

THE PARISH OF LEIGHTON & EATON CONSTANTINE

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held at 7.00pm on 28 May 2024 at Eaton Constantine Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors S Jones (Chair), A Bain, M Budgen, M Corrie, S Dawes, M Thorn and Shropshire Councillor C Wild

Clerk: Lisa Harris

6 members of the public were present

1. Chairman's welcome

Councillor Jones welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies

None.

3. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Thorn and

Resolved (without opposition)

that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 31 May 2023 be accepted as a true record.

The minutes were signed accordingly by the Chairman.

4. Any items arising from previous minutes

None.

5. Annual Reports

Annual report from the Chairman of Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council

Currently there are 6 members of the Parish Council, with one Casual Vacancy. The councillors are: Sue Jones, Mark Thorn and Malcolm Corrie from Leighton; Sue Dawes and Mark Budgen from Eaton Constantine; and Alan Bain from Garmston.

- The Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting were held on Wednesday 31 May 2023.
- Councillor Sue Jones was elected Chair and Councillor Mark Thorn was elected Vice-Chair at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.
- Full Council Meetings were also held on 4 July 2023, 5 September 2023, 7 November 2023, 9 January 2024 and 5 March 2024.

- An Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council was held on 22 March 2024 to agree the appointment of a new clerk as the current clerk, Lorna Pardoe, is retiring at the end of May 2024.
- Councillor Sue Jones represents the Parish Council and is Secretary of the Ironbridge Power Station Re-development Liaison Group. Meetings were held on 25 July 2023 and 13 March 2024. Minutes of the July meeting are available on the Parish Council website: www.leightonanddeatonconstantineparishcouncil.org.uk under the heading "Buildwas Power Station". The Minutes of the March meeting will be available online once approved at the upcoming meeting of the Liaison Group on 12 June.

PLANNING MATTERS

Planning decisions in the Parish

The Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee in planning matters within the Parish. The Parish Council gives comments on all planning applications and these comments are taken into account in any decision making. The final decision is taken by the Planning Officer or the Planning Committee at Shropshire Council.

For details of all planning decisions in our parish visit the Shropshire Council Planning Portal at www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning and view the planning register or see the planning tracker on the Parish Council website.

Former Ironbridge Power Station Redevelopment

Two planning applications have been granted to the developer Harworth PLC by Shropshire Council. One is for sand and gravel extraction and one for outline planning for up to 1000 homes on the former Power Station site. Details of applications and the Parish Council responses can be found on the Shropshire Council Planning Portal.

A Liaison Group has been set up to include the developer Harworth Plc, Shropshire Council and local Parish Councils. This group will discuss and help mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the local area, in particular the road network.

We have major concerns regarding the possible increase in traffic that construction of 1000 homes might have on the roads within our Parish and surrounding area. We have a legal agreement to implement Traffic Calming Measures in Leighton on the completion of the 50th home on the Ironbridge site. This is good news! As a gesture of goodwill, Harworth Plc have already paid for the instillation of 2 extra VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs) in Leighton and several more along the B4380 in addition the proposed Traffic Calming Measures. Our thanks go to Shropshire Councillor Claire Wild for all her efforts on behalf of all residents living near the Ironbridge site. She works tirelessly on our behalf and her efforts are much appreciated.

Our particular concern is the increase in HGV traffic along the B4380. Unfortunately, it is now confirmed that Network Rail will not now be carrying out the necessary repairs to the Albert Edward Bridge on the Ironbridge site which would allow sand and gravel to be transported by rail. The majority of the sand and gravel will now be held and used on site using the JPE quarry area to store material. There is a limit to how much product could be transported by road of 100,000 tonnes/ year. There is also a legal agreement that HGV traffic will not be allowed to use the B4380 but use Buildwas Bank towards Telford and the motorway network. This will be enforced by Harwoth plc using cameras. We will be watching and reporting any vehicle breaching the planning condition.

Regarding the construction phase of the development, Harworth Plc will be implementing a routing agreement with hauliers to route construction traffic up Buildwas Bank and not along the B4380. Cameras would enforce this.

There is a possibility and on-going discussions with Network Rail, to possibly upgrade the track and the Albert Edward Bridge to take a lighter, self-contained, rail passenger line. How this would work to connect to other rail lines and stations is still being discussed. This would be very exciting if it works out.

Regarding the construction of the new road junctions to support the development, including the proposed roundabout at the bottom of Buildwas Bank, discussions on timings, design and road safety issues are being discussed. We should have updates at the next Liaison Group meeting in June. We are asking for plenty of warning of when construction will start on the junctions to help mitigate traffic flow problems.

HIGHWAYS

Due to the financial pressures facing Shropshire Council, many of faults reported to the Council are yet to be completed. The re-surfacing of Kynnersley Lane due to be completed by the Capital Works Team is a priority but unfortunately we do not have any date yet for the works. We have also asked that the red/white bollards in lay-by near Stan's Wood, at the Buildwas end of Leighton, be replaced with a more permanent solution as the bollards are often moved and broken. We want to prevent Anti-social behaviour taking place there.

If you wish to report issues such as potholes or flooding please use 'Fix my street at www.fixmystreet.com. Here you can report and follow up issues. If you prefer you can telephone Highways customer services on 0345 6789006.

TRAFFIC MONITORING

In January this year traffic speeds were monitored in Leighton by Shropshire Council. We have had the results of this and can show speeds have reduced since the 2017 monitoring, possibly due to the Camera Safety Partnership speed trapping Leighton and possibly the addition of the 2 VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs). It is difficult to accurately compare the 2024 data to the 2017 data as traffic was measured at different sites in Leighton over different timescales, however, the trend through the village is downwards. We can also see there is still need to reduce speeds further. We are hoping the Traffic Calming Measures will help moving forward. Another point noted was the increase in the percentage of HGV traffic travelling through Leighton since 2017.

POLICE

West Mercia Police Neighbourhood Matters

West Mercia police provide local alerts and information about crime in local areas through their website 'Neighbourhood Matters'. To sign up to receive alerts and information please sign up at www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk

To make reports please contact the West Mercia Police via the West Mercia Police website www.westmerciapolice.co.uk. **Please dial 999 in an emergency.** For non-emergencies please dial 101.

Our Parish is under the Shrewsbury Rural East police area. To find out crime rates in our area please use www.police.uk website where you can find the 'crime map' and details of crimes reported.

