

Summary of comments from Lydford Parish Plan Survey results 2008

The main questionnaire, which was circulated in June 2008, was far from ideal. There were problems with how the questions were phrased. There were questions that were not asked that should have been. The complexity of the document did not help neither did the fact that it took 18 months to collate the results from the survey. Furthermore it is known that comments from at least one questionnaire submitted directly to one of the councillors have not made it into the collated results. If one has gone missing perhaps more have and this also has implications for the confidentiality that was claimed for the completed questionnaires.

Many of the questions in the main survey were multiple-choice but also had a comment box. The fact that few people answered some of the comments does not necessarily mean lack of interest. It may mean that the tick-box choices contained a suitable response.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first contained questions that applied on a household basis. The second applied to individuals within each household and had columns labelled A to E to allow for answers from households of up to six people. An additional complication was that some of the tick-boxes asked for just one answer and some allowed multiple ticks.

The early questions give some indication of how many questionnaires were included in the analysis. For questions 1, 3 and 6 the count reported by Devon County Council (who processed the completed questionnaires) was 85. This suggests that questionnaires representing 85 households were included.

This does represent more than 85 people of course. In the first question people were asked how many lived in the household. The sum of DCC's reported groupings comes to 179 people. Question 2 asked for the number of males and females in each household split by age group. This should, of course, be the same total number as in question 1 but actually came to 175. Perhaps somebody did not complete this question or perhaps there is some other sort of error.

Interpreting the results of the tick-boxes is easier for some questions than for others. To give an example of one of the simpler ones question 3 asked how long the family had lived in the Parish. Of the 85 who answered this question the largest number, 21 families, had lived here between 26 and 50 years. The percentage is given as 25 i.e. 21 as a percentage of 85. Even with this relatively simple result there are pitfalls. The result does not mean that 25% of families in Lydford have lived here between 26 and 50 years but only that 25% of those whose questionnaires were considered have done so.

Not so simple is the tick-box result for question 56. This question asks "*Is the Parish church important to you, and why?*" The DCC results for their analysis of the tick-boxes gives a total count of 427. Of the nine options for the tick-box the one "*As a historic building*" seemed to receive the most ticks with a count of 90. DCC report a percentage beside the count and give this as 57% but what is this a percentage of? Clearly not a percentage of the total number of ticks as this would be 21%. If one considers that from Q1 it seems the completed questionnaires represent 179 people then perhaps it is 90 as a percentage of 179. Close at 50% but still not the 57% reported.

This should give some idea of the complexity of the tick-box section and the difficulty for anyone trying to understand just what the DCC analysis of results actually means.

The comments are potentially of great interest as they allow people to expand on the tick-box choices and include items not specifically mentioned. Unfortunately, for the reasons explained above, analysis of the comments section is also complicated.

To give an example the comment section of question 29 asked people to identify which footpaths / bridleways they use. This produced 50 comments but does not mean much as people were not expressing deep felt concern but just writing down where they walk as they had been asked to do.

Compare this with the question about “danger spots” on roads. This question also drew 50 comments but it is clear from reading the text of the comments that there is genuine concern over road safety.

A number of ordinary parishioners took time and trouble to complete their questionnaires. For this reason it is a real shame that their effort should be ignored. The minutes of the December 2009 meeting of Lydford Parish Council even go so far as to blame the ordinary parishioners *“This [the parish plan] was discussed and sadness expressed over the seemed lack of interest from the parishioners”*.

Despite the fact that the questionnaire was seriously flawed, that some of the results are now irrelevant and despite the lack of interest from LPC there is still some value in studying the results. Topics such as concern over road safety remain relevant today for instance.

The main purpose of this document is to summarise the comments from the questionnaire and to put them in a form where they are easier to consider than the spreadsheet of raw data supplied by DCC.

In the table below the first column gives the question number from the final questionnaire. The second column describes the topic of the question. The third column indicates if this question was multiple-choice as this may well affect the number of comments given. The fourth column lists the total number of comments given. For questions that required only a comment (i.e. no tick-boxes) it is not surprising to find a significant number of responses. The final column gives a brief idea of the nature of the comments, although not for questions that were considered intrusive of where personal information was requested.

