

` Broadclyst Community Consultation, Summer 2024 - REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

The Broadclyst Community Consultation was conducted to gather feedback from residents across the whole Civil Parish of Broadclyst. The primary objectives were to assess community needs, identify potential volunteers, and map demographic patterns. The consultation engaged residents through surveys, focus groups, pop-up events and other smaller consultation inputs. The main consultation survey received 124 responses, of which 115 were valid. This report highlights the success of the survey and the wider consultation in harnessing the views and wishes of the Parish's communities, particularly in relation to volunteering opportunities, and identifies areas for improvement and further action.

Key findings show strong interest in developing community spaces and sports facilities, particularly in Westclyst and Tithebarn, where residents are concerned about rapid expansion and lack of corresponding infrastructure, including schools, play parks, and other amenities.

Concerns raised included issues such as overdevelopment, traffic management, parking, littering, and a lack of youth and sports facilities. Specific suggestions were made for future projects, including enhancing community cohesion through supporting new and existing local sports clubs, creating a rural social group, and addressing the varying needs of different communities. The report provides several recommendations for Council to consider.

2. Recommendations

This report RECOMMENDS to Council:

- To **NOTE** the report outlining the outcomes from the Community Consultation.
- To **NOTE** the discussions had regarding Management Companies, as per Council resolution on 2nd September 2024 (Minute 24/109).
- To **NOTE** the consultation's positive engagement surrounding the Broadsheet.
- To **NOTE** the underspend from budgeted funds on the consultation.
- To **NOTE** the consultation's discussions surrounding accessibility of the Council.
- To **NOTE** the strength of feeling surrounding community spaces and sports facilities, especially in Tithebarn and Westclyst, and **RESOLVE** any recommendations as Council sees fit.
- To **RESOLVE** to use the results of this consultation to inform its emerging Strategic Plan and Work Programme, and any other work as the Council sees fit.
- To **RESOLVE** to allocate staff time, via the Community Connector, to explore establishing a rural social group, similar to projects delivered through the Accidental Counsellors programme.
- To **RESOLVE** to incorporate suggested improvements to the consultation process into any future consultation ran by the Council.

- To **RESOLVE** any other recommendations resulting from the consultation's outcomes as Council may see fit.

3. Introduction

The Broadclyst Community Connector was established and filled as a post on 19th February 2024. The aim of the post is to facilitate community activities across the whole Parish, supporting residents with their ideas and helping people into volunteering in the Broadclyst Parish community. There are numerous health and behavioural reasons for this, not least the benefits that volunteering has in tackling social isolation, increasing community cohesion, and supporting community resilience.

As part of this role, there is a specific need for the Community Connector to reach as wide an audience as possible. However, outreach work at coffee mornings and meetings with community groups and stakeholders had been unable to provide comprehensive links into more passive parts of our community. This formed part of the rationale behind the need for a summer consultation.

At its Extraordinary Council Meeting on 22nd April 2024 (Minute 24/041ii) (Broadclyst Parish Council, 2024), Council resolved to approve the proposed plans for a Community Connecting consultation to take place in Summer 2024. It was also resolved to delegate authority to the Community Connector, in consultation with the Parish Clerk, to carry out the actions within the consultation plan presented to Council (Bonetta, 2024).

The original consultation plan outlined a timeline of events culminating in a final report to Council at its September meeting. Following a period of staff absence, Council resolved at its meeting on 3rd June 2024 (Minute 24/075i) (Broadclyst Parish Council, 2024) to extend the consultation period to 30th September.

This report outlines how the consultation was undertaken, what its findings have been, and what recommendations Council are recommended to resolve as a response.

4. Methodology

The initial aim of the summer consultation was twofold: one, to identify new volunteers for our local community, and two, to map any demographic patterns that may arise from the survey. For example, whether there are any age-specific or location-specific patterns that need addressing. These were expanded in the report to Council (Bonetta, 2024) to include questions about the community that respondents live in, to allow residents to explain what they like and what they'd like to see improved in their areas. These aims were followed through in the consultation with the aim of supporting the work of the Community Connector, as well as the Council more widely.

The consultation research followed methods championed by Jody Kretzmann and John McKnight (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), as well as through the contemporary work of Cormac Russell and Nurture Development (Nurture Development, 2024), known as Asset-Based Community Development ("ABCD"). These methods frame conversations around three initial questions, from which outcomes can be drawn. These questions are:

- What is the best outcome from a community? What works the best in local areas?
- What areas are help required in, and where would communities best benefit from support?

- What extra support may specific communities require from outside agencies, for example Government bodies?

The ABCD approach also considers the ability of individuals to make change within their areas, as well as associations and institutions around them (Nurture Development, 2024). Therefore, this consultation also took this into account through the questions on volunteering and skills. The consultation survey questions were designed to lead people on a journey towards volunteering, beginning with previous experience and leading to their skills and general interest in the community. This was relatively successful, and the report will outline this further in Section 6.3.

The consultation's approach surrounded the need to follow recognised research in the area, specifically by asking open, community-minded questions in the ABCD style. The main benefit of using this research method is that it specifically focuses on this kind of work, as opposed to other development-focused methods such as the Theory of Change (Centre for Theory of Change, 2023), which are not necessarily designed for this specific area of work. The research has been carried out through a blended approach between quantitative and qualitative data collection: quantitative through the statistics that have been gathered, and qualitative through the written representations that have been received on specific community-based questions.

Data was collected through multiple different channels to complete this consultation. The main data collection methods were the online surveys, segregated into separate surveys for Residents and Businesses. These surveys were created and maintained through the SurveyMonkey platform. Other data collection methods included the four focus groups that were conducted across the Parish, and the pop-up events attended by the Community Connector across the Parish. The local Schools were also approached for their input, to ensure the voices of younger people were inputted through the consultation. Section 6 of this report explains the findings from all these data collectors.

The consultation was advertised widely across the Parish, both online and in-person. Nearly 50 posters were distributed across all areas of the Parish, in various community-facing locations such as the local schools, shops and bus stops. The consultation was advertised in the Parish newsletter, the Broadsheet, two editions in a row – including with a front-page feature in the Summer 2024 issue (Broadclyst Parish Council, 2024). Online, the consultation was widely advertised through the Broadclyst Parish Council website (<https://www.broadclyst.org.uk>) including through features on the Home page, as well as a dedicated Consultation page. Paid-for advertising was also procured through Facebook, with other information disseminated through the Council's Facebook page and local community discussion groups for free.

Data collected through the survey has been swept for any demographic patterns found in both the qualitative and quantitative questions. This work has been done using Excel and other Microsoft programs, as well as some functional analysis support from ChatGPT. On this note, it is important to emphasise that the use of ChatGPT's AI mechanics has not formed the main backbone of the work but has predominantly been used to confirm and support the arguments made. Quantitative data points such as age groups, where possible, have been compared to data from the 2021 UK Census (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024). However, this can't be relied on totally as a source for population data, not least due to the significant growth in size of the parish since the publication of the Census 3 years ago – with large-scale development taking place in Tithebarn.

Through the work of the consultation, we aimed to counteract any predicted and perceived imbalances received through the results of the survey. There were two main barriers that we foresaw: one, a lack of responses from Under 18s and, two, an imbalance of responses between the different communities within the Parish. Both of these were actively planned for and counteracted, respectively via extra consultation work with Clyst Vale Community College and by hosting targeted community-based focus groups. These allowed us to take more balanced, detailed information from all parts of the community. A smaller imbalance which we didn't foresee were a tendency towards larger households responding more frequently than smaller counterparts, which has been rebalanced by providing slightly extra weight to suggestions from smaller households. Also, it is known that certain local pressure groups and communities organised their members and followers to get specific messages across through the consultation process. On this point, we aimed to counteract this live throughout the consultation process, especially by pushing for wider responses in more varied areas of the Parish, and by carefully picking the participants for the focus groups.

