

Summary of Pertinent Comments: Questions 8 – 11

(plus background information)

Local facilities

One respondent commented “*We cannot see what 160 houses would add in facilities to this village*”, and there were several other similarly negative comments. Most mentioned improvements they would like to see as the housing increased. More investment in infrastructure, better broadband and more resilient utilities were commented on. There was particular concern about the risk of flooding that might occur with more housing.

Shop

Over 40% of respondents of the October survey mentioned the lack of a shop among things they did not like about the parish. The village shop in Great Kimble closed more than 20 years ago, and there are now no shops within the parish. At a meeting with two representatives of the planning office at the end of October, it was made clear that the Neighbourhood Plan would need to demonstrate that a village shop was viable to be acceptable. It is believed there are currently 171 houses in Great Kimble and around 300 elsewhere in the parish. Even with a further 160 houses, would this raise sufficient footfall in a small village store to be viable?

However, Wycombe District Local Plan – Regulation 19 Version October 2017 states on page 172 (Policy PR3) that they will require “*A local centre with 300-400 sqm retail space*” for the main Princes Risborough expansion area along the relief road. Given the plan also draws up provision for a joint footpath and cycleway alongside the upgraded B4009 to Great and Little Kimble, this may be a good compromise for parishioners looking to pop out to small shops on foot or on cycle.

Pub/restaurant

The pub was mentioned by several as being important to them, but there was concern that we now only have one eating place in the parish (The Swan). Some suggested a café (possibly community run) or a take-away.

School

The local Church of England School in Great Kimble is an important part of the community. It is highly regarded, drawing pupils from beyond the parish, and was rated as outstanding in the last Ofsted report. It currently only takes ages 4-7, but plans are in progress to expand it to take children up to age 11, with numbers increasing from 67 to 105 pupils. These plans will use the property next to the school to create new classroom facilities, but expansion may mean there is less room for children from outside the parish. The school also has an Outside Classroom at ‘Smokey Row’, a 15 minute walk from the school that pupils visit weekly and it is hoped the reordering work at St Nicholas’ will provide a suitable floor space for drama, PE etc.

Only 4% of respondents to the survey mentioned the village school as being something they liked about the parish in question 8, but 28% wanted to see an increase in school places in question 10, which asked about improvements people would like. This might suggest a low percentage of respondents currently have children using the school, but that parishioners would like to see a younger demographic in the village – this ties in with question 4 where nearly 85% thought the housing should be ‘mixed housing with some starter homes’, ‘include a preference for village families’ or be ‘family homes’.

There were numerous comments suggesting the school was improved, enlarged, or even relocated to accommodate the likely influx of children from the additional housing. However, there were also a significant number of comments relating to the lack of parking at the school and the congestion problems in Church Lane at certain times of the day, eg

- *Church Lane is very congested at certain times of the day and will only worsen if the school is enlarged as proposed. Parking must be taken into consideration.*

There is also a private preparatory school in Little Kimble, Griffin House, which takes around 150 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11.

Community spirit

There were lots of comments about how important the community spirit is in the villages, and the fact that we live in a friendly neighbourhood where *“everyone knows everyone else”*. Facilities such as the village hall, the school, local churches, the pub and the playground were mentioned in connection with facilitating community spirit. The allotments and cricket pitch were also valued. However, facilities for people to come together are currently very limited – there is just the one village hall in Little Kimble, and one pub in Great Kimble, (plus one in Marsh which is currently up for sale) and access on foot is not easy for many. There were also a couple of comments about the need to improve safety for the children’s playground.

Four respondents specifically mentioned there was no centre in Great Kimble, and several suggested some building around the village green/playground/pub. Conversely, another respondent wrote: *“Parish lacks centre - not all residents live by the Swan.”* Another commented that the village hall was not in the main area.

Utilities

At present, a considerable number of houses in the parish are not connected to the foul water drainage system and outlying areas have no gas supply. In addition, power and telephony supplies are often via overhead cables, and several commented that more needed to be done to prevent outages. There were also several comments about the poor provision of high-speed broadband.

With respect to water, there were concerns about flooding due to additional housing run off, with one respondent including comments and photos showing their property being flooded in 2015.