In response to a request from West Mercia Police, the Parish Council has confirmed the 3 policing priorities in our area as:

1. Speeding
2. Anti-Social Behaviour including fly-tipping
3. Theft from outbuildings

FINANCIAL

The Parish Council has increased the precept for 2024/25 to £10,363 (from £9,500). This is a rise of 38p/month for a Band D property.

Due to the financial pressures Shropshire Council face in the upcoming year, we have had to budget for the potential loss of our Environmental Maintenance Grant from Shropshire Council. This grant helps towards the cost of grass cutting in our parish.

COMMUNICATION

We are still looking at ways to increase communication with residents. We have recently asked a volunteer group to produce a Parish Survey. This will help guide the decisions of the Parish Council moving forwards. I thank everyone who helped produce the survey. Your hard work is much appreciated. I would also like to thank residents who completed the survey.

Councillor Thorn has organised a monthly coffee morning at Leighton Village Hall. This has been a lovely way to get together over a cup of coffee and slice of cake. It is hoped that more residents will join us. There will hopefully be a councillor there at each event to discuss any issues you might have, or just come for a chat.

FINALLY...

I will be stepping down as Chair of the Parish Council. I feel it is time to pass the baton but I will stay on the Parish Council to help the new Chair and Councillors as best I can.

I would like to thank the Parish Councillors and all volunteers in our community who give up their time freely and work hard for the benefit of our parish. It's much appreciated. It helps make our parish a wonderful place in which to live.

I would also like to thank our Shropshire Councillor, Claire Wild who works incredibly hard on our behalf. Thank you, Claire!

A huge thank-you must go to our clerk, Lorna Pardoe, who is retiring this year. Lorna has been with us since 2016 and has done a great job. The Clerk has a very important responsible role within the Parish Council and we really appreciate what Lorna has done for us.

We welcome our new clerk, Lisa Harris. Lisa is an experienced clerk, and we look forward to working with her.

I will end by extending my sincere thanks to Elaine Parton who has recently resigned from the Parish Council. Elaine worked tirelessly for the benefit of the community for almost a decade and her contribution is much appreciated. Thank you so much Elaine. You will be greatly missed!

SUE JONES

Chairman, Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council

Annual report from the Ward Councillor

Councillor Wild's annual report, as follows, had been circulated prior to the meeting:

I am sure it will not be a surprise to any of you that our major focus this year has been on financial stability, and this will continue into the next financial year and beyond, especially if there are no changes to the national funding agreements for Local Government.

This is not just a problem in Shropshire, Councils across England are suffering, and our plight is made worse due to the rural nature of where we live.

We, like our nearest neighbours in Telford, Staffordshire, and Herefordshire, are having to increase council tax, increase fees and charges and yet cut services which will include making redundancies. Please take a look at our budget-specific pages on our website which can be found by clicking [Our 24-25 Budget Explained](#)

There is no doubt that for most top-tier councils who have responsibility for social care services, upwards of 75% of their budgets are spent on this area. The demand, cost and increased complexity is pushing up these costs all the time and this is almost entirely the cause of our financial difficulties. Yes, there is a hangover of high inflation but in the main, it is the cost of looking after our most vulnerable people for which we have a legal and ethical responsibility.

Despite the huge amount of work that it takes to make these changes to services and staffing the Council is still investing in our County and providing a very broad spectrum of services.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Council has saved £41 million of spend in this financial year which is more than has ever been achieved in a single year. The Council is seeing unprecedented demand in Social Care in the current year with demand estimated at £26 million over and above predicted increase in last year's budget. It is being created by Demand pressures by more people needing care mixed with the type of complex care they need plus major inflationary pressures in the delivery of the care. This has been mitigated by the use of reserves this year but makes up a part of the further £62 million of savings we have to make in the next financial year 24/25.

The finances are already cut to the bone and the proposals set out in the budget will see more visual changes to residents than have been seen to date. Council tax will rise, a charge will be introduced for your green bin and parking fees will rise, as will all discretionary fees the Council charges.

There will be a complete review of some service areas. Some services may be reduced, some may cease all together. We will also look to find other ways of achieving savings and all ideas are welcome.

We will also look to leave Shirehall as we will be a much smaller organisation, and this will save £1.5 million a year in running costs. We are looking for temporary accommodation for the Council until the Multi Agency Hub is built in the Riverside development. The decision by Chester University to withdraw its Shrewsbury Campus may afford us more options.

We will certainly be moving into an era where there will be an opportunity for local Councils to deliver more services locally if desired and precept accordingly as Shropshire Council will need to concentrate its delivery on statutory services.

We are constantly lobbying our MPs and talking to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing

and Communities Department regarding fairer and further funding.

The Capital Programme continues, and this is different to annual revenue spend and is funded mainly by developer's contributions and external grants. This includes £84 million for housing, £27 million for schools and £40 million for highways.

CLIMATE CHANGE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Grant Funding - The Climate Team has attracted Government capital and revenue grant funding awards totalling £4.3m to date.

Pyrolysis / Biochar – Shropshire Council is currently procuring a demonstrator plant to test the use of pyrolysis to 'cook' (rather than burn) natural woody materials from highway maintenance and garden waste to reduce it to pure carbon 'biochar' which can be used to store carbon in a stable form, improve soil quality and for the manufacture of low carbon building materials such as bricks and asphalt. This is a technology which could be widely deployed commercially in Shropshire to generate 'green growth'.

Green hydrogen feasibility –The Council is working with a range of commercial and academic stakeholders to on a project to test hydrogen refuelling facilities for its own fleet and that of its contractors. In the longer term, the Council hopes to develop a small-scale demonstrator facility to manufacture hydrogen fuel locally.

Leading by example - A number of the demonstrator projects which we are developing are already recognised as being at the forefront of good practice by local authorities in the UK.

Low Carbon Community Buildings – the design of new buildings such as the new swimming pool at Whitchurch is increasingly being informed by information about lifetime energy and carbon performance to minimise carbon emissions and running costs.

Electric Vehicle Chargers – Shropshire Council has one of the largest EV charging infrastructure programmes in the Midlands and will soon own and operate over 300 chargers in its car parks, with a further 500 to come in future years!

Business Support – Shropshire Council is working closely with community climate organisation and local businesses to offer free climate advice and training for local firms and to free consultancy advice on the installation of solar panels on large industrial buildings. The continued availability of these support programmes may also help local companies supplying goods and services to Shropshire Council to reduce their emissions.

Community Climate Action - We have established a really positive and constructive ongoing working relationship with community climate organisations across Shropshire.

