

Project of: *Caroline Heuman*

EE/10653

Essex

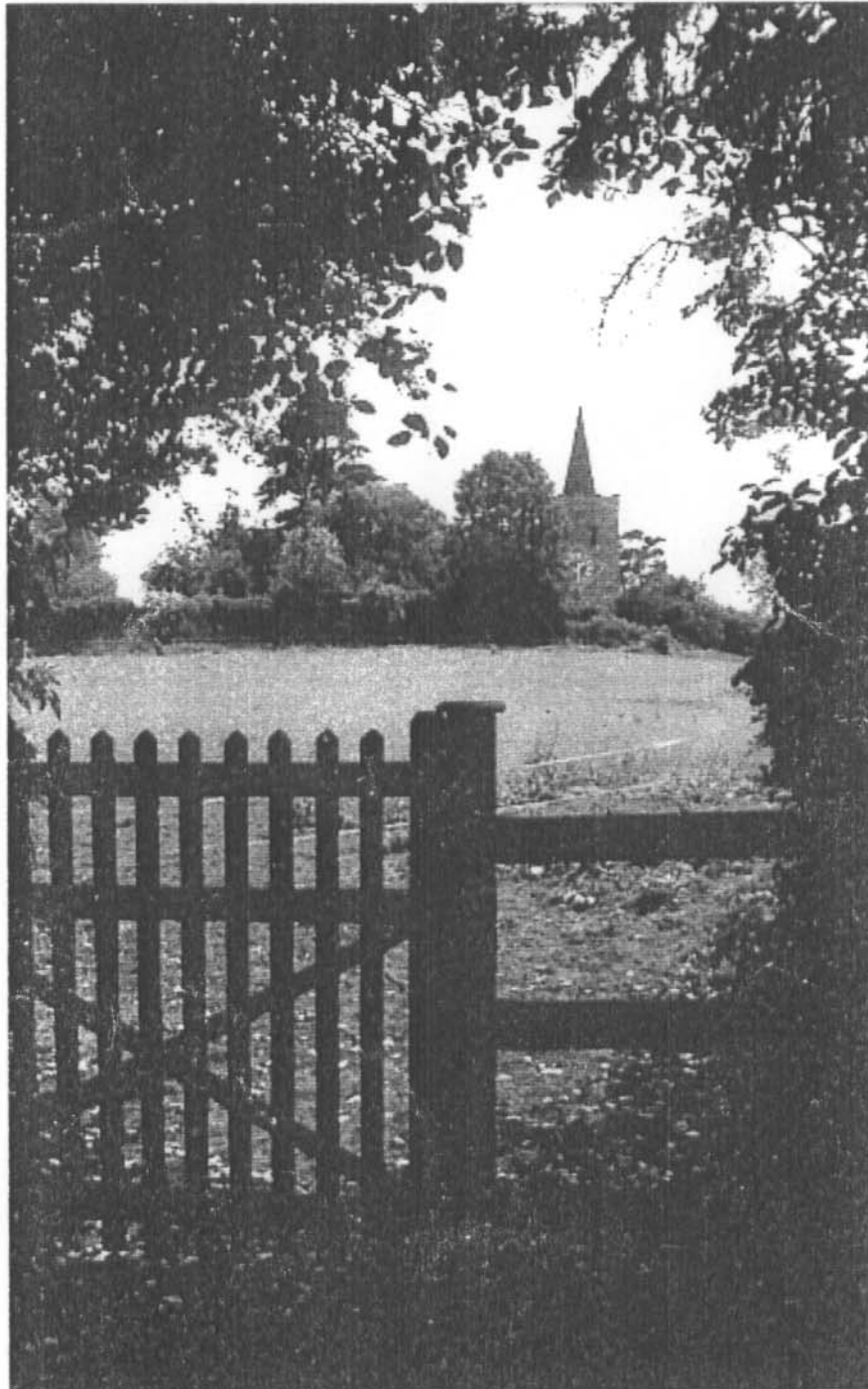
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GREAT BARDFIELD

VILLAGE APPRAISAL

Contact
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2003

GREAT BARDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

About Great Bardfield



Great Bardfield is situated in open countryside, in the valley of the River Pant, on the B1057, 9 miles from Braintree, 6 miles from Great Dunmow and 10 miles from Stansted Airport. The village has a population of around 1000. Facilities include a Post Office, three shops and two public houses. There is a Primary School with 150 pupils, a Pre-school and an After-school club. The nearest Doctors' Surgery is in Finchingfield, 2 miles away. The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book and has a significant number of fine timber-framed houses, the earliest dating from the 14th Century. The Parish Church dates from the 11th Century and was re-modelled in the 14th Century. There is also a Roman Catholic Church and a Quaker Meeting House. The village has a wide range of clubs, groups and organised activities catering for all age groups, many of which take place in the Town Hall. There is an extensive playing field with a football pitch, a small pavilion and a children's play area on the edge of the village. A small commercial development on the outskirts of the village comprises a range of office and light industrial units.

What is the Village Appraisal?

The Village Appraisal was carried out to help the Parish Council to plan in an informed way for the future of the village and to work with other tiers of local government, such as Braintree District Council and Essex County Council, and other agencies. The questionnaires were designed by the Council and distributed to all households in the parish. The results of a preliminary analysis of the 569 completed questionnaires were reported at the Annual Parish Assembly in May 2002. Since then a more detailed analysis has been carried out and is published in this report. The data from the appraisal are held on computer in the Community Information Point and are accessible on request.

What does it tell us?

The responses help us to build up a picture of the community at the start of the Twenty-first Century. They tell us what people value about living in Great Bardfield, and what they feel could be improved. The comments about living in Great Bardfield are very

positive. The main concerns relate to the volume and speed of traffic and the future development of the village. There is a strong desire for improved leisure facilities for people of all ages and it is encouraging that some people are prepared to contribute to improved facilities by donations, supporting a Lottery bid or helping to fund-raise. The responses show that there is a very strong awareness that a flourishing Primary School contributes significantly to the viability of the community. People are positive about the level of services in the village and many support local shops. However, use of public transport is limited and the mobile library is only used by a small number of people.

