

SOUTHWATER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



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Summary

Analysis shows the population profile of the Southwater and surrounding countryside to be younger, more affluent and less un-employed compared with regional and national profiles and has grown rapidly in this profile. This is both a strength and opportunity as basis for change.

In our survey we asked, "***What one change would you like to see in Southwater Parish in the next five years?***"

71% (603) replied to this seemingly simple question. The main issues this question elicited are: the secondary school; a desire to see no more development; concerns around traffic calming/traffic speed control; policing; young people; maintenance of pavements, hedge cutting and lighting and access at and over the Hop Oast roundabout.

These matters are addressed in detail in the analysis that follows.

Finally, we asked people if they had any other comments. 31% (279) responded of whom one-fifth said that Southwater was a nice place to live. Their other comments largely repeated what had been picked up elsewhere in the surveys.

Background

Southwater as a Village

Southwater is not an ancient village. Nevertheless the basic structure of our modern village has existed since medieval times in the form of a farming community and its support industries. This community expanded in response to the employment offered by the railways and brickwork's during the late 19th century. From 1960 to the present time development has been as a result of pressure brought about by the continued development of Crawley new town, and the expansion at Gatwick airport with its attendant employment opportunities.

The 1970's saw the development of the central area, 1972 Timber Mill, Forge, Anvil and Quarry Way's, closely followed between 1974 and 1977 by the Southwater old industrial estate and shopping precinct. The Ash Road estate, Woodlands Way and the Fieldings were completed in 1976. By 1983 both the railway and the brickwork's had gone and the A24 bypass opened. Rapid development followed. Cedar Drive and Castlewood were completed in 1985 followed by Blake's Farm.

The Country Park was created on the site of the former brickworks at Lennox Wood and the old railway line became the Downs Link. These together with Pond Farm Gill, the shaw¹ on the remains of Reeds Lane from Easteds Farm House to the bypass, serve to bring the countryside into the heart of the village. Despite the extensive development in the now central area of the village, the retention of the hedgerows, ghylls² and shaws have enabled Southwater to retain a characteristic low Weald wooded landscape. These features are a major characteristic of the village and it follows that there is a need to ensure that these features are protected and that arrangements continue for their proper management.³

Southwater as a Small Market Town

The 1991 census showed the Parish⁴ population at 7,365. The new homes, mostly taken by families with children, raised the need for a new school and this was built at Castlewood and opened in 1997. The development of a new industrial park at the north end of the village and a major redevelopment to provide a health centre, library, cafe, family pub, shops and council office with youth club in Lintot Square were completed in 2006. Lintot Square is now acclaimed as providing a focus for the community that was missing before in what is now no longer a Sussex village and largely farming community but a small market town.

¹ Shaw – a thicket, small wood, copse or grove; a strip of wood or under wood forming the boarder of a field

² Ghyll (or gill) – a deep rocky cleft or ravine, usually wooded and forming the course of a stream

³ After Southwater Design Statement, December 1999

⁴ Southwater civil parish includes Christ's Hospital, Tower Hill, Denne Park and Newfoundout

Demographics

The population has grown in Southwater village and at Christ's Hospital with the development of new housing. It has more than doubled in 20 years and grown by 28% in the last 10 years. Census figures are: 1981 4,428; 1991 7,365; 2000 9,395; 2006 9,490 (estimate).

The Parish population today is estimated at more than 10,025⁵ with the residents characterised as being one of the youngest in England. Those in the category of 65+ number 923 (9.1%) and the measure shows that Southwater overall is significantly younger than both West Sussex (20.3% aged 65+) and England (15.8%).

Whilst there is no precise data, evidence from the respondents to the Questionnaire indicates the population outside of the village and Christ's Hospital is on average older and has lived or worked in the Parish for more than 15 years. Evidence suggests that people that come to Southwater tend to stay: 74% have been in the Parish for 6 years or more. Anecdotal evidence is that people move within the area rather than away from it.

The younger population is concentrated in the newer housing developments and around the schools, see Chart 1. Specifically, Cedar Drive, Blakes Farm Road, Worthing Road, Andrews Road/Foxfields/Shipleigh Road and Cripplegate Lane area have the highest concentration of children. Reflecting the young age of the residents more have children in the infant and junior schools than at secondary schools or at sixth-form college, see Chart 2. This is true considering both Southwater and Christ's Hospital populations.

Considering the younger population in Southwater statistics are available only for age <15 - 2,710 (27.1%). Mirroring the characteristics of the older age group in Southwater overall the youth population is significantly younger than both West Sussex (17.9%) and England (18.9%).

⁵ Southwater village ward profiles compiled by West Sussex County Council and the West Sussex Public Health Observatory. Base source is 2001 Census

Process

Community Plans are part of a Government-sponsored initiative to help local people develop their own neighbourhood **in the way that they want**. The current consultation was supported by the Southwater Parish Council and the Horsham District Council and aided by a consultant from Action in Rural Sussex. It consisted of a number of events, activities and actions aimed at hearing the voice of the people and reaching all those that wanted to contribute.

A feature of the process was that every person living or working in our community had an opportunity to have a say, from young people to senior citizens. Now complete, the plan is in place to inform policy makers and give direction, and as a base to support initiatives, applications for grants, planning matters and much more. Many of the changes recently seen across the Parish, and notably in the village Centre, are based on earlier consultations commissioned by the Parish Council. This new effort is the next step.

At the schools' summer fete and over the early autumn printed *wish lists* inviting people to list areas of concern, things they wanted and inviting participation were distributed around the Parish. The feedback from these *wish lists* was used as a focus for the design of an eight-page questionnaire. The questionnaire was aimed to elicit residents' views, concerns and needs. It included environmental matters, sports and leisure, education, shopping and the local economy, young peoples' needs, traffic and transport. Volunteers hand delivered questionnaires to 4,100 houses in Southwater Parish. Replies are confidential and a freepost envelop was provided. The total response was 912 completed questionnaires returned and included in the statistical analysis plus another 46 which arrived too late to be included but which were scanned to include comments and points. This return is better than one in five houses and judged a very high return for such an exercise. Respondents were aged mainly over 30, see Chart 2a.

In addition, a series of meetings and interviews were held with local businesses, the senior managers at Christ's Hospital School, the pre-school play groups leaders', Southwater Welcome Club members, young residents through an open day organised by the Youth Worker, and with the local churches.

The results of all the consultations and information collected were considered by focus groups covering four distinct areas: Social and Community; Transport and Accessibility; Environment and Economy.

The following section summaries the concerns and plans from each of these groups in turn.

Social and Community Matters

People have a growing amount of leisure time, we are told, and need to take exercise to maintain a healthy life style. With this in mind we probed a number of areas with the Questionnaire concerning sports and leisure pursuits.

LEISURE

What sporting facilities would you like to see and use?

25% of respondents made suggestions of which nearly half wanted a swimming pool⁶, while a further 18% wanted squash or tennis courts.

26% felt that there were sufficient facilities in the village with Broadbridge Heath Centre and Pavilions nearby.

What extra sports facilities for young people?

34% responded of whom 26% felt that no more facilities were needed. The other 74% made a wide range of other suggestions of outdoor and indoor facilities.

Outdoor facilities included running track/athletics, archery, and climbing wall, while indoor includes trampoline, gym, dance, badminton, squash and soft play area were all mentioned, see Chart 3. The football/Astroturf grouping includes floodlit and multipurpose pitches and rugby. A catch all category that we labelled *anything* is reflected in the phrase, 'anything that will keep them occupied/use up their energy'. The category also included suggestions such as social club/youth club.

Are there leisure facilities that you would like to see and use?

34% responded of which 48% did not need any further facilities. The remaining 52% of those making suggestions covered a wide range, the most popular of which was again a swimming pool but included soft play area for young children.

Suggestions from 148 (16% of returns) included swimming pool (one third noted this) and multiple mentions for tennis, more badminton, archery and an ice rink.

The need for more evening classes and a cinema were noted.

From the 23 returns from Christ's Hospital there were 2 comments about the lack of play facilities for young children.

EDUCATION

Would you like to see a Secondary school in Southwater?

In response to this straight question, 75% of respondents had definite views and of those 56% made a comment. 34% were in favour of a secondary school, 41% against. There seemed to be a widespread general assumption, particularly by those commenting in favour, that the school would be for Southwater children only and hence there would be no buses and few cars. Otherwise the comments covered a wide range of issues which can be broadly grouped as follows: the need; increase in young people hanging about; no more

⁶ There are swimming pools at Horsham, Billingshurst and in the Parish at Christ's Hospital

development; cause of more traffic congestion but in every case there were points made for and against.

The strength of feeling in support may be measured by the 7.5% who specifically asked for a secondary school in response to the question, "What one change would you like to see in Southwater Parish in the next five years?" This was balanced by an almost identical number who wanted no more development. Clearly this is an issue that needs a great deal of further elaboration and consultation. In the context of the current economy it is assumed that the building of a new school lies over the horizon of the present plan and so no specific actions are included.

YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYS

How can the personal and social development of young people be best fostered in our community?

The contribution of the Youth Worker, the focus of the Youth Club and the recreation facilities for young people is viewed as important to Southwater residents: 40% (367) of respondents want the Youth Club opened longer and 46% want more recreation facilities. Some recognize the need for more parental responsibility and involvement. A slightly larger proportion referred to developing a dialogue with young people to identify their preferences and encouraging them to become involved in the community. Similarly a proportion referred to the need for more recreation/leisure activities.

More negative suggestions were received including requirement for more policing of young people.

82% answered the question about how important they felt was the provision of a permanent youth worker in the Parish. 68% of those responding to the survey feeling that permanent youth worker was essential/useful. Just 12% were not sure and 19% did not answer the question.

During the Easter holiday a group of volunteers lead by our Youth Worker held a coffee shop event in the downstairs Youth Centre, where around 35 children and young people attended and shared their dreams and visions for Southwater.