Flexible (Demand Response Transport) – Our first Flexible public transport service started operating on 4 December. The zones covered will be the Pulverbatch and Longden zone to the SW of Shrewsbury, and the first service in the Otley Road zone. The service has been well received, usage has increased and is increasing. The aspiration is to implement in further zones, in other areas, as soon as funding allows.

The Council continues to bid for additional funding to help to retain and improve public transport. The £2 single fair (adopted by most providers) is supported via Government funding and will continue until at least March 25.

Waste

Waste is the biggest contract in the Place Directorate. There has to be significant savings made to the service so difficult decisions have had to be made. This includes:

- Charging for Green Waste (opt in service at an estimated charge of £52 per year).
- Potential Closure of 2 HRCs (consultation needed before decision on which 2 HRCs will close).

Shropshire residents produce a lot of waste. On a national league table SC is listed as the second highest producer of waste per household, so bottom of the table. However, when Green Waste is removed from the equation, Shropshire sits in the Top third. SC is also one of the best Local Authority's for recycling.

Shrewsbury Town Centre Redevelopment – The Smithfield Riverside consultation saw a lot of engagement from residents across Shropshire. The first phase (demolition of the Riverside Med practice and Riverside Shopping Centre followed by the development of Roushill Park), has achieved Planning permission. Work should begin later this year.

Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy

Consultation on the Movement and Public Space Strategy is ongoing. The vast majority of respondents have been positive. This project will see improvements to the gyratory by the Railway Station, Active Travel routes, Pedestrian Priority Zones, better Public Transport through the town and a series of traffic loops. These measures, along with the completion of the ring road will provide a safer and cleaner environment in the town centre. There will still be the ability to drive and park in the Town Centre for those who need it. More disability parking will be available.

Active Travel

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been in development over the past year. The Plan will come to Cabinet this month (13 March). Having a Plan will attract more funding for Active Travel throughout the Council area.

PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

The Draft Local Plan seems to have been dragging on forever. A report will come to Cabinet in April or May confirming our interactions with the inspectors. It is likely there will need to be a short period of consultation which will focus on any additions. It is still envisaged that this plan will be adopted in early 2025.

Place plans are being updated and there are a number of new Neighbourhood Plans in process, more will be coming to Cabinet and Full council for approval.

In Regulatory Services there have been a number of prosecutions against utility companies, and shopkeepers selling illegal vapes and alcohol to under 18s.

There has also been a number of prosecutions for the sale of counterfeit goods being sold which ended in custodial sentences. All these have come with hefty fines.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Economic Growth Team continue to be involved in a wide range of projects.

Following the Government's decision to stop funding the Local Enterprise Partnerships the

new way of working will be led by the Economic Growth Team via the Shropshire Economic Partnership. In the first instance a Joint Committee has been convened between Hereford, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils to manage the transition.

The Shropshire Economic Partnership goes from strength to strength and part of the remit is to oversee the roll out of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Many businesses and organisations obtained funding in the first and second rounds. The latest round of funding is grants for businesses who employ 1-49 employees and is to assist to purchase capital equipment or to undertake improvements to business premises.

Progress on the Smithfield Riverside Development continues apace with planning approval received for the demolition of the Riverside site and the construction of the pocket park. There has been significant commercial interest in this site and Heads of Terms for the new cinema are being prepared.

Our Business Team have helped over 30 new businesses setup, mainly in the Artistic and Creative industries. Shropshire is widely known as a hub for businesses in the creative industries.

The River Severn Partnership will be launching major plans in the coming months. Alongside this is a series of small projects designed to slow the flow of the Severn. Much of this work is cross border and the Marches Forward Partnership (an informal agreement of cooperation between Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire) is very involved in the project work.

The new pedestrian bridge at Oswestry will be fully operational by the end of March and this will see the start of the work on the Innovation Park. Again, there is much interest in this site.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Caring for vulnerable adults is one of the Council's most important statutory duties, whether vulnerable adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues between the ages of 18 – 65 or our 65+ residents. We have a duty of care to ensure people are safe and properly looked after, either in their own homes, with domiciliary care support or in residential care or nursing homes. We work closely alongside partners from health, the voluntary and private sectors to deliver the most appropriate support to ensure people can remain in the heart of their communities for as long as possible.

Providing care for both adults and children is by far the most expensive service provided by the Council, absorbing 77% of the Council's overall budget. Shropshire is a very rural county, so travel times are longer and care delivery costs are higher than in the towns. Costs are rising every year as our population grows and our customers develop increasingly complex needs. In order to mitigate costs, Shropshire Council has been developing technological solutions to help our elderly population stay supported in their own homes and we are working on a transformation plan with partner organisations to improve outcomes and service to our customers.

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

As you may be aware, we recently had a spotlight return visit by OFSTED. We have formed a Children's Improvement Board to focus on retention and recruitment of social workers to aid not only case management levels of our teams, but address agency spends. We are not alone in this; this is a challenge nationally that all councils are facing and recent media around this has suggested there are as many as 6,000 vacant positions. As a focus we have advertised

these positions with a whole host of additional incentives, and we have seen an interest and applications are coming in and we aim for a fully permanent workforce.

We continue, after significant investment, to reach out to families with our Early Help offer. The teams are focused on making sure that the right support is put in place as soon as it is needed. With the right level of support in a timely way it helps families to achieve the best outcomes. A new improved streamlined service offering targeted support can be reached by calling 0345 678 9021.

We have also increased our offer to Foster Carers and the drop in “Fostering Info Sessions” have been really positive across Shropshire and we have seen more interest and additional Foster Panels to support the process have been added to deal with this increased interest. Further information can be found at www.shropshirefostering.co.uk.

We are pleased to also confirm that another Children’s Residential Care Homes is near completion and is near opening in North Shropshire which is excellent news. Our Care Homes offer excellent support to children and young people and are all Ofsted rated good and outstanding.

Stepping Stones continues to go from strength to strength, we continue to see this project delivering on diverting children becoming “Looked After” and working towards the step down of children from residential care to foster care or back with their families where they have worked hard to make sustained changes. The work above underpins our vision of all children living in a family where it is safe to do so – whether that family is their own, extended family or foster care.

Families continue to help us shape the future of SEND in Shropshire as we continue to work with our NHS Partners and Education providers to listen to needs and improve the Special Educational Needs and Disability support available in the local area. We have developed an Accelerated Progress Plan following on from an inspection of our Send Services and both NHS England and the Department for Education (DfE) have recognised good progress is being made. As with all local Authorities we have seen a significant increase in demand in this area.

