

ACTION4ACOMB

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE: HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

JULY 2022

The information contained in this summary report was made available to Acomb residents across 8 public 'Open-Door' events during March 2022 and comprises the key assessment of data prepared and presented by Ivor Knox who very kindly gave many hours of his time to support and provide independent and professional expertise to the whole process. Additional material contained here has been drawn together by members of A4A.

This report can be viewed on the following sites:

www.action4acomb.co.uk

www.acomblocal.co.uk

A Supplementary/Background report has also been produced and this can be accessed on: www.action4acomb.co.uk

A full, unabridged copy of all the data collected during the questionnaire process can be access at:
www.action4acomb.co.uk



Why Action4Acomb (A4A)?

- A4A - established in 2013 as a Constituted Community Group
- Represents everyone in Acomb
- Is independent of other organisations
- Can apply for grant and other funding for projects
- Core role is engagement with local community, seeking their views and wishes
- Encourage active participation for the future

- An early piece of work was to conduct a community-wide questionnaire in 2014 (response rate 56%).
- This informed Acomb's first 5-Year Community-Led Plan.
- Responses were analysed and actions identified.
- Many objectives have been successfully achieved.

It is now time to repeat and refresh this work. This is why we have undertaken a further community-wide survey.

Acomb's Community Led 5 Year Plan – 2015 to 2020

An Introduction	Page 02
Section 01 Protect & Sustain	Page 06
Section 02 Improve & Renew	Page 11
Section 03 Support & Co-operate	Page 21
Acknowledgements	Page 24



Methodology

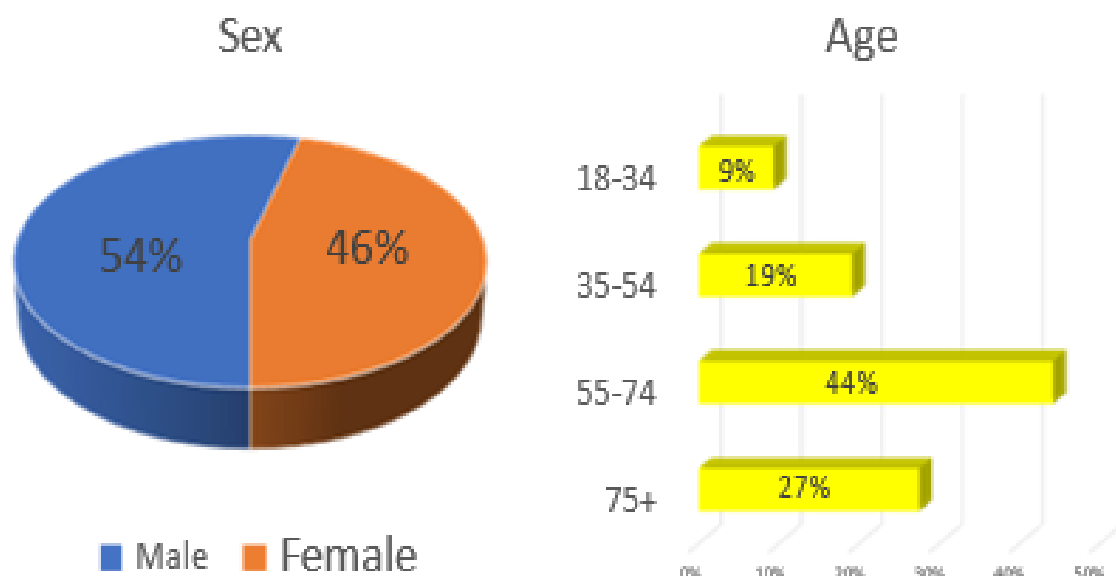
Questionnaires were hand-delivered to all 614 occupied households in Acomb Parish and included a link to an online version.

Any household that was unable to respond online could have a paper questionnaire collected by A4A volunteers

Responses: 83 online & 161 paper = 244 in total (40%)

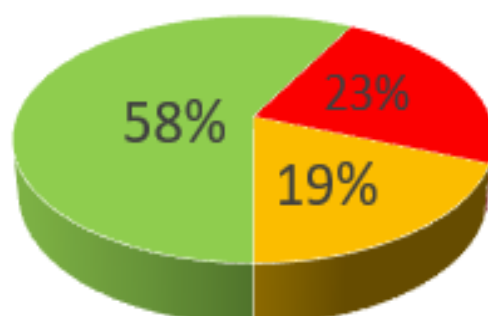
Based on the number of responses the indications are that there has been around a 25% turnover of residents in the last 5 years while two-thirds have lived here for 10 years or more.

