

WEST HILL

Neighbourhood Plan



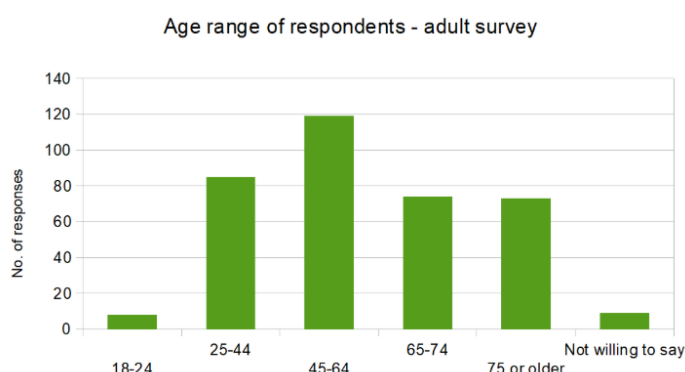
West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey 2025

Report – Responses to Adult Questionnaire

- The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group wanted to obtain an initial steer from residents about how the village might develop in the next 10-15 years. An online survey was considered the most efficient way to collect the responses, but paper forms were also made available at Morrisons shop for anyone without access to the internet. Completed paper forms were collected by the Parish Clerk and input manually by members of the Working Group. The survey was promoted through the Parish Council newsletter and website, social media, word of mouth and a banner displayed outside Morrisons shop which fronts the main road and was highly visible to everyone passing.
- There was a separate survey for young people aged 11-17.
- The surveys were live online between 4th June 2025 to 19th July 2025. 374 completed adult surveys were received and 28 young persons' surveys, giving a grand total of 402.
- The surveys were anonymous, but respondents were asked to provide their postcode to safeguard against fraudulent returns as both surveys were on the web and theoretically discoverable by anyone. All postcodes provided were checked against a list of West Hill postcodes.

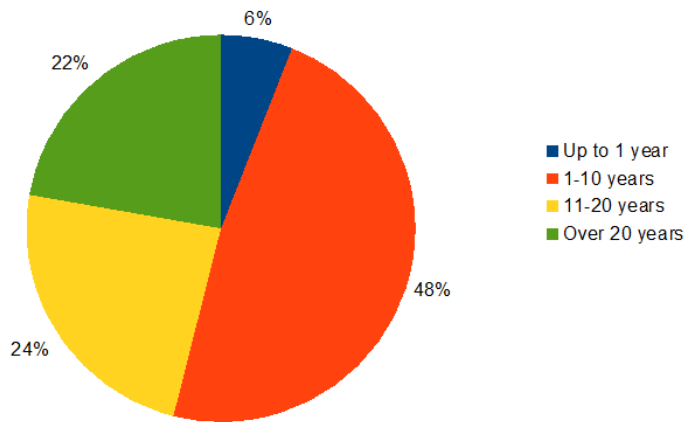
Q2 What is your age group? (tick one)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| 18-24 | 2.17% | 8 |
| 25-44 | 23.10% | 85 |
| 45-64 | 32.34% | 119 |
| 65-74 | 20.11% | 74 |
| 75 or older | 19.84% | 73 |
| Not willing to say | 2.45% | 9 |
| Answered | | 368 |
| Skipped | | 6 |



Q3 Approximately how long have you lived in the parish?

Q3 How long have respondents lived in the parish?



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Up to 1 year | 5.96% | 22 |
| 1-10 years | 47.97% | 177 |
| 11-20 years | 23.85% | 88 |
| Over 20 years | 22.22% | 82 |
| Answered | | 369 |
| Skipped | | 5 |

Q4. What attracted you to West Hill as a place to live?

Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses:

1. EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

One of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing West Hill is the quality of local education. Residents consistently mention:

- The outstanding reputation of the primary school (though some note this has declined over time)
- Being in the catchment area for Kings School, Ottery
- Access to Colyton Grammar School via bus routes
- The village serving as a feeder school for quality secondary education
- Parents relocating specifically for their children's educational opportunities

2. WOODLAND CHARACTER AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The village's distinctive woodland identity emerges as a defining attraction:

- Described repeatedly as a "woodland village" with abundant mature trees
- Residents value the green, leafy environment and natural surroundings
- Concerns are expressed about tree removal and loss of woodland character over time
- Wildlife and bird life is appreciated as part of the rural experience
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are mentioned as important protections
- Respondents refer to the individual properties set within spacious wooded plots providing natural privacy

3. LOCATION AND CONNECTIVITY

West Hill's strategic position offers multiple advantages:

- Easy access to Exeter for work, shopping, and services
- Proximity to the coast and seaside towns (Sidmouth, Exmouth, Beer)
- Convenient transport links including A30, M5, and public transport (though noting that the bus service has some flaws)
- Access to Exeter Airport for travel further afield
- Close to Ottery St Mary for additional services and amenities
- Rural setting while maintaining good connectivity to urban areas

4. FAMILY AND PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Many residents have strong personal ties to the area:

- Following family members who already lived in or near West Hill
- Returning to childhood homes or familiar areas
- Being near relatives, particularly ageing parents or adult children
- Multi-generational family connections to the village
- Marriage or partnership bringing people to the area

5. PEACE, QUIET, AND RURAL LIFESTYLE

The tranquil environment attracts those seeking escape from urban life:

- West Hill is consistently described as quiet, peaceful, and calm
- Rural village atmosphere without urban pressures
- Low traffic levels and safe roads for walking (again noting that some residents find the traffic problematic in certain areas of the village and others find the lack of pavements and/or lighting difficult – more about this in the responses to later questions)
- Escape from noise and busyness of suburban or city living
- However, some residents note increasing noise from garden equipment and changes over time

6. HOUSING AND PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

The village's housing stock offers particular appeal:

- Well-spaced properties with good-sized gardens
- Individual, architecturally varied houses rather than estate developments
- Quality housing stock, often described as "upmarket"

- Bungalows available for accessibility needs (noting that in later questions residents would like more bungalows)
- Privacy provided by spacious, low-density plots and natural boundaries
- Attractive properties in appealing settings

7. COMMUNITY AND VILLAGE AMENITIES

Local facilities and community spirit are valued:

- Village shop and Post Office providing essential services
- Community facilities including village hall, church, and school are appreciated
- Friendly, respectful neighbours and community atmosphere (noting that some residents consider that the community atmosphere could be improved)
- Local businesses including garage and dental practice
- Village-scale community where residents know each other
- Royal British Legion and other community organisations are appreciated (noting that later in the survey residents mention the lack of certain amenities)

8. EMPLOYMENT AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Work-related factors influence location choice:

- Commuting convenience to Exeter and surrounding areas
- Job relocations bringing families to the area
- Retirement location offering good amenities and accessibility
- Self-employment or flexible work arrangements suited to rural location
- Career changes facilitating moves to the countryside

9. SAFETY AND CHILD-REARING ENVIRONMENT

Families particularly value the secure environment:

- Safe place to raise children with low crime rates
- 20mph speed limits and traffic calming measures (noting that later in the survey residents mention a desire for 20mph throughout the village and more traffic calming, particularly on Bendarroch Road and the B3180)
- Rural roads suitable for walking and cycling (noting that later in the survey residents draw attention to the lack of connectivity and safe walking/cycling routes)
- Community environment where children can play safely
- Strong sense of security and community watchfulness

10. ACCESS TO COUNTRYSIDE AND RECREATION

Respondents noted that the village provides excellent access to outdoor activities:

- Proximity to Woodbury Common and the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Good walking routes directly from the village
- Access to coastal paths and beach activities
- Countryside location enabling outdoor pursuits
- Connection to Devon's broader recreational opportunities

11. QUALITY OF LIFE AND LIFESTYLE FACTORS

Residents seek and find enhanced quality of life in West Hill:

- They report finding a better standard of living compared to previous locations
- Cleaner air and healthier environment
- Stress reduction from rural living
- More "affordable" housing compared to some areas (London is mentioned particularly) (caveat: affordability is relative and West Hill is not particularly affordable compared to other East Devon villages)
- Retirement-friendly environment with good healthcare access (noting the difficulty everyone has in getting an appointment at Coleridge surgery)

12. CONCERNS AND CHANGES OVER TIME

Some residents express concerns about village evolution:

- Loss of trees and woodland character through development – particularly estate-type

development

- Increasing traffic and noise levels
- Changes in school quality or reputation
- Concerns about overdevelopment and potential loss of village character
- Some infrastructure challenges or service changes (GP surgery, dentist, school places)

CONCLUSION

West Hill attracts residents through a combination of excellent educational opportunities, distinctive woodland character, strategic location, and strong (not everyone agrees) community atmosphere. The village successfully balances rural tranquility with urban accessibility, making it particularly appealing to families seeking quality education for their children while maintaining connection to natural environments and supportive community life. However, there are emerging concerns about preserving the village's distinctive character as it evolves over time due to increasing development and traffic.