Children and young people had the opportunity to talk freely with those volunteers around to share their ideas: some filled in wish lists fliers, and some shared their ideas on a 'dream wall'. Their input was captured in three main areas: what you like/don't like about Southwater; what would you like to see in Southwater and their dreams, wishes and hopes for Southwater as detailed below.

What you like about Southwater?

Youth Club, Londis, the parks, Café, woods, the Youth Worker, the Downs Link, Skate Park, the Village centre, and the Country Park.

What you don't like about Southwater?

Speeding cars, large groups of older young people hanging around

What you would like to see in Southwater?

A swimming pool, a cinema, more places for young people to go to, a theme park, larger leisure centre, Ten Pin bowling, McDonalds, KFC, a Game shop, more outdoor facilities, more cycling routes, a charity shop, a youth counselling service, bus service to Pulborough and Brinsbury College and a bigger skate park.

Dreams, wishes and hopes for Southwater:

Youth work promoted via email/website, a Paintball centre, a free Go Kart track, more clubs for those aged 6-10, somewhere safe for girls to hang out, a water park, more car parks, more play parks, theme park, an assistant for the youth worker, a farm, a children's environment group with talks / meetings / activities / planting etc, a proper pathway through the woods, a basketball court, a trim trail, more parks with better facilities.

COMMUNITY

An essential element in any community is communications, with people knowing what is going on so they can make informed choices about how they spend their time. We probed this area and discovered that the monthly *Southwater News* distributed by the Parish Church, the quarterly *Parish News* distributed by the Southwater Parish Council and the weekly West Sussex County Times newspaper are important for more than two thirds see Chart 4, otherwise word of mouth predominates while communications through a group (school, church, PTA etc) and from roadside banners are important, see Chart 5.

Thinking about changes if people had not got it right we asked, **How can information about local events be improved?**

34% (308) answered this question, of which about one-fifth felt there was sufficient information or had no suggestions to offer for improvements. There were several specific mentions about the need for early advertising in the *Southwater News* as several commented that by the time they received their copy the event had already taken place. There were requests for *Southwater News* to be delivered outside the village to Tower Hill and Christ's Hospital and also a query why *Parish News* was not received in Tower Hill area.

The majority wanted some improvements to the current methods with more notice of events and notice boards kept up to date.

There were requests for a notice board in Lintot Square. There is a web site maintained by the Parish Council (www.thelocalchannel/southwater) but the evidence suggests that it is used only by a small proportion of people wanting event information.

Statistics and people's perceptions don't always coincide. To gauge how people feel about safety in Southwater we asked, **Do you feel that Southwater is a safe place to live?**

97% of respondents answered this question, with 84% feeling that it was a safe place to live, see Chart 6.

All of those who did not feel safe gave a reason, over half of which related to groups ('gangs') of youths hanging around and feeling that this was intimidating (what age group involved

here?). A smaller proportion than in the other groups of responses referred to anti-social behaviour, abuse, vandalism, graffiti etc. Other issues included drinking by young people, speeding traffic and the need for more policing, see Chart 7.

11% of those feeling safe also made comments and a little under half referred to the intimidating effect of young people ('gangs') hanging around especially in the evening.

Mention was made of the impact on less aggressive youths.

Places mentioned specifically in connection with groups of youths hanging around and anti-social behaviour were: The Cock Inn; Lintot Square – especially in area of the Co-op and The Lintot; The Country Park; Cedar Drive; Cripplegate Lane; the Leisure Centre; Easteds Barn and Castlewood School.

Actions concerned with Social and Community issues

In arriving at the actions listed below, the group has drawn on information from consultations, comments on 'wish list' flyers and the results of the questionnaires. Some commentary on the social infrastructure aims to set these actions in context of the Health-check SWOT analysis conducted.

In the housing supply shortfalls exist for first time buyers, affordable housing for young people, supported housing, key-workers and shared ownership housing. Otherwise there is a supply of good modern housing stock.

There is adequate access to a range of healthcare and social care services. A new Health Centre provides a range of primary health care services and the dentist is still taking NHS clients. Further afield there is good access to many health care services at Horsham Hospital. Major hospital services are located in East Surrey Hospital, Redhill which is not easy to reach by public transport, and at Worthing Hospital.

There is strategy in place to tackle local crime and protect the community. The issue is to ensure that Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) deployment is maintained and ideally increased. PCSOs have limited powers and many would like to see a greater Police Officer presence. Keeping anti social behaviour to a minimum will be an ongoing challenge. Deployment of a full time youth worker has been an unqualified success in breaking the cycle of behavioural issues in growing youngsters. Engagement, recognition and valuing teenagers is as important as providing sophisticated 'play' facilities therefore securing funding to make the current youth worker post permanent is a critical part of the strategy for managing youth issues. There is an opportunity introduce a *Good Neighbour Scheme* to counter concerns about young peoples' behaviour.

In terms of sports, leisure and open space facilities meeting the needs of residents these are perceived as reasonably strong. However, certain areas are lacking (especially for teenagers). There is a need for more playing fields (pitches). This could be seen as an opportunity (develop new sports areas) but also as a threat (loss of open space) which is a key feature of Southwater development. Church Lane is threatened by possible development and the future of Philips Field for use as football pitches is unknown. Areas

and facilities are reasonably well maintained and in general accessible and affordable for residents. Christ's Hospital is noted as the most expensive facility in the area and the Bluecoat Sports Health & Fitness Club is a private members club with facilities ranging from swimming and fitness through to a crèche, racket sports and training.

In the course of producing this Action Plan West Sussex County Council has announced its proposal to develop a Children and Families Centre in Southwater. This is an important new service and it is absolutely vital that the community is actively involved and consulted in shaping the services it will deliver.

We recognise that some of the actions identified through this process are already part of the 2008-2009 Southwater Parish Council Corporate Plan and therefore moving forwards items will be implemented by them. We are lucky to have an active Parish Council, good representation of the people, with centrally placed administrative centre and moreover in touch with the needs of the community. The work of the Southwater Community Action Plan process will hopefully support successful outcomes on the issues noted below.

Actions concerned with Social and Community issues

Ser No	What?	How?	When?	Who?
S&C	Address Social and Community Issues and Opportunities			
S&C 1	Lobby to ensure ratio of affordable housing to new developments	Housing Needs Survey comment on future developments, and LDF, address in Village Design Statement	On-going from 2009	SWAT/SPC/HDC/ local developers
S&C 2	Acquire and create more sports pitches and outdoor well-lit games areas	Identify potential sites, secure funding and partnership working	2 years	SWAT/HDC/SPC/ funders such as Lottery funding
S&C 3	Engage with young people of Southwater to develop activities with and for them	Secure funding to sustain youth worker post	3 years	URC, MC, SPC, HDC, Others
S&C 4	Raise awareness in the community of local events, activities and amenities	Establish Youth Forum Undertake audit of current information and look at how this can best be disseminated	1 year 1 year	SYP/SPC/HDC HDC/Christ's Hospital/SPC/SWAT/ local groups & clubs/local press/media
S&C 5	Strengthen links with Christ's Hospital to promote cultural and heritage links	Engage with Christ's Hospital to consider how this can be achieved	2 years	SWAT/CH/SPC/ schools/local groups
S&C 6	Ensure Children and Family services are appropriate for Southwater	Be actively involved in the development of new Children and Family Centre to meet the needs of the local community	1 year and ongoing	WSCC/SPC/PCT/HDC
S&C 7	Reduce anti-social behaviour in Southwater	Strengthen youth services. Ensure police presence is maintained and effectively deployed	On-going	SPC/WSCC/HDC/ Sussex Police/ Local Police Panel

Prime mover in **BOLD**Responsible authority in *italics*

Transport and Accessibility

In arriving at the actions identified below, the group has drawn on information from consultations, comments on 'wish list' flyers and the results of the questionnaires.

Many of the actions identified through this process are already a part of the Southwater Parish Council Corporate Plan and therefore moving forward many items will be implemented by them. We are lucky to have such an active Parish Council and the work of the Southwater Community Action Plan process will hopefully support successful outcomes on these issues.

An extensive set of data extracted from the Questionnaire is held on file that will inform policy makers and which underpins the summary documented here.

The main areas of concern raised by the process were speeding; traffic calming (both for and against); access (particularly crossing the A24 at the Hop Oast roundabout); parking (especially around schools); pavements (lighting, surfaces and maintenance); and numerous aspects of bus travel.

SPEEDING

On speeding, you told us that the areas that concern you most are: Cripplegate Lane (especially at the junction with the Downs Link), Southwater Street, Cedar Drive loop, Mill Straight, Worthing Road straight near New Road and Church Lane (particularly as there are two nursery schools). You expressed many and various views on the traffic calming in Southwater with 80 comments wanting fewer measures, 228 a change, and 385 more calming. Removal or change requests focused on the pinch points at the Hen and Chicken and around the schools (as causing the congestion) and removal of humps generally. Requests for more calming centred on the areas of speeding noted above, and at the schools on Worthing Road. The Parish Council has identified three actions on speeding within their corporate plan with medium priority. The results of the Action Plan process should help to inform the Parish Council regarding locations and provide support.

BUS SERVICES

The main bus service in Southwater is the 98 route, on which buses now run approximately every 15 minutes during weekdays. Southwater is the only village locally to have any late night services. Over 300 of you told us in the questionnaire that real-time passenger displays and improved shelters/seating would encourage you to use buses more, Chart 9. Part of the real-time information displays scheme would include access to continuously updated bus information by internet and text messaging, which may be attractive to younger people in particular. Over 250 responses also mentioned Sunday services and late night services as an incentive to further bus use.

The Parish Council has identified bus time tables, bus stops and improved transport links for elderly or less able as issues within the village. There are a number of proposed actions relating to bus travel in the parish. The Parish Council will lead on the issue of shelters and seating and other actions may be taken forward by the Action Plan group either alone or in partnership with the Parish Council.

CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

You felt that by far the most important issue with regard to encouraging/improving cycling was easier crossing of A24 at the Hop Oast roundabout, as evidenced in Chart 10. Without solving the problem definitively, two possibilities have been raised, being either: route over Southwater Street bridge and back to Worthing Road or, as a longer term solution, either traffic lights or walkways crossing the Hop Oast roundabout itself toward Horsham. The Action Plan group can continue to press for a solution although neither of these projects are likely to happen quickly. For those of you who cycle off-road the surface of the Downs Link is also an issue, particularly running north from Lintot Square towards the Bax Castle pub. Many other suggestions were made regarding cycling in general and this led the group to suggest a review of cycle feasibility in the village in order to find out exactly what needs to be done to encourage safer and more attractive cycling in Southwater.

The Parish Council is supportive of cycling in the parish and especially routes around the village itself. The Parish Council, working with the County and District Councils, will be in the best position to decide which actions recommended by the review are best for the parish.

PUBLIC AND OFF-ROAD FOOTPATHS

In the area of footpaths and pavements, you felt they would benefit from more lighting, improved surfaces and better maintenance in general, with paths overgrown by hedges etc. being a common issue. Lighting was requested on the path between the Leisure Centre and Lintot Square, the Eastern end of Station road, Cripplegate Lane and Southwater Street. General improvements were requested on the Downslink and Worthing Road. Outside the village, common requests were for improvements to the pavements down past the Boar's Head Inn and down to the Christ's Hospital Station, and the provision of proper paths on Tower Hill and from the RSPCA and Oakhurst Business Park out to the Worthing Road and Hop Oast.

PARKING

The final important area of concern that you raised is parking and congestion around the two schools on Worthing Road. The schools are already aware of this and are proactive in tackling these issues.

The Parish Council already supports the schools as the three actions in their Corporate Plan that relate directly to this issue show. There may be further help (including with fund raising) that the Action Plan group can provide to support progress on this issue from the extensive set of data offered by the Questionnaire.

Actions concerned with Transport and Accessibility matters

Ser No	What?	How?	When?	Who?
T&A 1	Work with local authority and agencies to investigate speeding and traffic problems and seek to implement measures			
T&A 1.1	Highways – reduction in speed	Inform WSCC of perception from public from consultations and work with them to find solutions	Within 1 year	SPC/WSCC/SP/ SWAT
T&A 1.2	Highways – traffic calming and pinch points	Present evidence of need to relevant authorities from consultations and monitor to ensure issues are addressed	2 years	SPC/WSCC/SP/ SWAT
T&A 1.3	Policing – Tackle speeding	Support SID operation	1 year	SPC/SP/SWAT
T&A 1.4	Reduce congested areas around schools	Present evidence of need to relevant authorities from consultations and monitor to ensure issues are addressed	1 year	SWAT/ <i>Southwater schools</i> /WSCC
T&A 2	Improve the availability and convenience / comfort of buses			
T&A 2.1	Improve access to bus information to reduce waiting time	Investigate appropriate technology and location of real time indicators in Southwater parish	2 years	SPC/WSCC/HDC /Bus Operators
T&A 2.2	Improve bus user comfort	Identify locations for bus shelters and seating	1 year	SPC/SWAT/ WSCC
T&A 2.3	Create a Sunday bus Service in Southwater	Lobby WSCC to fund a Sunday service or investigate other opportunities to create a Sunday service.	1 year	SWAT/WSCC/ HDC/Bus Operators
T&A 2.4	Improve Bus Availability	Work with bus operators and WSCC to improve late night services	1 year	SWAT/SPC/ WSCC/HDC/Bus Operators

T&A 3 Encourage safer and more attractive cycling options for Southwater as a whole				
T&A 3.1	Identify Cycling issues and opportunities	Commission a review of cycle feasibility in Southwater. Use recommendations to lobby relevant authorities for improvements	1 year	HDC/SWAT/WSCC
T&A 3.2	Push for a crossing at or near Hop Oast	Lobby WSCC, HDC and relevant developers	Ongoing	SWAT/HDC/WSCC
T&A 4 Improve pedestrian routes within the Parish				
T&A 4.1	Improve specific footpaths as identified by residents	Present specific needs to relevant authorities for prioritisation and monitor implementation	1 year/ongoing	SWAT/SPC/WSCC/Landowners
T&A 4.2	Reduce obstructions and improve maintenance of paths	Identify problem areas, create and implement maintenance schedule	1 year	SWAT/SPC
T&A 4.3	Bring the Downslink path to uniform standard within Southwater parish	Identify and Communicate the improvements needed on the Downslink bridleway between Christ's Hospital and Lintot Square	2 years	SWAT /SPC/WSCC/ HDC/Landowners
T&A 4.4	Increase safe pedestrian and cycle routes to and from schools in Southwater	Support schools and authorities to promote and implement initiatives and find solutions	2 years	Southwater schools/WSCC/SPC/SWAT

Prime mover in **BOLD**

Responsible authority in *italics*

Environmental Concerns

Again in arriving at the actions identified below, the Environment group has drawn on information from consultations, comments on 'wish list' flyers and the results of the questionnaires. Many of the actions identified through this process are already a part of the Southwater Parish Council Corporate Plan and therefore moving forward many items will be implemented by them.

Sustainability and green environment are key watch words in 21st century planning and in addressing the issue in the Questionnaire the group sought views on what is currently offered and explored areas where there were perceived shortfalls. The results show a mixed pattern and indicate that always more can be done.

RECYCLING

On the general question we asked if people were satisfied with the recycling facilities in the Parish including the Hop Oast recycling facility. 74% are satisfied with recycling facilities but 17% not. The key messages within these areas were as follows.

The wish for improved collections focused mainly on having a wider range of paper and plastics collected, see Chart 11. The current restrictions were felt to be 'too picky' especially with regard to plastics and it was hoped that the new single bins to be introduced later this year would improve the flexibility and reliability of collections.

Home collections were felt to be crucially important to maximize recycling.

Although most requests were for more frequent collections and the option of larger/more bins there were several comments from those living in flats that they often did not have room for more/larger bins but would prefer more frequent collections.

Concern was expressed that unless there was a convenient way of recycling batteries people would just include them in general rubbish instead of taking them to Hop Oast.

Comments on local collections largely focused on the option of having local collection points for the items identified for collection if there could not be the preferred option of household collections. Any such collection points should be well signed and easily accessible and emptied regularly.

HOP OAST IMPROVEMENTS

Visiting the Hop Oast recycling and refuse facility can be a time consuming exercise and respondents are looking for:

- Improved management including a system indicating vacant parking spaces when there are queues
- Improved access and use of the site extension
- Reduced congestion around glass and plastic recycling
- Attendants to be more helpful

In addition to specific requests for more information/education about recycling, and what could and could not be recycled, several responses suggested that some residents were unaware of what was already collected in the regular fortnightly household cycle e.g. requests for collection of newspapers, plastic bottles. This, together with comments about wanting a recycling bin and why there was a charge suggests that perhaps bins do not get left behind when people sell their house.

Some asked for information about how Southwater compared with other villages and whether it should aim to become a 'green' village.

There were also requests for local business to be included in recycling provision.

Financial incentives (e.g. council tax reduction or vouchers/tokens) were suggested. There were also some suggestions concerning possible fines for those that did not recycle.

DOG BINS

In response to a topic of more dog bins there was an even split between those wanting more, those expressing a view that there are enough and those not sure.

235 made suggestions where there should be new bins, see Chart 12. In the analysis the Downs Link (60), Country Park (29) and Cedar Drive (19) are predominant. The places grouped as 'Other' include Cripplegate Lane, Andrews Road/Foxfield (7 each), Quarry Way, Station Road, and Southwater Street (6 each). Blakes Farm Road, Leisure Centre, Allotments and Shipley Road were also mentioned.

Of the 23 returns from Christ's Hospital, 4 wanted dog bins in the village, the path from the new housing development to the train station being specifically mentioned.

Respondents making further comments (9%), most wanted the bins emptied regularly/more frequently.

LITTER BINS

There was an even split between those wanting more bins, and those not wanting any more. 24% made suggestions as to where further litter bins were required. 19% of these (5% of the total responses to the survey) felt there should be more litter bins near the shops in Lintot Square and near Londis/Diamond Cuisine, see Chart 13.

There were some comments about the need for regular emptying of bins and the need for bigger bins near the Leisure Centre.

THE COUNTRY PARK AND GREEN SPACES

As commented earlier the way the village has evolved and the transformation of the industrial brickworks into the Country Park has brought the countryside into the heart of the village despite the extensive development. The retention of the hedgerows has enabled Southwater to retain a wooded landscape. These features are a major characteristic of the village, and presumably a factor in influencing people to come and stay. It follows that there is a need to ensure that these features are protected and that arrangements continue for their proper management.

Concerning the Country Park, our survey shows that it is greatly used with 40% visiting at least weekly and 27% once a month.

28% (258) made general comments of which 10% liked as it was or said, "It is lovely".

Several wanted the café to have longer opening hours or wanted more seating. Views on dogs were mixed – as many wanting dogs on leads at all times as wanted them allowed off the lead at all times. There were comments about the need for maintenance in some areas and improvements to paths, although some commented that it was becoming more like an urban park and wanted more natural areas, with more information about the wildlife.

It was pointed out that although cycling is not allowed people do cycle and there were some requests for cycle paths.

In addition to these general comments over 7% of all respondents wanted more children's activities and improvements to the children's play area with comments that it had become run down. Several respondents commented about the play area and its access getting very muddy.

Two respondents commented on the need for the swings to be maintained and for glass and cans to be removed from the play area.

Are the green spaces managed in the best way?

The consensus was that they are managed well, with 47% responding 'Yes' and only 11% 'No'.

17% made additional comments, the principal one (5% of the total) being the need for more frequent grass cutting. The majority of these also wanted the cuttings removed so that they did not blow all over the paths, Chart 14.

This was followed closely by requests for cutting back hedges and overhanging trees near paths as well as for more regular maintenance of shrubs and weeds. The need for cutting back hedges and shrubs next to footpaths is repeated in the Transport section.