Lack of other facilities

Some residents complained about the lack of street lights, others valued the dark skies, but the number of comments was low in each case. There was also the odd comment about the lack of a doctor’s surgery, lack of police, poor accessibility for the disabled, the need for more amenities for young people, and poorly provisioned and maintained litter bins.

One respondent mentioned *“lack of housing for the young wanting to continue living in the village”*.

Lack of employment opportunities

Being a large parish of some 557 hectares, dwellings are much spread around apart from in the main villages. There are thought to be a considerable number of small businesses running in the area, either from home or in commercial units, such as re-purposed farm outbuildings. There were a couple of comments in the survey about current lack of employment opportunities within the parish.

However, the Wycombe Local Plan only asks for residential housing to be built in our parish. (It should be noted that 500 sqm space for business start-ups is planned for the main expansion area for Princes Risborough).

Public transport

There were several comments about the good proximity to local towns and to cities further afield, with both bus and railway connections. However, there were more comments about the lack of convenient public transport for those who do not live on the main bus route or by the station. Pertinent comments include

- *Bus service is quite good and reliable, but still need a car if working farther out. Sadly no work as such in the villages. Trains are very frequent also, but not always convenient, so having a car is essential for some residents.*
- *Public transport regular services limited to one or two roads, ie, not using Grove Lane/Lower Icknield Way*
- *Poor transport links by train, poor quality roads, use of parish as high speed rat run*

Under the section asking what improvements respondents would most like to see, improved bus/train links to local towns were mentioned, with a specific call for a regular bus service on the B4009. Improved access to the station for pedestrians from the south and west was also mentioned.

Footpaths and cycle ways

There is a good network of footpaths in the parish, including part of the Aylesbury Ring, and a large number of respondents mentioned how important being close to the countryside and having good walks was. It should be pointed out that the footpaths are generally unmade paths crossing the countryside rather than being convenient for accessing facilities. There are some paths along road verges, but there were a large number of comments about the lack of provision for pedestrians/cyclists along roads. Specific areas of concern included:

- *The railway bridge in Grove Lane, where there is no footpath. This makes it difficult to access things like bus services, the train station and village hall for those living in Clanking and the west side of Great Kimble.*
- *No road-side pavements for those accessing the school in Church Lane.*
- *The need for a wider footpath along the B4009*
- *The need for dramatic improvements to the pathway along the A4010*
- *Lack of safe footpaths and cycle tracks through Great Kimble and the A and B roads that serve it*
- *Pedestrian connectivity to the station through providing an all year round surface was suggested by one respondent, and others suggested similar improvements.*

It was also suggested that more footpaths and cycle ways would reduce the carbon footprint and that footpaths should be dual use – walk and cycleway. There were also a few comments about the need for better bridleways. One respondent suggested:

- *Interconnect villages and hamlets with horse-riding and cycle paths/footways separate from roads/cars*

Countryside, views, quiet and environment

There were many comments about how much respondents liked the views to the countryside, the peace and quiet, the easy access to country walks and the environment in general. The following comments are a small sample but give an idea of the range of opinions.

- *The fact we are a small countryside rural area with green spaces and country views and lots of lovely country walks and wildlife*
- *We have the perfect balance of rural quiet living whilst having nice small towns close by*
- *Countryside; quiet, green natural space and therefore a healthy environment*
- *...we moved to Kimble to get away from the noise and stress of town life*
- *Beautiful views and many lovely walks, and footpaths all over to see our beautiful countryside*
- *Open green spaces with mixed agriculture and sustainable hedgerows and woodland for wildlife*
- *Views with low density development not obstructing views over local countryside and Chiltern Hills*
- *Views outlook - to lose any view is loss of value + quality of life*
- *Countryside; quiet, green natural space and therefore a healthy environment*
- *Clean air!*

Other comments about the environment and heritage include:

- *Lack of street lighting so night sky visible*
- *Village traditions must be maintained. Once they're gone, they never return, more the pity*
- *Chiltern heritage*

Specific views and spaces

There were numerous comments about specific views and spaces respondents thought important to be retained. A sample follows:

- *Maintaining rural nature of the parish*
- *The character of the surrounding natural environment should, where possible, be preserved and/or enhanced*
- *As much open space as possible retained, whether agricultural, grassland or woodland as befits this rural parish*
- *Conservation of ALL areas of natural beauty in the parish*
- *Respect for areas of outstanding natural beauty and the green belt*
- *Conserve hayfields and meadows which are the main habitat and food source for wildlife in the area, including hedgerows*
- *Preserve fields, including those between Great & Little Kimble and the footpaths that cross them*
- *We have some beautiful views and historic churches and buildings in the villages*
- *Allotments, village hall and Cricket club should be preserved*
- *Pub/village green/play area: preserve*
- *Preserve view, field outlooks of existing properties, eg new Redding Close ideal without impacting others, but NOT bulk between Kimble Station and B4009 NOR bulk along B4009 from Bridge Street towards Askett*
- *Conservation of views both of the hills from the village and the views from the hills on the Ridgeway*
- *View towards AONB protected and more species-rich hedges*
- *Specifically, Beacon Hill and Monument Hill and woodland*

- *View of Coombe Hill/Ellesborough Church/Chequers Hill*

Recreational aspects

Comments that respondents made about recreational activities include:

- *Rural environment to pursue Horse Riding activities*
- *Country lanes for cycling with beautiful views*
- *Good footpath links giving good access to facilities and amenities across the parish as well as valued recreational walking routes*
- *Play facilities for children*
- *Keeping dog walking field near train station*

Road matters

Badly maintained roads

There was considerable concern amongst respondents about the poor state of our local roads and verges. Comments such as:

- *Church Lane is so badly maintained. Lots of potholes and over hanging trees and hedges.*
- *Badly maintained roads, lack of foot paths, nightmare walking under the bridge for the bus & train.*
- *Badly maintained roads and paths and overgrown hedges need to be cut back*
- *The state of the roads on the B4009, potholes and in Marsh is very poor, not being maintained!*

give a flavour of the feedback given.

Traffic/Speeding/Noise

Many respondents were concerned about the volume and speed of traffic using our roads, along with the number of lorries, judging by the considerable number of comments. Particular concerns were:

The volume, speed and size of traffic on both the A4010 and B4009 eg

- *B4009 is used as a "rat run" for speeding cars making it unsafe for crossing - the speed limit of 40 is totally inadequate.*
- *Amount and size of traffic eg HGVs on B4009.*
- *Narrow bridge and traffic conditions at a 4010/B4009 junction*
- *40mph maximum speed limit on all main roads. 20/30 on all side roads*
- *Speed limit 30mph, not 40mph for built up areas like our section of the A4010*

The traffic speed in Marsh and along Marsh Road and the number of commercial vehicles using the minor roads eg

- *Traffic - the lane through Marsh is far too busy with HGVs etc*
- *Many heavy HGV/lorries carrying large loads of soil and subsoil (too fast also) using Marsh Rd.*
- *Lower speed limits, enforced, e.g. Marsh Rd*

Narrow lanes being unsafe eg

- *Narrow lanes used by HGV's and large agricultural vehicles also used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders*
- *Traffic speed and volume on small roads, especially near school / play areas*
- *Road safety and safe routes to the school - 20mph limit for Church Lane/Bridge Street*
- *Some wanted restrictions on access as well as speed eg "Ban any lorries through Bridge Street/Church Lane as it is too narrow".*

Noise from traffic and trains eg

- *Increase of traffic, noisy and never seems to stop. It's 24 hours now*
- *Noise of heavy vehicles on B4009 and A4010*
- *Noise from trains hooting too loudly. Would prefer automatic warning to footpath users by an 'electric' signal device. Vibration from trains was also mentioned.*

Road safety/traffic management

There were numerous comments on this topic, probably more than on any other, particularly calls to reduce speeds on both the main roads and the minor ones. There were some calls for traffic calming, but in the main respondents wanted better traffic management, particularly along the A4010 by the derelict Bernard Arms (to allow pedestrians to cross safely), along the B4009 through the village, along Marsh Lane to Marsh, and along Bridge Street/Church Lane. There were also several comments about making junctions safer. A selection of comments follows:

- *Road safety, particularly meaningful speed limits and routes for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Safety of pedestrians (paths can be uneven), traffic does not always observe speed limits.*
- *Road safety along Bridge St/Church Lane, especially during school pickup/drop off time (reducing speed limit at all times)*
- *Traffic and no speed enforcement and dangerous roads for pedestrians and vehicle users*
- *Unpoliced road speed limits: on B4009 traffic is often travelling at 50/60mph in a 40mph limit*
- *Much larger 40 mph signs please*
- *Improved parking and signage & maintenance of roads. Roundabout at Bridge / Marsh Rd/ B4009*
- *Road planning to alleviate rat run in Marsh*
- *Better traffic management putting people (not cars) first... for footpaths/cycle ways connecting communities safely*
- *Better management of hedgerows to improve road safety/visibility on rural roads*
- *Poor traffic calming in residential areas*
- *Pelican/Pegasus crossing by The Swan*
- *Parking for the school*