Demographics



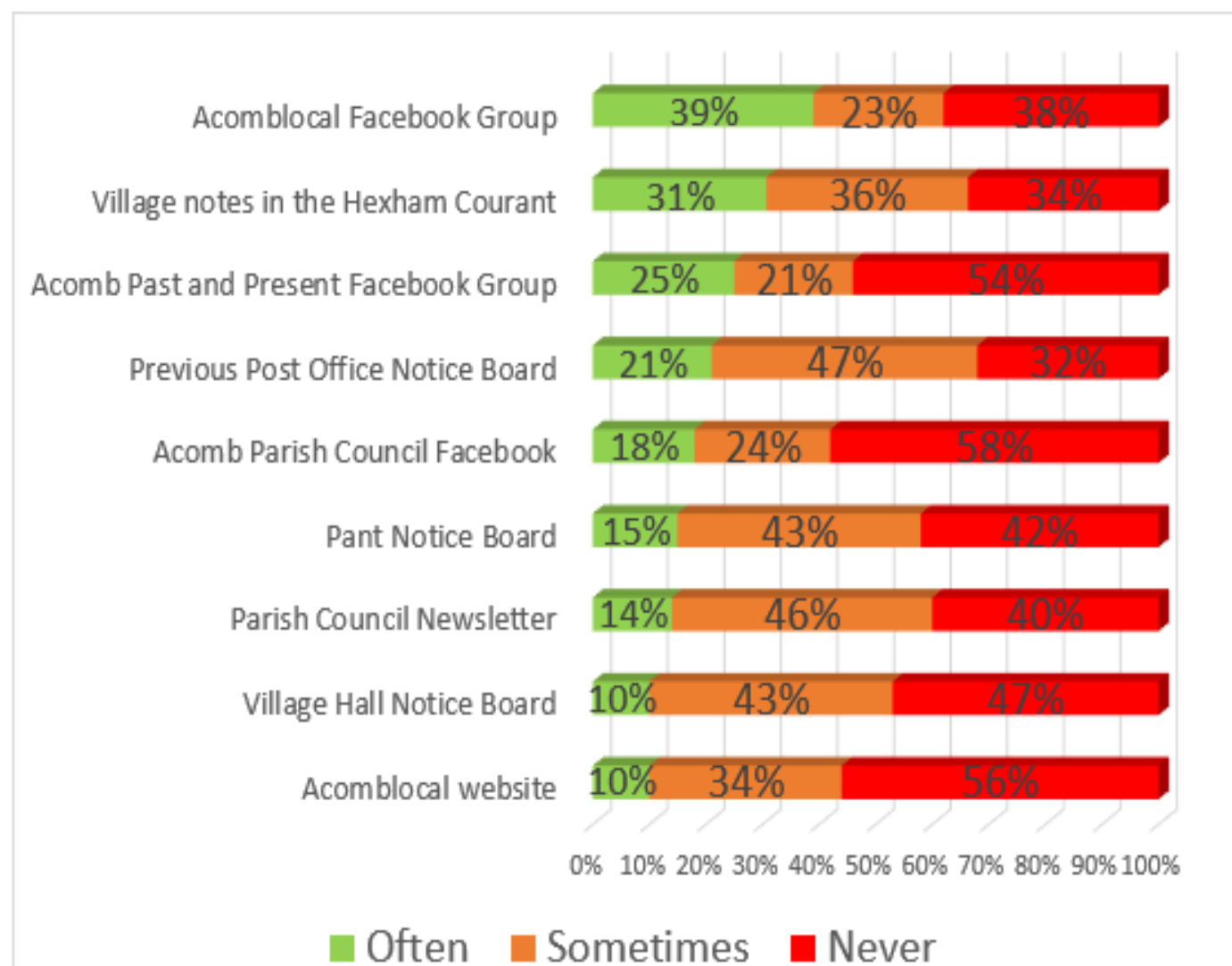


Is there enough information for you about what is happening in Acomb?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

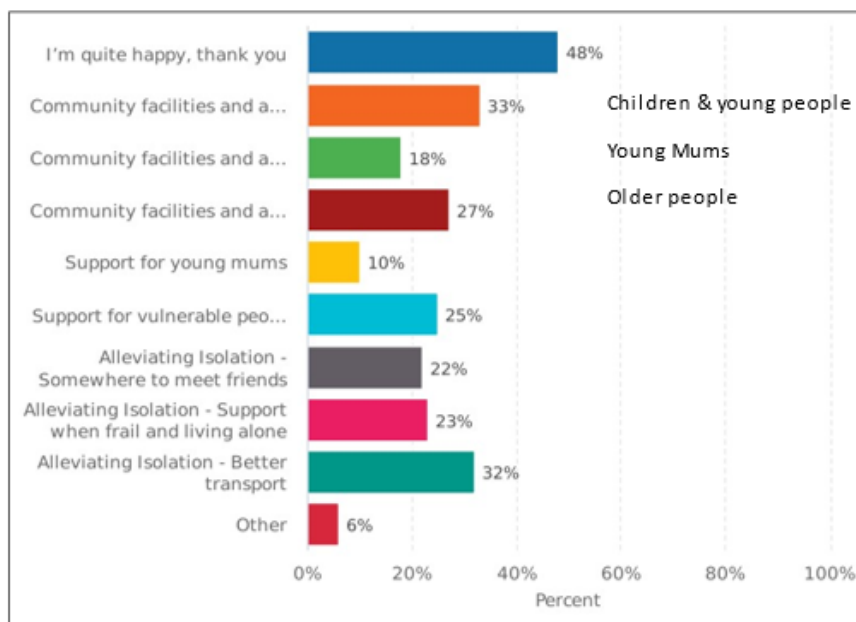
Which of the following do you access to find out about meetings or events in the village?



Q2 People told us in the last survey that they liked living in Acomb for the following reasons. Do any of the following apply to you now? (Tick all that apply)

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Relatives	27%	65
2	Friends/neighbours	61%	146
3	Being close to Hexham	80%	192
4	Close to my place of work	22%	52
5	Being able to work from home	16%	38
6	The surrounding countryside	87%	208
7	Village life	48%	116
8	Community spirit	39%	93

What do you think would improve life in Acomb further?