A range of comments from encouraging wildlife to improved landscaping/ planting especially round the old railway bridge were offered. At Christ's Hospital comments included the Parish Council taking over upkeep of village green and the need to stop cars parking on the verges near the train station.

ALLOTMENTS

We asked, **If more allotments were provided would you use one?**

11% said 'Yes'. 2% of respondents commented that they already had an allotment. One had been on a waiting list for two years and two others would like one when they retire.

Actions concerned with Environmental matters

Ser No	What?	How?	When?	Who?
Env	Address Environmental Issues and Opportunities			
Env 1	Monitor green space, hedges and bins to ensure maintenance is kept up	Work with appropriate local authority, appoint an environmental 'champion' or through school projects	2010 – ongoing	SPC/HDC/WSCC local groups ⁷
Env 2	Raise awareness in community for new refuse collection arrangements, and inform on 'reduce, re-use, recycle' initiatives	Hold an event to tie in with HDC timescale. Book recycling bus and ensure information is to hand and publicised well	1-2 years	WSCC/HDC/ Recycling bus/SWAT/SPC
Env 3	Promote Country Park activities within Parish	Attention to parking and signage	1 year	HDC/SPC/SWAT/ local sports and youth groups
Env 4	Create a small park in Southwater Street	Lobby SPC to continue with this initiative	5 years	HDC/SPC ⁸
Env 5	Promote Southwater Walks	Produce Walks leaflet	1-2 years	SPC/HDC/SWAT
Env 6	Encourage Southwater community to consider sustainability and how to take an active part	Promote awareness of various initiatives including Greening Campaign, and schools projects. Secure funding	2 years	SWAT/SPC/WSCC /local groups

Prime mover in **BOLD**

Responsible authority in *italics*

⁷ Dependent on land owner

⁸ Dependent on a Compulsory Purchase Order successfully applied for by HDC and transfer of land to SPC

Economy and Business Matters

By economy we mean the local businesses, traders, retailers and what people do to sustain enterprise in the Parish. To gauge what additional support services might help small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) we carried out a series of face to face interviews and also got some general feedback from businesses through the questionnaires. Probes concerning the shops were revealing as the commentary that follows shows.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

What new support services for SMEs would help you?

36 answered this question, of which half identified services that **were** previously offered by Southwater Business Resource Centre (virtual address, office services, parcel drop etc). A third did not want any services.

The most specific request which did not fit into any of the above, most of which were provided in the past, was for hot-desk/meeting rooms with the first five hours a week free and open seven days a week until late.

Data from the Questionnaire was backed by a survey and series of meetings with representatives of local businesses at the Oakhurst Business Park which provided feedback on issues such as accessibility, parking, transport links, security, location, building space etc.

The businesses at Oakhurst cover a diverse range of activities from retail trade through construction, manufacturing, wholesale & distribution, professional services, vehicle repair and health & social work. The overall majority are long-established enterprises in Southwater with nearly 80% being present for 10 years or more. The majority of employees live in the Horsham district.

Factors that are considered most important to these businesses are cost of premises; availability of suitable units; accessibility by road; quality of working life; security; parking and site maintenance. On the negative side poor access to the site by foot was noted.

In probing specific difficulties with running a business at Oakhurst it was noted that high overheads, lease and maintenance costs, flooding at the front and into the units, better relationships with HDC was sought. Continued red tape to get work done on unit is an issue.

The highest priority for improving Oakhurst as a place to do business included items such as a post-box, mobile hot food van and café on site, purchase of freehold/shorter lease, better sign-posting and raising awareness of the business park within the community.

Looking to the future half foresaw business expansion on the current site but growth was tempered by the current market conditions, costs, planning constraints and skilled labour availability.

On the question of broadband speed, 60% responded to this of which over 40% felt that the speed was already sufficient, see Chart 15.

RETAILERS**What regular activities would you like to see in Lintot Square?**

57% responded to this question of whom 70% (364) wanted a market in one form or another, including 33 requests for a Saturday/weekend market. Another popular suggestion was for live music, see Chart 16.

One central feature of any village community has been the Post Office and the vital services it provides. Southwater had a period early in 2007 when the Post Office closed for a period which if nothing else showed the widespread strength of support for it which is reflected in the 59% that use the Post Office at least once a week. Of those that don't, 59% get services in Horsham and 14% via the internet.

Of those living outside of Southwater village people from Tower Hill and Christ's Hospital are seen to go to Horsham, Chart 17.

The patterns of retail shopping in Southwater are illustrated in Chart 18. The supermarkets attract the highest level of usage with the Card/Gift shop and Chemists in the same league. In the chart 'Other' includes outlets on the Business Park, the other two pubs and Mollycoddles. In addition to requests for a DIY store there were several requests for a key-cutting service. Requests from people living outside the village included a shop at Christ's Hospital (2), newsagent at Tower Hill (2), see Chart 19.

38% of respondents replied to the question, 'If you do not use local shops, what are the reasons?' Most said price and choice were the reasons, see Chart 20.

Those that gave other reasons, over half referred to the fact that Horsham was closer or more accessible, with most of the rest saying they worked elsewhere.

Actions concerned with Economy and Business Matters

We see some indicators on what the public want, but moreover we see a need for more in depth market research based on consultations at the Oakhurst Business Park, the Questionnaire, Wish List slips and Worksheet Evidence.

Ser No	What?	How?	When?	Who?
Econ	Address Economy Issues and Opportunities			
Econ 1	Make links with the business community	Hold series of events, press releases to gauge interest. Form 'founding fathers' committee. Secure funding to start up association	1 year	SWAT/HDC/local traders/Town Centre Manager
Econ 2	Produce shoppers guide/website for Southwater	Work with HDC – this could also link with Environment group action re Country Park	1 year	SWAT/SPC/HDC/ Business Association/Town Centre Manager
Econ 3	Work with local businesses and shops to improve accessibility and continue to identify needs/facilitate solutions with and for local community	Set up business association. Audit of features of Southwater and barriers to trading opportunities. Assess where people are coming from to shop	1 year	HDC/SWAT/local traders/Town Centre Manager
Econ 4	Broadband – improve infrastructure delivery	Investigate alternative internet access solutions	2 years	Business Association/HDC/ SPC/WSCC/internet providers, large employers
Econ 5	Work with local employers to encourage skills training and recruitment	Set up business association. Involve local traders, youth groups, national employers	2 years	Business Association/ Business Link/HDC/ WSCC

Prime mover in **BOLD**

Responsible authority in *italics*

Note: The group agreed that the local shopkeepers have not been consulted properly, this could come as part of the first action, to link with the business community, or earlier to involve that audience in the drafting of the community action plan. To be discussed further.

Glossary

HDC	Horsham District Council
LDF	Local Development Framework
SWAT	Southwater Action Team
SME	Small and Medium-size Enterprises
SP	Sussex Police
SPC	Southwater Parish Council
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
WSCC	West Sussex County Council
URC	United Reform Church