Active Travel around Schools continues with the work we are doing to implement the 20mph outside schools’ programme. We have delivered Bikeability training to all but six schools across Shropshire and assessment work continues on reviewing all zig-zag lines outside schools. We are also soon to go live on six school streets across the County, all to support safety around schools.

And finally, recent Secondary School places were announced with children across the county finding out what school they were allocated. 2,974 applied and 2,667 were offered their first preference and of all who applied 98.4% offered one of their preferences and 1.6% offered an alternative. Once again excellent news and well done to the team as we aim for a smooth and happy transition for these children.

CULTURE AND DIGITAL

The council has continued to deliver a wide range of facilities and activities across Shropshire. With outdoor recreation sites, leisure facilities, libraries, theatres, museums, armed forces support and more it is very easy to forget how much we provide and are involved with.

There are literally too many highlights to run through individually but one of the things the service should rightly be proud of is the way it opens opportunities to knowledge, entertainment, support and exercise to a wide range of people.

Our staff work hard day-in, day-out to provide the best services and experiences possible and they do this alongside the wide spectrum of partners and volunteers who provide invaluable help and support to these local services.

So, what does this year and the future look like? Financially, tough. We must operate within a reduced budget at a time when costs are increasing. This means the status quo is not an option and we must work to identify any opportunities or necessary changes.

To do this we are going to need help and goodwill from across Shropshire and it will come as no surprise that we will be looking to build upon our partnership work with communities to explore what is possible.

We continue to try and enable people to get things done or resolved as easily as possible when they contact us. People have a range of ways to contact the council and we have been working to improve our digital services for those who can do what they need to do without additional assistance.

We also continue to maximise the benefits of digital behind the scenes within the council to improve productivity and reduce costs.

HOUSING AND ASSETS

Shropshire Council's two owned housing companies, STAR and Cornovii, are performing well, with over 200 homes under construction across the county. These are delivering a mixture of high-quality affordable homes, low energy homes, local needs homes and specialist accommodation.

During a recent pilot inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing, STAR received the highest possible grade for customer engagement, C2.

Homelessness continues to be an area of high pressure for Shropshire Council, with about 250 households in need of temporary accommodation at any one time. This rise in demand is broadly in line with local authorities across the country, however we are bucking the trend with use of bed & breakfast for temporary accommodation falling in Shropshire due to investment in both support work and accommodation.

Shropshire Council continues to support the Homes for Ukraine project as the Russian invasion stretches into its third year. At the height of the programme almost 800 Ukrainians were living with host families across Shropshire. Some of those have now returned home as areas of Ukraine have been liberated, others have settled into Shropshire very well taking on jobs and homes of their own.

We recently supported events to commemorate the anniversary of the invasion with a flag raising ceremony at Shirehall and a vigil in the Quarry in Shrewsbury.

The council has received two rounds of funding from central government to buy properties for use by Ukrainian and Afghan families that will become affordable housing open to everyone in Shropshire once the immediate need has passed.

Specific concerns around housing in the most rural parts of Shropshire is the current focus of several projects within the Council. There is work being done to find ways to make small scale development of affordable homes in the smaller villages viable, a team is looking at how we can support housing associations to retain, or at least replace, their properties in rural parts of the county, and the private sector housing team is working with a number of the county's historic estates to improve the standard and conditions of their estate properties.

HIGHWAYS

In Highways the major project of the North West Relief Road continues to make good progress with the signing off at Council on 29th February of the extra spend necessary to get to the position of Full Business Case hopefully by September. The procurement process is in progress, and whilst we are aware there may be an application toward a Judicial review, we are confident in our position, and this has been 'priced in' to the critical path.

The recent announcement by Government of £136.4m extra to spend over 7 years from next year is welcome news. Cllrs and MPs will have a say in how that money is spent, and I envisage a process whereby Town and Parish Council can feed into that process.

We are firmly in pothole season, but since May 21 the trend of outstanding potholes is in a long-term decline of numbers, as you can see from the graph below:



Shropshire Council has been shortlisted for a national award for the impact of its new approach to maintaining and improving the county's roads. The council is one of the finalists for the 'Innovation' award at the LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Awards 2024, with the winner set to be announced in June.

By 2020 the council's previous approach to highways maintenance had resulted in a backlog of 19,000 potholes and other defects on the council's roads. As a result, a new 'mixed economy' model of highway maintenance was introduced, which saw the council review its existing highways maintenance contract with Kier, launch new in-house operations and energise the local supply chain.

Shropshire Council was also the first council in the country to support and use a new procurement system designed to encourage innovation in highway maintenance, enabling it to speed up repairs while reducing procurement costs and ensure compliance. The new approach has resulted in 75% reduction in the cost of repairs between 2019 and 2023 – saving £1.4m per year. Whereas 90% of repairs were temporary in 2019, 90% are permanent in 2023. Residents have recognised the difference the new model has made – year on year, public satisfaction in highways is up 25%, according to the National Highway and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey. We all know of long term, or persistent, or returning potholes. However, I am

confident that the 'mixed economy' Highways model that Andy Wilde and his team has developed with Kier is working. We are in a far better place than 2017 – 2021.

Car Parking has been in the headlines recently as we need to increase charges to help us pay for investment in both the parking team and the car park infrastructure. There have been some very well publicised politically motivated campaigns whose tactics are to throw us off course. A new strategy may well have better to have been developed before the implementation of changes to pricing, however budget timings have dictated that we need to go this way around. A new report will go to cabinet in April, where we will demonstrate that we have been listening to business and public concerns. A strategy will follow on later in the new financial year.

CLAIRE WILD

Councillor for the Severn Valley Division

Annual report from the Responsible Financial Officer of Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council – year ending 31 March 2024

The Parish Council received £9,500.00 from Shropshire Council in precept monies to enable the Parish Council to carry out its statutory functions during the year.

The Parish Council received an Environmental Maintenance Grant from Shropshire Council this year. Shropshire Council pay this grant retrospectively so the money the Parish Council had spent during the 2022/23 financial year on grass cutting etc was partially met with a 50% grant from Shropshire Council paid during 2023/24. The grant was halved from previous years and the Parish Council have had to match fund the grant payment. This will have an effect on the precept in future years as the Parish Council will continue to have meet more and more of this cost for the maintenance of the Parish

The Council also received a refund from its insurers following a claim for a locum clerk whilst the permanent clerk was off on long-term sick leave.