While 78% said they would recommend Acomb to family and friends as a place to live, 5% said No and 17% said they were Not Sure

99% of people said they always or usually found Acomb a safe place to live



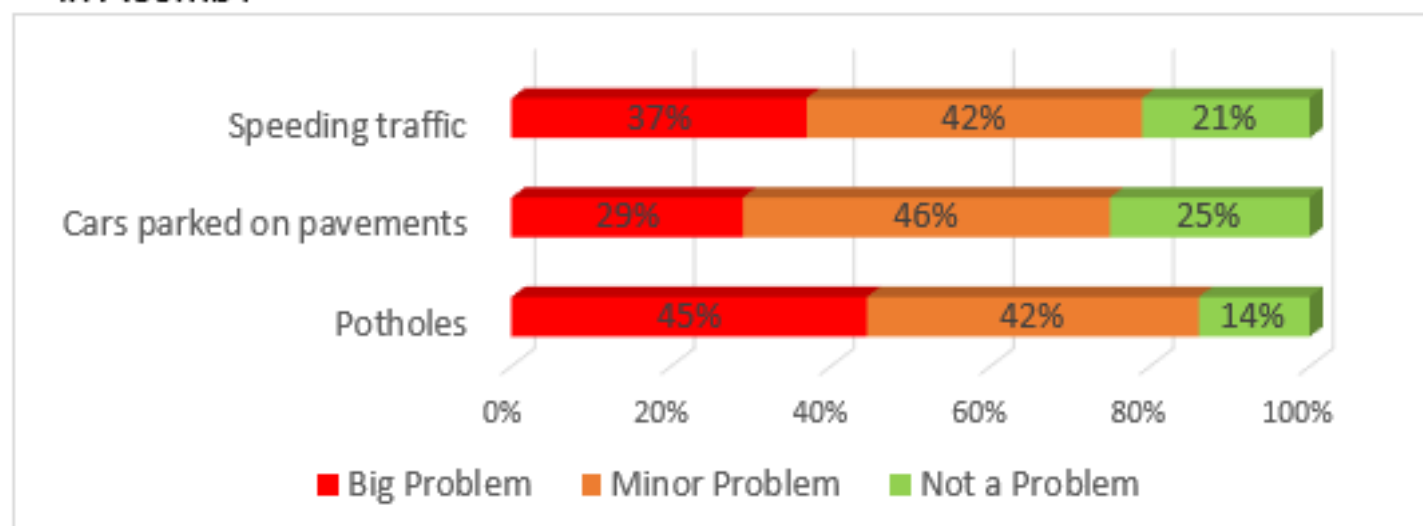
Local Environment and Climate Change

People identified a range of issues they believe to be problem in Acomb:

Answer Choices	Big problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Anti-social behaviour	4% 8	19% 40	77% 159
Vandalism	2% 4	23% 47	75% 153
Crime	1% 3	15% 31	83% 170
Drunkenness	2% 5	16% 33	81% 167
Drug taking/dealing	9% 18	19% 39	72% 145
Speeding Traffic	37% 81	42% 92	21% 45
Cars parked on pavements	29% 64	46% 102	25% 56
Litter	22% 48	53% 116	25% 54
Fly tipping	7% 15	37% 76	55% 112
Vermin	9% 19	37% 75	53% 108
Dog Fouling	30% 66	52% 114	17% 38
Potholes	45% 98	42% 91	14% 30

While general anti-social behaviours were not felt to be a problem, there were stronger responses to speeding traffic, dog fouling and potholes.

How much of a problem to you or your family are each of the following in Acomb?

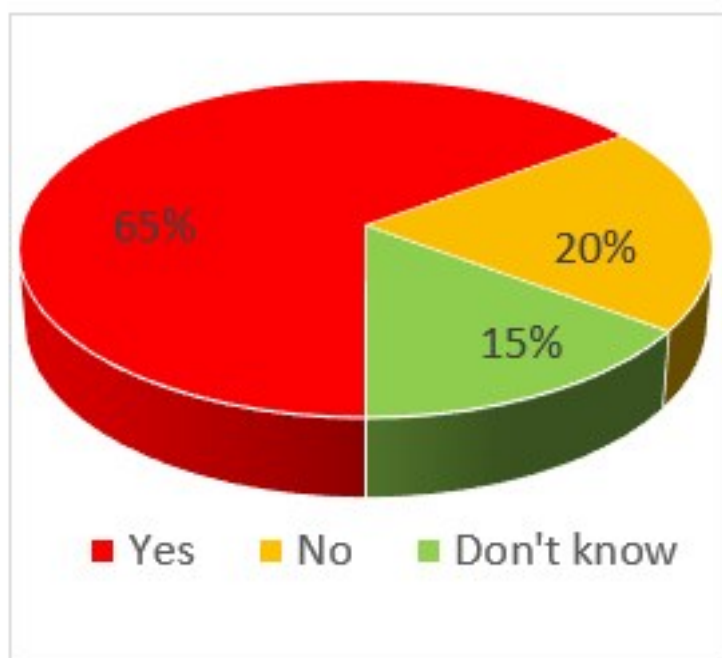




Traffic Issues



Are there any areas that you consider to be traffic danger spots in Acomb?



These were the areas identified:

- Main Street (48)
- Garden House Bank (39)
- A6079 (32)
- Crossbanks(16)(Howford Lane/6079/Morrison Terrace)
- Millersfield (10)
- Orchard Avenue (8)
- First School (8)

These were some of the areas identified in Acomb village where there was either problems with too many cars parking or speeding was a problem – including outside the school.

One resident said:

"Zig Zag lines at school have improved safety measures around school but has brought about speeding traffic (parents included)".

Another said:

"Main Street. Speed of traffic and parking".