5. Budget

At its Extraordinary Council Meeting on 22nd April 2024 (Minute 24/041ii) (Broadclyst Parish Council, 2024), the consultation budget was expanded by Council from £200 to £1000. This expanded budget was to cover a wider consultation, including social media promotion, drop-in surgeries and focus groups, and it also opened up the possibility for further staff support via requests to the Finance Committee.

Figure 1 below shows the budget for the consultation agreed by the Community Connector and the Parish Clerk/RFO, the actual spend from the consultation, and the remaining balance under each heading.

Figure 1: Community Consultation budget

TASK NAME	BUDGETED	ACTUAL	REMAINING BALANCE
1. Social Media/Marketing	£115.00	£87.11	£27.89
Facebook paid advertising	£110.00	£83.00	£27.00
A4 Posters	£5.00	£4.11	£0.89
Drop-in Events	£128.80	£118.80	£10.00
Roller banner	£118.80	£118.80	£-
Sundries	£10.00	£-	£10.00
Consultation	£30.00	£-	£30.00
Stamps and envelopes	£30.00	£-	£30.00
Focus Groups	£690.00	£350.52	£339.48
Participation payment	£500.00	£160.00	£340.00
Travel expenses cover	£20.00	£-	£20.00
Snacks and refreshments	£20.00	£36.70	-£16.70
Note-taking staff	£100.00	£83.82	£16.18
Room hire	£50.00	£70.00	-£20.00
Contingency	£36.20	£-	£36.20
Contingency	£36.20	£-	£36.20

TASK NAME	BUDGETED	ACTUAL	REMAINING BALANCE
TOTAL	£1,000.00	£556.43	£443.57

As is seen through the budget, there was a significant underspend on the consultation. The bulk of that underspend (£340.00) is due to the under-attendance of the focus groups conducted, which will be explained under Section 6.5 of this report. Other minor items of underspend can be found in *Figure 1* above.

Overall, with the consultation coming in largely under budget, except for room hire and refreshments which can be explained through higher-than-expected costs for these items, it is not deemed that this has had a major effect on the efficacy of the consultation. This is due to the nature of the underspend and where it is attributed.

6. Results

The results of the consultation are multi-faceted, including factors from multiple different inputs. The main input was through the Residents' surveys, which the bulk of this section breaks down in detail. At the end of this section are breakdowns of the focus groups, pop-up in-person events, school consultation and Business survey.

The Residents' survey attracted 124 total responses. Of these, 9 responses were excluded either for being a test response or responses from residents outside of the Parish. Therefore, for the sake of the data shown throughout the results, 115 responses have been counted.

To calculate the representativity of the survey results, as well as the overall margin of error, SurveyMonkey's in-built Margin of Error tool (SurveyMonkey, 2024) explains the formula used for these calculations. This can be found in *Figure 2* below.

Figure 2: Margin of error formula (SurveyMonkey, 2024)

n = sample size σ = population standard deviation z = score

$$\text{Margin of Error} = z \times (\sigma \div (\sqrt{n}))$$

The industry standard confidence level for surveys used in this calculation is 95% which, according to SurveyMonkey's calculator (SurveyMonkey, 2024), equals a z-score of 1.96. Therefore, the margin of error attributed to this survey – based around a population in Broadclyst Parish of 6,016 (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024) – is ~9%. This is a slightly larger margin of error than is usually acceptable for professional research. However, with the inclusion of extra data found through the other parts of the consultation, it is noted that the results of the consultation are, overall, representative to within an acceptable margin of error.

When discussing the representativity of the survey, it is also important to compare demographic responses to the most accurate population data for the area. This is the 2021 UK Census which, as stated above, is not a perfect representation but is the closest piece of data that exists in the public domain (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024). Using this data, we can compare age and household sizes provided through the survey. These differences are broken down in Section 6.1.

6.1. Demographics

This section will break down the responses to the first three survey questions, discussing respondents' age, community and household size. It is important to note that these questions were not mandatory, and therefore each answer may have fewer than 115 responses.

The below sections will reference the “normalization” of 2021 UK Census data. This is calculated using the formula found below in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3: Formula calculating “normalization”

6,016 = Parish population (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024)

$$\text{Census 2021 (normalized)} = \left(\frac{\text{Age Group Census Count}}{6,016} \right) \times \text{Response Count}$$

6.1.1. Age

113 responses were recorded through this question. It is important to note that, even though the survey was open to residents of all ages, no responses were recorded from any residents under the age of 18. Therefore, any data representing Under 18s from the 2021 UK Census has been removed from any graphs and charts. Section 6.7 of this report will explain the views of many of the young people in the Parish, through consultations ran by Clyst Vale Community College.

As shown through *Figure 4.1*, two-thirds (66.7%) of responses from the survey come from working adults between the ages of 35 and 64. 21% of respondents are older than that, and 12.3% younger. *Figure 4.2* compares this to normalized data from the 2021 UK Census (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024), showing that the average respondent (51.3 years) is older than the average resident (37.2 years). Again, this is in large part due to the lack of responses from Under 18s, which is counteracted through direct school consultation.

Figure 4.1: Age groups % by sector

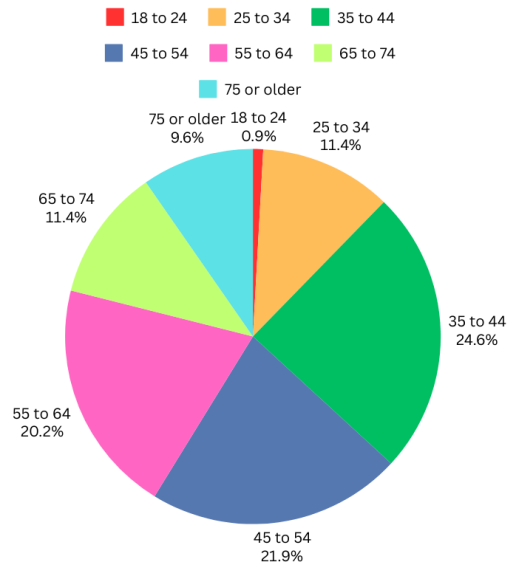
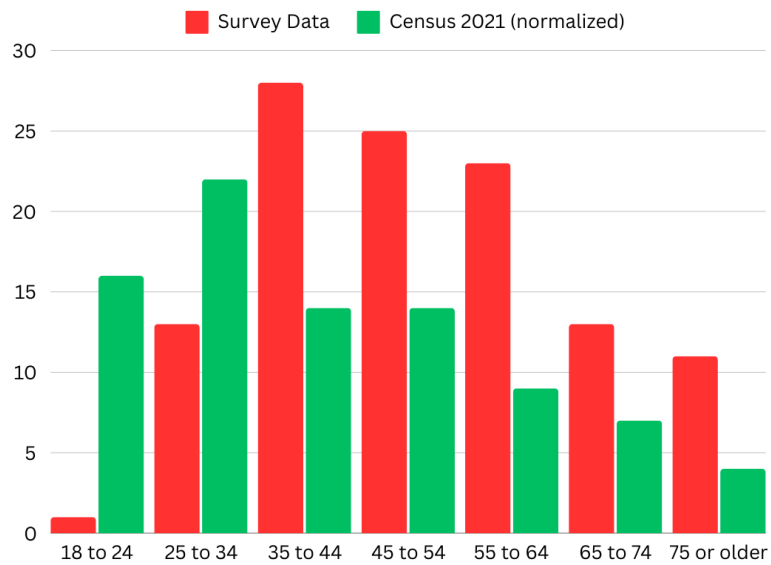


Figure 4.2: Age group results versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)



Figures 4.3-4.7 break down the age of respondents by community, first by comparing responses between each area, followed by comparisons with 2021 UK Census 2021 data, normalized to the number of responses received per community.