The Council has spent £8,491.14 which is broken down in the end of year accounts.

The main area for expenditure this last year was the staffing costs and the maintenance of the grass within the Parish.

The Council has reviewed and updated, where deemed necessary, its risk assessment documents along with its Financial Risk Assessment documents.

LORNA PARDOE

Responsible Financial Officer

6. Presentation of Parish Survey results

On behalf of the LEC Parish Survey Team, Claire Timmins presented the results of the survey. The highly informative slides that made up the presentation, are as follows:

VARIOUS TOPIC SURVEYED TO GAIN THE OPINIONS OF
THE LOCAL PARISHIONERS WITH THE AIM OF
INFORMING AND INFLUENCING FUTURE PLANS AND
ACTIONS

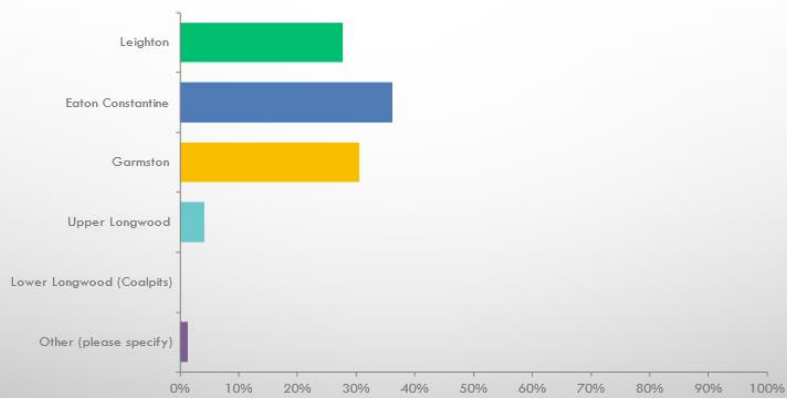
TOTAL RESPONSES: 72

SURVEY RAN FROM MID FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

Q3: WHICH VILLAGE DO YOU LIVE IN?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



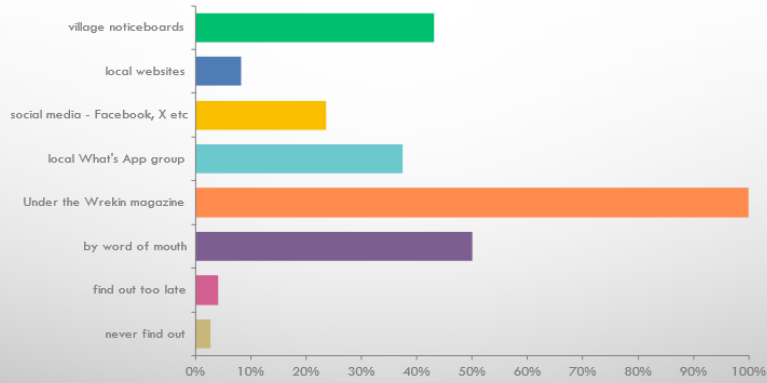
Q3: WHICH VILLAGE DO YOU LIVE IN?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Leighton	27.78%	20
Eaton Constantine	36.11%	26
Garmston	30.56%	22
Upper Longwood	4.17%	3
Lower Longwood (Coalpits)	0%	0
Other (please specify)	1.39%	1
TOTAL		72

Q4: HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT LOCAL EVENTS AND OTHER PARISH INFORMATION?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



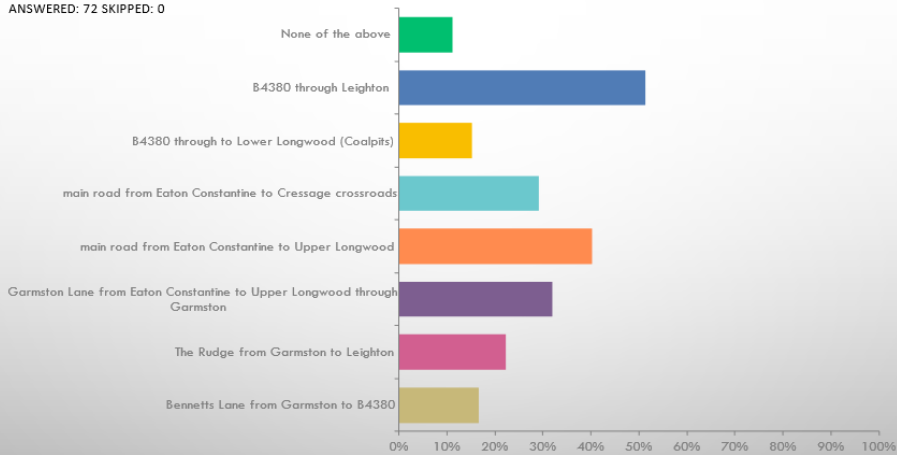
Q4: HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT LOCAL EVENTS AND OTHER PARISH INFORMATION?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0

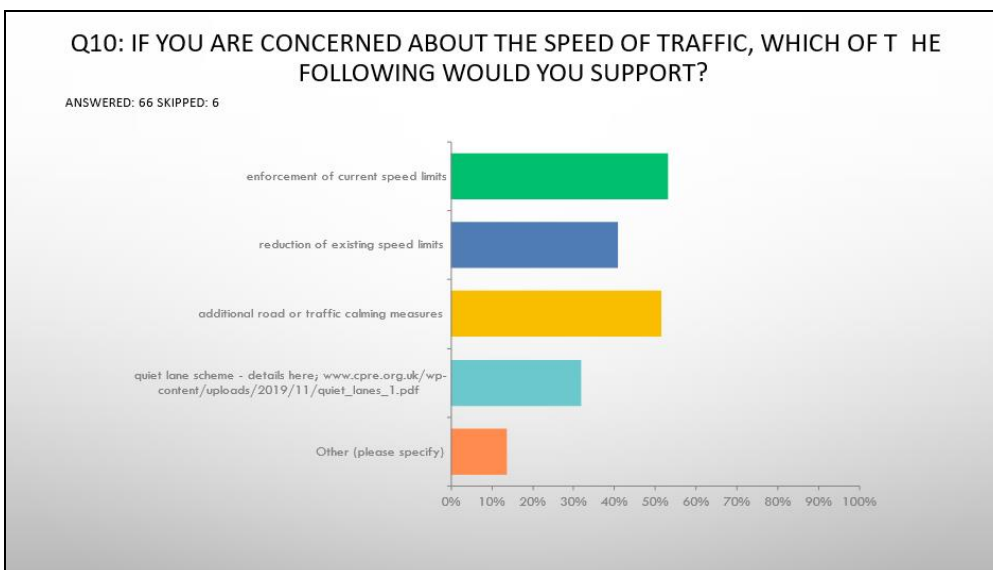
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
village noticeboards	43.06%	31
local websites	8.33%	6
social media - Facebook, X etc	23.61%	17
local What's App group	37.50%	27
Under the Wrekin magazine	100%	72
by word of mouth	50.0%	36
find out too late	4.17%	3
never find out	2.78%	2
TOTAL		194