Charts

Chart 1

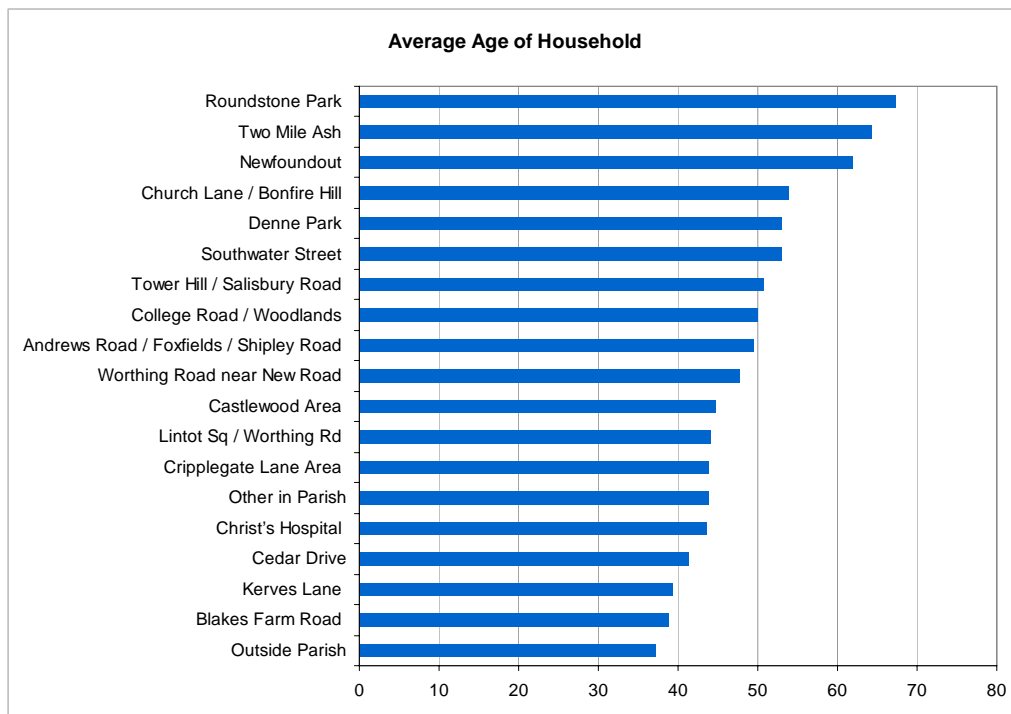


Chart 2

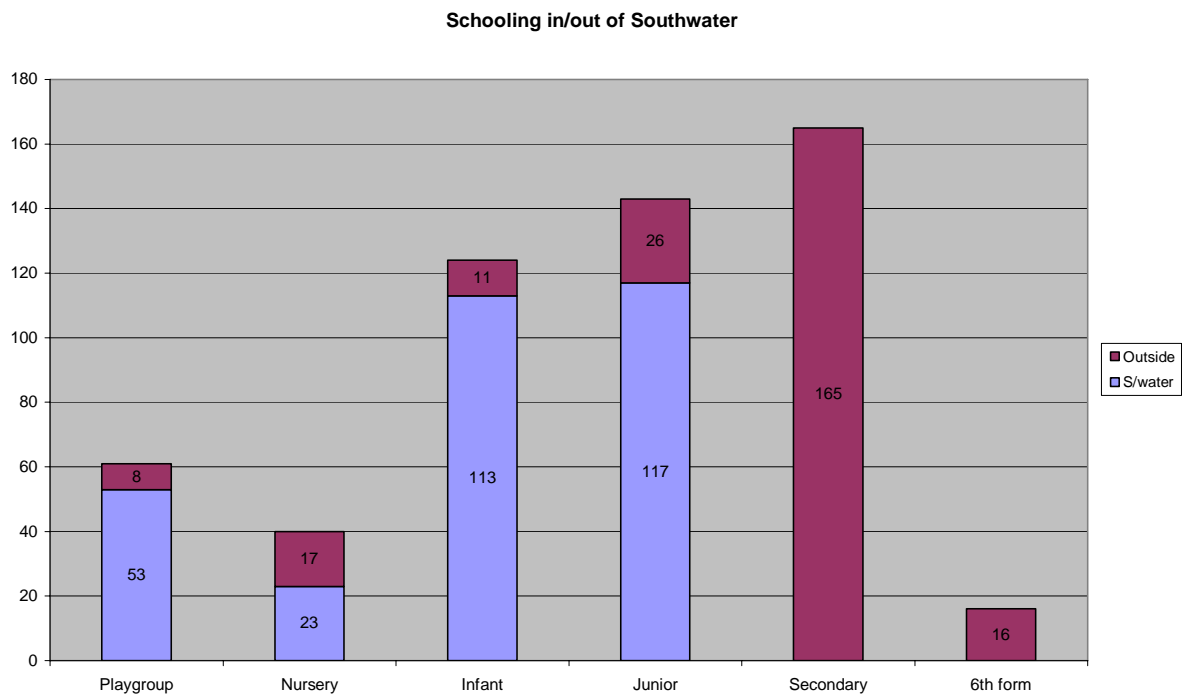


Chart 2a Age of Respondent

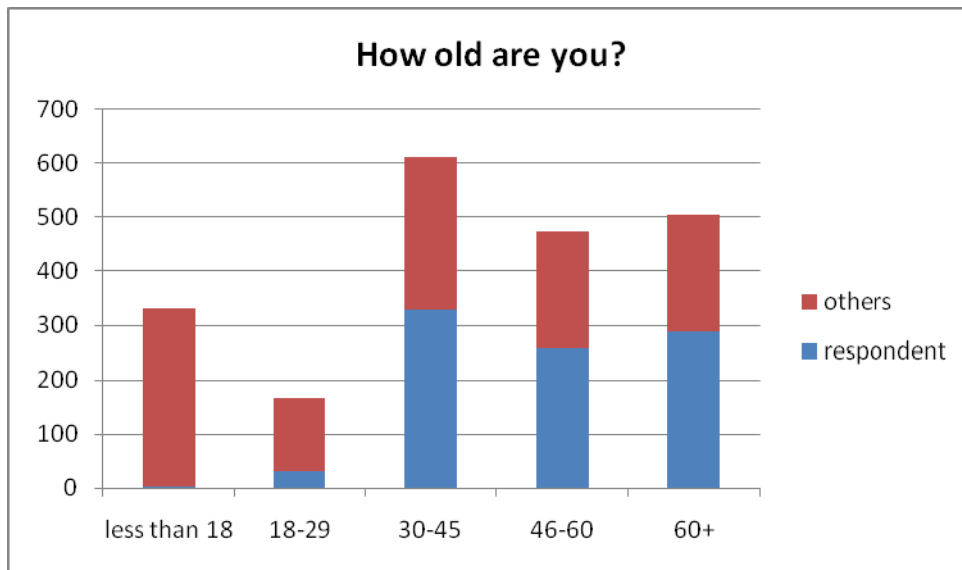


Chart 3 Extra Facilities for young people

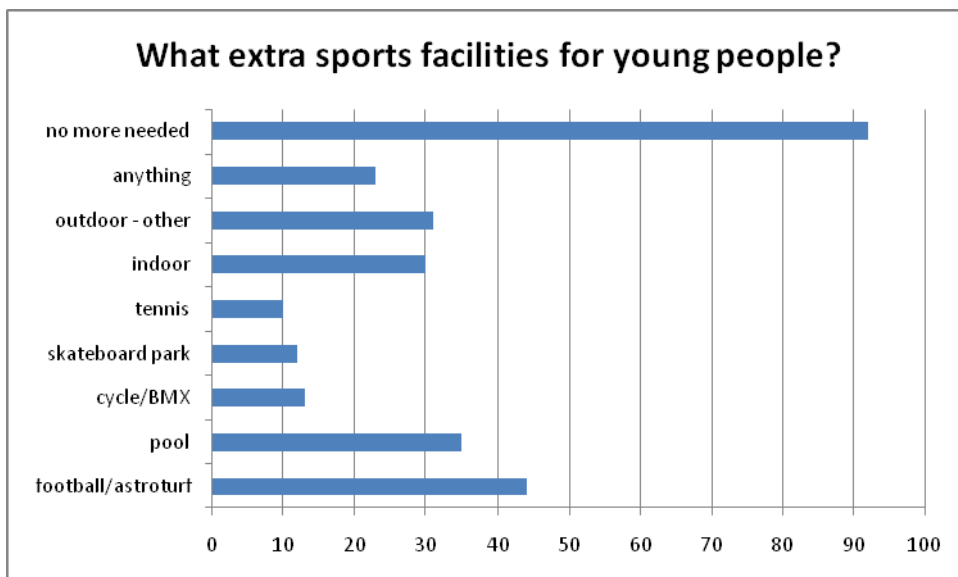


