for first time buyers	49.69%



## Norton Parish Plan

Themes from the survey with regards to new homes, show there was a strong demand for properties with off street parking and incorporating a garden. Over 60% of the responders would like to see new homes with two or three bedrooms and there was also a strong demand for sustainable/eco friendly properties. Although 44.6% of the questionnaires would like to see new developments having bungalows, only 6.7% highlighted a desire for flats.

**Table 5: Types of ownership of housing**



This table indicates that villagers consider that new houses built in the village should be for both owner occupation and rental. There is also a desire for plots and houses for part buy, part rent but little interest in holiday homes.

### **Actions:**

- Development of a structured Housing Needs Analysis to assist in the Planning Process for future development.



**Section 3 - Transport**

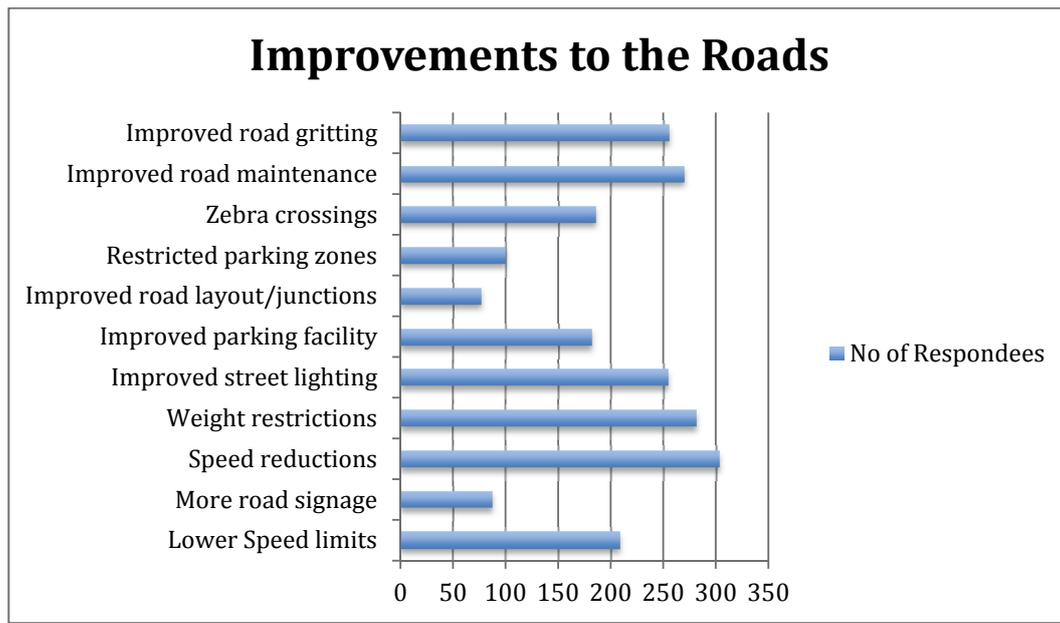
The key themes from this section are as below with over 95% of the people responses using their motor vehicle for leisure and 88% for shopping and only 63% for travel to work.

**Parking:**

Over 93% of the responders keep their vehicles on their own property whereas fewer than 3% park either on the road or not on their own property, this would highlight that there is adequate parking within the community. Consideration must be taken for availability of parking in the future with the advent of numbers increasing at the Norton Primary School.



**Table 6: Road Safety**



## Norton Parish Plan

There is a theme for a number of measures to improve the road safety standards including a review of the speed levels in the village and improving road maintenance.

With regards to a separate question, approximately 68% of the population answering the question stated that they had experienced problems with icy roads in Norton.

### Bus Service:

This question was well answered and over 67% of the responders do not use the service, whereas only 5% of the community relies on the service. Of the view of what could be done to improve the bus service, there was interest to extend the timetable and connect it to other transport facilities.

### Pavements/ Footpaths

The general consensus is that the pavements are of reasonable condition, but there is a demand for extra pavements within the village.