Q9: ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPEED OF TRAFFIC IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS? (PLEASE CHOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	11.11%	8
B4380 through Leighton	51.39%	37
B4380 through to Lower Longwood (Coalpits)	15.28%	11
main road from Eaton Constantine to Cressage crossroads	29.17%	21
main road from Eaton Constantine to Upper Longwood	40.28%	29
Garmston Lane from Eaton Constantine to Upper Longwood through Garmston	31.94%	23
The Rudge from Garmston to Leighton	22.22%	16
Bennetts Lane from Garmston to B4380	16.67%	12
TOTAL		157



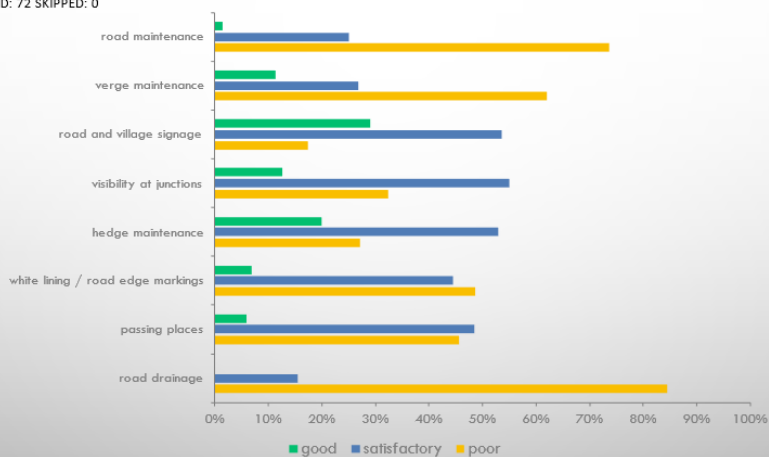
Q10: IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPEED OF TRAFFIC, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU SUPPORT?

ANSWERED: 66 SKIPPED: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
enforcement of current speed limits	53.03%	35
reduction of existing speed limits	40.91%	27
additional road or traffic calming measures	51.52%	34
quiet lane scheme - details here; www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/quiet_lanes_1.pdf	31.82%	21
Other (please specify)	13.64%	9
TOTAL		126

Q11: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE FOLLOWING?

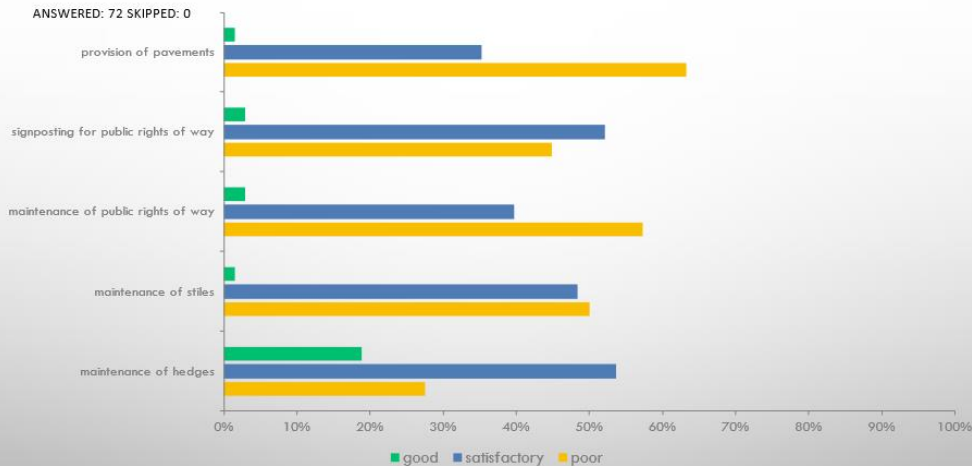
ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



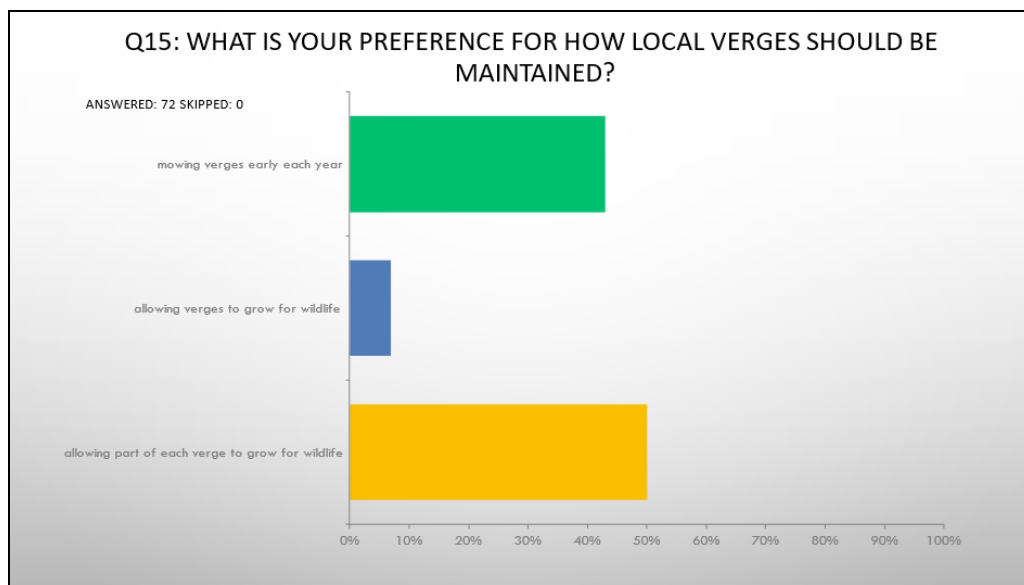
	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
road maintenance	1.39% 1	25.00% 18	73.61% 53	72	1
verge maintenance	11.27% 8	26.76% 19	61.97% 44	71	1
road and village signage	28.99% 20	53.62% 37	17.39% 12	69	1
visibility at junctions	12.68% 9	54.93% 39	32.39% 23	71	1
hedge maintenance	20.0% 14	52.86% 37	27.14% 19	70	1
white lining / road edge markings	6.94% 5	44.44% 32	48.61% 35	72	1
passing places	5.88% 4	48.53% 33	45.59% 31	68	1
road drainage	0% 0	15.49% 11	84.51% 60	71	1