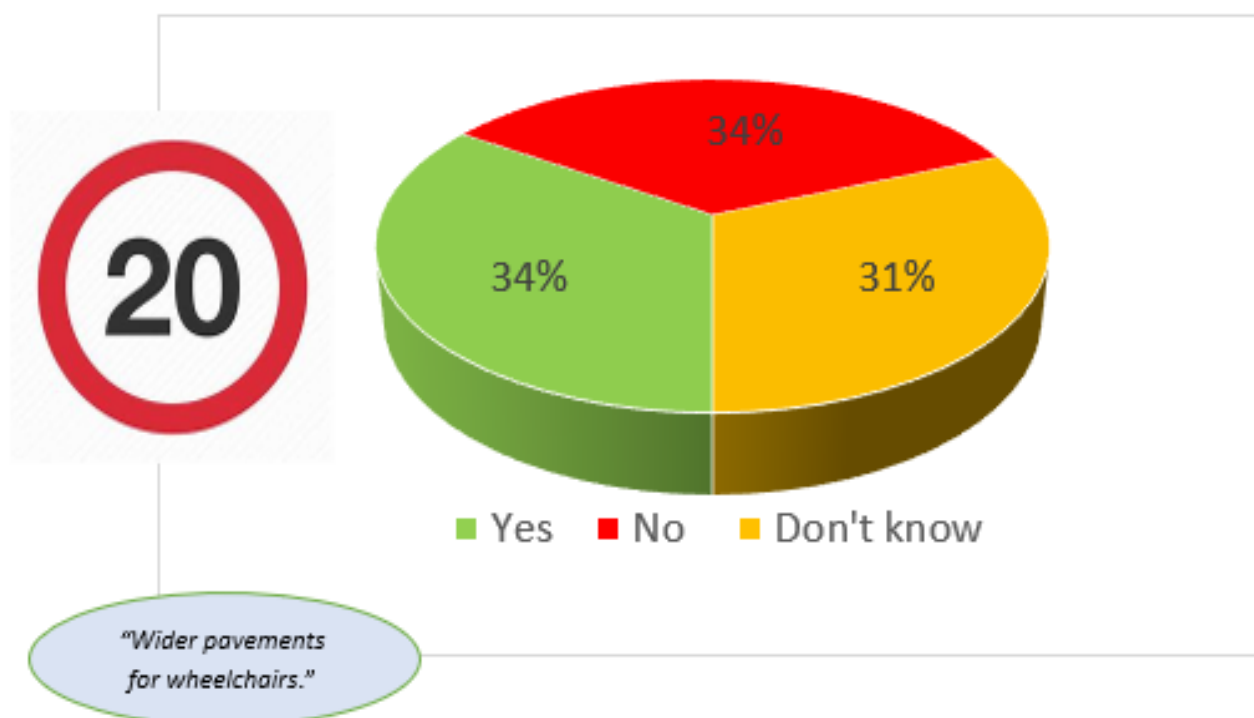
"Walking on the A6079 can be scary when using small footpaths with HGVs travelling at speed on the road".

"A6079 – highway too narrow for heavy goods. Footpaths too narrow. Kerb too low, drainage very poor".

"The crossroads at the end of Morrison Terrace (the junction between Morrison terrace, Howford Lane and the A6079) is difficult and dangerous to cross on foot, especially the A6079 itself".

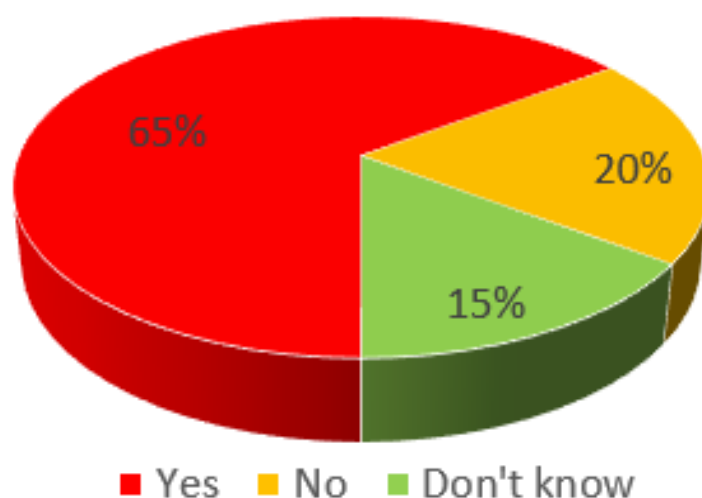


Has the 20mph speed limit made a difference to safety in the village?



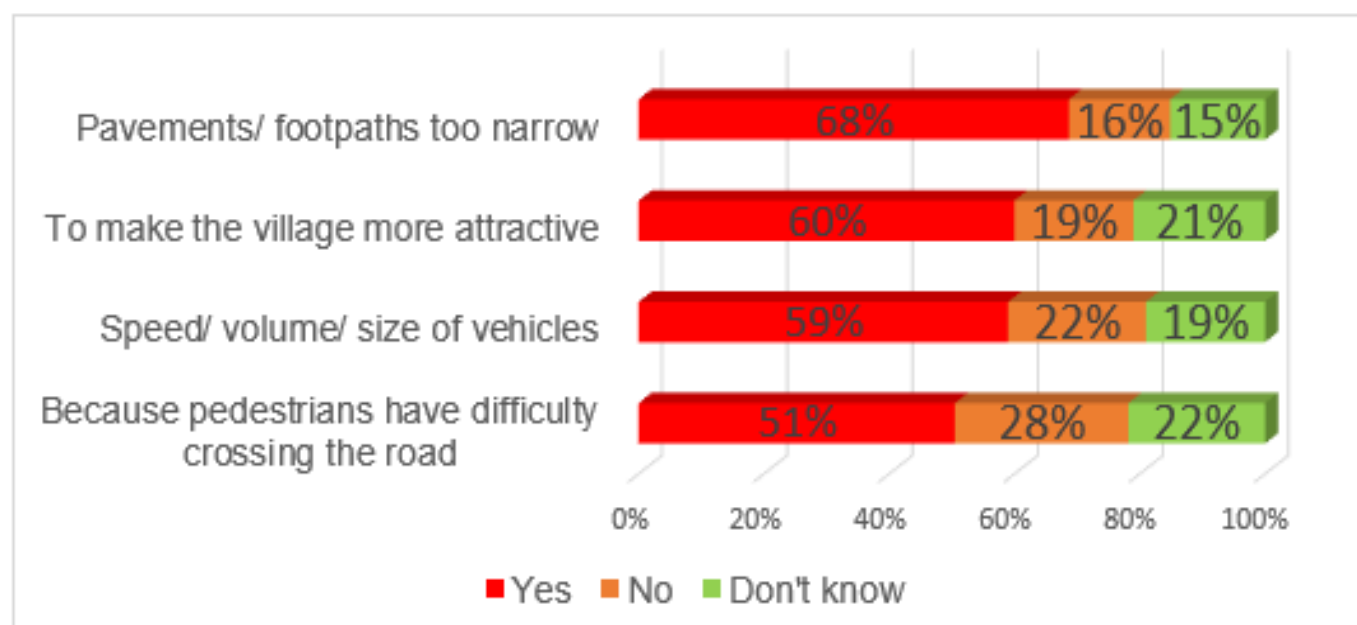


Have the interactive speed signs made a difference to reducing speed along the A6079?



54% of people said the Interactive Speed Signs had made a difference to the speed of traffic along the A6079 through the village, and 68% said they thought continued data collection would assist in demonstrating both the speed and volume along this stretch of road.

Do you think the approach to the village along the A6079 (from A69 towards Wall) needs further improvement?



A6079 Approach to the Village

Following the previous Parish Questionnaire (2014) and subsequent Community-Led Plan, an 'Approach to the Village' group was established and received the support of Philip Barker of Glen Kem Landscape Architects. A number of actions were identified for creating improvements along the A6079 stretch of road through the village, many of which have been progressed.

Only 27% of people said they had noticed any of the visual improvements carried out over the last few years:



Improved signage at
Howford Lane junction



Replacement barrier
at Hexham Old Road



Planting of
bulbs and
plants



Removal of
Japanese knot
weed





Dog fouling
Clean it up

Dog Fouling:

When asked what might help address the problem of dog fouling there were very different views:

	Yes	No
Extra bins	83% 164	17% 34
Identifying those who do not pick up dog mess	88% 167	12% 23
More posters	53% 82	47% 73
Ask for a Dog Warden to visit	67% 105	33% 52
Reporting dog fouling to Northumberland County Council	74% 119	26% 41
Having a Village campaign	65% 98	35% 52

Dog fouling and overgrown hedges were said to be of greatest concern to people when walking/cycling (64% and 61% respectively)

The majority of people, 89%, said they had never reported dog fouling and 77% were not aware this could be done very simply through the village web page Acomblocal:



Report Dog Fouling

Click here to report dog fouling issues in Acomb. This will transfer you directly to the Northumberland County Council website to make the report.

"Dog fouling is terrible."



Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability:

A majority of people said that most options would bring significant environmental benefits.

The main exceptions were car sharing schemes, Northumberland's 6-week gear change challenge and Citizen Science monitoring activities.

77% of people said domestic glass collection from home was important or very important to them



85% of people said publicised local cycleways/walking tracks were important or very important to them

While 61% of people said there is an adequate number of footpaths and bridleways in and around Acomb, 41% said they would like more cycle trails.





Village Services and Facilities

Convenience Shop

Nearly all respondents said having a village shop was either important or very important to them.

There were many suggestions and ideas about ensuring a village shop into the future, and a large number of people were complimentary about the arrangements that have been put in place at The Queen's Arms.



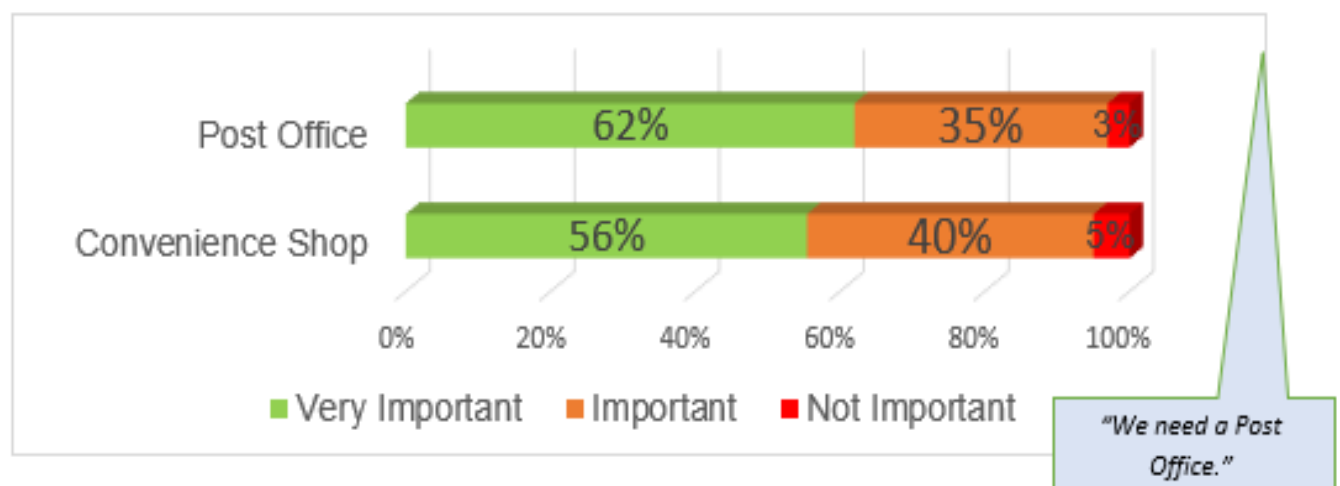
Post Office

Many people said a Post Office is essential, particularly given the difficulty elderly or less mobile residents have getting into Hexham by public transport. The visiting Post Office van is seen as useful but overall is not seen as adequate.

It should be noted that this does not mean that the van is unappreciated.

Note: With effect from 4 July 2022 the Post Office van will visit the village for an hour on 4 days per week.

How important is it to have each of the following in Acomb?



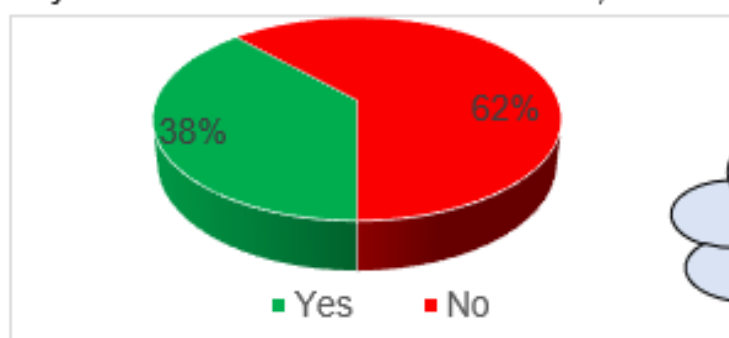
"Very poor bus service – we care about the environment but having no car, life is becoming difficult."



Bus Services

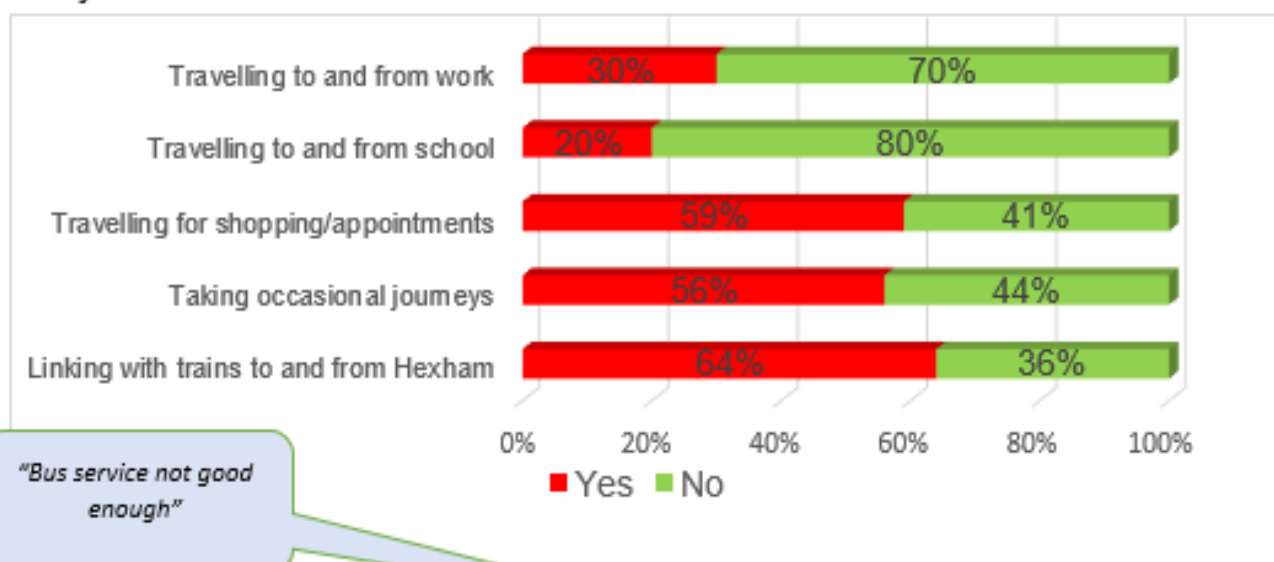
18% of people said they rely on public transport as their main means of travel, and of these 62% said it does not meet their household's needs.

If you use the current bus service, does it meet your household needs?



"The frequency and interconnectivity of the 680 bus in Hexham. A 16:15 or 16:45 departure would be ideal."

If No, does this negatively affect your household in any of the following ways?



A little over 50% of people said current bus services do not meet their needs for occasional journeys such as shopping, or for keeping appointments (such as doctor, dentist, hospital). More particularly, 64% of people adversely affected by the bus schedules said they did not link up with trains to and from Hexham.