Finally it should be said that this document should be read in conjunction with the DCC analysis of the tick-box results.

| Q Num. | Question topic | Multiple choices? | Num. of comments | Nature of comments |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 | This question asked about the respondent's dwelling. | 8 set choices plus 'other' | 2 | The comments refer to the 'other' reason. |
| 10 | Difficulties with TV, radio, mobile phone, broadband etc. | Yes / No /Don't know | 27 | Many comments about TV reception but these are irrelevant now as digital TV was introduced before the results were available. |
| 11 | Question about need for nursery school or pre-school playgroup in the Parish. | Yes / No /Don't know | 5 | One comment claimed three groups already operating in the village. |
| 15 | This asked how the respondent came to live in the village. | 9 set choices plus 'other' | 11 | The comments refer to the 'other' reason. |
| 17 | Employment was the topic of this question, full-time, part-time, etc. | 10 set choices plus 'other' | 5 | The comments refer to the 'other' reason. |
| 18 | This asked for the type of employment e.g. professional, manual, etc | 5 set choices plus 'other' | 10 | The comments refer to the 'other' reason. |
| 20 | Means of transport to work. | 9 choices plus 'other' | 2 | One comment mentioned car sharing which was not one of the set options. The results from the tick boxes show that car was by far the most used option. |
| 22 | This question was about accommodation for tourists and type required. | Complicated two stage multi-choice with 6 plus 'other' choices for type | 4 | Two felt there was enough accommodation. One was non-committal and another was about the public toilets. The results from the tick boxes recorded 'Bed and Breakfast' as being the most desirable form of additional accommodation with a count of 37 |
| 24 | This question sought to determine why the lack of childcare facilities restricted employment. | 4 choices plus 'other' | 3 | Comments indicated that the question did not apply. The tick-box section recorded a count of 8 for the option 'There are no facilities' |

| Q Num. | Question topic | Multiple choices? | Num. of comments | Nature of comments |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 | People who were intending to become self-employed in the next 12 months were asked for the type of employment. | 4 choices plus 'other' | 5 | The responses included one not applicable. |
| 26 | For those who run a business this asked for location and category. | Two stage multi-choice with total of 11 choices | 4 | Relate to type of business |
| 28 | This asked what type of evening classes people would like. | Yes / No | 29 | Variety of subjects requested with 6 specifically mentioning computing/IT skills. One response was misplaced and referred to footpaths. |
| 29 | Public footpaths and bridleways, frequency of use and location. | 6 choices of frequency of use. | 50 | All these responses dealt with which paths people use. There were no set choices for location which explains the number of comments. The answer seems to be a variety! |
| 30 | Improvements to existing paths or suggestions for new paths were required here. | No tick-boxes | 27 | There was a wide variety of responses with no clear consensus. |
| 32 | This asked if there is a need for a village focal point and if so where? | Yes / No /Don't know | 39 | 24 people mentioned that we already have the Nicholls Hall. 10 people asked for a shop. |
| 33 | Sources of disturbance were listed | 9 choices plus 'other' | 18 | Variety of comments but 9 dealing with traffic or speeding. |
| 34 | This question asked what landscape features of the Parish need to be protected. | No tick-boxes | 43 | There were no set choices for this question which explains the number of comments. 16 people specifically mentioned the castle. Others mentioned the church, moorland and views. |
| 35 | Respondents were asked to choose from a list of things that they felt would be useful for the village. | 9 choices plus 'other' | 7 | Varied answers with 2 people asking for a hydroelectric scheme. |
| 36 | This question asked if people had difficulty getting to services. | 17 choices | 19 | 4 commented that they had no difficulty. Others mentioned reliance on neighbours. |