Q14: FOOTPATHS, PAVEMENTS AND BRIDLEWAYS; WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON FOLLOWING?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



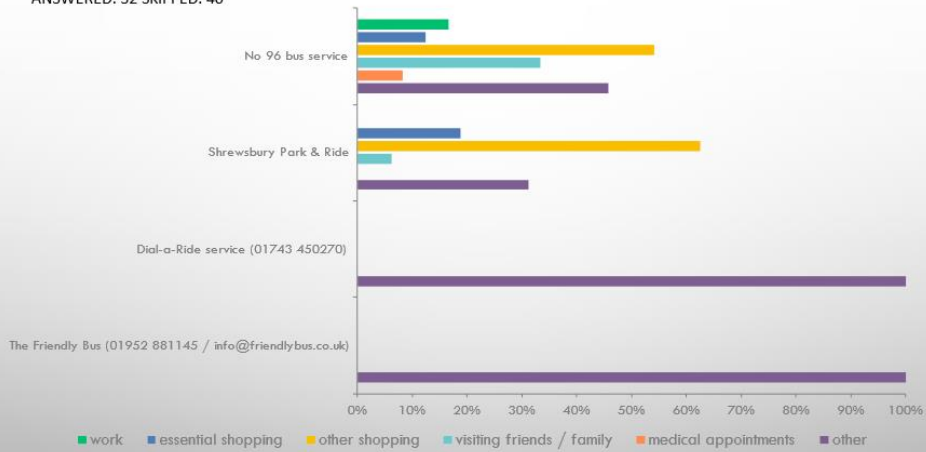
	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
provision of pavements	1.47% 1	35.29% 24	63.24% 43	68	1
signposting for public rights of way	2.90% 2	52.17% 36	44.93% 31	69	1
maintenance of public rights of way	2.94% 2	39.71% 27	57.35% 39	68	1
maintenance of stiles	1.56% 1	48.44% 31	50.0% 32	64	1
maintenance of hedges	18.84% 13	53.62% 37	27.54% 19	69	1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
mowing verges early each year	43.06%	31
allowing verges to grow for wildlife	6.94%	5
allowing part of each verge to grow for wildlife	50.0%	36
TOTAL		72

Q16: DO YOU USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES AND FOR WHAT REASON?

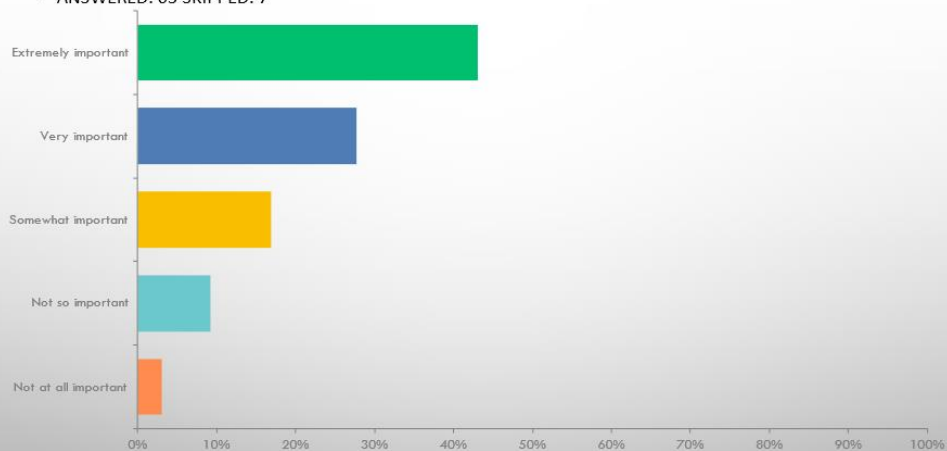
ANSWERED: 32 SKIPPED: 40



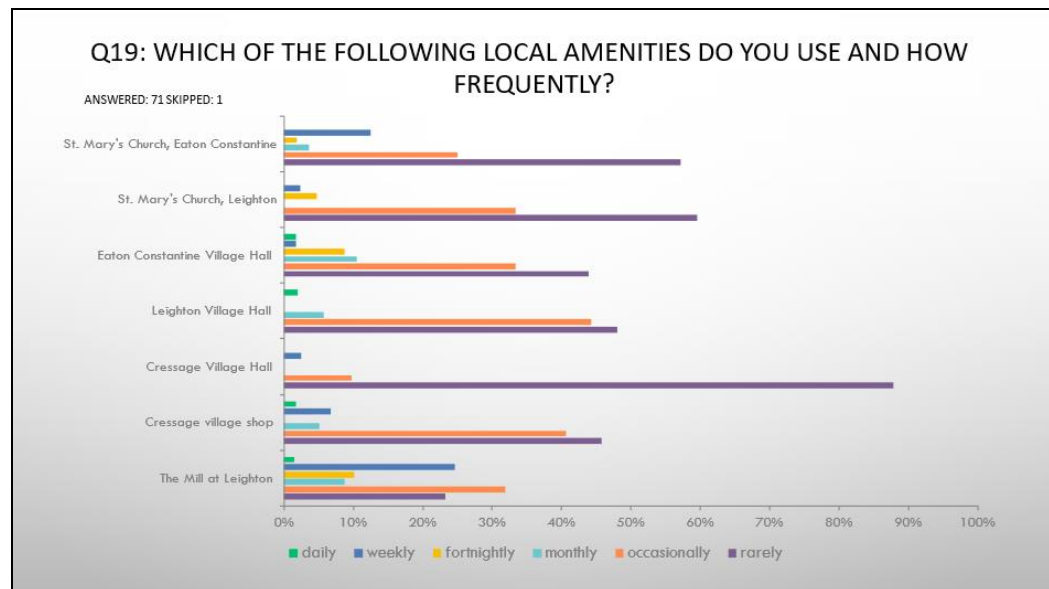
	WORK	ESSENTIAL SHOPPING	OTHER SHOPPING	VISITING FRIENDS / FAMILY	MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS	OTHER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
No 96 bus service	16.67% 4	12.50% 3	54.17% 13	33.33% 8	8.33% 2	45.83% 11	24	1
Shrewsbury Park & Ride	0% 0	18.75% 3	62.50% 10	6.25% 1	0% 0	31.25% 5	16	1
Dial-a-Ride service (01743 450270)	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	100% 1	1	1
The Friendly Bus (01952 881145 / info@friendlybus.co.uk)	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	100% 1	1	1

Q17: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU THAT THESE SERVICES ARE MAINTAINED?