How have we used the information so far?

Although the final report has only just been published early analysis of the questionnaire responses has enabled us to strengthen our case when dealing with outside agencies, for example:

- to support our response to the Stansted Airport consultation;
- to support our project to open a Community Information Point;
- as evidence in our responses to planning applications.

How will the Parish Council use it to plan for the future?

The issues identified through the Village Appraisal will form the basis of a Parish Council Action Plan which will be costed in terms of time and funding, reviewed at each meeting and reported on at the Annual Parish Assembly. Particular areas will include:

- drawing up a Village Design Statement to inform future development planning;
- identifying and meeting public transport needs;
- using the information to support bids for funding for projects such as a new sports/leisure pavilion at the playing field;
- improving the public footpath network.

The challenge lies in maintaining a balance - retaining those aspects of the village which people value and preserving its character, whilst ensuring that there is appropriate development and growth to keep a lively, mixed community.

THE EVIDENCE BASE

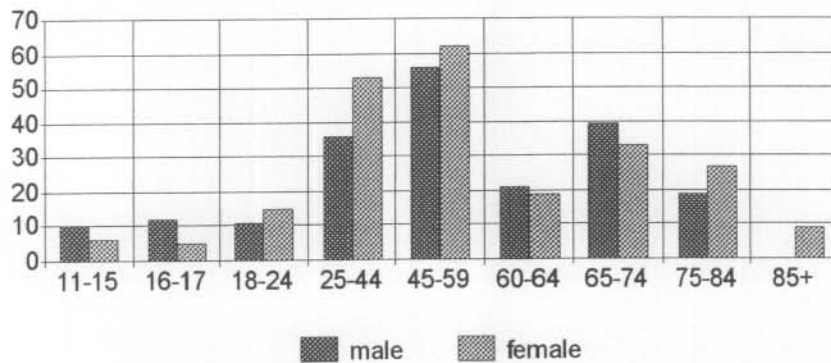
There are 950 registered electors in Great Bardfield. Questionnaires were distributed to all households in the Parish. A total of 569 people from 245 households responded to the survey, that is around 60% of the population of the village. Only one of the respondents reported that the dwelling in Great Bardfield was not their main residence.

A separate questionnaire for young people was included. There were 34 responses from people aged between 9 and 18. The analysis is included on page 19.

In addition to questions which required a box to be ticked we invited respondents to add written comments. Examples of these are included throughout the text of this report.

The distribution of the responses between men and women was almost equal with 47% of respondents being male and 53% being female. The chart below indicates the age range and sex of the respondents to the questionnaire.

Respondents by Age & Sex

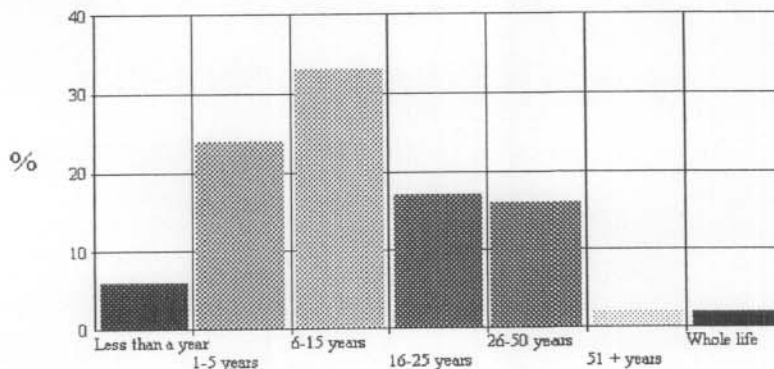


1. LIVING IN GREAT BARDFIELD

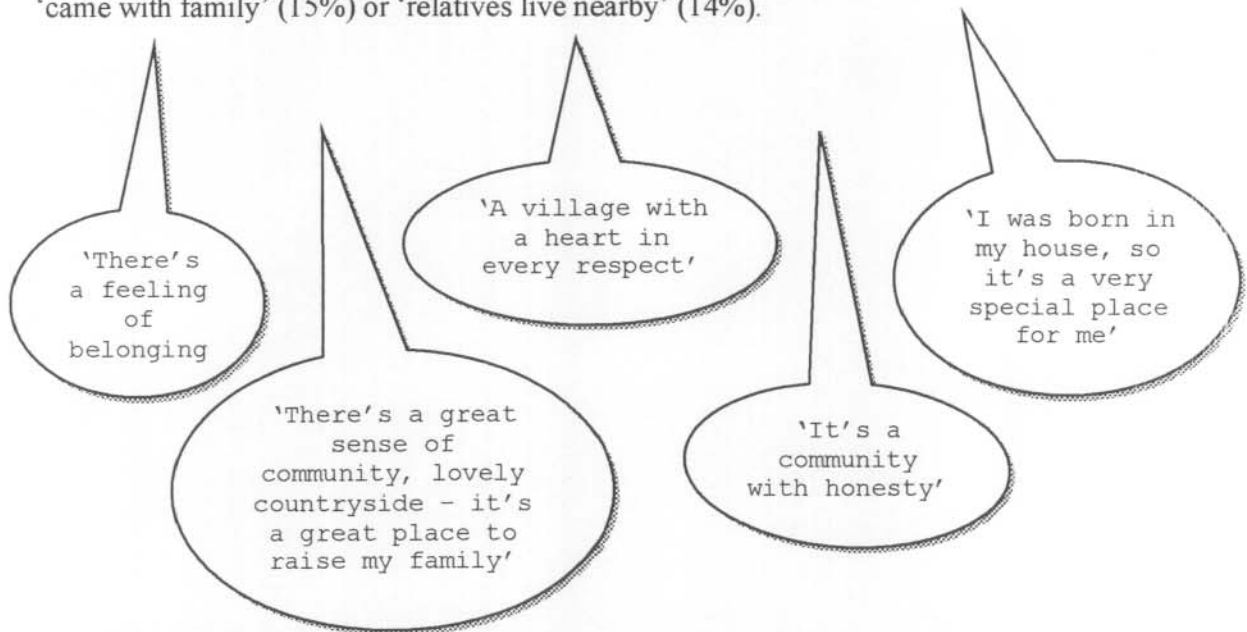
Of those responding to the questionnaire, the majority, 65% own the property in which they live, with 18% in local authority or housing association rented property and a further 3% in privately rented property. The remainder live in property 'tied' to or provided by their employer.