Chart 4

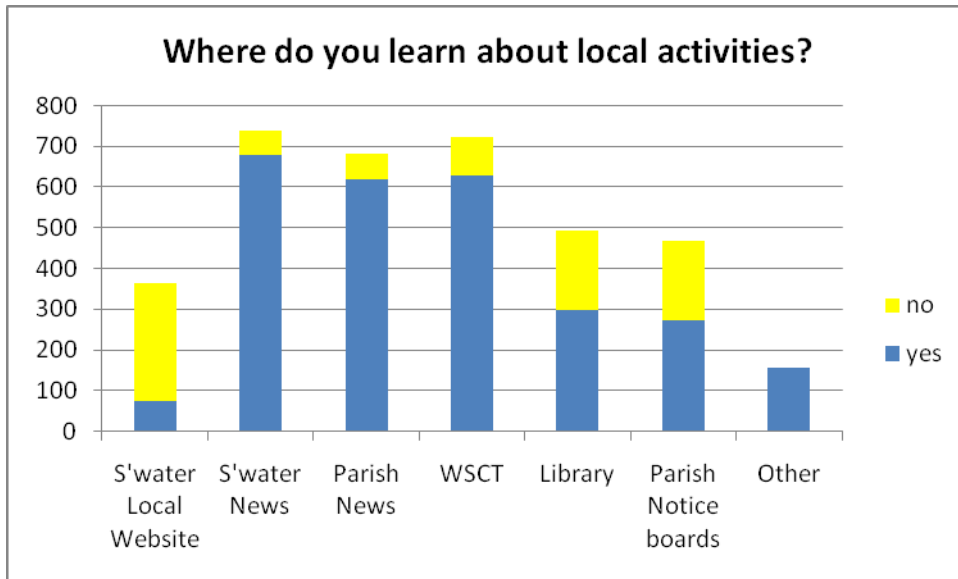


Chart 5

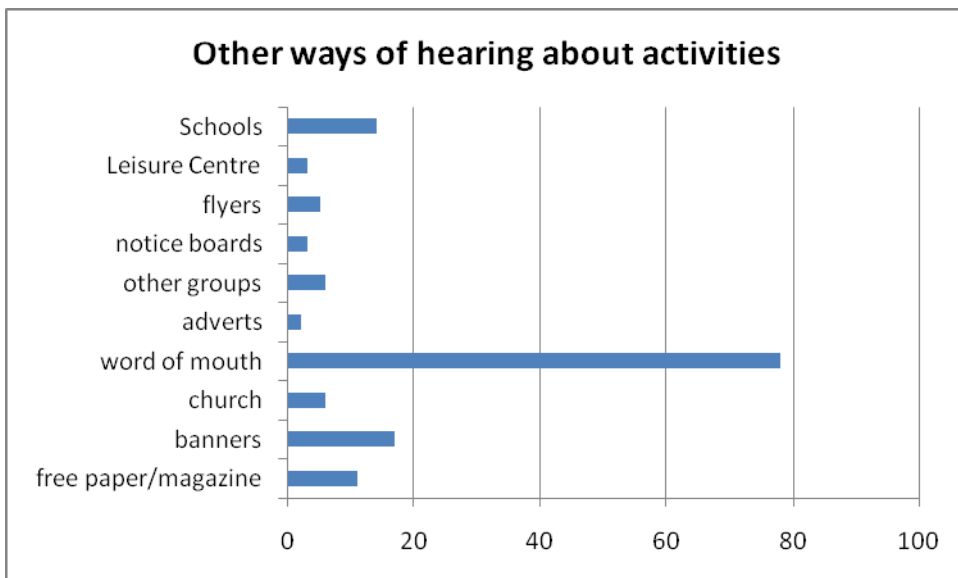


Chart 6

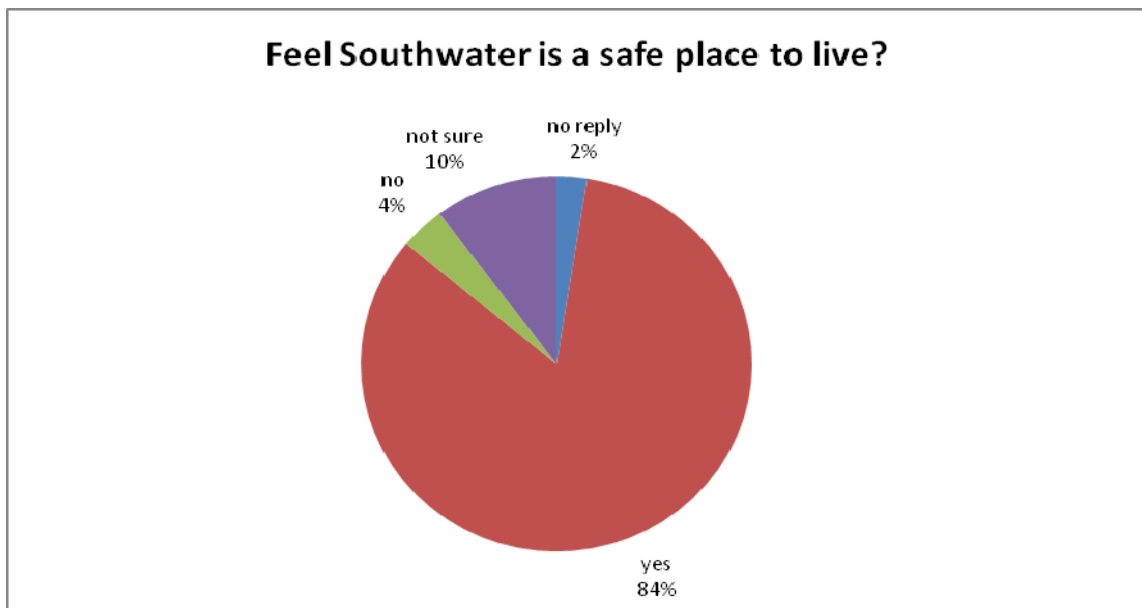


Chart 7

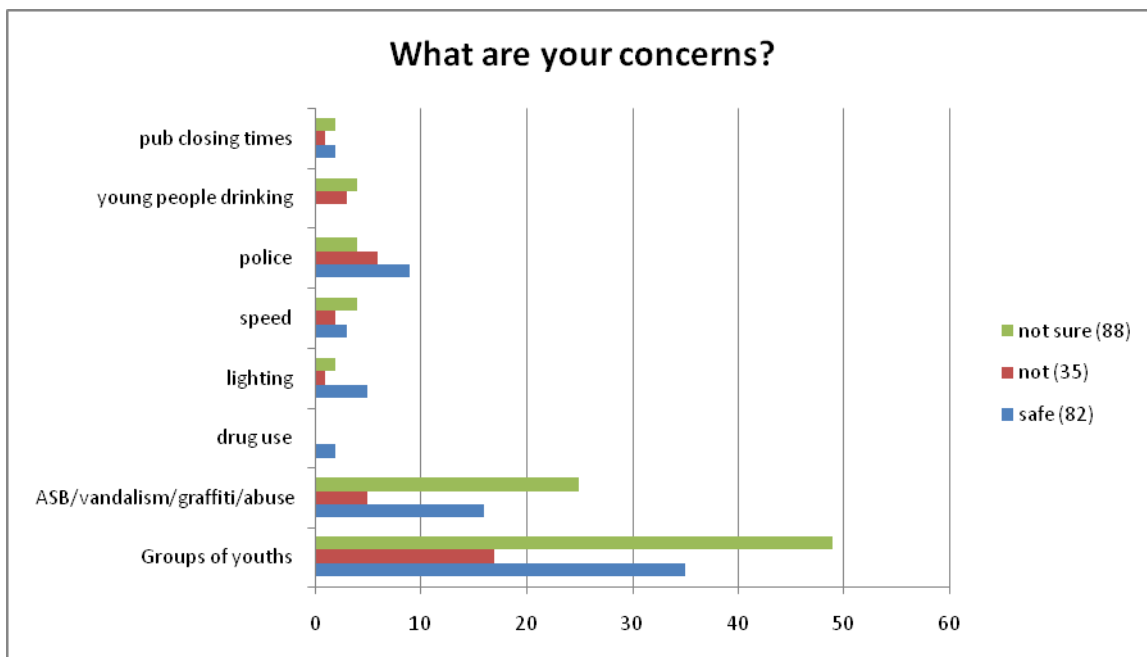


Chart 9

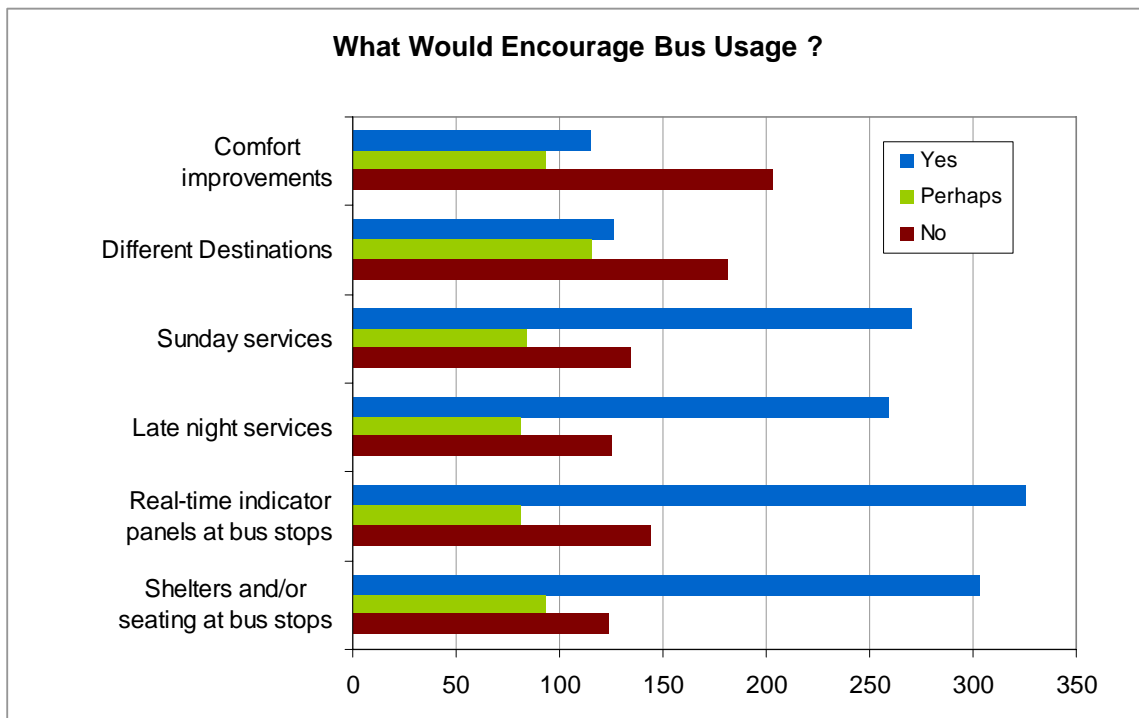


Chart 10