| Q Num. | Question topic | Multiple choices? | Num. of comments | Nature of comments |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 39 | Required here was how many times a month people use the counter service at the local Post Office and what they use it for. | Two tier multi-choice. For type of use there were 5 choices plus other | 21 | 7 people specifically mention Bridestowe post office. |
| 40 | This question requires people to say which other facilities they would like to see in the Parish. | No tick-boxes | 23 | 14 people wanted a shop or general store. |
| 41 | This asked how often people would use a community shop and what they would like it to sell. | Often / Occasionally / Never | 39 | Most wanted a shop to sell groceries, food, milk and bread. Other items were mentioned. In the tick-box section 58 said they would use a shop 'often' and 57 'occasionally'. 14 said 'never'. |
| 43 / A | People were asked which sports activities they participated in. | 17 choices plus 'other' for sports | 30 | Riding and walking were not in the list of set choices and were mentioned by several. |
| 43 / B | In the second part of Q43 people were asked which social activities they participated in. | 16 choices plus 'other' for social | 10 | Various other social activities mentioned |
| 44 | People were asked which activities they would participate in if they were available in the Parish | 19 choices plus 'other' | 11 | No real consensus on activities not already listed. |
| 45 | This asked for which age range the Parish needs additional sports facilities | 4 set choices | 17 | The responses specified sports activities rather than the age ranges asked for. 3 people mentioned skateboarding otherwise various answers. |
| 46 | Two questions were asked here. How many times a month people used the village hall and if they thought it was adequate. | 5 choices for frequency of use were provided | 29 | 23 who commented thought the hall adequate, very adequate, good, etc. |
| 47 | People were asked if they thought speed was a hazard in the Parish and if so would they like further speed restrictions. | Yes / No /Don't know | 41 | Clearly many people felt that speed was indeed a problem. A variety of locations were mentioned and suggestions made. In the tick box section there were 95 'yes' against 31 'no'. |

| Q Num. | Question topic | Multiple choices? | Num. of comments | Nature of comments |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 48 | This question was on what forms of public transport people were reliant on. | No tick-boxes | 30 | There were 8 'no' answers. 21 people were reliant on the bus but some qualified this by adding 'occasionally' |
| 49 | This was a question about the quality of public transport services in the Parish. | 4 set choices | 12 | There were comments about the bus pass only being valid after 09:30. There were three specific requests for the 10:00 bus to be re-instated and others mentioned the need for additional services. |
| 50 | This question was about danger spots on the roads and what people would like done about them. | Yes / No /Don't know | 50 | 22 people specifically mention the school. 15 mention the A386. This is clearly something people feel strongly about. In the tick box section 78 thought that there were danger spots. |
| 51 | Street lighting was the subject of this question. The comment box was to indicate where people would like it. | Yes / No /Don't know | 13 | 5 people indicted locations where they would like street lighting. 8 expressed comments that were against lighting. In the tick box section a count of 122 was recorded for street lighting and 14 against. |
| 54 | This was a question about where, and how often, people get information about the parish. | 8 choices plus 'other' | 3 | The comments added little to the tick box section of this question. The tick-boxes were overly complicated but indicted that people use the Parish Magazine (count of 121) or word of mouth (count of 68) more than other options. |
| 55 | People were asked where they would like to get information from local authorities. | 9 choices plus 'other' | 14 | 7 people mentioned the local paper which oddly was not one of the tick-box options. |
| 56 | People were asked why the parish church was important to them. | 9 choices plus other. Multiple ticks permitted | 11 | 4 comments mentioned bell ringing which was not one of the tick box options. The tick box section gave "as a historic building" as the top choice with a count of 90 |

| Q Num. | Question topic | Multiple choices? | Num. of comments | Nature of comments |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 59 | This was about planning and asked if there was sufficient information. | Yes / No /Don't know | 7 | A range of comments with no clear consensus. |
| 61 | This question asked what were the main crime and safety concerns. | 7 choices plus 'other' | 6 | 3 comments concerned the police, two positive one negative. |
| 62 | This was a question about antisocial behaviour and similar concerns but limited to just the previous 6 months. | 6 choices plus 'other' | 10 | 3 comments were on speeding and 3 were on theft/burglary. |
| 64 | People were asked which services could be provided in the Parish, which would they use most often? | 9 choices plus 'other' | 10 | 5 of the comments pointed out that some or most of the services listed in the tick-box choices were already available. |
| 66 | This asked people to suggest where money should come from to implement suggestions arising from the questionnaire. | 5 choices plus 'other' | 14 | 6 comments specifically mentioned Government. |
| 67 | This final question asked for further comments or suggestions | No tick-boxes | 24 | At least 10 comments mention affordable or low cost housing whilst 3 are against further development. |