The following chart indicates how long respondents have lived in their current home. Of these over 20% previously lived at another property within the parish and a further 30% moved less than 10 miles. 30% moved here from a distance of over 30 miles.

How long have you lived in your current home?



The most popular reasons given for the choice of living in Great Bardfield are 'love of village life' and 'love of country life' with 33% and 29% giving these reasons. Other popular reasons, in order of popularity were 'work in the area' (16%), 'born here' (15%) 'came with family' (15%) or 'relatives live nearby' (14%).



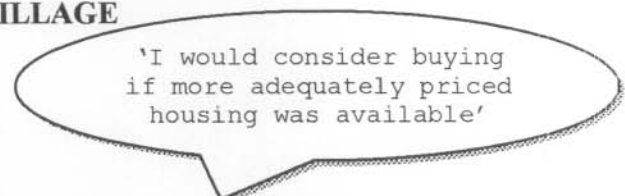
2. EMPLOYMENT

Of those respondents who are employed (just over half of all respondents), 31% live and work in Great Bardfield, 15% commute to London and 6% work at Stansted Airport. There is a fairly even spread of around 3% each for those who work in Braintree, Chelmsford or Cambridge.

10% of respondents are self-employed or run their own business although few employ anyone else.

We asked those seeking work, training or study opportunities (18% of respondents) to highlight the main problems they face. Lack of transport or having the right type of experience/qualifications were the most common answers given, with lack of available/affordable childcare the next most frequently cited problem.

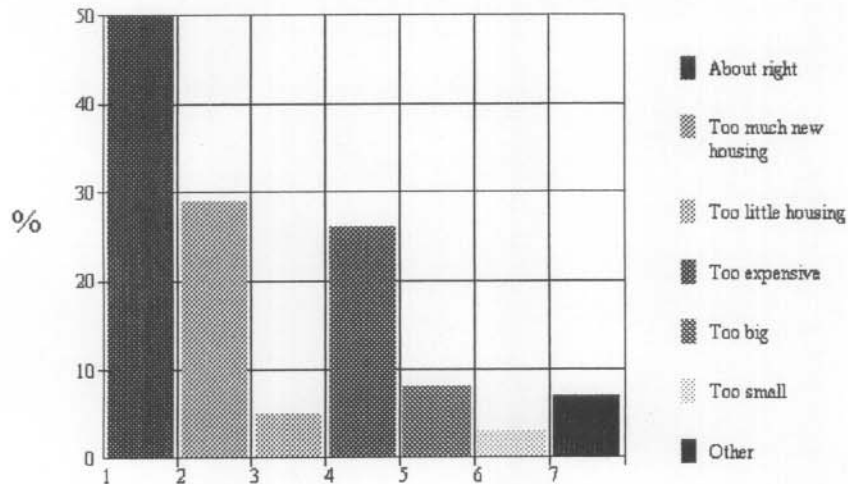
3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE



We asked about residents' attitudes to new housing and development within Great Bardfield. The following chart indicates resident's feelings about recent housing

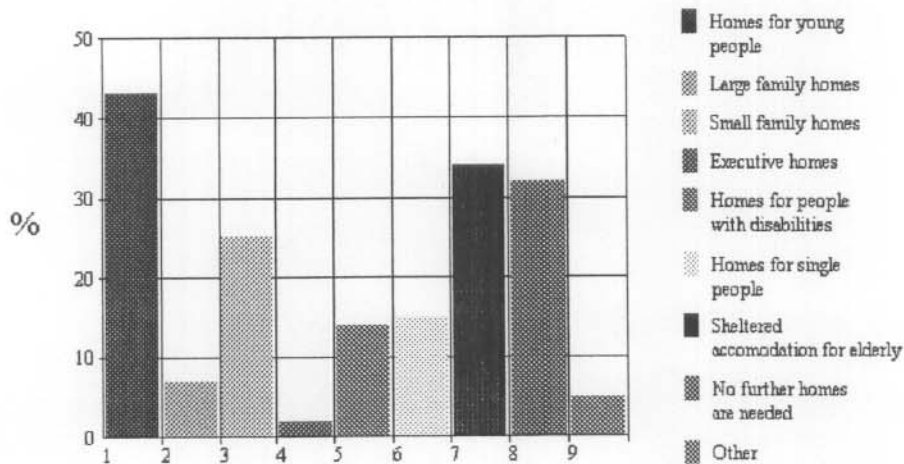
developments in the village. It indicates that the majority are happy with the number of houses built in the last 10 years, although nearly 30% felt there had been too many and 26% felt that the housing which had been built recently was too expensive.

The no. of houses built in the last 10 yrs



With regard to future housing development a third of respondents felt that no new housing could be accommodated in the village, 20% considered more housing could be accommodated (the remainder were unsure). The following chart indicates the type of accommodation respondents felt was most needed in Great Bardfield.

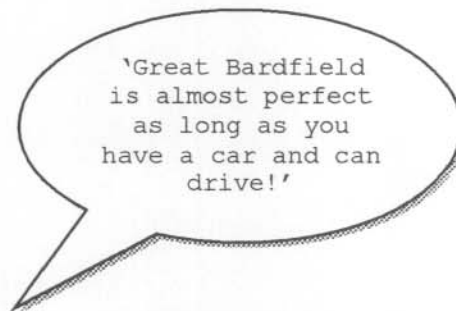
What kind of accommodation do you think Great Bardfield needs?