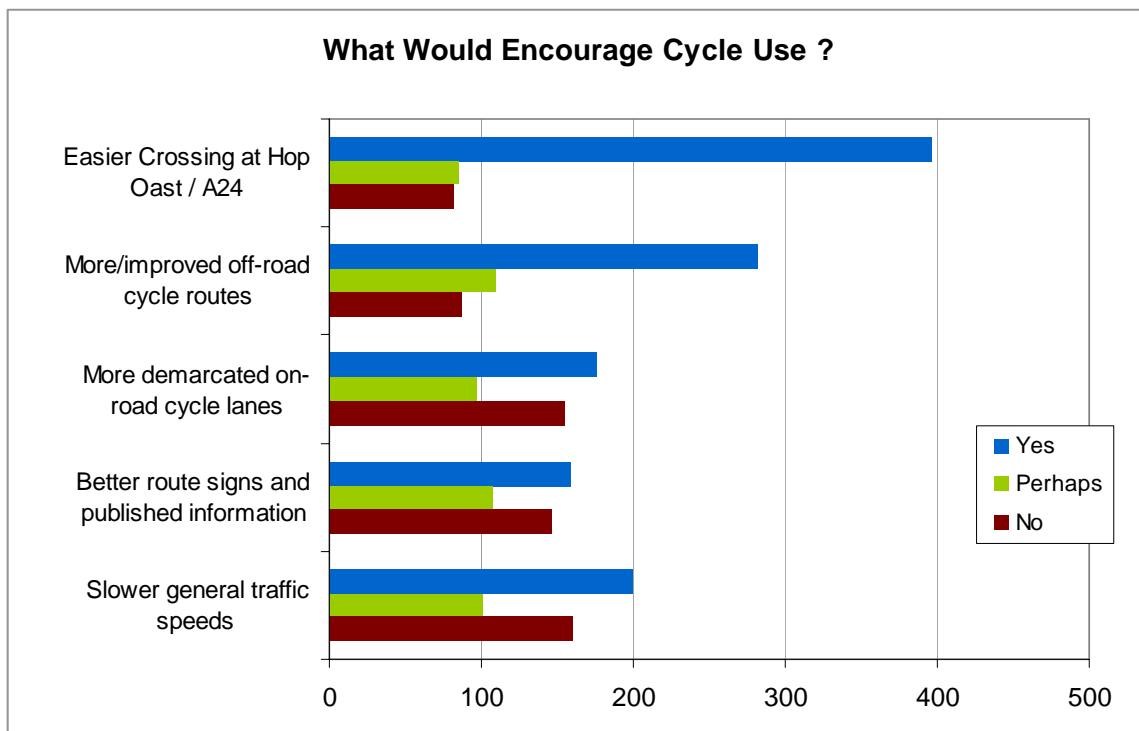


Chart 11

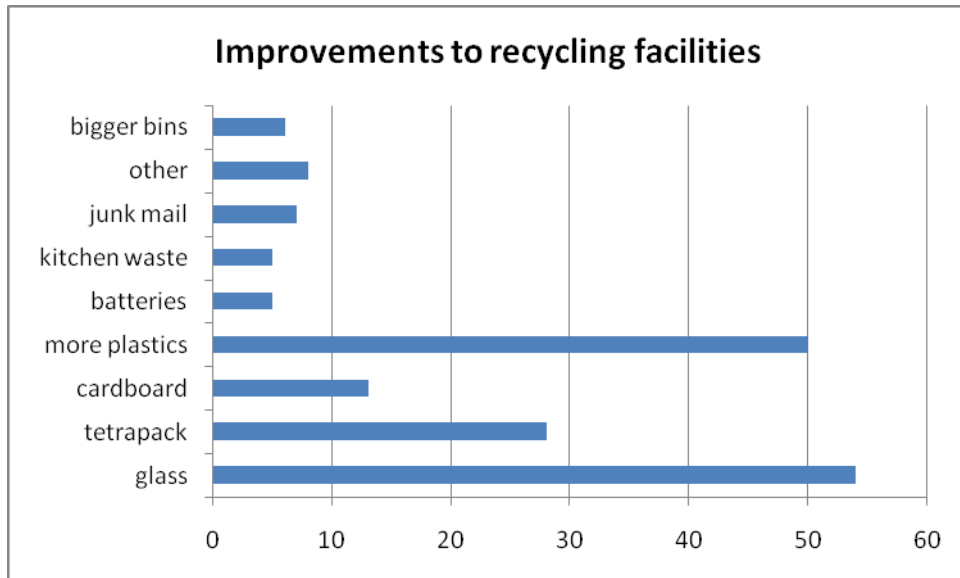


Chart 12

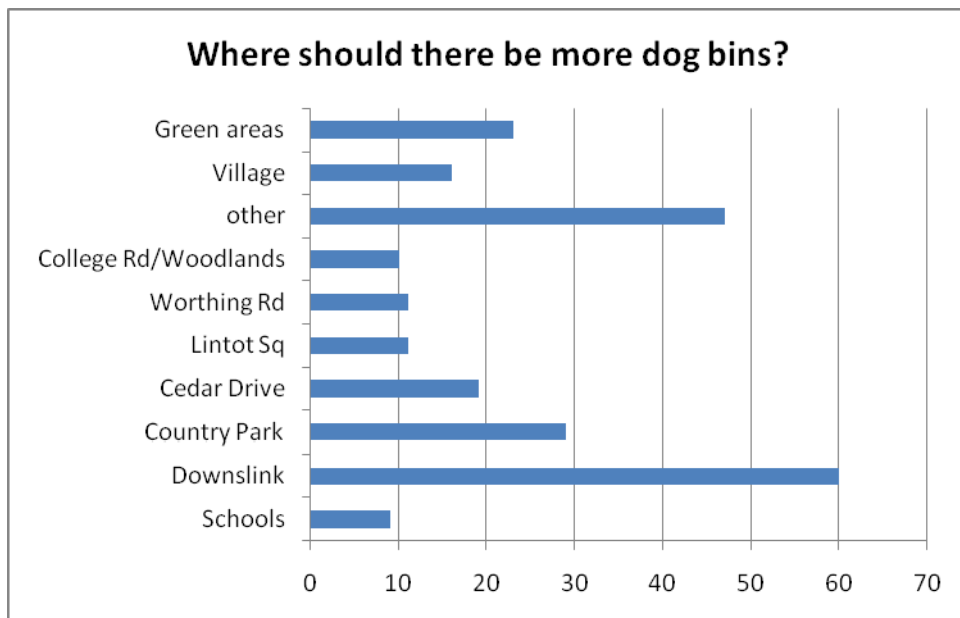


Chart 13

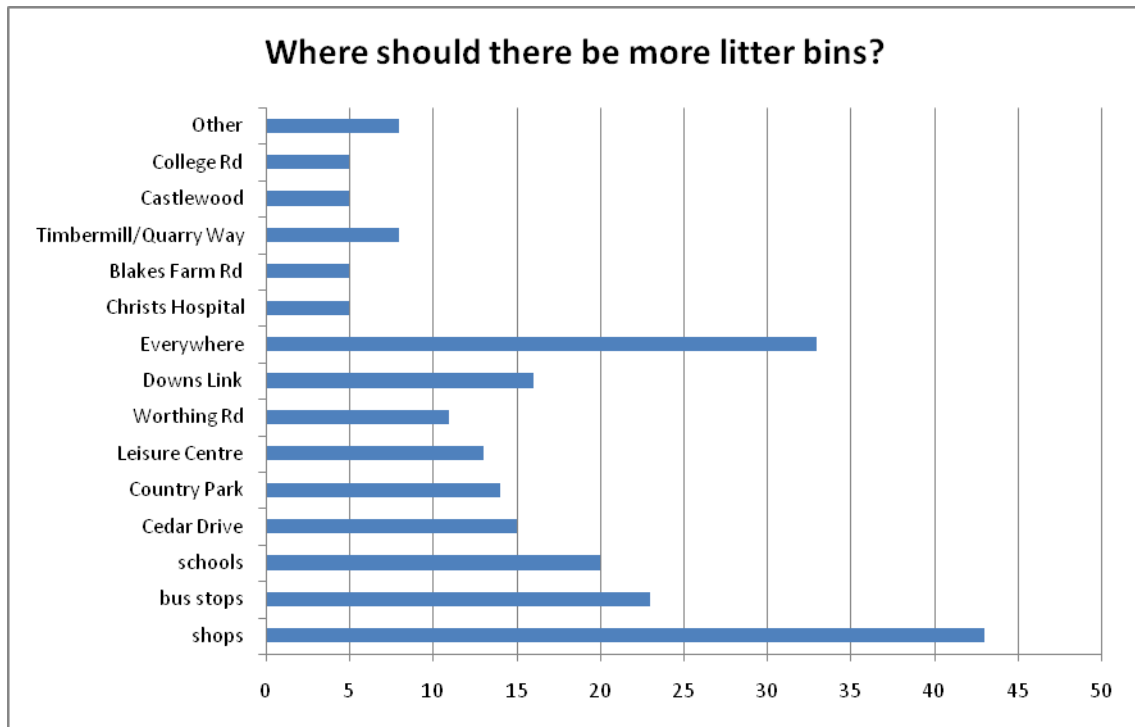


Chart 14

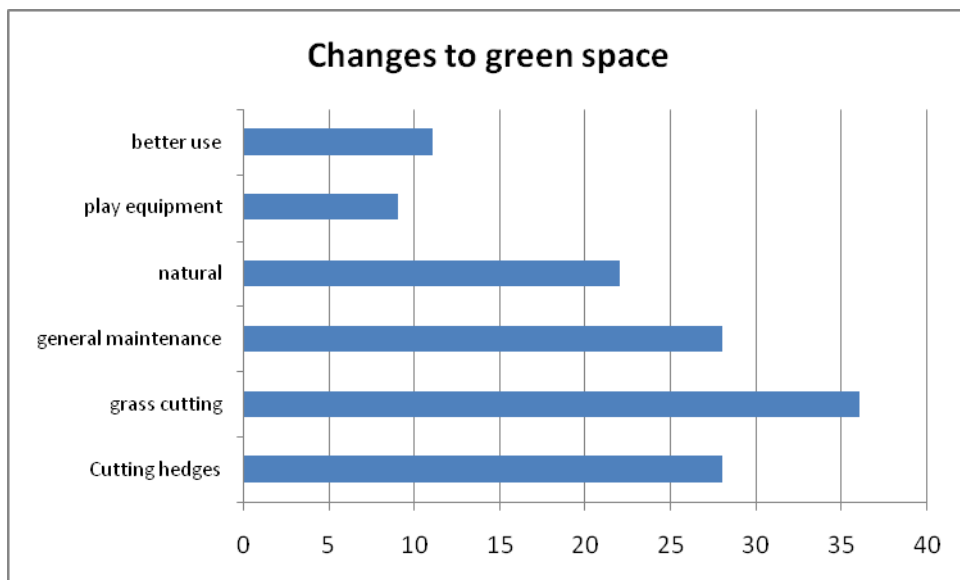


Chart 15