Walking Group



Chess Club



Flower Arranging



Line Dancing

Village Hall, Pavilion, Playing Field, Playground and Tennis Courts

A broad range of activities currently (or usually) taking place in the village were identified in the questionnaire. Most are attended on just 10% or less of occasions, except the 3 below:

Answer Choices	Never	Sometimes	Often
Local History Society (Monthly)	82% 163	10% 19	9% 17
Pop Up Café (third Thursday of the month)	78% 151	15% 29	9% 18
Acomb Floral, Horticultural and Industrial Society (Annual Leek Club Show)	61% 125	24% 49	16% 32

Suggestions made about other possible activities that would be of interest to residents, include:

- Walking Group
- Badminton
- Yoga/Pilates/Fitness Club
- More activities for children
- More use of outdoor spaces



Badminton



Whist Drive



Yoga



Football



Tennis



Social Meetings



Running Group



Scouts/Guides etc



Crafting Group



Clubs for Young People



Clubbercise



Motorcycle Club



Photography Club



Support Groups



Jewellery Making



MUGA



Men in Sheds



Seasonal Fairs/Events



Repair and Mend Group



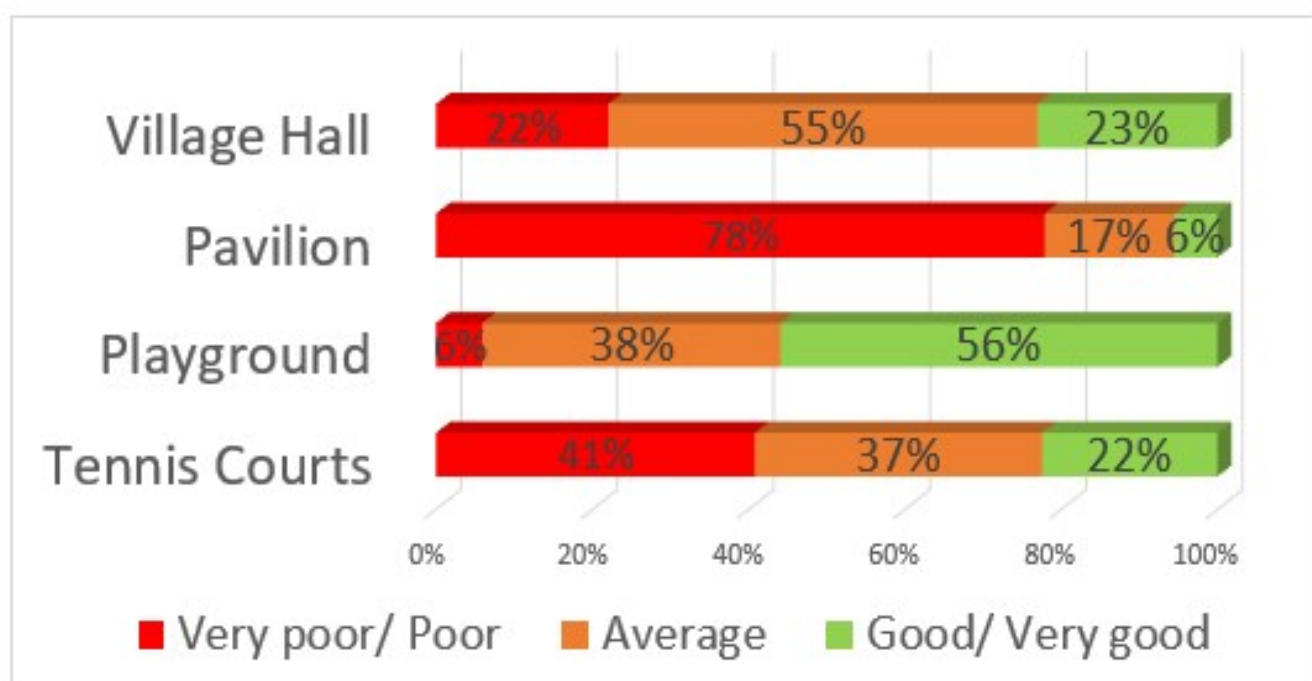
Tai Chi



Wildlife Conservation Group



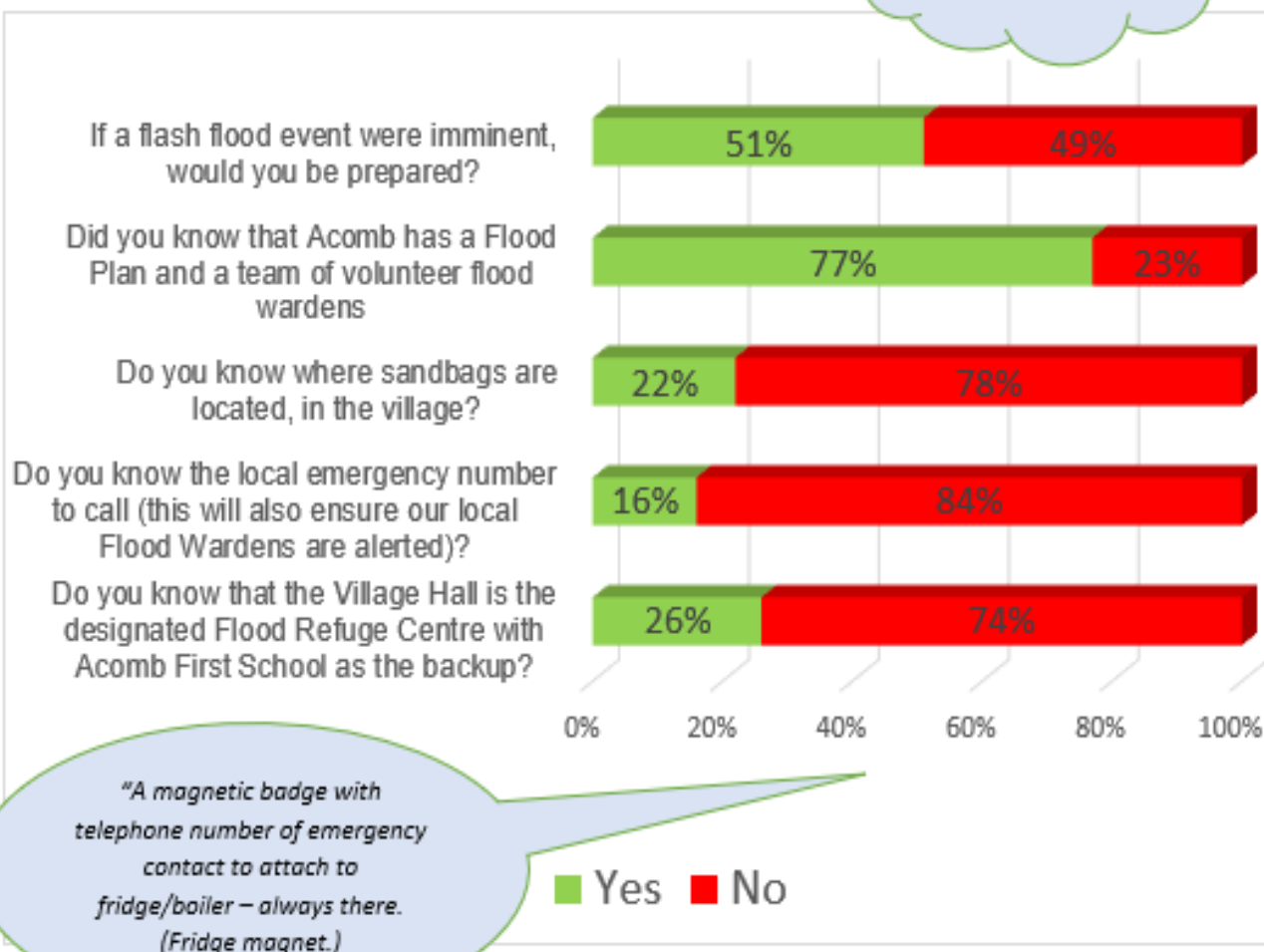
Standard of Facilities



(Since carrying out the questionnaire some rehabilitative work has been carried out on the pavilion.)

Flood and emergency planning

"Flood wardens are doing a great job."



LOCAL PLANNING & HOUSING



44% of respondents said they know that Acomb has a Neighbourhood Plan, with 42% saying they are aware that Main Street is a Conservation Area.



39% of people said they felt there is not enough affordable housing in Acomb, while 41% said they have concerns about future development in and around Acomb.



Acknowledgements

Progress to date would not have been possible without the following involvement:

All residents who took the time to complete the parish - wide questionnaire	Volunteers who delivered the recent questionnaire to all Acomb Parish households and then collected them
Action4Acomb Committee members, past and present, and all Action Group members too.	Community Action Northumberland for the early support towards establishing A4A
Community Voluntary Association (CVA) for their support and grant funding information	Ivor Knox, Research Consultant for his time and expertise in analysis and planning questionnaire