ANSWERED: 65 SKIPPED: 7



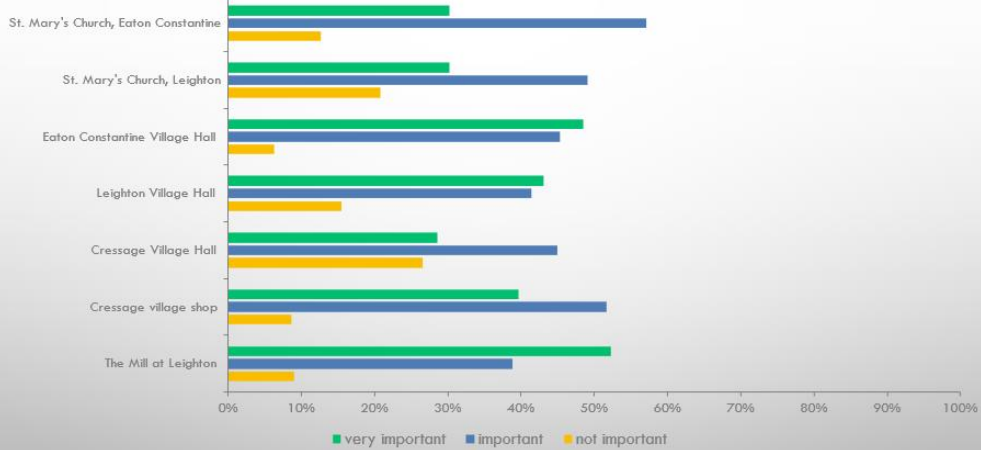
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely important	43.08%	28
Very important	27.69%	18
Somewhat important	16.92%	11
Not so important	9.23%	6
Not at all important	3.08%	2
TOTAL		65



	DAILY	WEEKLY	FORTNIGHTLY	MONTHLY	OCCASIONALLY	RARELY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
St. Mary's Church, Eaton Constantine	0% 0	12.50% 7	1.79% 1	3.57% 2	25.00% 14	57.14% 32	56	1
St. Mary's Church, Leighton	0% 0	2.38% 1	4.76% 2	0% 0	33.33% 14	59.52% 25	42	1
Eaton Constantine Village Hall	1.75% 1	1.75% 1	8.77% 5	10.53% 6	33.33% 19	43.86% 25	57	1
Leighton Village Hall	1.92% 1	0% 0	0% 0	5.77% 3	44.23% 23	48.08% 25	52	1
Cressage Village Hall	0% 0	2.44% 1	0% 0	0% 0	9.76% 4	87.80% 36	41	1
Cressage village shop	1.69% 1	6.78% 4	0% 0	5.08% 3	40.68% 24	45.76% 27	59	1
The Mill at Leighton	1.45% 1	24.64% 17	10.14% 7	8.70% 6	31.88% 22	23.19% 16	69	1

Q20: HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES?

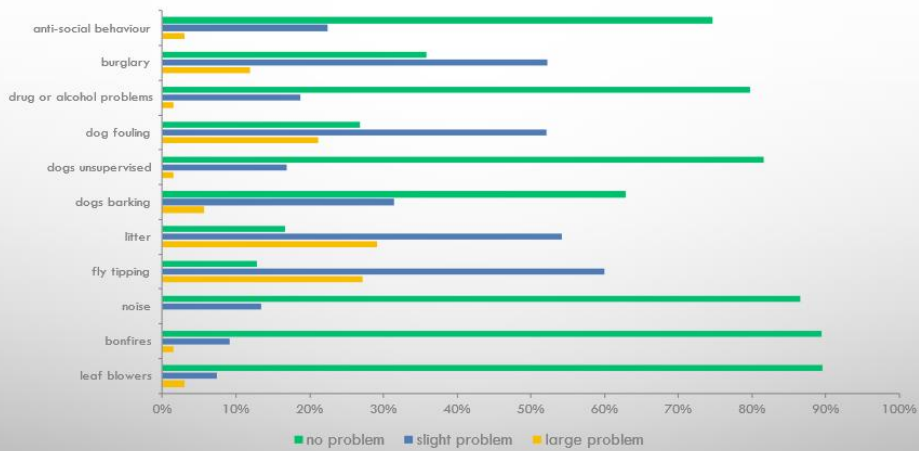
ANSWERED: 71 SKIPPED: 1



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
St. Mary's Church, Eaton Constantine	30.16% 19	57.14% 36	12.70% 8	63	1
St. Mary's Church, Leighton	30.19% 16	49.06% 26	20.75% 11	53	1
Eaton Constantine Village Hall	48.44% 31	45.31% 29	6.25% 4	64	1
Leighton Village Hall	43.10% 25	41.38% 24	15.52% 9	58	1
Cressage Village Hall	28.57% 14	44.90% 22	26.53% 13	49	1
Cressage village shop	39.66% 23	51.72% 30	8.62% 5	58	1
The Mill at Leighton	52.24% 35	38.81% 26	8.96% 6	67	1

Q28: ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IN THE AREA?

ANSWERED: 72 SKIPPED: 0



	NO PROBLEM	SLIGHT PROBLEM	LARGE PROBLEM	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
anti-social behaviour	74.63% 50	22.39% 15	2.99% 2	67	1
burglary	35.82% 24	52.24% 35	11.94% 8	67	1
drug or alcohol problems	79.69% 51	18.75% 12	1.56% 1	64	1
dog fouling	26.76% 19	52.11% 37	21.13% 15	71	1
dogs unsupervised	81.54% 53	16.92% 11	1.54% 1	65	1
dogs barking	62.86% 44	31.43% 22	5.71% 4	70	1
litter	16.67% 12	54.17% 39	29.17% 21	72	1
fly tipping	12.86% 9	60.0% 42	27.14% 19	70	1
noise	86.57% 58	13.43% 9	0% 0	67	1
bonfires	89.39% 59	9.09% 6	1.52% 1	66	1

7. Parish Matters

None notified.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: