

Coates Parish Council – Parish Plan Steering Group

Analysis of Parish Questionnaire Responses

September 2018

1. Analysis summary

Coates Parish Council have been considering whether to compile a Neighbourhood Development Plan since October 2016. Before embarking on this resource intensive activity, the Parish Council needed to understand parishioners' attitudes to development and how they wanted their parish to change over the coming decade. In conjunction with a community outreach event in April 2018, parishioners were asked to complete questionnaires on these subjects. 84 questionnaires were received. Coates has 187 households.

The almost universal view from respondents was that Coates is a happy and safe place to live which highly regards the services that do exist. Speeding, particularly along Trewsbury Road, and parking, particularly in Coates Lane and Quaker Row, were the most common complaints.

There is an appetite for more amenities such as a dedicated playing field and Rural Cinema type film nights and an enthusiasm for wild flowers to be planted at the approaches to the village. Above all, there was enthusiastic and passionate support for: a community shop selling a limited range of groceries; activities and transport solutions for teenagers and young people; and a cycle path to Cirencester.

There was a majority of people willing to volunteer in some way to assist with these refinements and to accept a small increase in council tax to pay for them.

There was an acknowledgement that younger people should be encouraged to move into the parish and to this end, affordable homes of which there should be less than 10 was the limit of development that would be acceptable.

The analysis shows that most respondents would only welcome small scale development and only if it provides affordable housing but that their interest in this is secondary to protecting the tranquility of the parish and adding a finite number of additional facilities.

We now know what about 30% of households in Coates think about development and what they would like Coates to be like in 2030. There was a clear majority in favour of compiling a Neighbourhood Development Plan and because the benefits and disadvantages are finely balanced it is now for the Parish Council to decide whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan would be the best way of delivering the aspirations of the parish.

In deciding this, it must be mindful that the majority of respondents like Coates the way it is but that they feel that it could be improved with a few more facilities.

2. Background

October 2016

The Chairman of Coates Parish Council attended a Cotswold District Council Planning Committee meeting to object on the Parish Council's behalf to the proposed construction of a house in a garden in the village. The Planning Committee voted in favour of the proposal and were unsympathetic to the view of the Parish Council. The Planning Committee felt that the Parish Council did not have a vision for how Coates should develop and recommended that it compiled a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The Chairman of the Parish Council put forward a proposal for compiling an NDP.

January 2017

Barbara Pond of Gloucestershire Rural Communities Council (GRCC) visited a Parish Council Meeting to talk about community led planning and the options for Coates.

September 2017

The Parish Council decided to compile a Village Plan with the possibility of this forming the basis for an NDP.

November 2017

The Parish Council agreed to form a steering group to consider a Village Plan.

December 2017

The Steering Group looked at the outcomes of the 2012 questionnaire, reviewed the advice on NDPs and Village Plans and discussed the reasons for conducting any such plan. It was agreed that an NDP was the only form of community led planning that would provide the Coates with any genuine planning control.

Before committing to any formal plan it was decided that the Parish Council needed to know what parishioners aspired Coates to look and be like in 10, 20,30 years time and in particular what their attitude to development was. This information would tell if a Village Plan, an NDP or 'do nothing' was the most appropriate course.

January 2018

The Parish Council agreed that an engagement event should be organized to coincide with the Annual Parish Meeting to gather this information. The steering group decided that the event would also be an opportunity to ask parishioners about their satisfaction with the Coates as a place to live and their opinions on specific matters that had cropped up at recent Parish Council meetings. Helen Richards from GRCC provided advice and read through the questionnaire and event text to ensure their accuracy and objectivity.

April 2018

A questionnaire was distributed to every household in the parish to give parishioners unable to attend the event an opportunity to have their views heard. An exhibition was put on in Coates Village Hall over 4 days that discussed matters corresponding to the questions in the questionnaire. There was a different version of the questionnaire available at the exhibition which asked specific questions about NDPs and visions for the future of Coates that the exhibition was able to inform. The event culminated with the Annual Parish Meeting and a talk by Barbara Pond of GRCC on the subject of NDPs. 84 questionnaires were received in total and 54 of these included the additional page covering NDPs. 46 members of the public attended the Annual Parish Meeting. The

event had 103 visitors from 64 households. To put this into context, the parish has 363 registered electors living in 187 households.

May 2018

The data from the questionnaires was then collated and summary statistical results were presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council. The steering group then began more detailed analysis of the comments and views expressed in the questionnaires. The analysis was divided into three main themes. 'Taking the Pulse of the Parish' considered questions about respondents' satisfaction and contentment with life in the parish and the services that were provided. 'Choices, Choices' looked at respondents' views on new services that could be provided and their willingness to volunteer or to contribute more council tax to cover the costs. 'Development in Coates' looked at attitudes to development in the parish and the compilation of an NDP.

3. Methodology

A spreadsheet was compiled containing all the questionnaire questions and the answers to yes / no questions were keyed into it. This provided instant statistical evidence that was presented to the AGM of the Parish Council in May. At the same time, answers to the questions *What do you most like about living in Coates?* and *What would you most like to change about living in Coates?* were keyed into the spreadsheet since these gave an immediate indication of subjects of concern and evidence of satisfaction that could be summarised and presented at the meeting. The answers to these questions are included in this report as appendix 1 and 2.

Following the meeting, each member of the Steering Group took one of the 3 analysis themes and created additional spreadsheets and documents to record answers to other open ended questions and produced summaries from them. These are included in this report as sections 4, 5 and 6. The Steering Group met finally in August 2018 to read through the summaries and to select the 10 matters felt most strongly by respondents that the Parish Council should consider addressing. These are listed in the conclusion of this report, section 7 below. The detailed spreadsheets and documents are available for consultation on request.

4. Taking the Pulse of the Parish

Questions associated with this theme were intended to find out how people feel about living in Coates: what they like and what they don't like.

Only 1 respondent indicated that they were not **happy with Coates as a place to live** so the overwhelming answer to this question was that those who responded are **happy with Coates as a place to live**.

There was a similar response to the question about **feeling safe living in Coates**, with only 1 negative response.

With regard to **what people like most about living in Coates** the commonest reasons were peace and quiet, the countryside and the friendliness of the community with quite a number of responses also citing the proximity to Cirencester.

In relation to what they **would most like to change about living in Coates** many things were raised; the most popular relating to improved parking and reducing speeding.

Only 2 responses indicated that **Coates does not have a friendly community**, although a greater number (16%) were of the view that **Coates does not have a thriving social life**. 7% of responses said that **Coates does not have a good support network**.

Only 1 response indicated that **Coates was not a safe environment for children** and only 6% did not think that the village had a **good communications network about events and activities**.

With regard to **loneliness**, only 11% of responses indicated that they had experienced it and of those who had a number indicated that it could be alleviated by more activities for teenagers.

Only 9% of those who responded had used the Mobile Library.

Only 22% of responses indicated **use of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme** with the vast majority of those who used it being satisfied with it. A much greater percentage of responses (72%) indicated **use of the Recycling Centre**, with the vast majority of those who had used it indicating satisfaction with it. Only 39% of responses showed use of the **grit bins** with the vast majority of users being satisfied with the bins.

With regard to the **Parish Council** 44% of responses indicate that it had been used with almost all of them being satisfied with it. A greater proportion of response (54%) had used the **Parish Council website** and again almost all of those who had used it were satisfied with it.

There were a number of questions about transport, roads, speeding etc. Only 14% of those who responded indicated that they have **problems travelling to and from Coates**, the main problems being the lack of a regular bus service and the absence of a cycle path to Cirencester.

30% of responses indicated that the **volume of traffic is a problem in Coates**, the vast majority of which cited Trewsbury Road as an area of concern in this regard. 17 % of responses saw the **volume of large vehicles to be a problem in Coates** with Trewsbury Road being the commonest place of concern.

