

## **Dorchester 2030 & Beyond Survey Summary & Strategic Priorities**

In his March 2024 Dorchester News column, Mike Corran provided an update on Dorchester 2030 & Beyond. At our March Parish Council meeting we signed off on Community First Oxfordshire's survey report and agreed on the Parish Council's Strategic Priorities as well as identifying some other important themes which other groups in the village may wish to champion.

The survey was conducted in September and October 2023. 267 surveys were returned representing around 30% of the village, which CFO describes as a good response. 70% of the respondents were aged 55 plus compared to the 2021 census of 60% in that age bracket. Unfortunately, we struggled to fully engage with the youngsters in the village with 11% aged 5-30 replying compared to 20% in the 2021 census, although their replies painted a similar picture to the overall report.

The most important activity or amenity in the Dorchester is the **Co-op** followed by **Access to the Countryside and Footpaths**.

The top 3 things people like about living in Dorchester are:

1. Rural setting, countryside, views, nature & wildlife
2. Community spirit & feeling
3. Friendly, helpful & supportive people

The top 3 dislikes are:

1. Noise from bypass
2. Too many cars parked on High Street
3. Poor public transport links, no bus service through the village

The final question in the survey was to ask people to describe in 10 words their Vision of Dorchester in 2030 & Beyond which CFO summarised as "Dorchester is a well-loved community, village, and environment. The majority of respondents wish to protect and enhance what is valued, change what is causing challenges such as traffic and noise and do what is necessary to ensure it thrives so that it is sustainable in the future".

In considering our Strategic Priorities, the Council has reflected on other local changes which could impact on the development of Dorchester over

the next 10 years with the major potential items being further reduction in OCC and SODC funding of services and the proposed development of Berinsfield Garden Village with up to 1900 homes plus new community facilities.

The Parish Council's proposed Strategic Priorities are:

1. Develop a Nature & Wildlife plan, including water quality
2. Develop solutions to the traffic issues, including noise, safety and car parking
3. Assess and progress future potential uses of the Pavilion plus refurbishment plans
4. Develop a plan for additional 10-20 Affordable Homes
5. Transform Dorchester Parish Council's operations including governance, finance, grounds maintenance & emergency planning

Below are the other important themes which were identified in the survey, and subsequent discussions, which other groups in the village may wish to champion:

1. Enhance footpath access, including to the bus stop, & register rights-of-way
2. Assess the viability of additional public transport through the village  
Maybe future opportunities via links with Berinsfield Garden Village
3. Support for the Village Hall, which has its own Trustees
4. Develop opportunities to support the future of the Village School especially through fund raising
5. Assess the opportunities for community renewable energy schemes
6. Develop community transport scheme for those with health conditions or impairments. Volunteers for Wallingford Volunteer Drivers?

The Parish Council intends to form Working Groups involving both residents and councillors to create plans with both short term and longer term goals to deliver on its chosen Strategic Priorities. There are many enthusiastic and skilled people living in the village. We look forward to hearing from volunteers who are willing to step forward and engage in the working groups. A few have already put their hands up, thank you, and if

you are interested then please contact either Mike or me on [chairman@dorchesteronthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:chairman@dorchesteronthames-pc.gov.uk) or [johntaylor@dorchesteronthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:johntaylor@dorchesteronthames-pc.gov.uk) Clearly the resourcing of the working groups will have a critical impact on the progress we make in implementing the Strategic Priorities.

So, what are the next steps:

1. End March. Dorchester 2030 & Beyond Survey Summary & Strategic Priorities and full CFO Survey Report published on Parish Council website with FaceBook publicity
2. 1 May. Annual Parish Meeting in the Abbey for the community to endorse the Parish Council's Strategic Priorities
3. 1 May. Annual Parish Meeting in the Abbey for volunteers to join the various working groups and launch the delivery of Dorchester 2030 & Beyond

In the meantime if you have any questions related to Dorchester 2030 & Beyond or feel excited about volunteering to join one of the working groups, then please do get in touch with either Mike or me.

John Taylor

Vice Chair, Dorchester Parish Council