Q5 What do you value most about living in West Hill?

Words most frequently used in responses:



Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses

1. PEACE AND TRANQUILITY

The most dominant theme across responses is the value placed on peace, quiet, and tranquillity. Residents consistently mention the peaceful environment, absence of noise, and the calming nature of the village. This includes appreciation for dark skies at night, minimal street lighting, and freedom from urban noise and congestion.

2. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WOODLAND CHARACTER

Residents highly value the woodland setting, with frequent mentions of trees, woodlands, and the "woodland village" character. The natural environment includes appreciation for wildlife, birds, green spaces, and the ability to feel connected to nature while still having access to amenities.

3. COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

A strong sense of community emerges as a key theme, with residents valuing friendly neighbours, community activities, local organizations, and the village atmosphere. This includes appreciation for the church, Royal British Legion, various clubs and societies, and community events centred around the school.

4. RURAL LOCATION WITH ACCESSIBILITY

Residents value the rural, countryside setting while appreciating good transport links and accessibility. This includes proximity to major roads (A30, A303, M5), Exeter Airport, easy access to Exeter, local towns like Honiton, Sidmouth and Ottery and further afield to London, as well as coastal areas, while still maintaining a rural character.

5. SAFETY AND SECURITY

The village is valued as a safe environment, particularly important for families with children. Residents feel secure walking around the village, even in the dark, and appreciate the low crime rate and family-friendly atmosphere.

6. SPACE AND PRIVACY

Many residents value the spacious plots, privacy from neighbours, and the feeling of not being overcrowded. This contrasts with urban housing developments and includes appreciation for properties not being overlooked and having space around homes.

7. LOCAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Residents appreciate local facilities including the village shop with post office, the primary school and pre-school, village hall, garage, and hairdresser. The ability to walk to these amenities is particularly valued.

8. OUTDOOR ACCESS AND RECREATION

The ability to access countryside walks directly from homes, woodland walks, footpaths, commons, and proximity to beaches and coastal areas is highly valued. This includes appreciation for the variety of walking routes and outdoor recreational opportunities.

9. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The local primary school and catchment areas for secondary schools (particularly Kings School, Ottery) are important to families. School also serves as a community hub for meeting other families.

10. VILLAGE CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

Residents value the distinct character of West Hill as a woodland village that has maintained its identity despite development. This includes appreciation for the village layout, architectural variety, and resistance to over-development.

NEGATIVE THEMES:

A small minority of responses expressed dissatisfaction, citing lack of true community engagement, concerns about development pressures, and some feeling the village lacks a proper centre or community cohesion.

CONCLUSION:

The responses reveal that West Hill residents primarily value the combination of rural tranquillity with accessibility, strong community bonds within a natural woodland setting, and the ability to maintain privacy and space while having access to essential amenities and transport links. The village represents an ideal balance between countryside living and practical accessibility to urban amenities and transport networks.

Q6 What development or facilities would you like to see in West Hill over the next 10-15 years?

Words most frequently used in responses:



Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses:

1. COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES (Most frequently mentioned)

- Village pub/restaurant for social gathering and dining
- Coffee shop/cafe as community meeting point
- Community hubs (often suggested at Village Hall or British Legion site)
- Social spaces that bring residents together across age groups
- Central village focal point around the shop site perhaps incorporating features like a wildlife pond

2. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (Very high priority)

- Playing fields and sports pitches (especially football)
- Facilities specifically for teenagers (currently lacking)
- Better playground equipment for various age groups not just young children
- Youth clubs and meeting spaces for young people
- Sports facilities including tennis courts, outdoor fitness equipment, hard-standing court (similar to the one in Ottery next to the hospital)
- Public green spaces for children to play safely
- Public green spaces for all

3. RETAIL AND SERVICES

- Maintain and improve existing village shop and Post Office (both considered essential)
- Upgrade/expand Morrisons site facilities
- Add complementary services: eg deli, bakery, farm shop, artisan shops
- Medical services: GP surgery, dentist (noting that the village has a dentist already), pharmacy
- Hairdresser (noting that the village has a hairdresser already) and other local services

4. TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

- Better bus services with more frequent schedules and stops in the village centre
- A safe walking and cycling route to Ottery St Mary
- Cycle paths and dedicated pedestrian routes to improve connectivity through the village
- Better public transport links to Cranbrook, Whimble, Exeter, Sidmouth
- Improved connectivity to surrounding areas

5. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ATTITUDES

- Mixed views: some support minimal, appropriate development in keeping with village character; others do not want any further development
- Strong preference for housing that preserves village character
- Support for affordable housing for young families and people downsizing
- Opposition to large-scale or inappropriate development
- Emphasis on infill development rather than greenfield expansion
- Infrastructure must support any new development

6. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY

- Traffic calming measures and speed limit enforcement (especially expanding 20mph throughout)
- Better road maintenance and drainage
- Improved street lighting
- Pavements and footpaths for pedestrian safety
- Utilities: fibre broadband for all properties, mobile signal improved for all
- Road safety particularly on Bendarroch Road and West Hill Road

7. PRESERVE VILLAGE CHARACTER

- Maintain woodland village environment and character
- Protect existing green spaces and trees
- Keep low-density housing pattern
- Avoid overdevelopment that changes village atmosphere
- Preserve rural, peaceful nature of the community

8. STATUS QUO/MINIMAL CHANGE

- Some residents say they want no changes
- Satisfaction with current village as it is
- Concerns about more development/facilities attracting outside traffic or changing village dynamics
- Existing amenities like village hall and RBL should be preserved

9. EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

- Support for primary school improvements and expansion
- Support for dedicated building for preschool
- Better facilities around school area
- Recognition that school capacity affects housing development potential

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Electric car charging points were suggested
- Solar panels and sustainable energy is welcomed
- Reduced pollution in River Otter
- Tree preservation and woodland management
- Environmental considerations in any development

11. GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Better community participation and engagement
- Community-led facilities and initiatives
- More organized community events and activities

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:

- Strong desire to maintain village identity while adding essential amenities
- Recognition that any expansion must be matched with appropriate infrastructure
- Tension between those wanting growth/facilities and those preferring minimal change
- Consistent emphasis on facilities serving the existing community rather than attracting outsiders
- Particular concern for providing facilities for children and teenagers who currently lack appropriate spaces
- Integration of new facilities with existing village assets (Village Hall, British Legion, school, shop)

area)

The responses show a community that values its current character but recognizes the need for some strategic improvements, particularly in community gathering spaces, youth facilities, and essential services, while being cautious about overdevelopment.

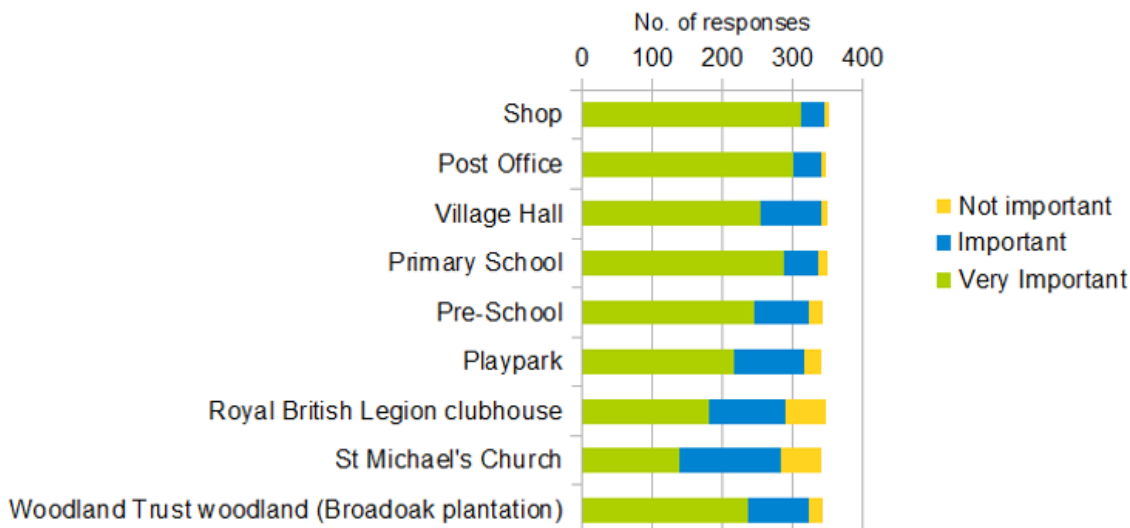
Community Facilities

Q7 Do you think of the area on the map as the village centre?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Yes | 89.4% | 312 |
| No | 10.60% | 37 |
| | Answered | 349 |
| | Skipped | 25 |



Q8 How important do you consider the following community facilities (in the centre and the wider village area)



| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Total |
|---|----------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Shop | 88.60% | 9.97% | 1.42% | 351 |
| Post Office | 86.21% | 11.78% | 2.01% | 348 |
| Village Hall | 72.57% | 24.86% | 2.57% | 350 |
| Primary School | 82.23% | 14.33% | 3.44% | 349 |
| Pre-School | 71.64% | 22.51% | 5.85% | 342 |
| Playpark | 63.64% | 29.03% | 7.33% | 341 |
| Royal British Legion clubhouse | 51.87% | 31.70% | 16.43% | 347 |
| St Michael's Church | 40.88% | 42.06% | 17.06% | 340 |
| Woodland Trust woodland (Broadoak plantation) | 68.80% | 25.07% | 6.12% | 343 |
| | | | Answered | 353 |
| | | | Skipped | 21 |

Q9 What facilities do you think are missing from the village centre?