Figure 4.3: Age group results compared per community

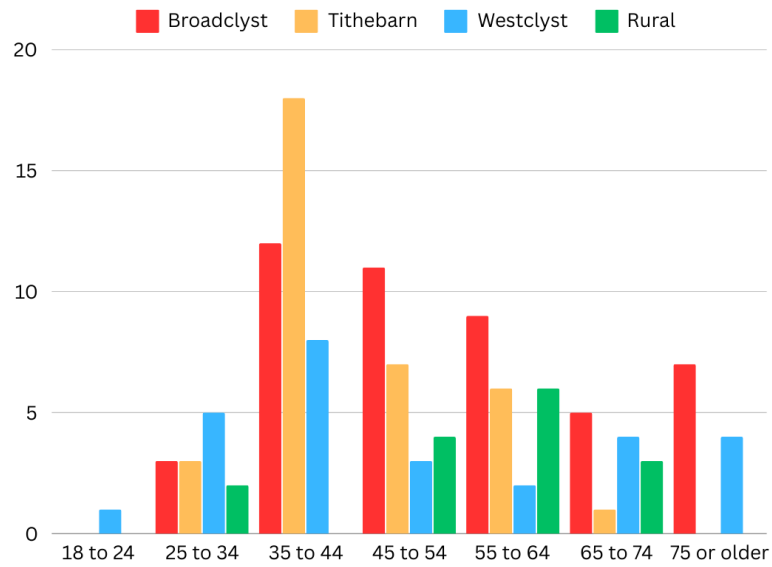


Figure 4.4: Age group results (Broadclyst) versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)

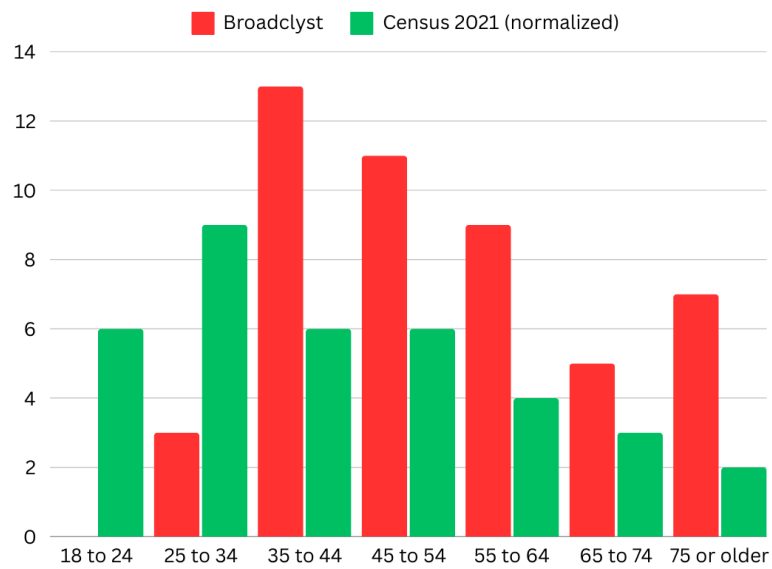


Figure 4.5: Age group results (Tithebarn) versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)

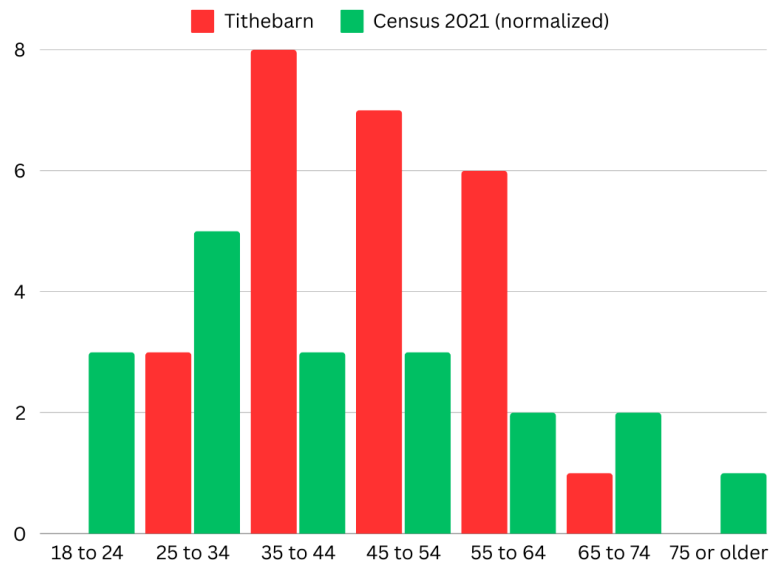


Figure 4.6: Age group results (Westclyst) versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)

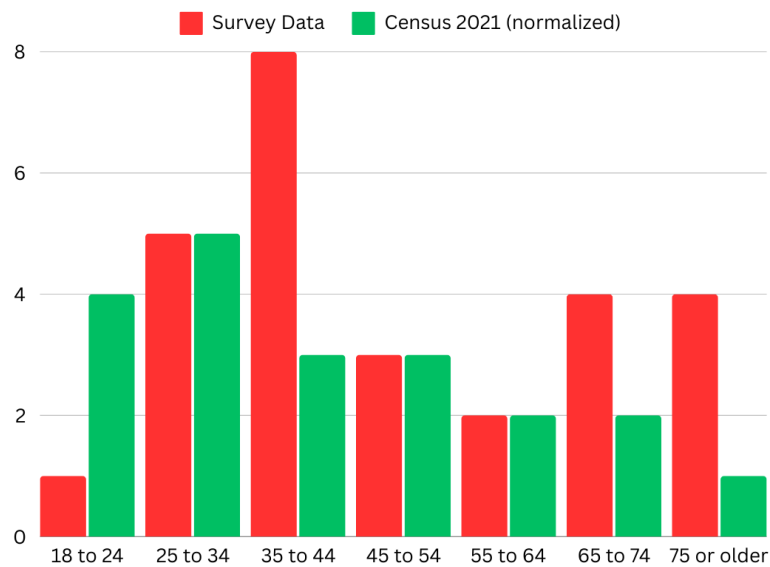
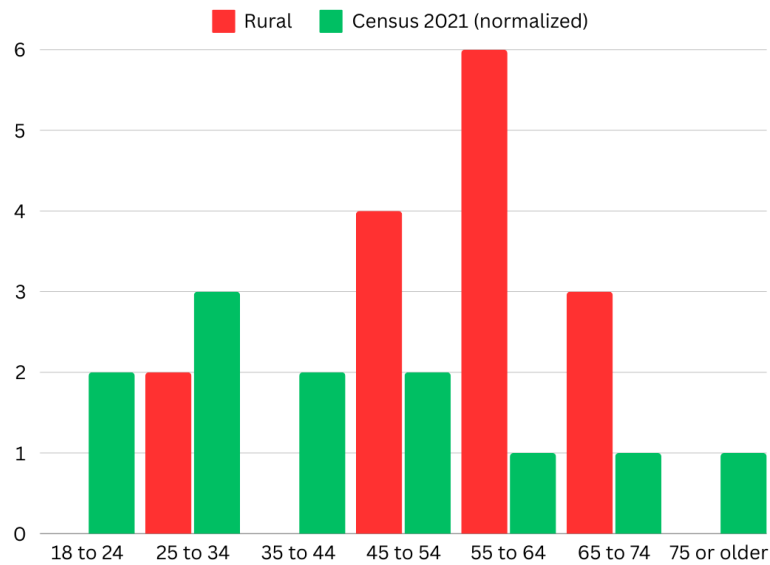


Figure 4.7: Age group results (Rural) versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)



6.1.2. Community

115 responses were recorded through this question. Responses to the survey were recorded across the Parish, which are mapped below in *Figure 5.1*.