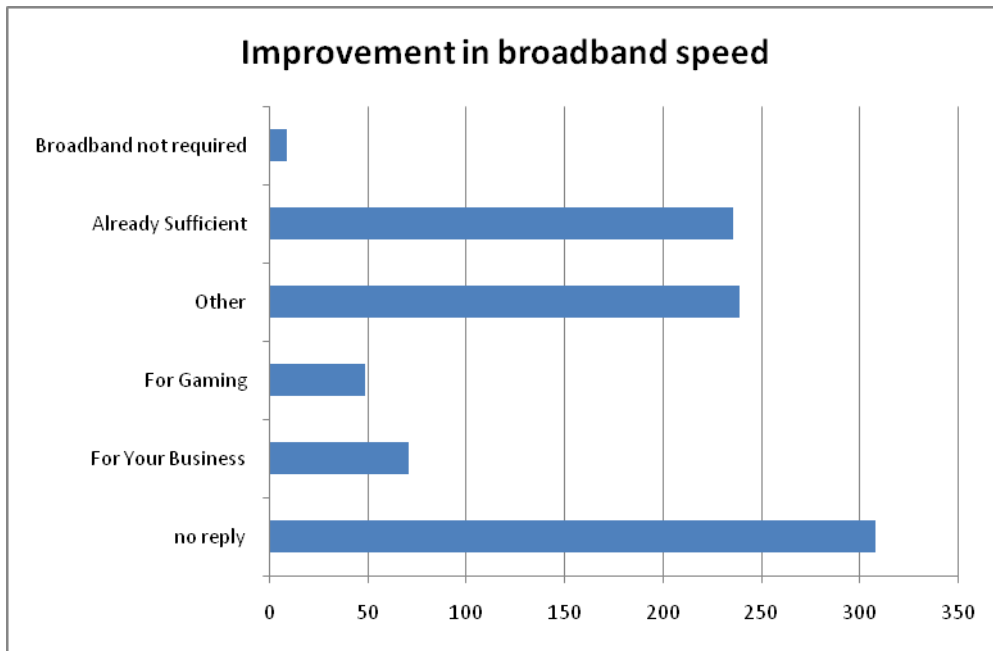


Chart 16

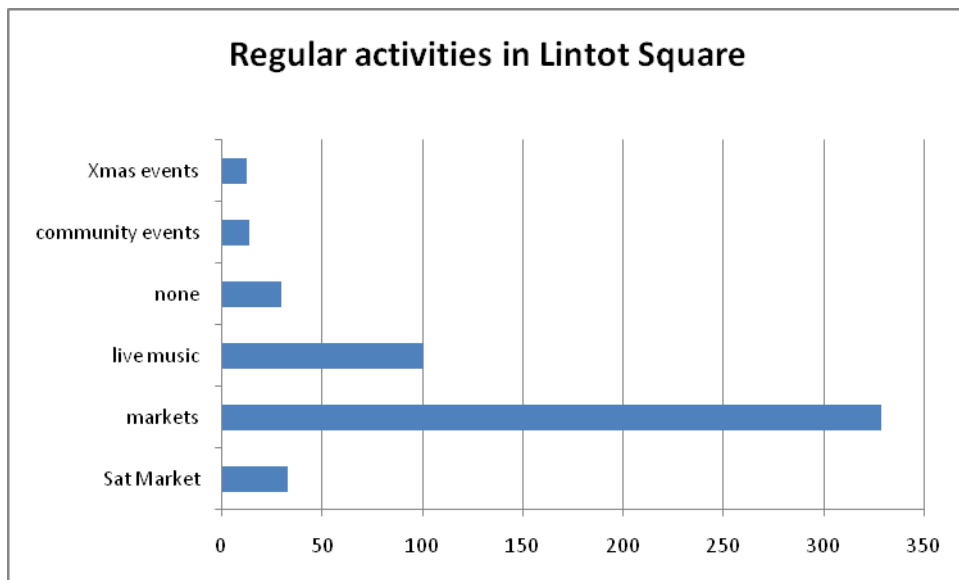


Chart 17

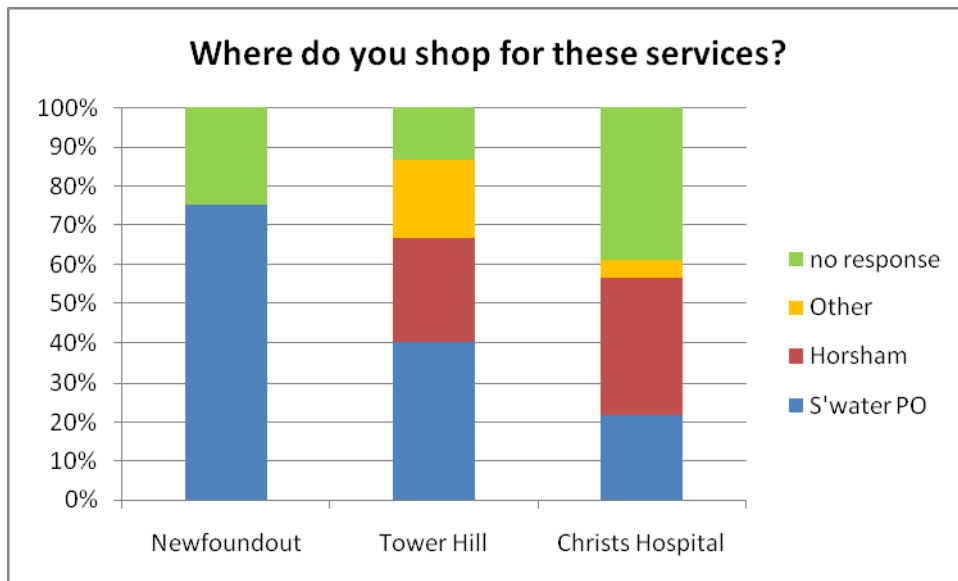


Chart 18

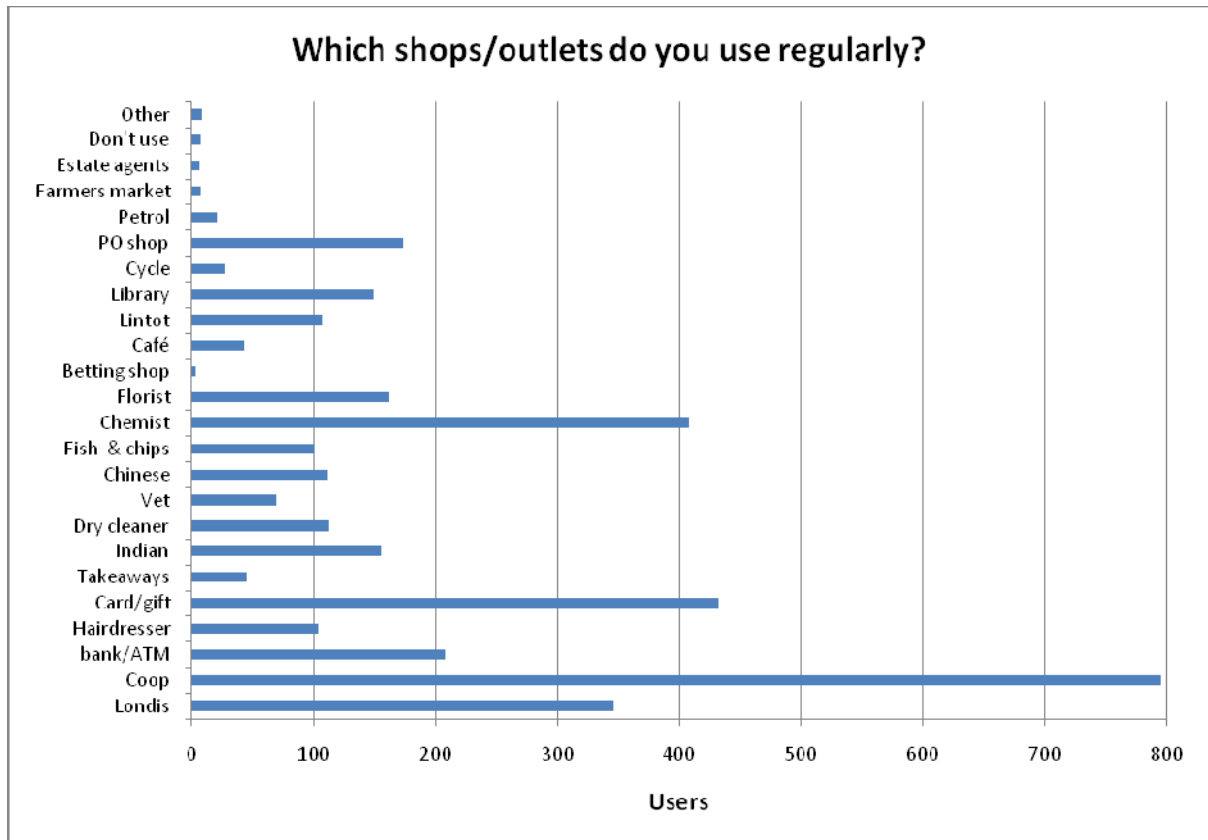


Chart 19

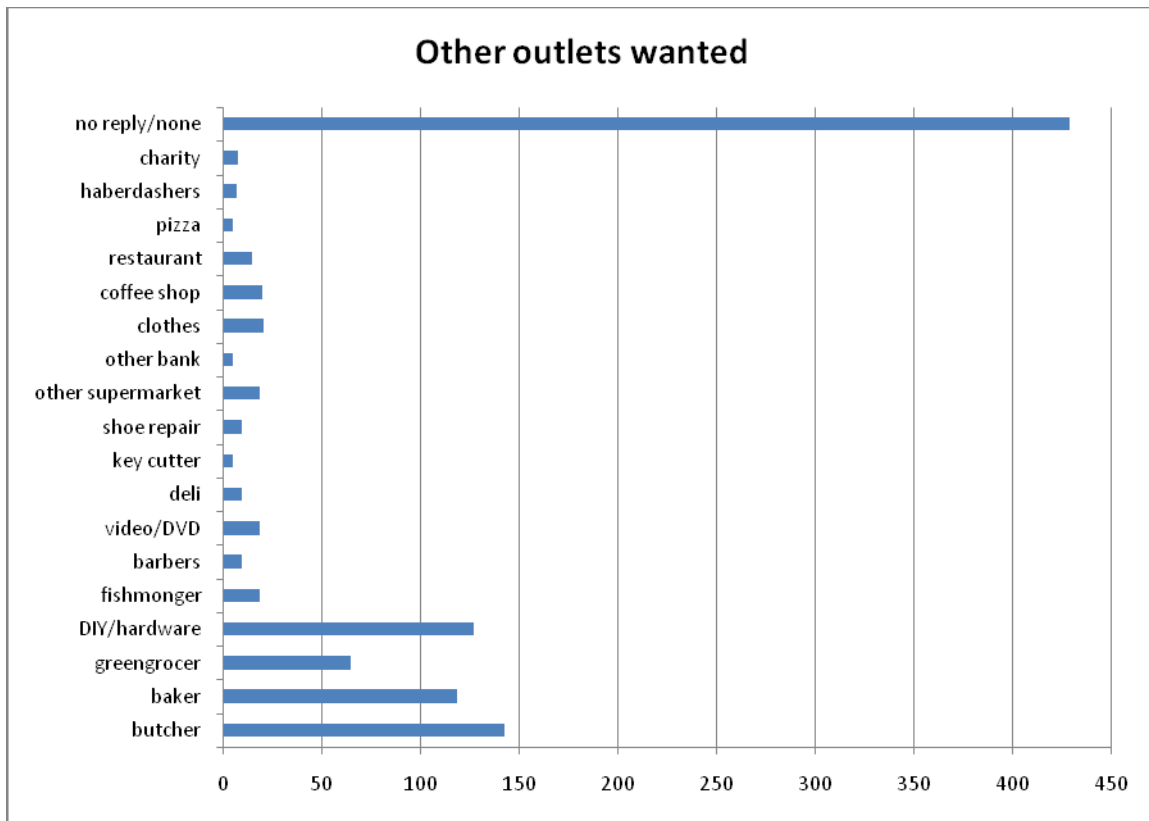


Chart 20