With regards to the footpaths, over 50% of the responders stated that they are in a reasonable condition but 119 responders would like to see additional footpaths, included within the parish. Interestingly nearly half of the 654 responses to the question were either unsure or unaware of where the village footpaths/bridle ways are located.

### Actions:

- Steering Sub Group to look at Speed limits/road safety
- Instigate a review of road maintenance/pathways
- Look at the strategy for road gritting during the winter
- Communicate footpaths to the households in the village.

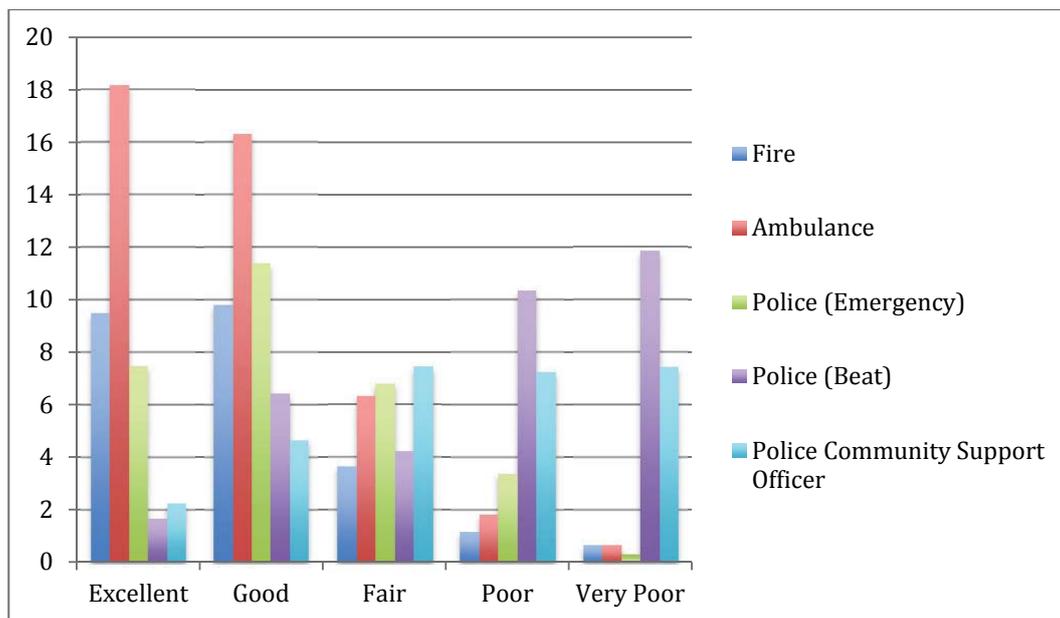


**Section 4 – Community Safety and Services**

Norton today is served by a police officer based at Elmswell. He reports regularly to the Parish Council and responds to calls as needed, but crime levels are very low.

The nearest fire services are based in Elmswell and Ixworth and operations are coordinated centrally and the local hospital is the West Suffolk General Hospital at Bury St Edmunds.

**Table 7: Standards of Services within the Village**



A large proportion of the village has not had the need to utilise the services within the village, but when used the following points can be taken from the survey.

- Fire Service very good
- Ambulance service is of a high standard
- Emergency police standards tend to be very good
- There was poor feedback regarding the visibility of the Police
- The feedback for the Police Community Officer ranged from fair to very poor.

The question regarding the experience of crimes or anti-social behavior was answered by less than 50% of the population, which would probably indicate, that a high proportion of households have not experienced any issues. However of those that answered, 185 stated that inconsiderate parking has been an issue.

Surprisingly 101 responses had experienced theft/burglary, noisy neighbours and vandalism/graffiti.

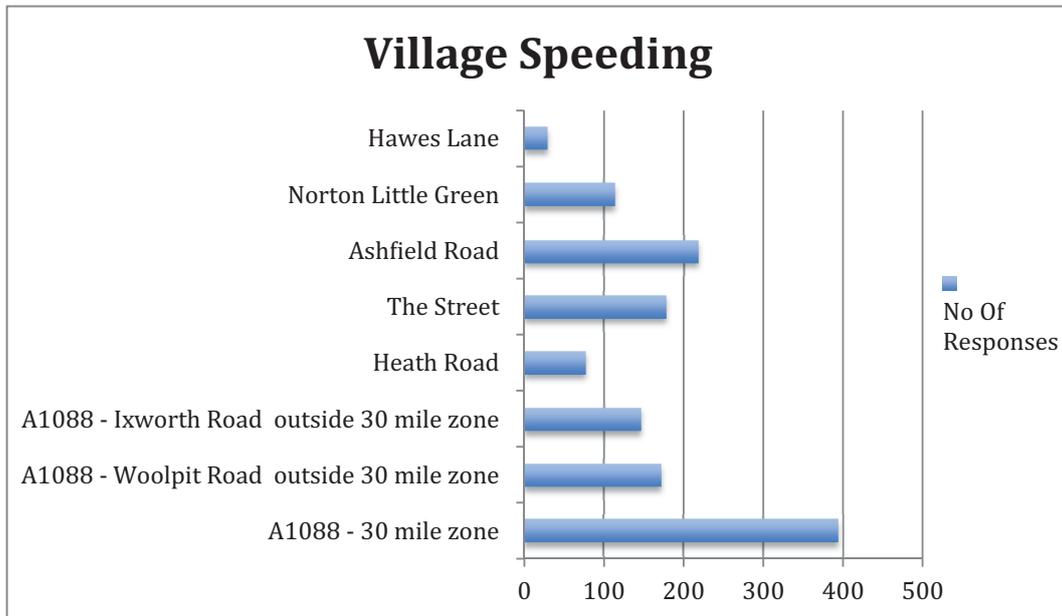


## Norton Parish Plan

Over 70% of responders felt that there were no areas in the village in which they felt unsafe.

### Speeding

Table 8: Concerns re Speeding in Norton



Taking into consideration the wide dispersal of residents, the responses highlighted an issue with speeding throughout the village. The A1088 within the village is highlighted as a key concern, and likewise Ashfield Road and The Street.

### Actions:

- Speeding of traffic in the village.
- Perception and visibility of the police
- Neighbourhood Watch feasibility study



**Section 5 - Local Services and Communication**

A number of services were evaluated and the outputs from the questions can be found in the following table.

Table 7 – Overview of Village Services

Activity	Overall Rating
Broadband	Very Poor
Mains Drainage	Good
Mobile Telephone Signal	Very Poor
Bin Collections	Good
Recycling System	Good
Lighting	Fair
Footpath Maintenance	Fair
Street Cleaning	Good
Road Maintenance	Fair

There were a number of responses highlighting that the bin collections, recycling system and street cleaning were excellent. Areas for attention are broadband coverage and mobile telephone signal.

Communication

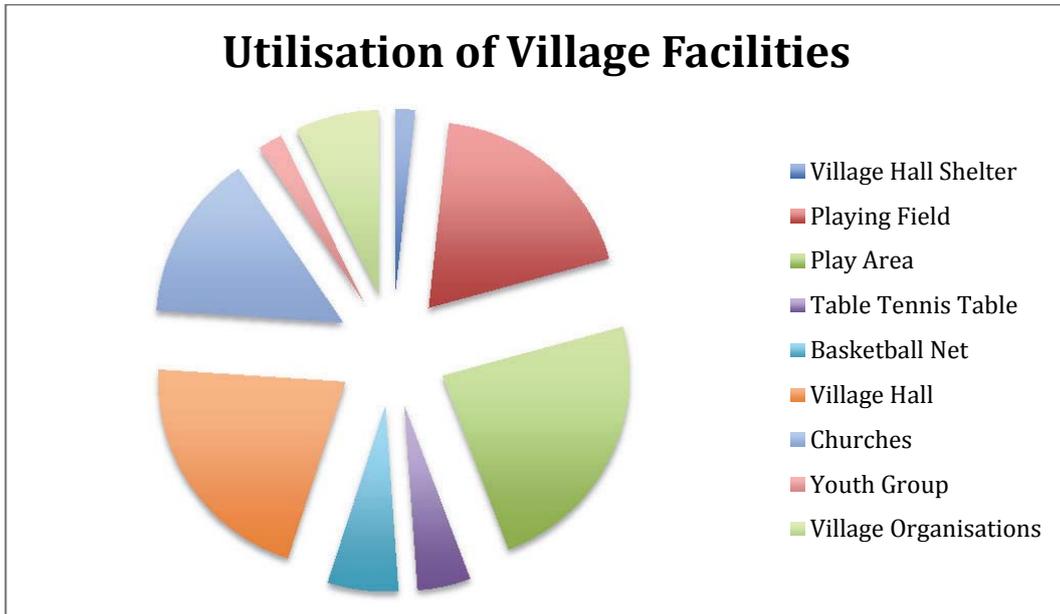
Of the 618 responses, over 94% obtain information of events from the Norton Messenger and this has been highlighted as an excellent medium for all residents within the village. 170 responders stated that they use the Notice Boards for news, but interestingly an average of only 6% use the Internet including the village website and Facebook for event updates.

Facilities

Only 55% of the total responders answered this question. The following chart focuses on the utilisation of the village facilities.



Table 9 – Use of facilities within the Village



Regardless of age group, the majority of residents thought that the facilities were reasonable in Norton, but when questioned about what events people would like to see, there was considerable interest in a Village fair or event with over 62% keen for this to take place.

## Norton Parish Plan

Other areas of interest are:

- Implementation of Tennis Courts
- Clubs such as Gardening or Photography
- Quizzes
- Dances/Discos
- Additional Playground facilities

With regards to the use of Village shops/services, the following evaluation can be made

Petrol Station – 64% Utilisation

Village Shop – 56% Utilisation

Garage – 49% Utilisation

Norton Dog – 49% Utilisation

Mobile Post Office – 35% Utilisation

There was a positive response for the village to encourage businesses with groceries being the popular choice with over 65% supporting the idea. Other areas of interest included restaurant/cafes and take away food outlets.

### **Actions:**

- Potential Annual Village Event to be reviewed and formatted
- Feasibility of introducing tennis courts in the village for use of the public.
- Potential support of new businesses eg grocer/food outlets.