Hexham Youth Initiative, youth workers and children and young people who have established a thriving local youth club	Volunteers who selflessly came together as a cohesive group to provide an Acomb Volunteer Support Network for those who needed support within the community over the past 2 years during the Covid Lockdowns.
Flood wardens, both past and present, who have volunteered their time and efforts day and night at times of flash flooding but much more beside to prepare and mitigate local flooding	Environment Agency for working with our community, supported by Colin Hall, Community Engagement Officer – Northumberland, Flood Resilience and also involving Acomb in research to benefit the community.
James Neasham, Project Engineer, Envirowatch Ltd who has supported the installation of the Citizen Science equipment	Citizen Science – Dr Eleanor Starkey, Newcastle University for her tireless work with Acomb and involving us in the Pyramid research project to benefit Acomb
St John Lee for their involvement with the Carols around the Tree event	Methodist Chapel for providing a venue for meetings and this year's Carols around the Tree event
Paul Baker, Acomb Post Office for putting up notices and providing a base for collection prior to closure	The Public Houses – Queens Arms, Sun Inn, Miners Arms - for supporting by putting up posters
Julie Foster, Acomb Village Correspondent for the Hexham Courant Acomb Parish Council	Groundwork North-East for their local involvement with young people and leading on the Blast from the Past Project
Trevor Cessford, County Councillor for Hexham West and Acomb	Egger for donating an annual Christmas tree
WI Acomb for their support providing refreshments at various events	Jim Wright, resident for taking on the task of erecting the Christmas tree in the Pant
Philip Barker, Landscape Architect, Director of Glenkemp Landscape Architects who gave his time free to work with residents on the Approach to the Village Plans	Acomb First School and Little Oaks Nursery with supporting with distribution of information
Grant funding sources as outlined in poster above	Adam McKinnon, Web Design Consultant
Acomb Parish Council	John Wilkinson, Resident, New Rift Farm for rescue donations of loo rolls when stocks were low and difficult to obtain!
Kathie Keady, Sports Development Manager Cultural Services, Northumberland County Council for advice and support successfully applying to Sports England Small Grants towards initiating activities	RW Sign and Design for offering the materials and Howford Recycling installing the ladder sign
Have we forgotten anyone? Then tell us who as we want to acknowledge all involved.	