A large majority of responses (66 %) said that they were **concerned about speeding** and again, Trewsbury Road was the main area of concern. About half (47%) of responses saw **road maintenance** as a problem in Coates with significant concerns about potholes and the state of Dark Lane.

Parking was the most common other **transport-related problem**.

Summary

- Coates seems to be alive and well with a strong and regular pulse.

- Almost all of those who responded are happy to live in Coates; feel safe living there and consider it to be a safe place for children with a good support network.
- Those who live in Coates greatly value its peace and quiet, location and the countryside.
- Loneliness does not appear to be a major problem.
- The Mobile Library appears to be rather under-used.
- Those who use the Parish Council and its website appear to be satisfied with the service.
- With regard to transport etc. the main issues appear to be speeding traffic in Trewsbury Road and parking.

5. Choices, Choices...

The questionnaire asked if certain suggested new services and facilities would appeal to respondents. Their attitude to volunteering and paying slightly more council tax was interrogated too, as well as their concerns about the environment of the parish.

Of respondents expressing a view:

89% thought Coates needs a cycle path to Cirencester

This received wide support with some respondents mentioning it elsewhere on the form and others ringing it enthusiastically with their pens. Many respondents unlikely to use the path appreciated its importance to the parish

88% thought that Coates needs a playing field for football and other activities

This idea received approval across all age groups: a third of people that said they thought that Coates needed one didn't have under 18s in their households

84% said that they would use Rural Cinema type film nights at the village hall

82% said that they would like wild flowers planted at the approaches to the village

80% said that they would use a community shop selling a limited range of groceries

This idea received approval across all groups but particularly from one and two person households. One respondent commented that a shop would help relieve loneliness, another described it as a 'great idea' and 'a village must to enable interaction', a third said 'I think a village shop would bring a heart to the village which is needed' Six people said that a lack of a shop was one of the things they most wanted to change about Coates.

62% said that they would you use a café in the Village Hall

50% said that they would like field gate type place name signs at the approaches to the village

35% said they would use a lift sharing scheme

33% said that they would use a community allotment?

24% said that they would use a community bus to take them shopping in Cirencester

15% said that they would use a school holiday club

13% said that they would use an after school club

12% said that they would use a garden share scheme

8% said that they would use meals on wheels service or a lunch club

3% said that they would use a parent and toddler club

83% said that they would be happy for a small increase in Council Tax to pay for new facilities and services that they would value

Of respondents that said where they wanted Council Tax to be spent, the following initiatives received more than one mention:

Shop 9

Rural Cinema type film nights 5

Better public transport 5

Children's activities 4

Youth club 4

Playing field 3

Café 3

Lift sharing 2

82% said that they would be happy for a small increase to pay for field gate type signs and / or wildflowers on the approaches to the village

56% said that they would be able to volunteer to assist with community facilities and services

Of respondents that said they could volunteer, the following ways that they could do so received more than one mention:

Shop 6

Rural Cinema type film nights 4

Village Club 3

Occasional village events 3

Youth club 2

Lift sharing 2

Litter picking 2

51% said that they would volunteer to maintain field gate type signs and / or wildflowers on the approaches to the village

Parishioners were asked what other services and facilities Coates needed

The answers that received a mention by more than 1 respondent were:

Better public transport 8
Shop 8
Cycle path 4
Playing field 4
Youth club 4
Playing field 4
Outdoor fitness equipment 2

72% of respondents felt that facilities in Coates were inadequate for certain groups

Of those commenting on which groups they thought were most poorly served, the following received more than one mention:

Teenagers 26
Youth 10
Young people 6
Non-drivers 6
Older people 4
Young children 3
Disabled 3

53% had concerns about the environment in the parish?

The answers that received a mention by more than 1 respondent were:

Dog fouling 5
Litter 4
Parking 4
Grass cutting and public area maintenance 4
Fear of loss of tranquility 3
Verges 3
Speeding 3
Poor pavements 2
Appearance of sewage works 2

6. Development in Coates

An NDP is a pro-development document and before considering compiling one, it is necessary to discover if Coates favours more development or not. There were two sets of questions on the questionnaire: one about development and the other about NDPs.

Of respondents expressing a view:

- 68% favoured development option 2 (limited development and more facilities)
- 68% favoured preparation of NDP and 66% happy to fund through small increase in precept
- 74% favoured small development
- 19% favoured no development at all and 7% favoured more extensive development
- 80% favoured provision of affordable housing to buy or rent
- 60% favoured owner occupied housing
- 24% favoured small business units
- no favoured position on sheltered or rented housing. Concern that sheltered housing is not appropriate because village facilities and amenities are inadequate

- there is no clear cut distinction between age groups but generally age group 41-65 preferred single house (in-fill) or no development, though this age group favoured development option 2
- older age groups favoured small scale development

Comments relating to development options: (no of respondents - 3 or more)

- want to keep village life. Need more young people with families/mix of housing would welcome mix of ages which is hugely important to village life/to keep village alive (6)
- small development in right place & right type of houses. No more high cost housing (5)
- prefer no development but in reality will have some and want to have a say in how the village develops (5)
- limit to small development (3)
- due to Chesterton development do not need large development in Coates (3)
- possibly utilise old Rural Skills / Bledisloe outbuildings for business / craft units to help preserve them (3)
- 17 other comments (1 or 2 respondents for each)

Comments relating to vision of 'Coates in 10 years time': (no of respondents - 3 or more)

- safe, quiet and friendly (8)
- stay as it is now (8)
- small development of sympathetic/attractive houses (8)
- safe cycle/pedestrian route into Cirencester (8)
- same as now, just a younger element (8)
- attractive, thriving village & safe environment with a good sense of community (5)
- smart village hall with good amenities (4)
- more village amenities (4)
- as now but with small improvements (4)
- a few affordable houses to buy/rent (4)
- better public transport/bus service to town (3)
- 26 other comments (1 or 2 respondents each)

Overall Conclusion

- Vision for Coates as an attractive, thriving and safe village with a good sense of community. Coates becomes a village that our children would like to live in as adults
- Keep Coates as a safe, quiet and friendly rural village
- Encourage younger families to want, and be able to afford, to live here
- Improve facilities and amenities for children, sports & recreation and village hall
- Improve public transport links
- Establish safe cycle route to Cirencester (and Kemble)
- Avoid Coates becoming a suburb of Cirencester
- Avoid more development of large, expensive houses

Should a NDP be prepared?

- there is a clear majority in favour of preparing a NDP
- there is a consensus for improving amenities/facilities and encouraging younger families
- there is also a strong view to retain the village feel to Coates with at most a small development

- there is recognition that a NDP may help influence how Coates can achieve the suggested improvements
- there is also a recognition amongst respondents who favour no/minimal change that a NDP may be a good way to protect what is valued in the village, and for residents to have a say in this

7. Conclusion

The questionnaire analysis reveals that respondents were happy with Coates as a place. They felt safe in the parish and were generally satisfied with the facilities and services that are currently provided. Few people want Coates to change much over the coming decade. Any development should be limited to a small development of mostly affordable housing if it is to receive approval from all but a few respondents.

Respondents want Coates in 10 years' time to be little changed but that it is a lively, thriving village that appeals to younger people.

Respondents felt most passionately about aspects that affected them personally and these aspects were diverse. The Parish Council must not forget these issues since they create considerable problems for those that they impact.

There were however a number of things that the majority of respondents were enthusiastic about:

- A community shop
- Activities and transport for teenagers
- A cycle path to Cirencester
- Rural Cinema type film nights
- Wild flowers planted at the approaches to the village
- A playing field
- Addressing speeding and parking problems
- Improved road and pavement maintenance
- Preserving the tranquility and safety of the parish and its countryside
- Improved public transport

The Parish Council must now consider if a Neighbourhood Development Plan is the best way to meet these aspirations.

Appendix 1

Answers given to the question: What do you most like about living in Coates?