Figure 5.1: Map of responses (Google Maps, 2024)

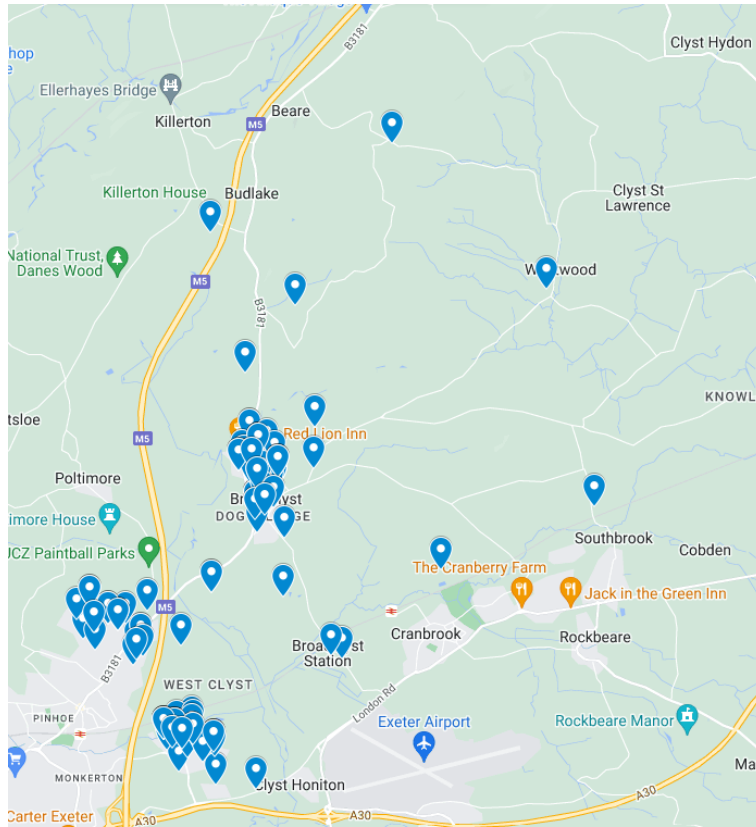
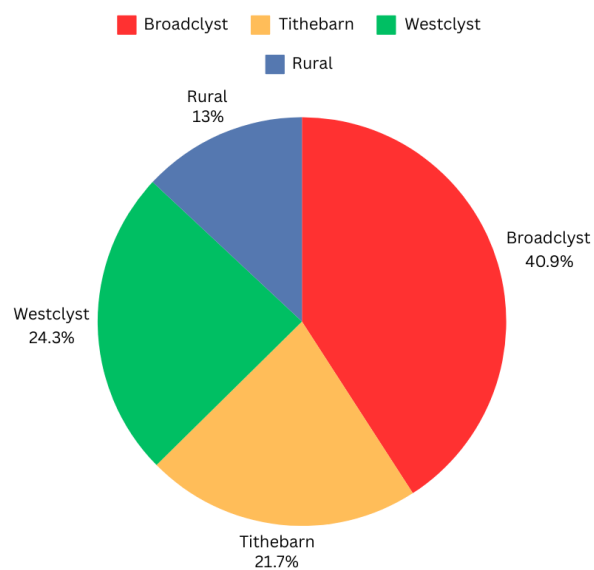


Figure 5.2 explains that 40.9% of respondents were based in Broadclyst village. This is followed by 24.3% from Westclyst, 21.7% from Tithebarn, and 13% from rural areas. There is no publicly-available data at an accurate enough level for each of these communities, including through the 2021 UK Census, and therefore it is currently impossible to further normalize these results.

Figure 5.2: Responses % per community



For the purposes of this report, the settlements of Beare, Budlake, Blackhorse, Broadclyst Station, Hele and Westwood, as well as other rural parts of the Parish, are classed under the “Rural” category. This is due to the nature of these settlements as predominantly rural in nature especially with regards to amenities, and because too few responses were recorded for each of these settlements to allow for representative data specific to them.

Overall, the responses show a good distribution throughout the Parish, with a slight weighting of results towards Broadclyst village and away from rural areas. The lower percentage of responses can be expected from rural areas from a smaller population base, however more responses would ideally have been received from Westclyst and Tithebarn as the other main settlements to more equally balance their views with those of Broadclyst village. However, as explained above, no data exists to accurately normalize this.

6.1.3. Number of people in household

113 responses were recorded through this question. As shown through *Figure 6.1*, nearly one-third of responses (32.7%) comes from households of 4 people. The maximum size of household given through the survey was 6, with 4 respondents (3.5%) answering with this. *Figure 6.2* compares household sizes from the survey to normalized 2021 UK Census data, showing that the average respondent household (3.03 people) is larger than that seen through the Census (2.45 people). However, since data is collected per household through the Census and this survey was conducted per individual, multiple responses from individual households may have skewed this data, and therefore the averages may indeed be closer. As we did not ask specific addresses for data protection reasons, it is impossible for us to establish a numerical discrepancy, and therefore this should be kept in mind when reading the below Figures.

Figure 6.1: Household size % by sector

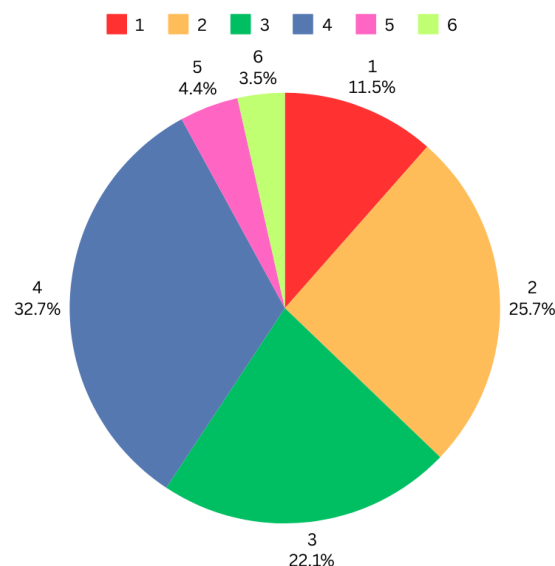


Figure 6.2: Household size results versus 2021 UK Census data (normalized)