With regard to development we asked what type would be most acceptable. Although 37% want no new development, 44% would accept the use/conversion of existing/redundant buildings, 29% felt single dwellings in controlled locations would be acceptable and 18% preferred small groupings of less than 10. 5% would prefer larger groupings and 17% felt it would be acceptable to expand around the edge of the village.

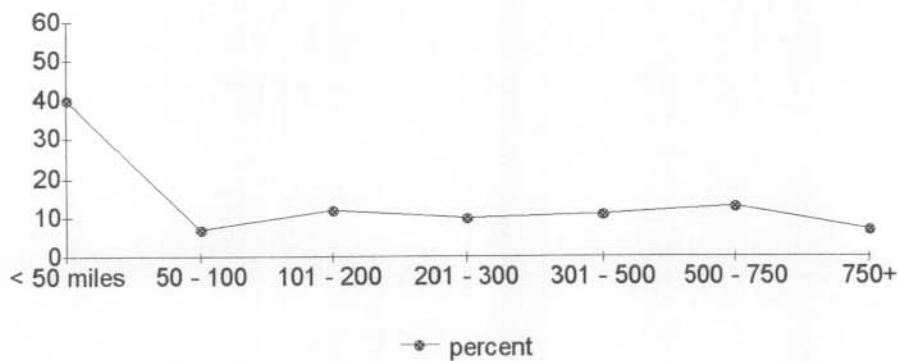
Although many people are satisfied with the way the planning system is implemented in Great Bardfield – 42% are at least quite satisfied, 26% state that they are quite or very dissatisfied with the system.

4. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT



This section provides information on means of transport used by residents and covers their views on public transport provision, parking and other traffic related issues. The following chart indicates the typical mileage covered by households in the village. The average household travels about 250 miles per week.

Weekly mileage travelled per household



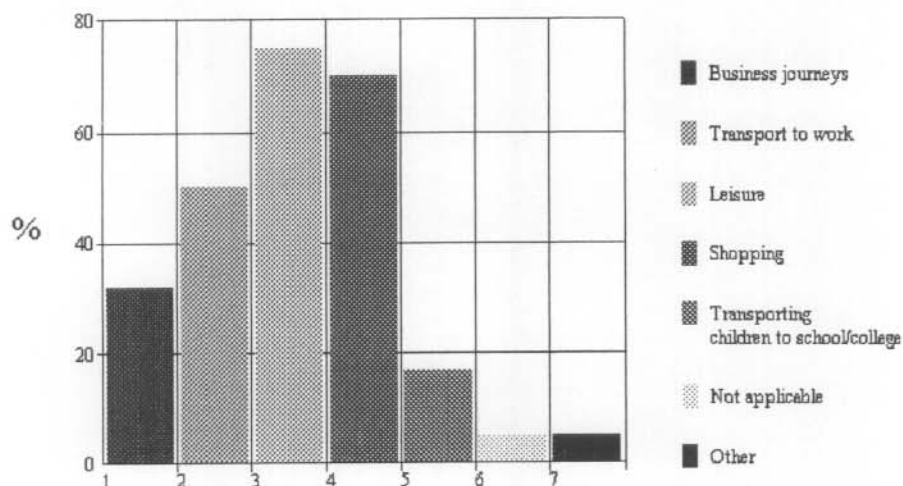
Use of Private Vehicles

84% of respondents have daytime access to a vehicle with 84% stating that a car is their major means of transport. The graph below indicates the main reasons respondents give for using their car or vehicle. The columns total over 100% as respondents could choose

as many options as were relevant. As can be seen, the most common uses were 'leisure' and 'shopping', with 'business journeys' and 'transport to work' also being popular.

Question: Do you have access to a vehicle during the day?

If yes, what do you use the vehicle for?



Other Forms of Transport Used

Only 16% of respondents do not use a car as their major form of transport. Of the other forms used the most popular were 'bus' or 'coach' (8%), 'walking' (3%) and 'bike' (3%).

The majority of people in Great Bardfield never use the bus service with less than 10% stating that they use it often. In these cases the most popular reason for using the bus is to go shopping.

Although few state that they use the bus on a regular basis most have a view on improving the service, with the majority wishing to see improved or more choice of routes (63%) or more frequent/extended timetable (47%). 20% of respondents wished to see improvements in the 'cost' of bus travel, presumably downwards. Others felt improvements were necessary in 'reliability' (16%), bus stop locations (15%) and 'disabled access' (16%).

Parking Issues

Of those responsible for a vehicle over 76% are able to park it on a private drive or in a garage. 15% park on the road and a further 6% on a pavement or verge.

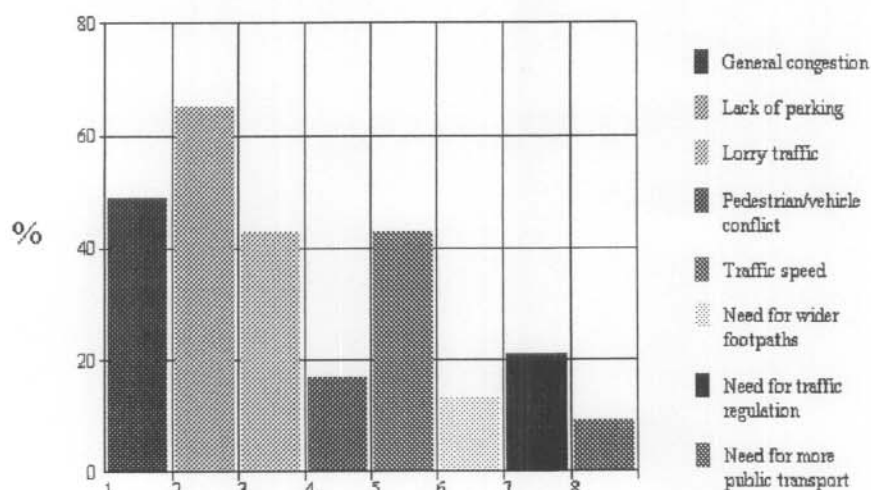
Only a minority of respondents reported experiencing parking difficulties at their home with 12% citing 'traffic blocking the road', 9% having problems with other vehicles blocking access to their driveway and 6% having 'nowhere to park'. 12% gave other reasons.