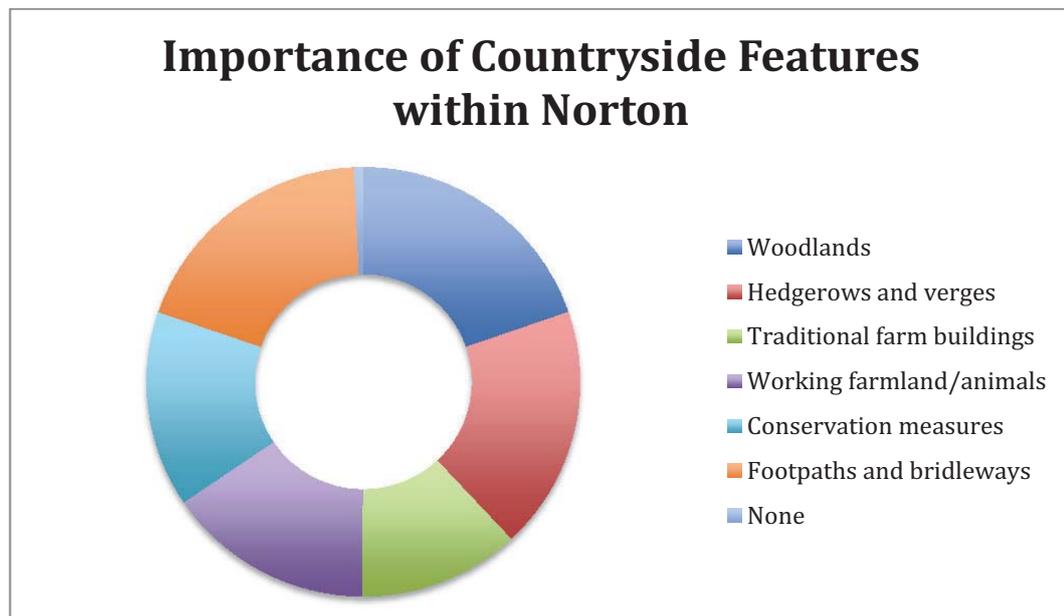


### **Section 6 - Environment**

This section was very popular, with over 80% adding comments to the questionnaire.

It is quite noticeable from Table 10 that the countryside features are very important to the local population.

Table 10: Importance of Countryside Features



More detailed analysis highlighted the desire to protect the trees and hedges within the community (61.8%) with focus on encouraging walking and cycling. There was also considerable support to improve public transport and plant more trees and shrubs.

Concerns from the survey supported the following areas

- Animal fouling
- Litter
- Fly tipping
- Overgrown footpaths

### **Actions:**

- Maintain the current Environmental footprint in the village
- Support of cycle paths
- Maintain, define and raise awareness of the village footpaths.



**Section 7 - Public Services**



**Schools:**

With regards to school placements, there were only a handful of responses that highlighted a problem with placements to any form of education. Nine had feedback that they had problems accessing a childminder.

This may be a challenge for the future due to the merging of local schools and the re introduction of the two tier education system.

**Village Services:**

This question had a poor response. However there was a clear message from the residents that the provision of road crossing facilities is a requirement within the village.

**GP Surgeries:**

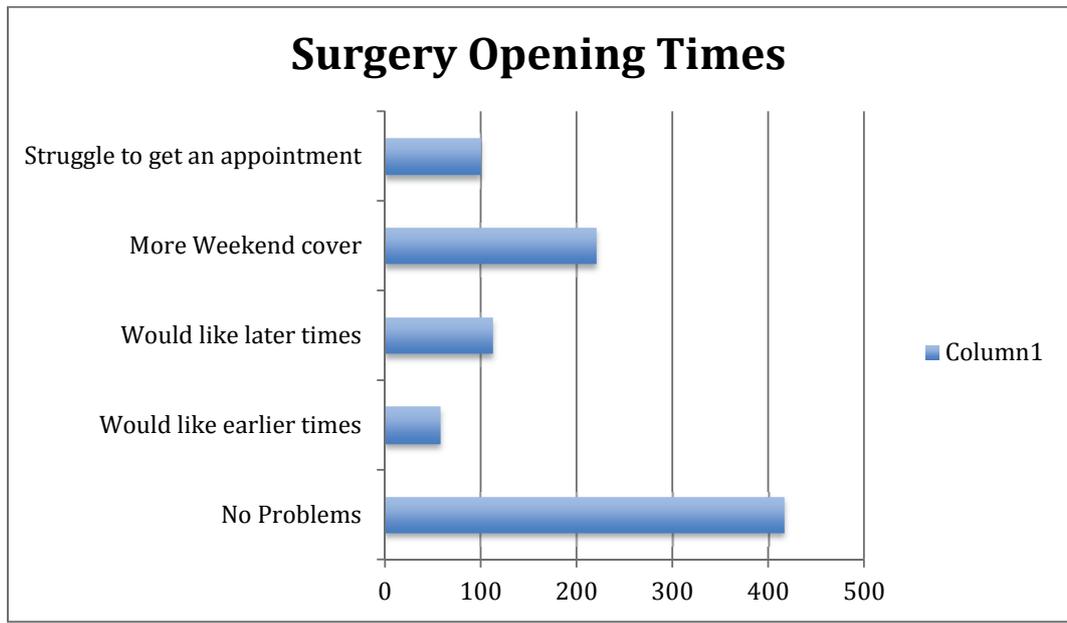
The surgery attended by the community was split as below:

Woolpit – 84.9%

Ixworth – 15.1%

The table below provided details on opening times of the local GP surgery:

Table 11 – Opening Times of the Local GP Surgery



As with Table 11, the majority of the Norton public (75.7%) had no problems with current opening times of the pharmacy, although 21% would like to see more weekend cover.

**Actions:**

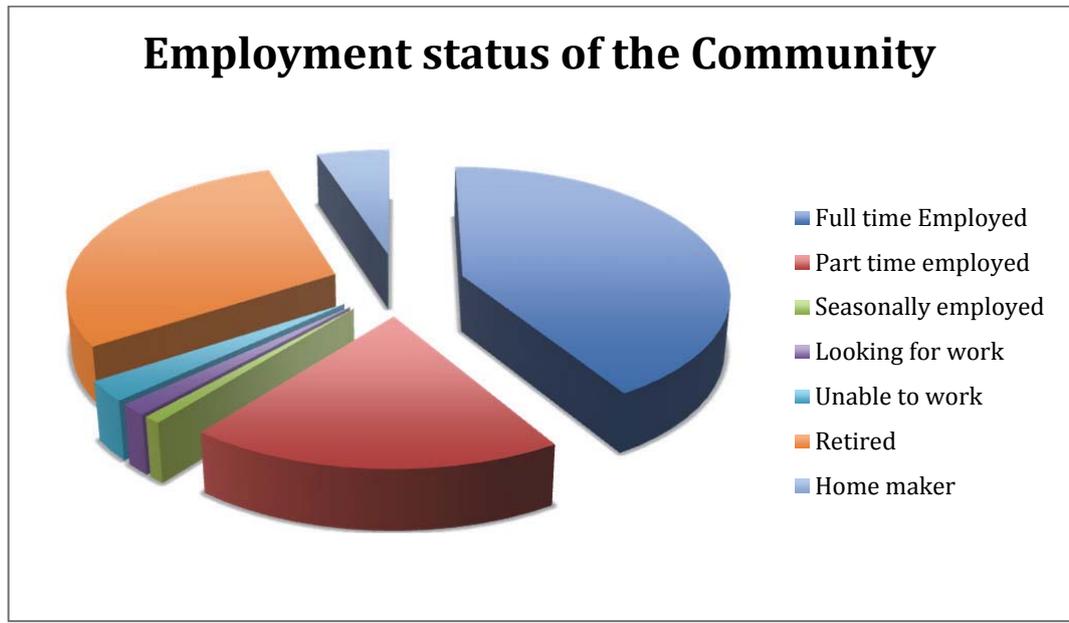
- Advertise child minding resources in the Norton Messenger.
- Review where local road crossings could be implemented within the village framework
- Feedback comments to the local surgeries



**Section 8 – Employment and Local businesses**

This section reviewed the breakdown of the employment status of the village population and requirements of local businesses

Table12: Employment Status of Residents



The travelling distance from home to work was evaluated and the following details was taken:

- Work from Home: 26 responses
- 0 -10 miles: 126 responses
- 10 – 20 miles: 92 responses
- 20 – 40 miles: 46 responses
- 40 – 60 miles: 30 responses
- 60 miles: 36 responses

The following information would question whether there were opportunities for car sharing to work.

The key message from the survey as already highlighted was the necessity for improvements to broadband and mobile reception to local businesses.

With regards to the mobile Post Office facility, 45.7 % stated that it met individual requirements. However 38.0% offered no opinion, which would question whether the community fully appreciates the availability of the service.