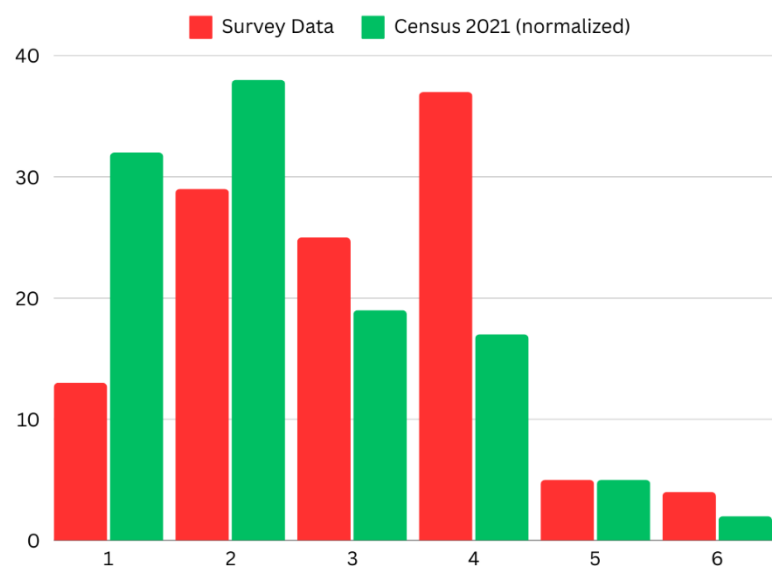
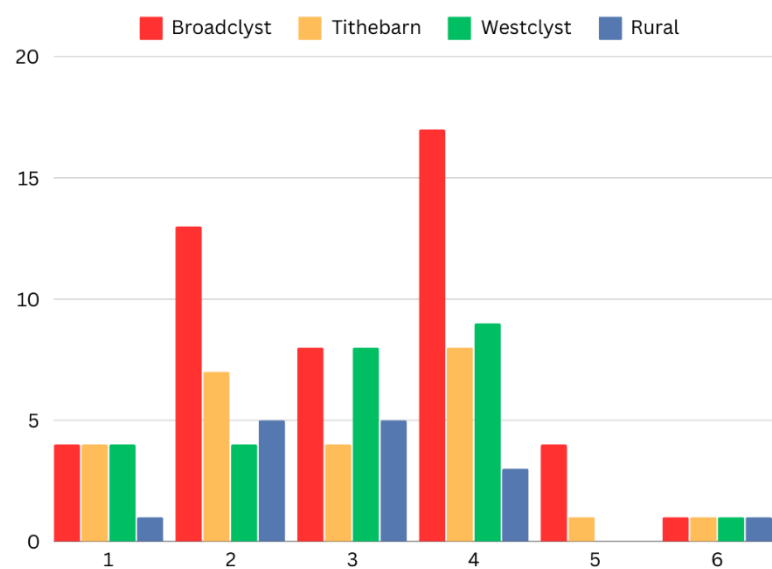


Figure 6.3 breaks down household size responses received per community. It shows that the average household size in Broadclyst is the highest (3.15 people), followed by Westclyst (3.00 people), rural areas (2.93 people), and Tithebarn (2.92 people). This also shows that all communities’ sets of responses have a higher average household size than the Parish’s Census average (CityPopulation and ONS, 2024).

Figure 6.3: Household size results compared per community



6.2. Substantive community questions

This next section covers the main, substantive and qualitative questions of the survey. These three questions formed the basis for the Residents’ survey.

These questions were chosen in line with ABCD principles, ensuring that people thought about what works well, where would communities best benefit from support, and what extra support from outside organisations may these communities require. For the purposes of the survey, these questions were simplified into three, open but partially leading, questions surrounding the needs of the community. These questions were picked to give respondents the freedom to answer on any topic they liked, however they aimed to take respondents on a “journey”, to facilitate them to consider solutions-based approaches and how they may be able to help. This led into the following section on volunteering, which will be covered under Section 6.3.

Appendix 1 shows the paper version of the survey, which uses exactly the same wording as the online version. *Appendix 2* provides the full list of anonymised responses to Questions 1 to 3.

6.2.1. What do you like within your community?

79 responses were recorded through this question, however this includes some active non-answers such as “None” and “Nothing” (6). *Figure 7* shows a word cloud from the answers to this question, showing that the most-used word across all answers was “community”.

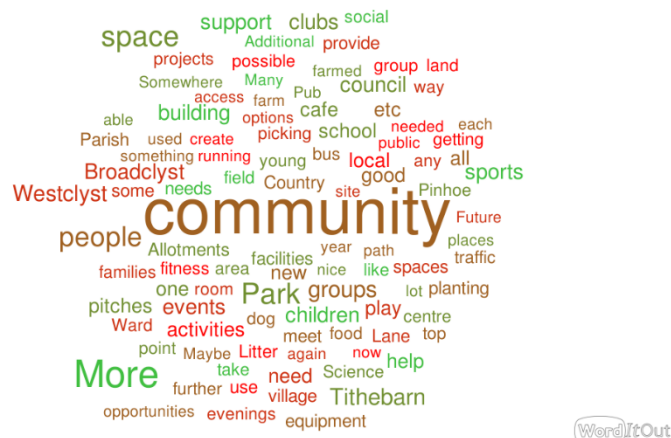
Figure 7: Question 1 word cloud



Across the whole Parish, the most common positive responses mentioned green spaces and the Country Park (19), followed closely by the friendliness of neighbours and community spirit of the area (18). Residents, especially in Broadclyst village, are supportive of the community spaces across the Parish (14), and respondents appreciated the local walking infrastructure (9). The Parish Council was specifically mentioned as a positive aspect of the community by 2 respondents, and the Fun Day by 3.

Respondents from Broadclyst village specifically mentioned the many community activities, events and projects available to get involved with. Older residents (65+ years) also specifically mentioned the village’s community feel and coffee mornings. Tithebarn respondents identified the Minerva Country Park and other green spaces as a positive feature, adding that the proximity to nature and rural feel of the settlement is a positive. Westclyst respondents like its sense of community and the friendliness of neighbours, as well as the mix of green spaces and residential areas. Rural areas appreciate the green spaces across the Parish, as well as the neighbourly and welcoming feel of the rural parts of the Parish.

Figure 9: Question 3 word cloud



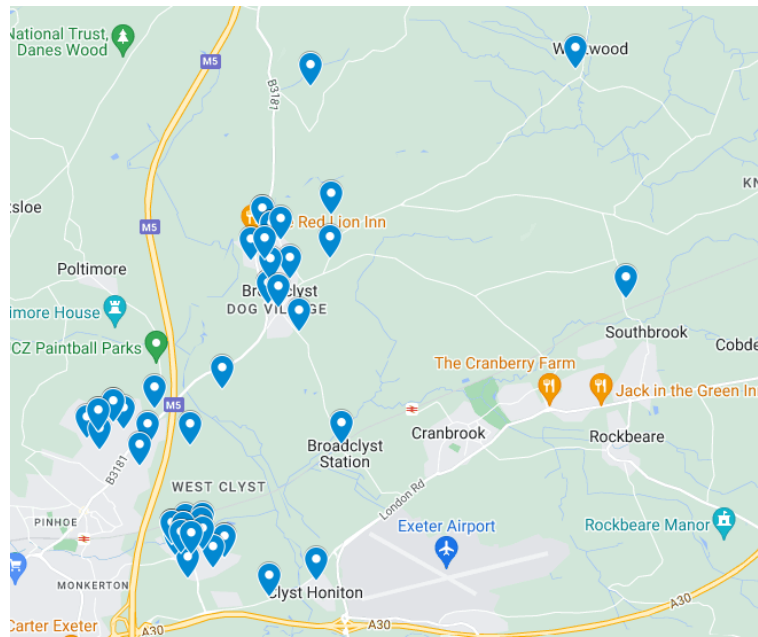
A much larger proportion of respondents mentioned a wish for more community-facing facilities (14), on top of mentions of community cafés (7). Sports, clubs and pitches were raised often (12), as well as wishes for fitness activities (4). Other ideas and wishes included tree and flower planting (5), better children’s play areas (5), more litter picking (3), allotments (3), and mention of the proposed Tithebarn school (3). Other, less-common suggestions included a Share Shed/Library of Things, community fridge, community mural, holiday meals for those in need, extra youth club provisions, and an extended mother and toddler group.

Broadclyst respondents wished for a focus on projects preserving the character of the existing community, whilst also maintaining or expanding on local green spaces. Notably, three respondents from Broadclyst highlighted their belief that either enough or too much community activity already takes place – which is a healthy position to be in. Tithebarn responses formed part of the wider desire for community space in the settlement for meetings, events, and social interaction, as well as more activities in the parks and community sports, and wellness programs for resident to partake in. Westclyst respondents noted a wish for better healthcare and shared spaces, with a further specific focus on more youth-focused projects. Rural residents argued for developing more parks, fitness trails and outdoor spaces, as well as a wider desire for community-centred events including clean-up days.

6.3. Volunteering

The final section of the survey focused on volunteering, including both what respondents already do and what they may want to get involved with in the future. Overall, this section proved very successful, with 64 respondents (55.6%) identifying their wishes to get more involved in the community. *Figure 10.1* maps the location of the 51 identifiable volunteers from the survey, incorporated into the volunteer database created during the consultation.

Figure 10.1: Map of identified volunteers



Figures 10.2 and 10.3 explain how often respondents to the survey get involved in existing volunteering opportunities, as well as a breakdown by community. This includes both formal and informal volunteering, through organised groups as well as by supporting neighbours and friends for example with babysitting. Across the Parish, 31.3% of respondents stated that they volunteer either “Always” or “Often”, with a further 16.3% of respondents identifying their volunteering activity as “Sometimes”. Considering that across the South West in 2021/22, 30% of people volunteered at least once within the previous 12 months (DCMS, 2022), this is a remarkably good statistic for the Parish.

Figure 10.2: Volunteering frequency %

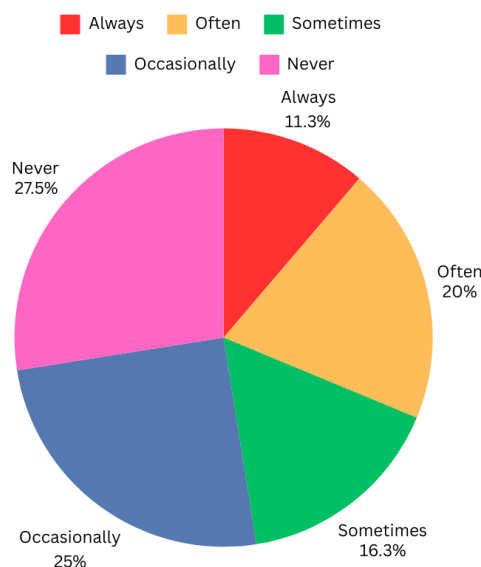
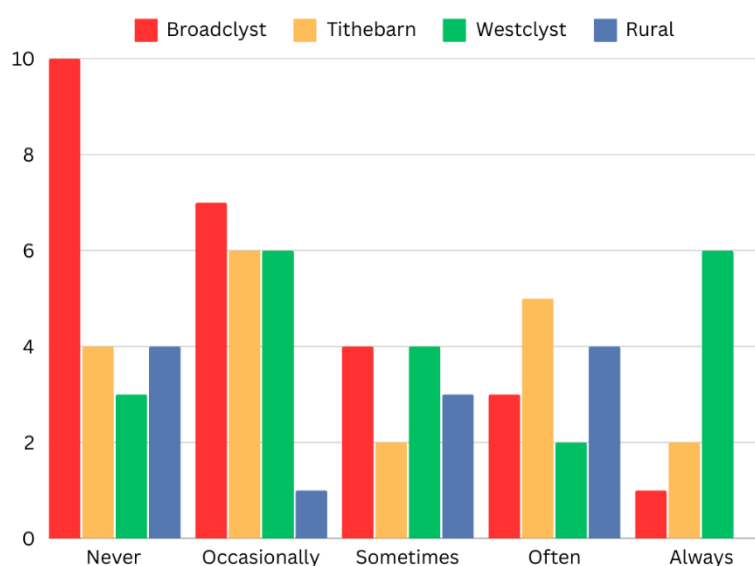


Figure 10.3: Volunteering frequency per community



In response to a question regarding what respondents' current and previous volunteer includes, *Figure 10.4* contains a word cloud from the responses received. Many respondents identified a variety of experiences from residents in the Parish. These range from trustee and senior business management experience, all the way through to baking, manual labour, gardening, and supporting neighbours during COVID.

Figure 10.4: Volunteer experiences word cloud



The next question asked respondents directly whether they wanted to get involved in volunteering in their community. *Figure 10.5* shows that 84.2% of respondents answered either “Yes” or “Maybe” to this question, with the remaining 15.8% of people identifying a “No” answer. This is a considerable increase in the number of people identifying that they have “Never” volunteered before (27.5%), as seen in *Figure 10.2* above.

Following this, respondents were asked to identify any skills that they may want to share with the community – with a word cloud under *Figure 10.6* showing some of the common responses. Many residents identified very varied wishes, with various management and listening skills given often, and these have been recorded in the new volunteer database.

Figure 10.5: Volunteering involvement wishes %

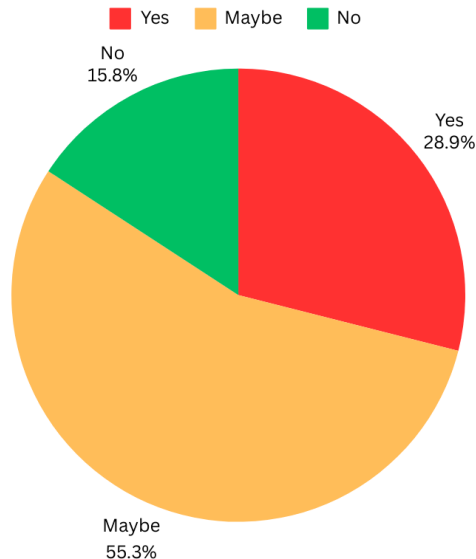


Figure 10.6: Volunteer skills word cloud



Overall, the response to the volunteer section of the survey was very positive. This will form the basis of ongoing work to support a small volunteer database supported by the Community Connector, which this report will cover in Section 7.3.

6.4. Business survey

Alongside the release and completion of the Residents' survey, an equivalent survey for businesses was released and publicised through the Council's Facebook channels and website.

This was also disseminated to large local employers via email where possible, and also via deliveries of posters directly to workplaces. After running the survey for the duration of the consultation period, only one substantive response was received from a local employee. We found that several local employees responded to the Residents' survey instead, as they also live in the Parish, and other respondents were not forthcoming. Therefore, it is clearly considered that this survey was not representative and, therefore, this has been discounted from the final consultation report.

Due to the quality of the single response that we received, and the location of the workplace, we invited this respondent to attend our Rural focus group, which they accepted. Their responses are therefore discussed under the next section.

6.5. Focus groups

To further support the Residents' and Businesses' surveys, and to balance the aims and needs of all sectors of the Parish, 4 Focus Groups were ran by the Community Connector and supported by a notetaker across the Parish. These sessions, lasting 90 minutes each, provided survey respondents a paid opportunity to expand on their views and wishes for the community. They also provided the Community Connector the opportunity to explore further issues, such as the debate around Management Company structures in Tithebarn and Westclyst following Council resolution on 2nd September 2024 (Minute 24/109) (Broadclyst Parish Council, 2024).

Overall, the focus group provided a detailed and useful deeper view of the varying communities' issues across the Parish. Although attendance was not as high as anticipated or hoped at some of the events – owed in large part to short-notice absences – the results of these events were highly valuable in providing extra context to the survey's responses.

The following sub-sections explain the conversations had at the focus groups, with *Appendices 3 and 3.1* detailing the full notes from the meetings.

6.5.1. Tithebarn

2 attendees attended the focus group for Tithebarn, held at the Black Horse Inn. These participants were chosen specifically to balance the views of the active pressure group campaign being ran through the consultation at the time. Unfortunately, 3 other respondents were also invited, however all three couldn't make the event last-minute – this included a member of the Residents' Association.

The attendees were selected to provide a balanced perspective and included a man with a wife and teenage stepdaughter, as well as a woman with a husband, adult children, and young grandchildren who visit regularly.

Attendees appreciated Tithebarn's transport links, and further noting that the area feels clean and well-maintained. The Minerva Country Park and other green spaces were highlighted as valuable assets, although improvements to the gravel pathways were recommended. They also mentioned utilising walking routes, the Broadsheet newsletter, the Council's new Little Free Library, and existing community groups, while also expressing a need for more.

Key concerns revolved around the vastness of ongoing expansion without corresponding infrastructure improvements, including the lack of adequate cycle paths, pavements and amenities, and issues with parking. The attendees channelled the community's wider requests for a school and more play parks. There was also concern over the lack of communication with

the nearby Science Park, problems with dog waste along Langaton Lane (with a request for another bin), and the management of smaller walkways and maintenance of Tithebarn Lane by developers.

Several ideas were put forward, including creating spaces specifically for hire to include the planned café (which is already in progress). These venues could host lunch clubs, toddler and mother groups, and other activities for younger people, however in the meantime other venues could be explored. There was interest in forming a local football team and developing wider sports facilities, as well as introducing befriending into the community and linking in with the wider Parkrun network.

6.5.2. Westclyst

This focus group had 6 attendees with a variety of household setups, from two-adult households to larger families. The feedback provided covered a broad spectrum of local issues.

Again, the Broadsheet was praised for being informative and well-organized, and the existing Little Free Library was appreciated as a community asset. The community Fun Day was highlighted as a successful event, though it was noted that it was more suited for young children rather than older ones.

Concerns from attendees included the integrity of the community's gravel walking paths, littering around the school, and differences in quality between contractors in different parts of the estates. There were also a few fears about flood risk at Saxon Brook. Other issues mentioned were related to traffic management and parking, and the need for more communication from the school, particularly the impact of noise during the holidays especially on neurodivergent residents in the community.

Attendee suggestions included adding a Westclyst section to the Broadsheet, providing further advertising space for community events like the Fun Day. The introduction of an autism-friendly tent at future Parish Fun Day events was raised, as well as a further discussion around disabled access across the community, which could form part of a wider discussion around the accessibility of the Council and its events. Attendees also wished to make better use of community spaces, involving the school and Alexander House, and organizing further community litter picks in collaboration with local partners.

A portion of the discussion was dedicated to a discussion surrounding the structure of Westclyst's future proposed Management Company. Attendees identified four main requests from any future setup: value for money, visibility of services, consistency and equity of services across the estates, and universal contracts. It was unanimously agreed that a private Management Company would have a negative addition on the community, and the entire group was open to both full Council adoption of services and a Council-owned Management Company based on the principles of non-profit and local accountability.

6.5.3. Broadclyst

Only one attendee was present, although multiple more were initially invited and expected. The attendee was a female resident with a two-person household and a number of animals.

The attendee positively highlighted the rural nature of the area, the abundance of bridleways, and the strong community ties with the National Trust and Killerton. The Broadsheet was again mentioned as well as the Council's Facebook pages, community updates and active presence.

The presence of activities for most ages was noted, as well as the village coffee mornings, local pubs, the Broadclyst Environment Group's work in the community, and the Science Park (although they felt it could be more accessible for community use). The variety of local food options through mobile vendors was also appreciated.

The attendee noted that there were fewer activities for people who weren't children or elderly. Other concerns included litter being discarded in and alongside fields and public footpaths, dogs being let off their leads in dangerous situations, and a wider lack of understanding of the country code. Additionally, they raised concerns about the increased use of local roads as rat runs, particularly since the development of Cranbrook.

Broader education on the country code was suggested by the attendee, establishing circular walking and riding routes that connect existing bridleways and footpaths, and creating more safe places for people to walk their dogs such as another dog park. They also proposed food events in the village, suggesting use of the Sports Pavilion's car park to help bring residents together. They stressed the importance of maintaining the identity of individual settlements within the Parish, acknowledging the unique needs and backgrounds of each area.

6.5.4. Rural

This focus group was attended by 2 participants, both business owners, with one based near Cranbrook and one working out of Broadclyst Station.

Both attendees appreciated the freedom and nature of their rural environment. They also valued good access to the A30 and M5 and proximity to train stations, with one attendee also specifically mentioning the good parking availability in Broadclyst Station. However, it was noted that, even though Cranbrook train station is very close to both attendees as the crow flies, a lack of easy walking access here exists.

Primary concerns revolved around rural crime and trespassing on private property, as well as poor walking access between existing settlements and an over-reliance on cars in places where it shouldn't be needed. They also mentioned the changing nature of the environment following the development of Cranbrook, a lack of community outreach and education on rural life, and inadequate internet connectivity. Specific concerns were raised about HGVs around Station Bridge and Broadclyst Station more broadly.

Both attendees recommended that a social group for rural residents be formed as a specific work program priority. One attendee also wished for further support for working parents through parent-and-toddler groups and better after-school club provisions, and creating intergenerational befriending and skills sessions. They also suggested working with the local schools to utilise local businesses and networks and improve career education in schools.

It is noted that both attendees disagreed agreeably over the installation of solar farms and battery infrastructure in rural parts of the Parish. Varying opinions were shared on these, covering the levels of consultation provided, the utility of the setups and change of use of farmland, noise pollution outputs and overall fire safety for residents and businesses.

6.6. Pop-up events

The pop-up consultation events were generally unsuccessful, despite being promoted through Facebook adverts and community groups, posters, and the Council's website. 7 events were held throughout July and August, with the only event receiving a good attendance rate being

held in Westwood (7 attendees). The other events had lower attendance rates, in Westclyst (1), Budlake (1), Hele (2), Tithebarn (2), Blackhorse (0) and Broadclyst (0). The planned event in Broadclyst Station was cancelled due to staff illness and was not reorganised due to the low turnout at the other events.

For the sake of the wider consultation, the responses received from Westwood are the only ones which are deemed to be of use for the consultation, not least since the other attendees who were spoken to at other events were either not Parish residents, or intended to complete surveys online and therefore didn't express their views on the questions at the events.

During the Westwood pop-up, attendees highlighted the need for better internet connectivity across the area. Attendees also wished for improved rural bus connections, including a request to explore the possibility of allowing residents to use school buses to increase rural mobility. There was also a limited discussion exploring the possibility of setting up a local Community Land Trust, to help increase the village's stock of high-quality affordable housing.

6.7. School consultation

As stated earlier in the report, it was anticipated that responses from residents under the age of 18 would be poor. Therefore, the decision was made to directly consult them through their schools. This work was carried out alongside the wider consultation, with contact being made with all 3 primary and secondary schools within the Parish. Valuable feedback was received from Clyst Vale Community College, and no responses were received from Broadclyst nor Westclyst Primary Schools.

Clyst Vale students, through their Student Board representatives, highlighted their appreciation for local clubs, youth clubs and the ability to travel to other places easily. They also appreciated that Clyst Vale was situated in the heart of the community, easy to get to and near to other schools where other friends may be attending. Students showed concern about the number of unnecessary roadworks and the dangerous levels of traffic near Clyst Vale Community College, and suggested a wider need for more secondary school/Sixth Form provision in the region.

Students, including Student Board members, were enthusiastic at the idea of hosting more Fun Day-type events across the area, such as a school fair in partnership with Enterprise students, and community school sales and fundraisers. Students wanted to organize litter picks (including sponsored ones), music events, and open garden day/contests. Wider support for expanding the youth club services was given, and there was also a call for Clyst Vale to be more integrated into the wider community.

The responses received from Clyst Vale represent the collated views of hundreds of local students, and therefore these responses are seen to balance out the earlier imbalance in average response ages seen through the Residents' survey.

7. Discussion

In this section, this report will discuss various outcomes from the consultation, including any findings and suggested recommendations for the Council to undertake or forward on to other partners.

7.1. Consultation aims and objectives

The initial and expanded aims and objectives of the consultation are outlined at the beginning of the Methodology section of this report. One of the main successes surrounding these was in

volunteering, where a significant percentage of respondents expressed an interest in getting involved. This resulted in 51 identifiable new potential volunteers across the Parish.

In terms of understanding the community, the consultation was also successful in identifying demographic patterns, mapping differences and gaps between various communities, and highlighting their distinct needs. This includes the more specific requests for deliverable projects for the Council, such as a suggested extra dog bin on Langaton Lane as well as extending the Parish's existing parent-and-toddler group and youth club provisions.

With more responses, further analysis could have been made into the demographic responses. This could have included through comparing age groups and household sizes together and identifying patterns on a more minute level. Any future consultation should bear this in mind, and aim for a smaller margin of error of between 4% and 8%.

7.2. Linking with other Council work

The responses gathered through this survey, including the full results seen through the Appendices to this report, provide valuable data that can be used to inform other work undertaken by the Council, in the short and medium term up to at least the Elections in 2027.

Alongside the existing Neighbourhood Plan and other supplementary community-based and legal documents, detailing many proposed community projects, this consultation should be used by the Council to inform its emerging Strategic Plan and Work Programme. Council must decide how this could be appropriately achieved, and to what extent the details of this report should be used. However, the responses to the Residents' survey should not be used alone, and any work should include reference to the other consultations taken place – especially the schools consultation and focus groups.

Given the distinct demographic patterns identified through the consultation, special attention should be paid to the specific needs of different communities when planning future initiatives. There is also significant potential for cross-agency collaboration, particularly with other Local Authorities and the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, to address the broader needs of the Parish. A copy of this report will be sent to East Devon District Council following a specific request, and bearing in mind the wider interest in the results of this consultation, it is recommended that the Council explore ways to work with its partners to achieve outcomes from this report in the most efficient, effective way.

With the appointment of a new Community Connector under way, Council should also explore how they wish this report's results to inform their new employee's wider work.

7.3. Volunteering database

The consultation provided respondents with the opportunity to indicate whether they were interested in volunteering within the community. Through the Residents' survey and focus groups, respondents also granted specific permissions regarding contact from the Council about volunteering opportunities. This has allowed the Council to establish a GDPR-compliant database of individuals who are interested in volunteering, as well as a list of available volunteer roles. This database supports efforts to fill volunteer vacancies across the Parish and works to enhance social cohesion, in line with the initial aims of the consultation.

As part of this process, the Council has reached out to various voluntary organisations to identify volunteer opportunities across the Parish. A number of volunteering opportunities have

already been identified, each with varying requirements and numbers of volunteers needed. It is intended that this database will form the basis for volunteer coordination across the Parish.

All information in the database must be kept up-to-date and fully compliant with data protection regulations. This database will also be passed on to the incoming Community Connector as part of the transition process, ensuring continuity in the management of volunteer roles. It is therefore recommended that Council explore how they wish this to be incorporated into the work of the Council's paid service.

7.4. How could the consultation have been improved?

Attendance at pop-up events and focus groups were poor. Whilst we don't know the reasons for this specifically, it can be expected that less visible advertising and lower incentives may be to blame with this. This is especially true for the pop-up events, for which advertising was negatively affected by staff absence and flexible working needs throughout the process. In future, wider dissemination of specific visit dates may provide some positive impact on attendance numbers, and if pop-up events are ran more regularly, alongside other agencies, the Parish communities may get more used to these and be more inclined to attend. It is also suggested in future that, if any focus groups are needed for other Council work, the incentives for coming along are explored and benchmarked more closely to industry standards.

Additionally, if another consultation similar to this is ran in the future, it may be beneficial to either integrate the business survey into the main survey, in effect to only advertise a one-size-fits-all solution for all residents and employees in the Parish. Otherwise, other ways to disseminate information to local employers could be explored, such as addressed letters, visits, or further information as required.

7.5. Findings and recommendations

The consultation revealed a variety of positives, concerns and ideas from different communities within the Parish. The survey and focus group findings highlight that each community served by the Council faces unique challenges and specific needs. Key findings were discovered in multiple areas.

Strong responses were received surrounding sports facilities and community spaces, which could benefit from further exploration by Councillors, especially with the future planned development still expected across the Parish's new communities. This could also link into the wider conversation began by Council surrounding Management Companies in Tithebarn and Westclyst.

The widely positive response to the Broadsheet, especially unprompted during every focus group hosted during the consultation. Specific mention was given to the newer editions of the newsletter in later focus groups, which took place following delivery of the Autumn copy. Many residents rely on the Broadsheet to keep informed on local events and information, and efforts should be made to continue using this platform to engage with the Parish's communities.

The discussions surrounding a rural social group, linking in with existing work conducted through the University of Exeter's Accidental Counsellors programme (University of Exeter, 2024), and which is already being utilised in Cullompton and Crediton, could create outsized benefits for our rural residents. Council should consider allocating Community Connector time to establishing this as a project going forward.

Therefore, this report RECOMMENDS to Council:

- To **NOTE** the report outlining the outcomes from the Community Consultation.
- To **NOTE** the discussions had regarding Management Companies, as per Council resolution on 2nd September 2024 (Minute 24/109).
- To **NOTE** the consultation's positive engagement surrounding the Broadsheet.
- To **NOTE** the underspend from budgeted funds on the consultation.
- To **NOTE** the consultation's discussions surrounding accessibility of the Council.
- To **NOTE** the strength of feeling surrounding community spaces and sports facilities, especially in Tithebarn and Westclyst, and **RESOLVE** any recommendations as Council sees fit.
- To **RESOLVE** to use the results of this consultation to inform its emerging Strategic Plan and Work Programme, and any other work as the Council sees fit.
- To **RESOLVE** to allocate staff time, via the Community Connector, to explore establishing a rural social group, similar to projects delivered through the Accidental Counsellors programme.
- To **RESOLVE** to incorporate suggested improvements to the consultation process into any future consultation ran by the Council.
- To **RESOLVE** any other recommendations resulting from the consultation's outcomes as Council may see fit.

8. Conclusion

The Broadclyst Community Consultation successfully gathered valuable insights from residents and provided a comprehensive overview of the community's needs and aspirations. A significant proportion of residents expressed interest in volunteering, and the consultation identified clear demographic patterns that will help the Council tailor future services and projects. Key findings indicate strong wishes for greater investment in community spaces and facilities, particularly in Westclyst and Tithebarn, to meet the demands of growing populations in these areas. The report also indicated the strength of feeling and pride from residents surrounding the Parish's green spaces and outdoor resources.

The consultation also highlighted the importance of maintaining open communication channels with residents, as evidenced by the positive reception and high levels of readership of the Broadsheet. However, the low attendance at pop-up events and focus groups suggests that future efforts should focus on improving in-person engagement through better advertising and incentives.

The recommendations put forth in this report provide the beginning of a roadmap for the Council to address concerns raised by residents, strengthen community ties, and enhance the overall quality of life in Broadclyst Parish. By incorporating the consultation results into its Strategic Plan and Work Programme, the Parish Council can ensure that future developments are aligned with the needs of its residents. Additionally, exploring cross-agency collaborations with other local authorities and the VCSE sector will further support the delivery of essential services and community projects.

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