In separate questions on traffic problems in the village (see below) 65% felt that 'lack of parking' was a problem. 59% felt some form of parking control should be introduced in the village. It would seem that though few actually experience it at their own homes, parking in the village is perceived to be a problem.

Causes of Traffic Problems

The graph below indicates the views of residents as to the main causes of any traffic problems in Great Bardfield. 84% of respondents felt there were 'major danger-spots' on the roads in the village and most highlighted specific problem areas.

Causes of Traffic Problems



The main causes for concern are parking and general congestion, speeding, and the use of narrow lanes and streets by heavy goods vehicles. The location which causes the most concerns is Bridge Street (parking, speeding and inconsiderate driving). Other locations which come up frequently are the roads outside the school (inconsiderate parking and, to a lesser extent, speeding), the junctions of Brook Street/High Street/Vine Street and High Street/Bell Lane (parking, poor visibility) and the combination of parked cars and the road calming measure in Braintree Road.

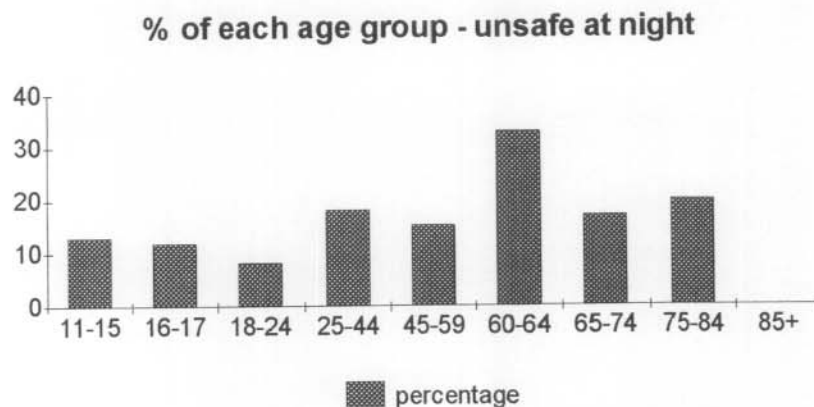
Speeding throughout the village is seen as a problem and the majority of respondents stated that they would support speed control measures such as additional 'traffic calming' (56%), 'lowering of the speed limit' (43%), 'more road warning signs' (40%) or 'extension of the speed limit' (37%).

Pedestrians

Around a third of respondents felt that pavements in Great Bardfield are not 'user-friendly' for disabled people or those with pushchairs. 43% felt they were reasonable. Few concerns were raised specifically about the safety of pedestrians in the village, though some comments were made in conjunction with other problems, such as speeding and parking.

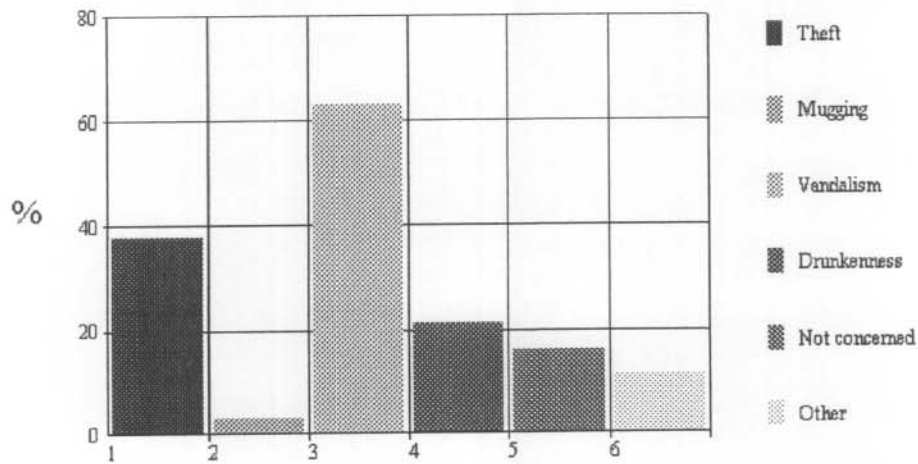
5. SAFETY AND CRIME

A small minority (20%) of people feel unsafe in Great Bardfield. The majority of these feel unsafe at night with only 4% of these feeling unsafe during the day. The chart below indicates by age, the percentage of all respondents who sometimes feel unsafe at night. Those people who seem most concerned are in the 60-64 year age group.



Although most people mainly feel safe in Great Bardfield, many have concerns about some level of crime or anti-social behaviour within the village. The chart below indicates the main types of criminal behaviour that concern respondents.

Concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour



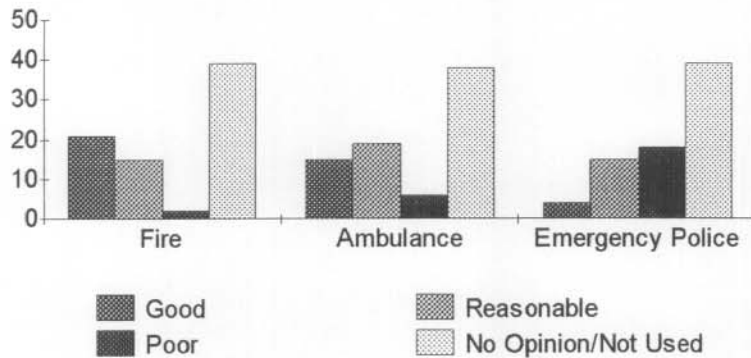
To combat these anti-social activities most people feel that a greater police presence is needed in the village (58%), with 32% desiring better consultation between the police and local people. 25% felt a neighbourhood watch scheme would help and 46% would like to see improved street lighting.

53% of respondents considered that more activities available for young people would help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the village. This was reflected in the responses to the young peoples' questionnaire.

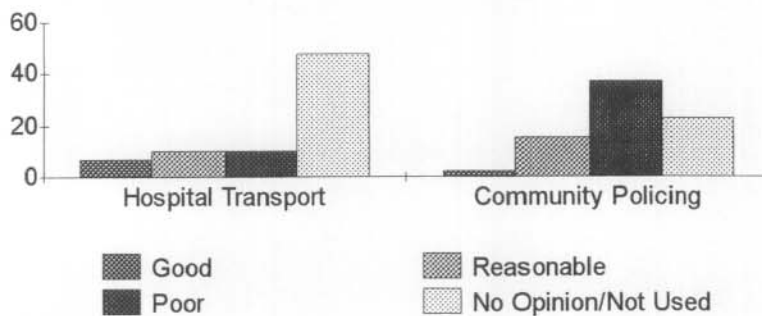
6. EMERGENCY SERVICES

The following two charts indicate whether residents find the emergency and associated services are good, reasonable or poor. The fire service comes out best, with community policing having the worst record with respondents.

Emergency Services



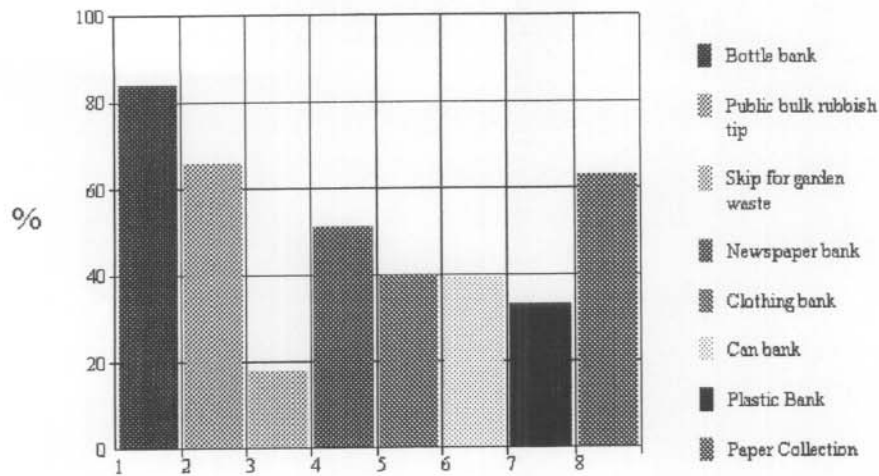
Associated Services



7. RECYCLING

95% of respondents would be prepared to separate items in the refuse for recycling if a separate collection was made. Many would (and probably do) use a wide range of recycling facilities where available as the next chart indicates.

Would you use the following?



8. LOCAL FACILITIES

The majority of residents consider that the range of shopping facilities within the village is reasonable or good. Less than 10% consider them poor.

Local shops seem well used with over 70% of respondents using them at least weekly. Over 50% use the post office on a weekly or daily basis.

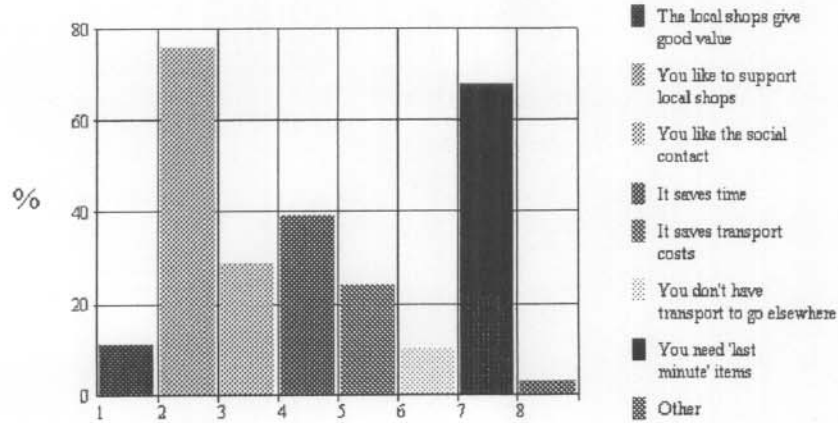
Mobile shops and fast food facilities are used less often with nearly 50% never using a mobile shop and 33% never using fast-food vans. The mobile library is poorly used with only 8% of respondents using it at least monthly.

The public houses in the village are used by 17% of respondents on a daily or weekly basis, with 15% using them monthly and a further 23% on a less frequent basis.

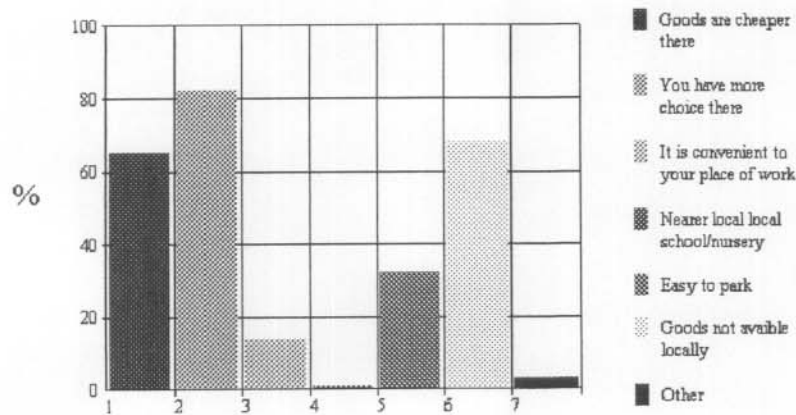
Over 30% of respondents use a milk delivery service on a daily basis.

The two charts below indicate the reasons given for a) shopping in Great Bardfield and b) shopping elsewhere.

If you usually shop in Great Bardfield is it because?



If you usually shop out of Great Bardfield, is it because?

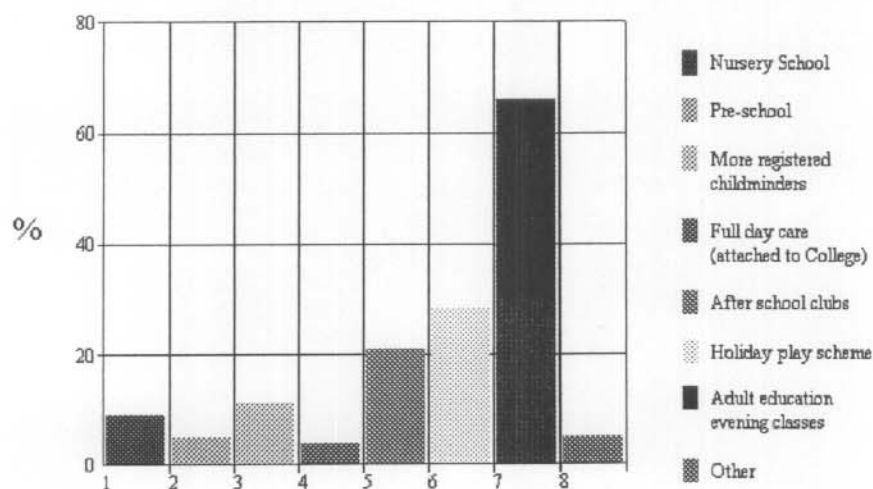


9. EDUCATION

83% of respondents felt that the village primary school was very important to the local community with a further 10% considering it important.

The chart below indicates which educational facilities are felt to be needed in Great Bardfield whether they are currently available or not.

Educational facilities necessary in the village



Adult education classes are considered important by 66% of respondents. Where people have not attended available classes the main reasons given were 'not interested', 'inappropriate subjects', 'inconvenient times' and 'expense'.

10. SPORT AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

54% of respondents felt that the facilities provided at the children's playground in the village were good or reasonable. 5% felt the facilities were poor. 40% of respondents had no opinion on these facilities.

When asked about sporting facilities required 33% felt an indoor sports centre was required in the village, 24% felt outdoor sports needed catering for, 30% wanted a swimming pool and 16% a skateboard park.

Over 51% of respondents stated that they would be willing to contribute to improved facilities by means of a donation, supporting a lottery bid or by helping to fund-raise.

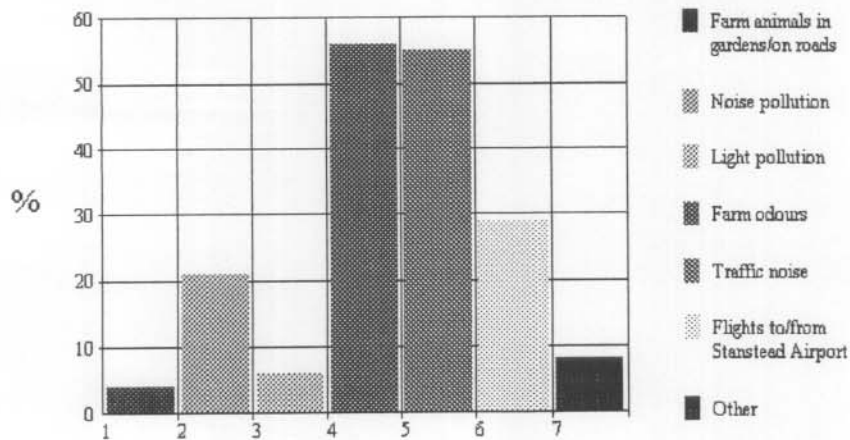
11. ENVIRONMENT AND COUNTRYSIDE ISSUES

99% of respondents felt that the quality of the countryside around Great Bardfield is important or very important to them. The elements of the countryside considered most important are ranked below (as indicated by this appraisal):

	% of respondents
tranquillity	73%
openness	72%
local identity	53%
a sense of place	50%

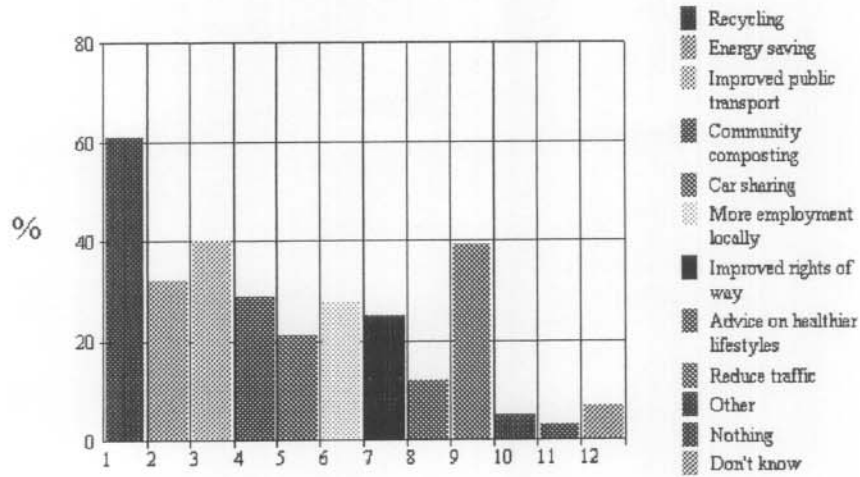
The chart below indicates the types of disturbance that respondents felt that Great Bardfield suffered from.

Does Great Bardfield suffer from any of the following types of disturbance?



We asked respondents to indicate how they feel the local environment could be protected and enhanced. As the next chart shows the most popular methods selected were recycling (61%), improved public transport (40%) and reducing traffic (38%).

What can be done to protect the local environment?