And looking to the future

Concerns (particularly about increased traffic due to various reasons) led to comments such as:

- *Need to think about how the construction traffic gets to the building sites*
- *Junctions on B4009 should have mini-roundabouts to help access and egress when traffic increases. Princes Risborough local plan would divert traffic onto B4009 from A4010 on top of local traffic from new housing.*

- *B4009 has too much traffic - this will increase with building in P. Risborough*
- *The increase in traffic, especially as 3K houses are planned for P.R. means our village will be ruined. Please note: A4010 is already too busy at peak periods.*
- *With B4009 to be main road, keep numbers of houses lower, to reduce vehicles entering*
- *Most of the roads in the parish, except the main roads, are narrow. Having a new housing estate with a large number of houses adjoining a country lane would be dangerous / ruins the environment. Thus the need for a few new houses to be scattered throughout the area, not all in just one or 2 developments.*
- *HS2, EW Rail and the Princes Risborough plan which will all have huge impact on our parish*
- *Traffic management - especially considering effects of HS2 road closures nearby*
- *Parish used as a shortcut to avoid main road.*
- *Build houses where possible to walk to school, station village hall with adequate lighting*

Housing mix/density/look

There were numerous comments on this topic, predominantly supporting the view that the look and feel of the parish should be retained as far as possible.

- Several parishioners commented in detail on the fact that they wanted quiet, low density housing to keep the rural atmosphere.
 - *Most properties look out onto open countryside, front or back*
 - *Gentle evolution of quality architecturally pleasing "in keeping" homes*
 - *Protect what old buildings/cottages are left to keep the Kimble "feel"*
- As for the look of the housing, there were comments such as:
 - *Housing to be in keeping with local country placement and Chilterns vernacular*
 - *Maintain the essential character of English villages - having small clusters of houses interspersed with open spaces - avoid large blocks of housing*
 - *New housing developed in a way that compliments the rural character of the parish with appropriate use of traditional materials whilst still allowing scope for innovation and individuality*
 - *Brick and flint.*
- One respondent commented at length about the number of new houses that had to be accommodated in the parish:
 - *If we are compelled to accept this level of development, then it should be implemented over as long a time frame as possible, and over a number of sites, possibly 3, to minimise the urbanisation of the Parish. The aim of the development we are required to accommodate should be to minimise the visual and environmental impact for the majority of Parish residents.*
- Others made comments that reinforced the view of over half of respondents to question 4 that the housing should be "mixed":
 - *A considered balance of housing stock*
 - *mix of houses ensures a good demographic profile*
 - *A good mix of properties to encourage integration*
 - *New development should be in smaller clusters of large and smaller houses with a proportion of affordable homes to allow younger families and residents to have the opportunity to live in the Parish.*

- One respondent mentioned “*unaffordable house prices*” amongst the things not liked about the parish. Indeed, there were a considerable number of comments supporting lower cost housing for young families and individuals to stay/live in the village.
- There were comments about retaining views for existing residents, such as:
 - *Ensure building lines do not spoil views of Chilterns and Ridges*
 - *Not blocking countryside views from other houses*
 - *As we are lucky enough to live in a pleasant area, it would be good if any development makes as little impact as possible on residents*
- Several also mentioned use of infill plots and small clusters of houses, rather than ending up with estates. eg
 - *As much as possible keep all development small scale so as not to destroy the nature of current villages feel*
 - *A sympathetic and not overwhelming set of small developments that meet the needs of local people*
 - *Preserving open spaces by building houses in lots of small clusters*
- Green spaces and planting of trees were also mentioned, with one asking for “*integration of wildlife areas within 'cluster' developments*”.

Miscellaneous concerns

There were some miscellaneous comments that probably fall outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, such as “*Illegal development: lack of Council enforcement*”, “*Lack of progress with former Bernard Arms PH*” and “*Rubbish on verges*”.