Words most frequently used in responses:



Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses:

Note that the themes are arranged in most important first, so by the time you get to nos. 9 and 10 the issues are mentioned by relatively few people. People tended to answer this question similarly to Q5/Q6, so not really concentrating on the village centre, just saying what they'd like throughout the village and also mentioning things that the village already has but emphasising the importance of retaining them into the future (like the Post Office). Some points are repeated in more than one category.

10 MAJOR THEMES IDENTIFIED:

1. SOCIAL GATHERING SPACES

- Coffee shop and cafe as community meeting point
- Pub for evening socializing
- Community “hub” and social space (indoor or outdoor, ranging from “a field” to a “pond”)
- Places for informal conversation and connection
- Proper village centre, focal point

2. HOSPITALITY & DINING FACILITIES

- Village pub and restaurant / gastropub
- Coffee shop
- Family-friendly dining
- Takeaway, more mobile caterers like Wandering Pig
- Evening entertainment venues
- Bakery, deli for local food, farm shop selling local produce

3. YOUTH & RECREATION

- Facilities specifically for teenagers (13-17 years)
- Sports fields and playing areas – more playparks or one, better playpark
- Football pitch with facilities like toilets, changing rooms
- Recreational grounds for community use, events, walking
- Activities and spaces for young people to hang out
- Multi-use sports facilities – ranging from a field to a hard-standing basketball/tennis court
- Swimming pool (mentioned 2-3 times)

4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Village green or central open space
- Community buildings and halls
- Public meeting spaces
- Focal points for village identity
- Spaces for community events and gatherings
- Safe cycle/footpaths – within the village and one to Ottery

5. HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- GP surgery, part-time satellite surgery like in Whimble
- Pharmacy services
- Dental services (though the village already has a dentist)

6. CHILDREN'S FACILITIES

- Improved playpark and additional play areas
- Dedicated spaces for younger children
- Preschool – a dedicated building
- Family-oriented recreational spaces
- Safe play environments

7. RETAIL & COMMERCIAL SERVICES

- Improved village shop with better variety
- Post Office needs to be retained
- Local produce and farm shop
- Specialty shops (hardware, gifts, crafts, charity)
- Commercial services for daily needs

8. TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

- Better bus services and connections
- Improved pedestrian access and pavements
- Safer walking and cycling routes (including to Ottery)
- Bus stops in the centre of the village
- Traffic management improvements, speeding

9. BASIC AMENITIES

- Public toilets
- Street lighting improvements
- Parking facilities
- Waste management (bins, dog waste)

10. CONNECTIVITY & COMMUNICATION

- WiFi and broadband improvements
- Public EV chargepoints
- Improved mobile phone signal

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:

COMMUNITY COHESION

- Strong desire for spaces that bring people together
- Emphasis on informal social interaction
- Multi-generational community building
- Support for local connections and relationships

VILLAGE IDENTITY & CHARACTER

- Need for a recognizable village centre
- Preservation of village atmosphere
- Balance between development and rural character
- Creating a sense of place and belonging

INTERGENERATIONAL NEEDS

- Facilities serving all age groups
- Particular concern for teenage provision
- Family-friendly environments
- Elderly and accessibility considerations

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Support for local businesses
- Concerns about commercial viability of existing retail if it isn't supported

SAFETY & WELLBEING

- Safe spaces for all residents
- Pedestrian safety improvements, traffic speed reduction, cycle route to Ottery
- Health and medical access
- Community security and comfort

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- Social gathering spaces (cafe/coffee shop, pub) were by far the most frequently mentioned need
- Many responses combined multiple themes, showing interconnected community needs
- Strong emphasis on informal social infrastructure rather than formal facilities
- Significant concern about provision for young people, particularly teenagers
- Desire for facilities that enhance rather than change village character
- Recognition that some suggested facilities may not be commercially viable
- Frequent references to the British Legion as existing but limited social facility
- Geographic challenges noted - lack of natural village centre focal point

MINORITY PERSPECTIVES:

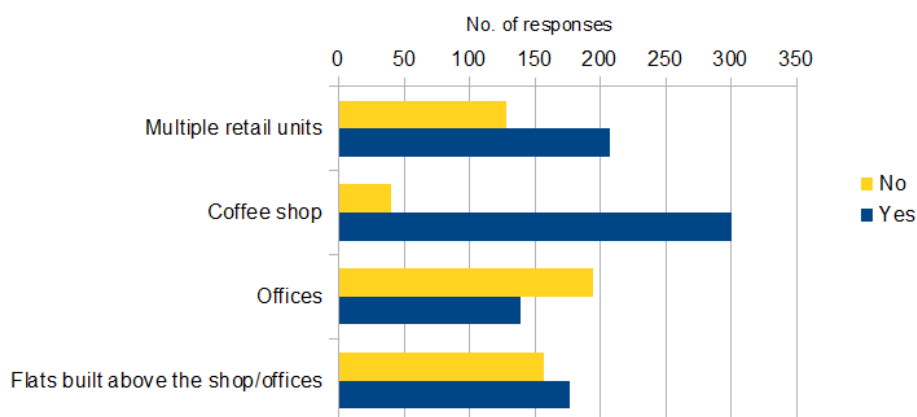
- Small number of responses indicated satisfaction with current facilities
- Some residents expressed concern about over-development
- Preference for maintaining village character over adding facilities
- Recognition that West Hill functions as a village rather than a town (some key facilities are in other places – Ottery, Exeter)

This analysis reveals a community seeking enhanced social cohesion and improved quality of life while maintaining its village character and identity.

Q10 Would you support any expansion of the commercial premises at the Morrisons site?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 75.89% | 255 |
| No | 24.11% | 81 |
| Answered | | 336 |
| Skipped | | 38 |

Q11 Would you support the provision of additional facilities at the Morrisons site? e.g.



| | Yes | | No | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|------------|
| Multiple retail units? | 61.79% | 207 | 38.21% | 128 | 335 |
| Coffee shop? | 88.24% | 300 | 11.76% | 40 | 340 |
| Offices? | 41.74% | 139 | 58.26% | 194 | 333 |
| Flats built above the shop/offices? | 52.99% | 177 | 47.01% | 157 | 334 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | 104 |
| Answered | | | | | 343 |
| Skipped | | | | | 31 |

Other – please specify”

Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses:

What People WOULD Like

Essential Services & Facilities:

- Retain existing shop and post office - Overwhelming priority across responses
- Coffee shop/cafe - Very popular suggestion for community meeting space
- Pub/restaurant/bar - Strong support for social gathering venue
- Medical facilities - Doctors surgery, dentist, pharmacy mentioned multiple times
- Bakery/deli - Support for quality food retailers
- Community spaces - Meeting areas, casual gathering places
- Centre of the village should be improved – a nice place for people to meet

Development Types (with conditions)

- Small retail units - Support for independent traders, local businesses
- Limited flats - Only 1-2 stories, small numbers, affordable housing for young people
- Office/workspace - Shared offices, working hubs, studios for local professionals
- Modernization - Updating existing facilities while maintaining footprint

Infrastructure

- Electric vehicle charging points
- Improved bus stop facilities (there should be bus stops in the village centre)
- Better landscaping and tidying of existing site

What People Would NOT Like

Strongly Opposed Development:

- Large-scale housing/flats - Particularly multi-story developments
- Loss of car parking - Consistent and emphatic opposition
- Chain stores - Preference for independent businesses over chains
- Over-development - Concerns about losing village character
- Multiple retail units - Scepticism about commercial viability

Specific Concerns

- Anything that reduces shop/post office size
- Developments that attract people outside normal hours (noise concerns)
- Buildings that increase elevation/height beyond single story additions
- Conversion of shops to housing

Major Recurring Issues

- Car Parking (Most Critical Issue)

Absolute priority - Mentioned in vast majority of responses

- Car park is essential for school drop-offs
- Safety concerns about on-street parking if car parking onsite is reduced
- Limited alternatives - Beech Park already at capacity
- Central location importance emphasized

Retail Sustainability

- Morrison's departure concerns - Fear of losing anchor store
- Post office dependency - Linked to Morrison's presence
- Commercial viability questions about multiple small units
- Owner relationship - Tensions with current property owner who has hinted that they would like to end Morrisons' tenancy

Village Character

- Quiet woodland village identity to preserve
- Not wanting to become like Ottery – West Hill has a distinct character
- Scale needs to be appropriate to village size
- Visual impact concerns about building height/mass

Infrastructure Capacity

- Concerns about overloading the village infrastructure
- Need for sustainable development
- Balance between growth and resources

Community Needs vs. Development Pressure

- NIMBY concerns - Some residents seen as blocking necessary change

- Generational divide - Young people want different amenities
- Affordable housing needed for local young people
- Community meeting spaces are lacking in current village

Conditional Support Themes

Most respondents showed conditional rather than absolute opposition, with common conditions being:

- Parking retention - Non-negotiable for most
- Shop/post office preservation - Must remain as anchor services
- Scale limitation - Single story additions only
- Local benefit - Facilities should serve village residents
- Quality over quantity - Better fewer good facilities than many poor ones

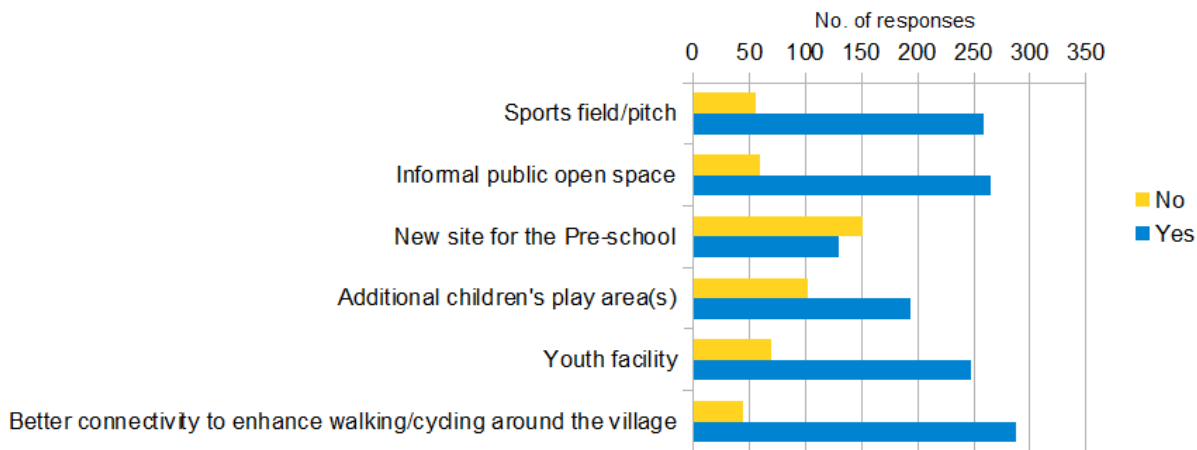
Key Tensions Identified

- Development needs vs. village character preservation
- Young people's needs vs. older residents' preferences
- Commercial viability vs. community desires
- Property owner's plans vs. community wishes
- Growth pressures vs. infrastructure limitations

Overall Sentiment

The responses reveal a community that recognises the need for some development and improvement but is deeply concerned about losing what makes West Hill special. There's strong support for enhancing existing facilities and adding community amenities, but equally strong opposition to developments that would fundamentally change the village's character or compromise essential services like parking and the shop/post office combination.

Q12 What additional community facilities would you like to see in the wider village area?



| | Yes | No | Total |
|---|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Sports field/pitch | 82.22% 259 | 17.78% 56 | 315 |
| Informal public open space | 81.79% 265 | 18.21% 59 | 324 |
| New site for the Pre-school | 46.26% 130 | 53.74% 151 | 281 |
| Additional children's play area(s) | 65.54% 194 | 34.46% 102 | 296 |
| Youth facility | 78.16% 247 | 21.84% 69 | 316 |
| Better connectivity to enhance walking/cycling around the village | 86.45% 287 | 13.55% 45 | 332 |
| Other (please specify) | | | 97 |
| | | Answered | 345 |
| | | Skipped | 29 |

“Other – please specify”: Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses:

MOST WANTED IMPROVEMENTS

Transportation & Safety (Overwhelming Priority)

- Walking/cycling path to Ottery St Mary - mentioned repeatedly as top priority
- Better footpaths and pavements - especially for school routes and safety
- Traffic calming measures - widespread concern about speeding through village
- 20mph zone enforcement and extension through the wider village - current speed limits largely ignored
- Road safety improvements - mirrors at blind corners, better visibility
- Cycle lanes - separate from dangerous narrow roads

Community Facilities & Social Spaces

- Pub/restaurant - strong desire for a village focal point
- Community café - alternative social meeting space
- Sports facilities - football pitch, tennis courts, bowling green, hard-standing courts
- Youth facilities - lack of spaces for teenagers to socialise
- Enhanced village hall usage - more community use

Essential Services

- GP surgery/satellite practice - medical access currently poor
- Pharmacy - linked to medical needs
- Public toilets - for residents and tradespeople
- Petrol station - lost previous facility
- Better taxi services - transport for non-drivers

Children & Education

- Expanded primary school - current capacity insufficient
- Dedicated preschool facility - current village hall arrangement problematic due to setting up/tidying away every day
- Safe routes to school - pedestrian safety priority
- Youth club facilities - teenage provision lacking

INFRASTRUCTURE CONCERNS

Connectivity & Technology

- Full fibre broadband - parish council previously supported fibre provided throughout the village
- Better overall connectivity - though some unclear what this means (it could mean physical connectivity of different parts of the village via footpaths)

Environmental & Maintenance

- Tree protection - proposal for official "woodland village" designation, blanket TPO
- Better drainage and ditch maintenance
- Clearer pavements - overgrowth issues
- More dog waste bins - current provision inadequate
- Shop car park maintenance - currently overgrown

CURRENT PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

Traffic & Safety Issues

- Dangerous speeding - Higher/Lower Broad Oak treated as "speedway"
- No safe walking routes - particularly to school and Ottery
- Narrow roads without pavements - forcing pedestrians into traffic
- Blind corners - visibility problems
- Cut-through traffic - non-residents using village roads to reach other places eg Ottery

Facility Limitations

- Preschool setup difficulties - daily equipment packing/unpacking
- Village hall income dependency - heavily reliant on preschool fees (if preschool moves somewhere else it would have a huge impact on village hall income)
- Limited informal public spaces - especially for teenagers but for the whole community
- Lost community assets - former football field and wooded areas sold for housing, school field is off limits

Access & Isolation Issues

- Transport poverty - residents without cars feel "marooned"
- Limited public transport - taxi services inadequate
- Dangerous cycling conditions - roads unsuitable for bikes due to narrowness and speeding traffic

MIXED OPINIONS & CONCERNS

Development

- Some resistance to "urbanization" - preference to maintain rural character

- Concern about maintenance costs - particularly for new public spaces
- Dog walker "colonization" - worry about new open spaces being taken over for dog walking
- Parking requirements - any new facilities need adequate parking

Facility Priorities

- Sports field viability questioned by a few - doubt it would get sufficient community use
- Preschool location debate - village hall vs. dedicated facility
- Youth facility location - village hall vs. separate provision

CONNECTIVITY TO SURROUNDING AREAS

Ottery St Mary Links

- Overwhelming support for safe walking/cycling route
- Current road described as "treacherous"
- Electric bike usage increasing - making connection more relevant
- Access to commercial centre - Ottery seen as key destination

Wider Regional Connections

- Tipton St John - also mentioned for cycle links
- Public rights of way - ensure accessibility maintained
- Belbury Fort access - walking route inclusion desired

COMMUNITY IDENTITY ISSUES

Lack of Village Focal Point

- Village described as "collection of houses behind walls" rather than true community
- Need for central gathering space - pub, café, or community facility
- Limited natural meeting opportunities - especially for newcomers
- Community spirit - references to Tipton as positive example

Social Connectivity

- Gardeners club - existing strength to build upon
- Legion and village hall - underutilized for community purposes
- School community - some residents excluded due to school capacity issues

SUMMARY

The responses reveal a community that feels isolated, unsafe, and lacking in focal points for social interaction. Transportation safety dominates concerns, with the connection to Ottery St Mary being the single most requested improvement. There's clear tension between a desire to maintain rural character while addressing practical needs for modern community life. The loss of community spaces to housing development is deeply regretted and there is a strong desire for facilities that would create natural meeting points and improve quality of life for all age groups.