In the countryside, tranquil, safe
Quiet and Safe
Quiet and Village Life
Sense of community
Community spirit
Quiet
It's a friendly village; location
Safe environment, open spaces, nice walks
Friendly people and quiet
Sense of community, close proximity to Cirencester
Space, friendly community, facilities nearby
The community
Beautiful landscape, views and peace
Community, nearness to Cirencester
Quiet countryside, village life
Quiet but active village
Rural setting, quiet peaceful setting
Countryside close to Cirencester
Community spirit & friendship
Good neighbours
Thriving social village
Peace & quiet, friendly
Outside space
Peace & quiet, countryside
Friendly community
Village environment
Quiet, accessible to Cirencester
Rural situation, convenient & good travel
Peace and quiet
Village Club, Events, friends
Quiet, beautiful countryside so near
Village life & events
Sense of being in the country, sense of community, proximity to Cirencester
Quiet, friendly, beautiful
Relaxed open village streets, Watershed magazine
Close to Cirencester and countryside
People. Current size. Quiet
Small, quiet, friendly
Rural, quiet, peaceful
Countryside around the village
The privacy
The people are friendly
Peaceful setting
Beautiful countryside, close to Cirencester
Peace and Tranquility
Quiet
The position to Cirencester/Kemble but living in a village

The people who live here are friendly and interesting
Quiet country life
Small village but close to town
Environment
Rural Aspect
Access to the countryside but close to Kemble/Cirencester
Proximity to Cirencester/Cheltenham etc.
Community
Friendship
Peacefulness
Living in a friendly village in the countryside
Pleasant village, friendly residents
Quiet, safe, nice people

Appendix 2

Answers given to the question: What would you most like to change about living in Coates?

Eliminate Dangerous Parking
Cycle Paths
More affordable houses for younger people
Bigger and better playground
Speeding cars, Trewsbury 30mph, Coates Lane 20 mph
A village hub, cycle path for Cirencester
The division/disharmony between village groups
Aspects of parking
Street lighting
The space outside the playground
Cycle track to Cirencester
Cycle lane to Cirencester
Open village shop
Shared pub/shop/post office
More people
Not much - reduce speeding, safer for bikes and horses
Village Hall, sports club, cycle paths
A shop !! / Cycle path to Cirencester
Slightly bigger population
More housing/more people
Speeding
Nothing significant
Speeding on roads around village
Having a local shop/store
Engage more residents in village life
Village shop
Car Parking facilities
Sewage entry point - disgusting needs beautifying
More recreation space
Better Parking
Put speed bumps on Trewsbury Road
Enforcement of speed limit
Designated Village Green central
Recreation area for teens
Better parking arrangements and street lighting
Speed of traffic
Connection
Communication
Community bus services (disabled friendly)
Village shop, regular bus service
Hide sewage area

Appendix 3

Demographic Analysis of 84 completed questionnaires

Number of people in household

people	count	%	
1	16	19.0%	
2	33	39.3%	
3	10	11.9%	<i>eg 10 households have 3 occupants</i>
4	9	10.7%	
5	8	9.5%	
6	1	1.2%	
no answer	7	8.3%	
	84	100.0%	

Number of households with age group combinations

	only	<18	18 - 40	41 - 65	66 - 80	80+	total
<18	0						0
18 - 40	2	1					3
41 - 65	18	15	8				41
66 - 80	20	0	0	4			24
80+	3	0	0	0	2		5
					<18, 18-40 & 41-65		4
					18-40, 41-65 & 80+		1
					no answer		6
					total		84

*eg 18 households have occupants aged 41 - 65 only
eg 4 households have occupants aged 41 - 65 and 18 -40*

no of households where age group is present:

age group	count	%	
<18	20	16.9%	
18 - 40	16	13.6%	
41 - 65	50	42.4%	
66 - 80	26	22.0%	
80+	6	5.1%	
	118	100.0%	<i>nb more than 84 because several households have multiple age groups</i>

eg 16.9% households have at least one resident less than 18 years

Number of years household living in Coates

year	count	%
<1	0	0.0%
1 - 5	18	21.4%
5 - 20	31	36.9%
20+	25	29.8%
no answer	10	11.9%
	84	100.0%