## Norton Parish Plan

It was also questioned on whether extra homes or parking facilities impacted on local businesses and responses was “no” to both questions.

### **Actions:**

- Potential car sharing to work.
- Heighten the awareness of the mobile Post Office.
- Focus group to improve broadband and mobile phone reception.



## Action Plan

The Action Plan is a working tool to ensure that practical steps are taken towards achieving the vision set out in the Parish Plan. The Parish Council will have a key role in managing its implementation, but it is a community plan and the active involvement of various groups and individuals will be of high importance. The Action Plan will be ongoing and the Annual Parish Meeting would be a good time to evaluate progress and identify action points for the following year.

	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Population Profile (Page 8)</b>			
	Strategic Review of village footprint in consideration of increasing numbers of vehicles	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium/Low
	Review of amenities for under 18's	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium
<b>2.</b>	<b>Housing (Page 10)</b>			
	Consider a housing needs survey	Parish Council	Local Council	Medium
<b>3.</b>	<b>Transport (Page 12)</b>			
	Investigate speed control measures	Parish Council	County Council	High
	Review road / pathway maintenance	Parish Council	County Council	Medium
	Road gritting in the Winter	Parish Council	County Council	Medium
	Heighten awareness of footpaths in the village	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium
<b>4.</b>	<b>Community Safety &amp; Services (Page 14)</b>			
	Management of speeding in the village	Parish Council	Police	Medium
	Perception and visibility of the Police in the community	Parish Council	Police	Medium
	Neighbourhood Watch feasibility study.	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium



## Norton Parish Plan

	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Priority</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Local Services and Community (Page 16)</b>			
	Organise Annual Village Event	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	High
	Review feasibility of tennis courts	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium
	Support of new businesses eg Grocer	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Medium/Low
<b>6.</b>	<b>Environment (Page 19)</b>			
	Maintain the current village environmental footprint	Parish Council	Environment Agency	Medium
	Support the location of a cycle path	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Low
<b>7.</b>	<b>Public Services (Page 20)</b>			
	Feedback comments back to the local surgeries	Parish Council	County Council	Medium
	Advertise child minding in the village	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Low
	Feasibility of road crossings in the village	Parish Council	County Council	High
<b>8.</b>	<b>Employment and Local businesses (Page 22)</b>			
	Car sharing to work feasibility study	Volunteer Group	Parish Council	Low
	Heighten the awareness of the mobile Post Office	Parish Council	Post Office	Medium
	Improvement of broadband and mobile phone reception	Volunteer Group	Service providers	High



**Useful Local Contacts Details**

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
Parish Council	Clerk	Jill Rowland	01359 240915 Rowland@talk21.com
Village Hall Management Committee		Richard Allen	01359 241071
Norton church	Priest in charge	Katherine Valentine	01359 235095
Baptist Church	Secretary	Roger Allum	01359 230093
Salvation Army	Major	Kevin Rand	01359 240787
Norton Primary School	Head	Stella Hart	01359 230530 office@norton.suffolk.sch.uk
Norton Pre School	Play Leader	Anne Gladwish	01359 232736
Woolpit Surgery			01359 240298
Police Station			01284 774100
West Suffolk Hospital			01284 713000
Fire Station			01473 3588901
Anglian Water			0845 7145145
Environment Agency			enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk



## **Acknowledgements**

The production of our Norton Parish Plan would not have been possible without the facilities, help, contributions, support and time of many individuals and organisations. Our thanks go to them all:

Particular thanks for support go to:

Norton Parish Council  
The Dog Public House  
Big Lottery Fund

Special Thanks also go to:

Suffolk ACRE for the initial guidance on the parish plan process, training and support.

The many volunteers who offered facilities, delivered questionnaires and assisted in organising the Event to publicise the outcome of the project.

And, most importantly, the residents of Norton who greeted us at the doors and contributed their opinions, views and ideas as well as their support for this Parish Plan.