Q13 Should the Neighbourhood Plan seek to protect existing and future community sites from being repurposed for housing?

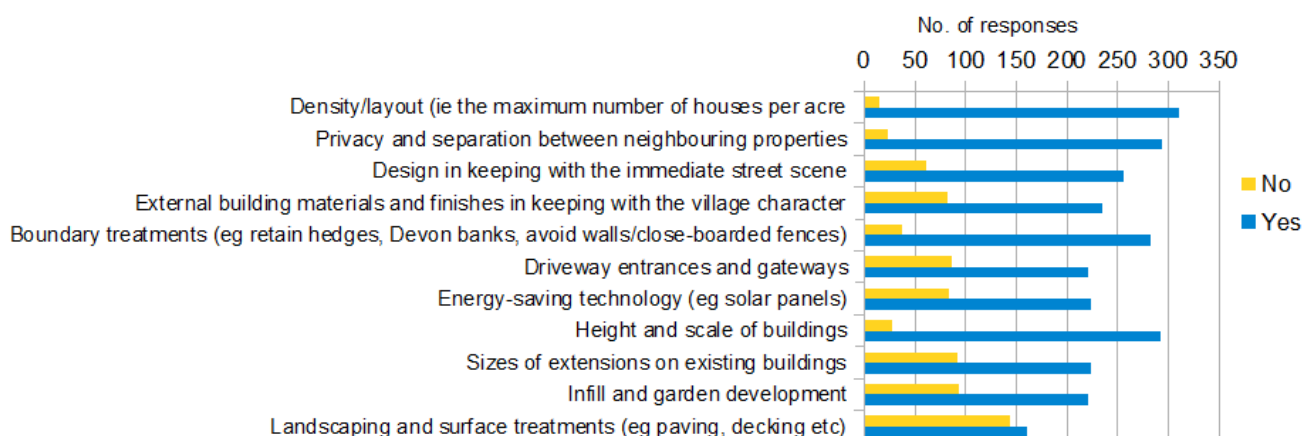
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 95.38% | 330 |
| No | 4.62% | 16 |
| Answered | | 346 |
| Skipped | | 28 |

The Built Environment

Q14 Should the Neighbourhood Plan set guidelines for the design and appearance of new and existing site development?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 92.40% | 316 |
| No | 7.60% | 26 |
| Answered | | 342 |
| Skipped | | 32 |

Q15 If Yes, what do you think these design guidelines should apply to?



| | Yes | | No | | Total |
|---|--------|-----|--------|-----|------------|
| Density/layout (ie the maximum number of houses per acre | 95.68% | 310 | 4.32% | 14 | 324 |
| Privacy and separation between neighbouring properties | 92.72% | 293 | 7.28% | 23 | 316 |
| Design in keeping with the immediate street scene | 80.76% | 256 | 19.24% | 61 | 317 |
| External building materials and finishes in keeping with the village character | 74.05% | 234 | 25.95% | 82 | 316 |
| Boundary treatments (eg retain hedges, Devon banks, avoid walls/close-boarded fences) | 88.40% | 282 | 11.60% | 37 | 319 |
| Driveway entrances and gateways | 71.99% | 221 | 28.01% | 86 | 307 |
| Energy-saving technology (eg solar panels) | 72.88% | 223 | 27.12% | 83 | 306 |
| Height and scale of buildings | 91.54% | 292 | 8.46% | 27 | 319 |
| Sizes of extensions on existing buildings | 71.02% | 223 | 28.98% | 91 | 314 |
| Infill and garden development | 70.38% | 221 | 29.62% | 93 | 314 |
| Landscaping and surface treatments (eg paving, decking etc) | 52.79% | 161 | 47.21% | 144 | 305 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | 68 |
| Answered | | | | | 325 |
| Skipped | | | | | 49 |

“Other – please specify”

Summary of broad themes emerging from the responses. Note that some respondents haven't answered the question and instead of saying what “other” things the NP design guidelines should apply to, have simply repeated things they said previously and just said what general things they would like to see in the village. Some comments are about whether or not design guidelines are appropriate and/or whether the village has a design style that can be enforced.

What Residents Want

Character and Design

- Maintain West Hill's woodland village character and green, spacious feel
- Preserve existing trees and require tree preservation orders
- Encourage high-quality design that fits the village setting
- Support variety in architectural styles while maintaining overall character
- Allow flexibility for residents to extend and adapt their homes to family needs

Housing Development

- Provide more affordable and social housing managed in keeping with village character
- Create smaller properties (bungalows) for older residents to downsize within the village
- Support low-density development rather than high-density building
- Ensure adequate off-road parking and garage space for all new developments
- Include footpaths and connectivity in new developments to enhance community spirit

Infrastructure and Safety

- Improve road infrastructure to handle additional housing
- Create safe walkways and pavements
- Enforce 30mph speed limits and consider 20mph extensions
- Add speed bumps before dangerous junctions to slow down traffic
- Improve visibility at road junctions

Environmental Features

- Protect wildlife habitats and dark skies (noting that some respondents would like more streetlights, though Q24 "Would you approve of more street lighting...?" shows an even split between Yes, No and Don't Know)
- Encourage energy-saving technology and sustainable design
- Include trees, wildlife boxes, and ponds in new developments
- Support contemporary, ecologically sound, low-energy design (noting that contemporary design has been described by some as looking like a factory)
- Maintain fields for horses and small stable blocks

Community Facilities

- Ensure adequate off-road parking for community facilities
- Improve bus services (frequency of buses, evening timetables and having bus stops in the village centre)
- Focus on building real community rather than creating a dormitory village

What Residents Don't Want

Inappropriate Development

- "Factory-style" (modern) homes that don't fit the village setting
- High-density housing
- Development that ruins the peaceful character of the village
- Gated developments that work against community spirit and are out of character
- Overdevelopment of single-story properties into multi-story buildings
- Development that covers more than 20% of a site (including garages and driveways) in accordance with the Village Design Statement

Design Features

- Astroturf instead of natural gardens
- Excessive exterior lighting or street lighting (again, see Q24 equal split Y/N and Don't Mind)
- Massive gates and entry systems that don't suit the woodland feel
- Buildings that are too high or have inappropriate footprints for their plots

Infrastructure Problems

- Development where sewerage capacity is inadequate
- Buildings without adequate parking, leading to road congestion
- Loss of mature trees due to excessive trimming and felling

Key Issues and Concerns

Traffic and Safety

- Narrow roads that serve as pathways, bridleways, and cycle routes being used by excessive and speeding traffic
- Overgrown hedges narrowing roadways and footpaths and creating safety hazards
- Limited public transport requiring residents to rely on cars
- Dangerous conditions for both pedestrians and drivers

Tree Management

- Continuous loss of mature trees with no replacement saplings reaching maturity
- Need for better balance between tree preservation and practical maintenance
- Excessive bureaucracy around tree management permissions

Community Balance

- Tension between maintaining village character and allowing natural evolution
- Need to avoid becoming exclusively a "retirement village", so affordable homes are key
- Balance between individual property rights and community standards

Planning and Governance

- Questions about whether local residents should have special say over development (noting that the Government encourages communities to develop Neighbourhood Plans)
- Tension between local control and area-wide planning decisions (what should be left to EDDC to decide?)
- Need to avoid overly rigid guidelines while maintaining standards
- Concern about NIMBY attitudes affecting reasonable development

Conflicting Views

- Some residents want strict design controls while others prefer flexibility
- Disagreement about the level of local versus regional planning control
- Different opinions on density, with some supporting infill development as a more natural way to grow the village
- Varying views on how much the village should change versus stay the same

Overall Sentiment

Residents generally want West Hill to evolve thoughtfully while preserving its essential woodland character. They seek a balance between allowing necessary development (especially affordable housing) and protecting what makes the village special. There's strong emphasis on environmental protection, community connectivity, and ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with development.

Q16 What, if anything, do you think would NOT enhance West Hill's character and appearance?

Key themes and issues identified from resident responses about what should be avoided to preserve West Hill's character as a woodland village:

7 Major Themes

1. Housing Development Concerns (Most Dominant Theme)

Overdevelopment and Density Issues:

- Overwhelming opposition to high-density housing developments
- Strong resistance to "cookie-cutter" housing estates with identical properties
- Concerns about cramming too many houses onto small plots
- Fear of losing the village's low-density, spacious character

High-Rise and Multi-Storey Buildings:

- Widespread rejection of buildings over 2-3 storeys
- Opposition to blocks of flats and apartment complexes
- Preference for maintaining the current building height profile

Housing Estate Development:

- Strong opposition to large-scale housing estates
- Resistance to uniform developments that lack individual character
- Concerns about development extending beyond existing village built-up area boundary

2. Environmental and Woodland Character Protection

Tree and Hedgerow Preservation:

- Overwhelming concern about tree removal and deforestation
- Protection of the village's woodland character as fundamental
- Opposition to cutting down mature trees for development
- Importance of maintaining hedgerows and natural boundaries

Green Space Conservation:

- Strong desire to protect existing green spaces and fields
- Opposition to building on farmland and woodland areas
- Concerns about loss of wildlife habitat
- Resistance to infilling of green spaces

3. Infrastructure and Capacity Concerns

Road and Transport Infrastructure:

- Existing roads described as narrow, single-track, and inadequate
- Concerns about increased traffic from new developments
- School drop-off parking issues already problematic
- Limited capacity on village roads for additional vehicle traffic

Community Facilities:

- Current infrastructure (school, GP, sewerage) already at capacity
- Lack of facilities to support population growth
- Concerns about losing existing community assets like the shop and car park

4. Village Character and Aesthetic Concerns

Maintaining Rural/Woodland Village Identity:

- Strong desire to preserve the unique woodland village character

- Opposition to urbanisation and city-like features
- Preference for natural materials and traditional styles
- Resistance to artificial or modern materials that clash with surroundings

Design and Planning Standards:

- Need for developments to be "in keeping" with existing properties
- Opposition to buildings that are out of scale or character
- Preference for individual, characterful buildings over mass-produced designs

5. Lighting and Urban Features

Street Lighting Opposition:

- Significant resistance to extensive street lighting (noting that at Q24 only a third of respondents said they would not approve of more street lighting)
- Desire to maintain the village's natural, unlit character
- Concerns about light pollution affecting the rural atmosphere

Urban Infrastructure:

- Opposition to excessive pavements and urban-style features
- Preference for maintaining natural verges and banks
- Resistance to traffic lights and urban traffic management

6. Commercial Development Concerns

Retail and Commercial Expansion:

- Some opposition to additional shops and commercial businesses
- Concerns about fast food outlets (McDonald's, Subway mentioned specifically)
- Resistance to large commercial buildings or industrial estates
- Specific concerns about redevelopment of the Morrison's shop site (especially if it leads to the loss of the shop/PO or a reduction in parking)

7. Specific Village Assets

Morrison's Shop and Car Park:

- Significant concern about losing the existing shop and its large car park
- Recognition of the car park as essential for school and community functions
- The shop area seen as a vital community focal point

Secondary Concerns

- Social Housing: Some resistance to affordable/social housing developments
- Tourism Infrastructure: Opposition to holiday parks or caravan sites
- Telecommunications: Concerns about mobile phone masts and aerials
- Renewable Energy: Some opposition to large solar farms and wind turbines
- Pub Development: Mixed views on additional pubs or restaurants (noting that in previous questions MANY said they wanted a pub!)

Key Underlying Principles

- Preserve Woodland Village Character: Fundamental desire to maintain West Hill's unique identity as a woodland village
- Appropriate Scale: Development should be proportionate to existing village scale and infrastructure capacity
- Individual Character: Preference for unique, characterful buildings over mass-produced developments
- Environmental Protection: Strong emphasis on protecting trees, green spaces, and natural

features

- Infrastructure Capacity: Recognition that current infrastructure cannot support significant population growth
- Community-Centred Development: Any development should enhance rather than diminish community facilities and social spaces

Conclusion

The responses reveal a community deeply committed to preserving West Hill's distinctive woodland village character. Residents are not opposed to all development but want it to be sympathetic, small-scale, and in keeping with the village's unique environment. The overwhelming concern is preventing overdevelopment that would transform West Hill from a peaceful woodland village into a suburban housing estate.

Housing with benefits

Q17 Would you support new residential units above existing commercial buildings to secure the long-term viability of existing businesses? (e.g. flats built above retail units)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 65.09% | 220 |
| No | 34.91% | 118 |
| Answered | | 338 |
| Skipped | | 36 |

Q18 Would you support a new housing site if it had to include the delivery of a much-needed community facility? (e.g. delivered a sports field/pitch, significant public open space)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 49.40% | 164 |
| No | 50.60% | 168 |
| Answered | | 332 |
| Skipped | | 42 |

Natural Environment

Q19

Which aspects of the natural environment in West Hill do you appreciate most?

Words most frequently used in responses



Key themes and issues identified from resident responses

Primary Themes: What Residents Appreciate Most

1. Trees and Woodland (Overwhelming Priority)

- Trees mentioned in approximately 85% of responses
- Specific appreciation for mature trees, native species, and tree diversity
- Strong attachment to Broadoak Plantation - frequently mentioned as a key village asset
- Tree-lined roads creating a "woodland village" character
- Veteran trees and the "cathedral-like" canopy over Oak Road
- Trees providing privacy and natural screening between properties

2. Wildlife and Biodiversity

- Birds and birdsong consistently valued
- Specific wildlife mentioned: deer, badgers, buzzards, bats, owls (particularly tawny owls)
- Appreciation for wildlife corridors and natural habitats
- Flora and fauna diversity, including wildflowers in hedgerows and verges

3. Woodland Walks and Access

- Broadoak Plantation walks highly valued by families and dog owners
- Public footpaths and bridleways providing countryside access
- Easy access to wider countryside areas like Venn Ottery Common and Aylesbeare Common
- Walking routes without pavements or street lighting maintaining rural character

4. Rural Character and Tranquillity

- Peace and quiet, minimal noise pollution
- Low housing density with space between properties
- Absence of overdevelopment
- Limited street lighting preserving night sky
- Country lanes and narrow roads

5. Devon Banks and Hedgerows

- Traditional Devon banks highly valued
- Hedgerows providing natural boundaries (preferred over fencing)
- Wild plants and flowers in hedge boundaries
- Natural screening and wildlife corridors

6. Open Spaces and Views

- Green spaces and fields
- Views across open countryside
- Sight lines to East Hill and surrounding hills
- Valued viewpoints as identified in the current Neighbourhood Plan

7. Clean Environment

- Fresh air and lack of pollution
- Clean, unpolluted environment
- Natural water features (brook/stream at Ford Lane)

Issues and Concerns Raised

1. Tree Protection and Management

- Calls for more Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- Concern about tree destruction and degradation
- Need for sympathetic tree management - removing invasive species while protecting indigenous ones
- Some feeling that tree protection rules can be "too precious"

2. Inappropriate Development Pressures

- Concerns about potential housing density increases
- Fear of losing village character through overdevelopment
- Worry about concrete taking precedence over greenery

3. Wildlife Access Issues

- Garden fencing blocking wildlife corridors, contrary to good practice
- Suggested need for review of fencing guidelines to ensure wildlife can move freely
- Concern that natural pathways for animals are being blocked

4. Infrastructure Issues

- Barbed wire blocking public right of way on bridle path off Bendarroch Road
- Overhanging branches on lanes creating hazards for large vehicles
- Speeding traffic concerns on some roads (Bendarroch Road)

5. Urbanization Concerns

- Resistance to urban features like yellow lines, roundabouts, and dog bins
- Opposition to resident parking zones
- Concern about losing the "old fashioned" country lane feeling

Key Locations Specifically Valued

- Broadoak Plantation: Most frequently mentioned woodland area, beloved by families
- Oak Road: Famous for its "cathedral of trees" canopy
- Prickly Pear Wood: Mentioned as valued woodland
- Ford Lane: Brook/stream access point
- Higher and Lower Broad Oak Roads: Tree-lined routes without pavements
- Village churchyard: Part of EcoChurch initiative

Overall Character Assessment

Residents overwhelmingly value West Hill as a "woodland village" where houses are nestled among trees rather than in cleared developments. The village's organic development pattern over many years has maintained green corridors and natural screening. The combination of mature trees, wildlife habitats, and easy access to countryside walks creates a unique rural character that residents are passionate about preserving.