Footpaths

43% of all respondents to the survey have experienced some difficulties in using footpaths and bridleways around the village. Typically these problems are overgrown bushes/nettles (40%), mud/water (37%) and lack of signposting (30%). 23% have found that crops have been grown across the footpath. Others have had problems with high/awkward stiles (9%), barbed wire (9%), farm animals (8%), locked gates (7%) and other users (6%).

Around 50% of all respondents would like to see improved maps of local footpaths available. 35% would like there to be leaflets of local walks available to purchase and 15% wanted guided walks of the area.

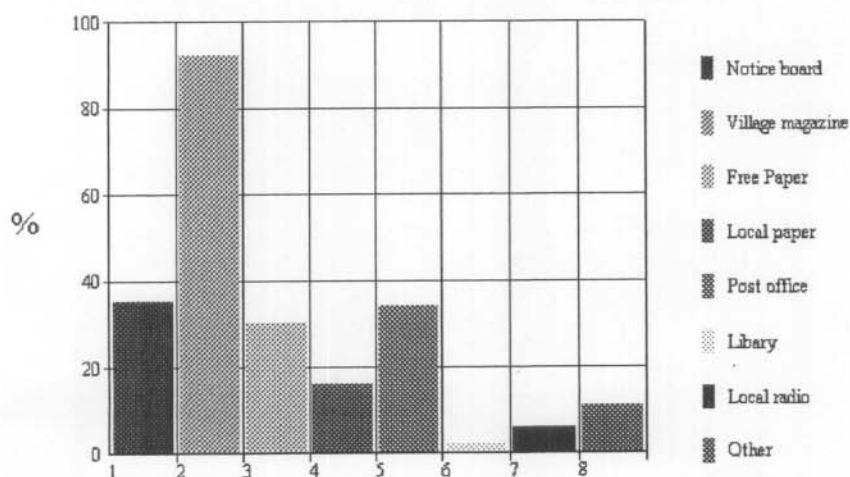
Flooding

Few residents reported having problems with flooding, either by surface water or storm drainage. 6% had experienced many problems and 17% few problems. The remainder have had no problems. Those who had experienced problems lived either near to the River Pant or in the Dunmow Road.

12. INFORMATION

The 'Bardfield Times' village magazine proves to be the most popular method by which residents gain information about the village and village activities. 75% report that they read every issue and only 2% never read it. The chart below indicates the sources of information considered important to residents of Great Bardfield.

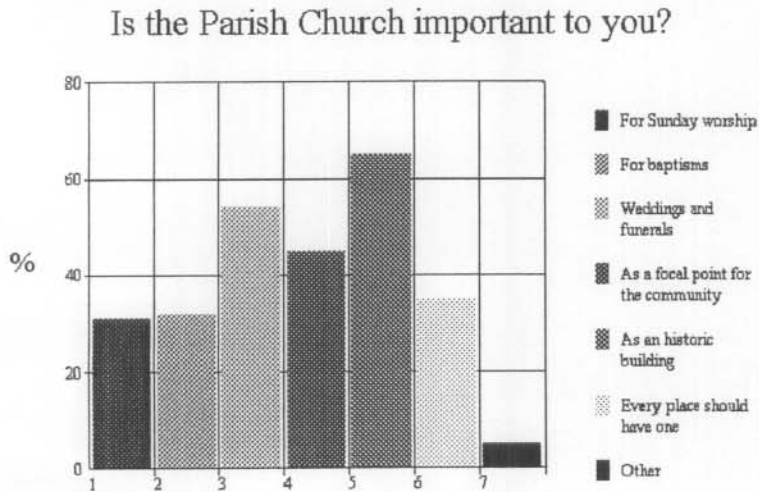
Information services important to residents



When asked about further information services which could be made available 36% felt they would use an information centre, 27% a Citizens' Advice Bureau, 24% a Parish Council 'office' and 12% would like public internet access.

13. CHURCHES/RELIGION

30% of residents consider themselves to be active members of any of the church groups in the village. However, more consider that the Parish Church is important as an historic building or for weddings and funerals as indicated in the chart below.



'There's a spirit of community - I have many friendships thanks to the churches'

Where people attend church services outside Great Bardfield the main reasons given are 'more convenient times', 'service preferred elsewhere' or 'better facilities for children'.

14. HOW YOUNG PEOPLE SEE LIFE IN GREAT BARDFIELD

The 34 responses to the young people's questionnaire are summarised below:

- The age of the respondents ranged from 9 to 18 with the majority being between 11 and 16.
- The most enjoyable things about living in Great Bardfield include: being near to friends, the peace and quiet, the countryside and the space; the playing field and the youth club are also seen as advantages.
- On the down side young people feel there is 'nothing to do' and 'it's too far from anywhere' with poor transport; another dislike was the speed of traffic passing through the village.
- Things which would improve the quality of life would include 'something to do' and 'somewhere to meet', better transport and better sports and leisure facilities.
- At present travel outside the village is to cinemas, swimming, shopping and various sports and musical activities with parents mostly providing the transport.
- Other comments included:
concern that some children and young people feel intimidated by 'village bullies';
more facilities for 13-17 year olds to keep them from 'hanging around aimlessly';
someone to organise an over 12s Football Team.

It was encouraging to see that 8 people said 'yes' to the question: 'Would you be interested in participating in a young people's council linked to the Parish Council where the young people of Great Bardfield can voice their concerns and wishes?'

Acknowledgements

Members of the Parish Council involved in the Village Appraisal, 2001-2003

Janet Dyson, Chairman

Mick Gell, Vice-Chairman

Tony Hayward

David Nance (until July 2002)

Carolynne Ruffle

Steve Slemmings

Simon Walsh

Clerk to the Council: Kate Fox

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The Countryside Agency.*

Thanks to Ian Fox for help in the preparation of this report.

The cover photograph shows the Glebe Meadow looking towards the church, a site currently the subject of a proposal for a housing development.