The responses reveal a community deeply connected to their natural environment, with trees serving not just as landscape features but as fundamental to the village's identity and residents' quality of life.

Q20 Do you think of West Hill as a "woodland village"?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 93.18% | 314 |
| No | 6.82% | 23 |
| Answered | | 337 |
| Skipped | | 37 |

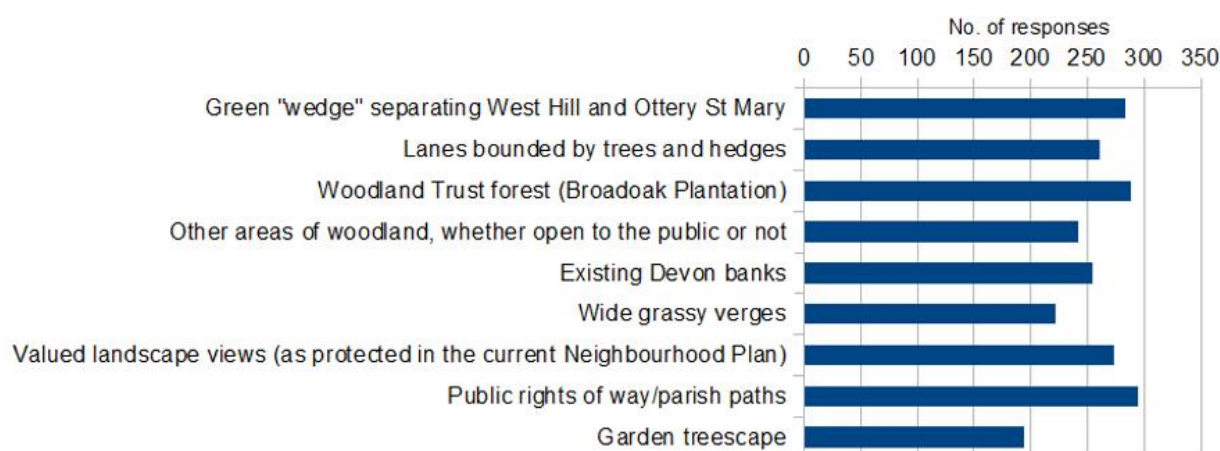
Q21 If YES, is this important to you?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 91.82% | 292 |
| No | 8.18% | 26 |
| Answered | | 318 |
| Skipped | | 56 |

Q22

Are there any places or natural features in the village that the Neighbourhood Plan should specifically seek to protect?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Green "wedge" separating West Hill and Ottery St Mary | 84.98% | 283 |
| Lanes bounded by trees and hedges | 78.38% | 261 |
| Woodland Trust forest (Broadoak Plantation) | 86.79% | 289 |
| Other areas of woodland, whether open to the public or not | 72.67% | 242 |
| Existing Devon banks | 76.58% | 255 |
| Wide grassy verges | 66.67% | 222 |
| Valued landscape views (as protected in the current Neighbourhood Plan) | 81.98% | 273 |
| Public rights of way/parish paths | 88.59% | 295 |
| Garden treescape | 58.26% | 194 |
| Other places or natural features (please specify) | | 38 |
| Answered | | 333 |
| Skipped | | 41 |



"Other – please specify"

Places/natural features specifically mentioned (some were already included in the tick boxes)

- Prickly Pear Common.
- Garden treescape
- A green wedge between West Hill and Exeter (due to development on the edge of Exeter)
- Streams, water courses
- Notable garden trees
- Include West Hill in the AONB
- Broad Oak Plantation
- Tree-lined Oak Road
- Trees along B3180, Oak Road, School Lane, West Hill Road
- Fields along B3180 should not be developed
- Farmland
- The "Green" in Beech Park (fear it might be built on)
- Churchyard
- View across River Otter Valley from field gateway to the south of Broad Oak Cross
- Field below the garage (next to WI hall) as an open wetland with deer observed
- Open grass fields (an important part of the "patchwork")
- Green spaces at the edge of the village with mature trees
- Existing gradients – no major land levelling
- Hedges
- Bridle path off Bendarroch Road to Toadpit Lane

Other issues mentioned (not really relevant to the question)

Path Maintenance:

- Overgrown path between Moorlands and Beech Park needs attention
- Unclear responsibility for maintenance when paths border different properties
- Wide grassy verges need bramble removal and hedge height limits (suggested 2m maximum)

Tree Management:

- Support for protecting notable trees but avoiding overzealous planning restrictions
- Homeowners should be able to maintain trees more simply for safety (removing dangerous branches, clearing road signs/lighting)
- Concern about people removing trees before planning applications to circumvent regulations
- Call for heavy penalties for such breaches

Village Character:

- Desire to maintain existing lane alignments and resist "improvements"
- Preference for hedges over fences
- Importance of preserving gradients without major land levelling
- Support for keeping open grass fields as part of the village "patchwork"

Access and Recreation:

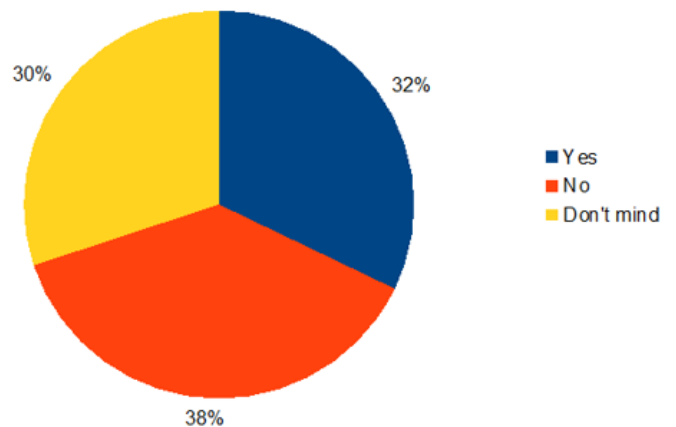
- Need for better footpath development within the village
- Support for public access to restored quarry site above Venn Ottery
- Importance of Prickly Pear Woods area for parking, walking, and dog exercise

Q23 Should developments be required to allocate space on site for planting trees? (The tree planting spaces would be in addition to replacing any trees that have been felled to allow development)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 85.89% | 286 |
| No | 14.11% | 47 |
| Answered | | 333 |
| Skipped | | 41 |

Q24 Would you approve of more street lighting throughout the village?

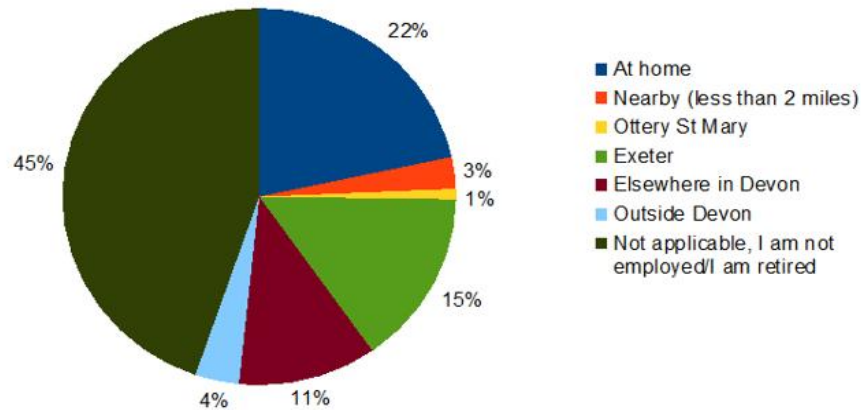
| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 32.15% | 109 |
| No | 37.76% | 128 |
| Don't mind | 30.09% | 102 |
| Answered | | 339 |
| Skipped | | 35 |



Economy

Q25

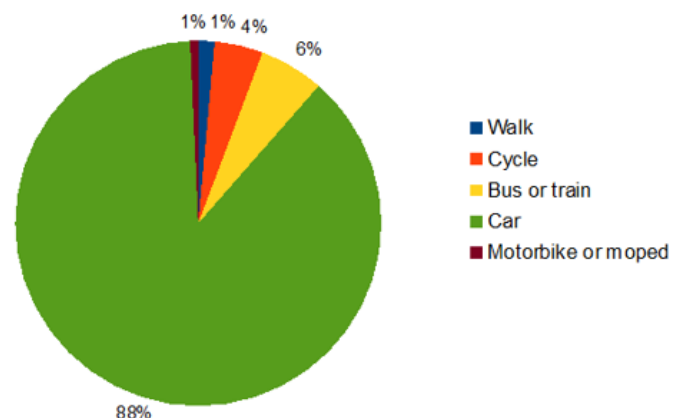
If you work, where is your usual place of work? (if you have more than one, choose the place where you work most often)



| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| At home | 21.62% | 72 |
| Nearby (less than 2 miles) | 2.70% | 9 |
| Ottery St Mary | 0.90% | 3 |
| Exeter | 15.02% | 50 |
| Elsewhere in Devon | 11.41% | 38 |
| Outside Devon | 3.60% | 12 |
| Not applicable, I am not employed/I am retired | 44.74% | 149 |
| Answered | | 333 |
| Skipped | | 41 |

Q26 How do you normally travel to work? (if more than one, choose your main transport)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Walk | 0.62% | 2 |
| Cycle | 1.85% | 6 |
| Bus or train | 2.47% | 8 |
| Car | 37.96% | 123 |
| Motorbike or moped | 0.31% | 1 |
| Not applicable | 56.79% | 184 |
| Answered | | 324 |
| Skipped | | 50 |



Q27 Would a local business hub be of interest to you? (providing office space, meeting space, cafe, broadband)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 27.13% | 89 |
| No | 72.87% | 239 |
| Answered | | 328 |
| Skipped | | 46 |

Q28 Should the Neighbourhood Plan encourage new small business space/units?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 44.89% | 145 |
| No | 55.11% | 178 |
| Answered | | 323 |
| Skipped | | 51 |

Future Housing Needs

Q29 Which of the following statements best describes your future housing plans?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| I have no plans to move house within the next 5 years | 81.21% | 268 |
| I hope to move house within 5 years and would like to stay within West Hill | 10.61% | 35 |
| I hope to move house within 5 years and away from West Hill | 8.18% | 27 |
| Answered | | 330 |
| Skipped | | 44 |

Q30 If you hope to move within 5 years and would like to stay within West Hill, what type of accommodation would you be looking for? (please tick as many as appropriate)

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Single bedroom home/apartment | 1.49% | 1 |
| 1-2 bedroom home | 10.45% | 7 |
| 2-3 bedroom family home | 23.88% | 16 |
| 3-4 bedroom family home | 31.34% | 21 |
| Large executive style home with 4 or more bedrooms | 31.34% | 21 |
| Affordable rented home (social housing) | 1.49% | 1 |
| Shared ownership/equity home | 1.49% | 1 |
| Starter home | 4.48% | 3 |
| Self-build plot | 8.96% | 6 |
| Home especially designed for older people (restricted to the over 55s) | 17.91% | 12 |
| Residential or nursing home | 10.45% | 7 |
| Other (please specify) | | 27 |
| Answered | | 67 |
| Skipped | | 307 |

Q31 Is there anything else you would like the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to consider? (Issues not related to planning will be passed on to the Parish Council)

Summary of broad themes. As expected with an “anything else” question, comments are a mixture of anything and everything. There are repeats of themes that cropped up in earlier questions. Some comments are perhaps ideas for WHPC to take on, others might be more to do with EDDC or DCC – things like highways maintenance etc.

1. TRAFFIC SPEED AND SAFETY (Most Frequently Mentioned)

- Multiple requests for speed cameras, particularly on B3180 and Bendarroch Road (one commenter specifically said “a bi-directional speed camera on the B3180”)
- Strong support for 20mph speed limits throughout the village, especially around the school area
- Concerns about speeding traffic on main roads and village streets
- Requests for traffic calming measures and speed bumps
- Specific mentions of dangerous speeding on Exmouth Road, West Hill Road, and School Lane
- Support for increased presence of community speed watch team (noting that CSW can't get people to volunteer!)
- Concerns about visibility at junctions, sometimes attributed to overgrown verges

2. WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Widespread calls for safe walking/cycling route to Ottery St Mary (one suggested using compulsory purchase to obtain the land)
- Need for footpaths and pavements throughout the village, especially along B3180, West Hill Road, and Bendarroch Road
- Requests for cycle tracks within and around the village
- Current pavements described as too narrow and dangerous
- Need for better pedestrian access and connectivity
- Specific requests for pavements along main roads to shops

3. ROAD MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Frequent complaints about potholes and poor road surfaces
- Need for proper road maintenance and timely repairs
- Concerns about road width and safety for all users (pedestrians, cars, horse riders)
- Issues with poor road junction design, specifically West Hill Road/B3180 junction (the dreaded triangle!)
- Need for better road markings and drainage maintenance

4. HEDGE AND VERGE MAINTENANCE

- Multiple complaints about overgrown hedges blocking sight lines at junctions, or narrowing the available road space causing drivers to choose between driving in the middle of the road or scratching their car paintwork
- Dangerous visibility issues caused by uncut growth
- Requests for regular cutting of grass verges and hedges
- More road sweeping requested to prevent drain blocking
- Specific safety concerns at turns onto main roads with faster traffic
- Need for designated maintenance of grass verges as safe pedestrian areas

5. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

- Strong resistance to excessive housing development that would change village character
- Concerns about infrastructure capacity (schools, doctors, sewage, roads) being

overwhelmed

- Calls to maintain current Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) to limit development
- Worries about loss of village charm and woodland character
- Some support for small-scale, high-quality development with proper infrastructure
- Specific opposition to development on green land and outside village boundaries

6. VILLAGE CHARACTER PRESERVATION

- Strong desire to maintain "woodland village" character
- Requests to retain peace, tranquillity, and rural feel
- Concerns about suburbanisation and loss of village identity
- Protection of green spaces and countryside areas
- Maintaining the "feel" of a quiet, friendly village
- Preserving what makes West Hill unique and special

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Calls for better bus services, particularly to Sidmouth and Exeter
- Current Sidmouth service (one bus per day) considered inadequate
- Need for Sunday bus services (seen as helpful for young people as well as others)
- Better bus links between West Hill and Ottery St Mary
- Public transport essential for the ageing population and anyone without a car

8. VILLAGE FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

- Strong support for retaining existing shop and post office
- Requests for café/coffee shop
- Interest in pub or restaurant
- Calls to protect Morrisons site car parking
- Support for a charity shop amongst possible retail facilities
- Need for facilities for teenagers and young people
- Requests for sports facilities (MUGA, football pitch)

9. HEALTHCARE AND SERVICES

- Concerns about oversubscribed doctors and dentists
- Calls for local GP surgery or part-time doctors' hub like in Whimble
- Need for care home and extra care accommodation for elderly
- Healthcare capacity unable to support further population growth
- Comparison to health facility in nearby Whimble

10. TREE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION

- Calls for more Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- Concerns about unauthorised tree felling
- Need for better tree management and replacement policies
- Issues with overhanging/dangerous trees affecting power/broadband cables
- Protection of existing woodland
- Need for accessible Tree Officer for residents seeking advice

11. SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

- Concerns about school capacity and lack of places
- Need for safer school drop-off arrangements
- Parking issues around school causing safety concerns

- Requests for wrap-around childcare facilities
- Double yellow lines needed outside school

12. UTILITIES AND BROADBAND

- Calls for full fibre broadband access for all houses
- Issues with patchy broadband coverage across village
- Problems with utility companies and tree maintenance affecting services (broadband at the garage end of LBO Rd was cut off for weeks when a tree branch severed the line)
- Need for better mobile phone coverage throughout the village

13. NOISE AND POLLUTION

- Complaints about aircraft noise from nearby airport
- Issues with air quality from neighbours' bonfires and wood burning stoves
- Noise from garden machinery
- Requests for bonfire bans or restrictions

14. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Support for village hall maintenance and improvements
- Requests for more community events and activities
- Need for public green spaces for social gatherings
- Better communication methods for residents without internet

15. PARKING AND CAR ACCESS

- Concerns about maintaining adequate parking at village facilities
- Issues with dangerous street parking blocking visibility
- Need to protect parking at Morrisons site
- Problems with cars parking on verges

Less Frequently Mentioned Themes:

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

- River Otter pollution issues
- Protection of green spaces and wildlife
- Climate change resilience
- Air quality concerns

YOUTH FACILITIES

- Lack of facilities for teenagers
- Need for sports facilities and safe recreational areas
- Nowhere for young people to go locally

FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE

- Overgrown public footpaths
- Need for updated footpath maps showing the public rights of way paths
- Better maintenance of walking routes

STREET LIGHTING

- Requests for lighting on Bendarroch Road

DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

- Need for more under-40s involvement in planning (NPWG criticised for lack of age diversity)
- Ensuring all age groups are considered in decisions affecting the village

SINGLE MENTIONS

- Ban on bonfires
- Better drainage
- Dog waste bins
- Solar panels requirement for new builds
- Business hub above shop
- Butcher shop or meat van
- Removal of traffic calming measures
- Land for football club
- Protection from aircraft noise
- Charity shop
- Farm shop