

The Swanmore Village Plan



Introduction

The idea of a Village Plan was first promoted in Swanmore by our Parish Council, and sponsored by Winchester City Council who have continued to support us practically and financially throughout. Nevertheless, it is the village residents, acting independently of the Parish Council, who have compiled this Village Plan. The Village Plan has originated from the ideas, views and comments gleaned from various surveys and doesn't represent the thoughts of any one person or group within the village. It is likely that not all of the issues will meet with everyone's approval and it should be noted that there is a substantial lobby for no change.

The Village Plan will be used during the planning authority processes, through what is called 'Supplementary Planning Guidance', enabling local views to influence the broader planning decisions. However, one misconception is that such plans are only about building things in whatever guise. Not so, the idea of a village plan is to establish what facilities and community projects people would like to see provided for the young through to the elderly, facilities which might include leisure, cultural, transportation, shopping, financial services, etc., the list is almost endless.

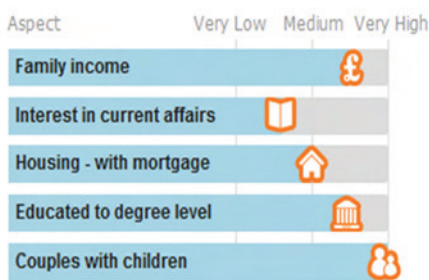
This document gives a brief summary of the results of the survey and outlines what the Village Plan Steering Group will do next. It is not intended that all of the action/project points are implemented overnight, as priorities, conditions, legislation, views and needs will change and any plan needs to accommodate such changes.

The Swanmore Village Plan has been developed by the people of Swanmore for the people of Swanmore.



A feel for Swanmore...

The Parish of Swanmore is situated in the southern part of Hampshire equidistant from Winchester, Portsmouth and Southampton. It has a population of around 3100 living in 1168 dwellings.



A brief profile of the Parish reveals that there is a slightly older population than the county average in the village. Swanmore is a relatively prosperous place, census figures indicate that compared with other places, Swanmore's residents have more cars and detached houses and that on average they have more rooms per household. Swanmore has, on the whole, more residents who are well qualified professional people or managers and more

Swanmore people are self-employed than average.

On the other hand, Swanmore differs from other places in having fewer people who are in their 20's. It has less rented housing; fewer people live alone and comparatively fewer than average workers living in the village use public transport to get to work.



Services and facilities in the village are good with 3 shops, 4 pubs, a primary and a secondary school (a third of its places are filled by Swanmore pupils), 2 nursery schools and at least 34 community groups.

Community facilities include 2 churches, 4 community halls, 2 recreation grounds and a nature conservation areas. However, Swanmore has no primary health care or chemist and relies on those and other day-to-day services from the nearby towns of Bishops Waltham and Wickham.

Producing the Questionnaire & Analysing the Data

The Swanmore Village Plan was launched at a public meeting held in the Swanmore Village Hall on the 14th May 2009 when volunteers were recruited to form a Steering Committee. At that meeting, the opinions of the residents were sought through 'Like it', 'Loathe it' and 'Change it' choice boards, these same questions were asked at the Swanmore summer fetes held in 2009 & 2010. The Steering Committee also consulted businesses, clubs and societies to identify their views, both present and future, that are of greatest concern to them. A pilot questionnaire was produced based on all these observations; this was distributed to selected volunteers in May 2010 for review. The outcome of the pilot questionnaire helped produce the final questionnaire which followed up local concerns such as the importance of retaining Swanmore's rural character, reducing traffic problems and what development would be appropriate; this was delivered to all the dwellings in the Parish in September 2010.



We had a fantastic response to the questionnaire with 53% of the Parish responding. An interesting point to note about the responses is that 81% of the Village Plan questionnaires were completed by someone 45+ even though only half of Swanmore's residents are aged over 45

The pupils of Swanmore Technical College took an enthusiastic part in surveying 11-16 year olds with their own survey (based on the full questionnaire) but biased towards the concerns of young people. This response to the survey was excellent with 331 young people being able to have their say, of which 91 lived in Swanmore. Surprisingly, the results of the young people's survey revealed that they have similar views on housing development as their parents even though they will become the next first time buyers.

There were three main issues that came from this survey:

- **Transport** – to Fareham & Botley station on a regular basis at the weekends.
- **Street lighting** – mainly in Springvale and the walkway through from the Village Hall.
- **Lack of facilities for young people** – e.g. a meeting place without organised activities for the 14 – 18 age group.

The Village Plan Steering Group will support these issues in the future as part of our future activities.

All the data from all the work that has been done to date has been compiled and analysed. The data amassed would have created a final report hundreds of pages long so we have decided to report in two ways; a double page summary of the main conclusions and practicable actions published in the Swanmore Magazine in June 2011 and this report, giving a more in-depth analysis of the views of villagers. All of the data and reports will also be available from the Swanmore Village Plan website for access by interested parties and as an archive for the future. <http://www.swanmorevillageplan.org.uk/index.php>

Questionnaire Results – Opening Questions

The questionnaire asked residents to state the reason for living in Swanmore, the results are as follows:

Rural character	55.3%
Geographic location	39.4%
Job	25.3%
Schools	18.7%
Low level of crime	12.7%
Other	16.6%
Born here	9.3%

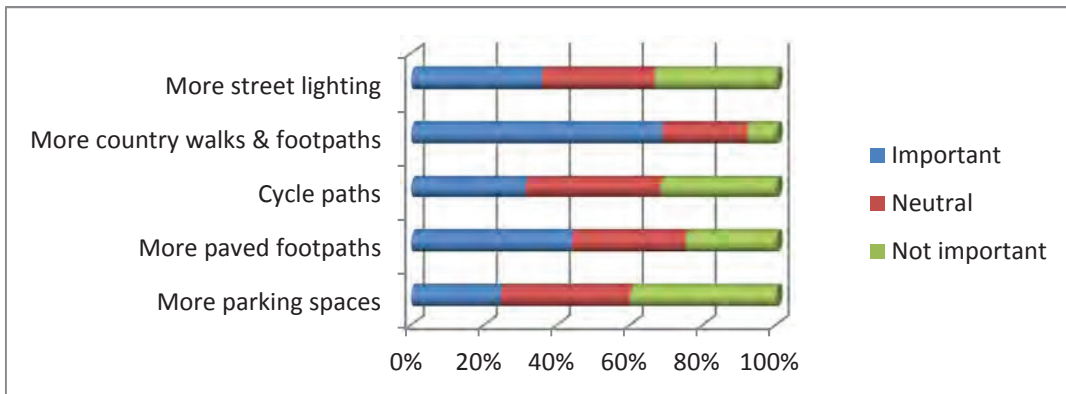
Although 'other' only made up 16.6% of the response the breakdown of these results reveal the important role that the village's housing stock plays in supporting family and community ties alongside the village's attractive environment and the range of amenities and local services it offers.



The questionnaire also asked people why they might move away, here are those results:

Other	35.8%
Age	27.1%
Less rural character	25.9%
Job	18.2%
Higher level of crime	10.4%
High cost of housing	8.7%
School	2.1%

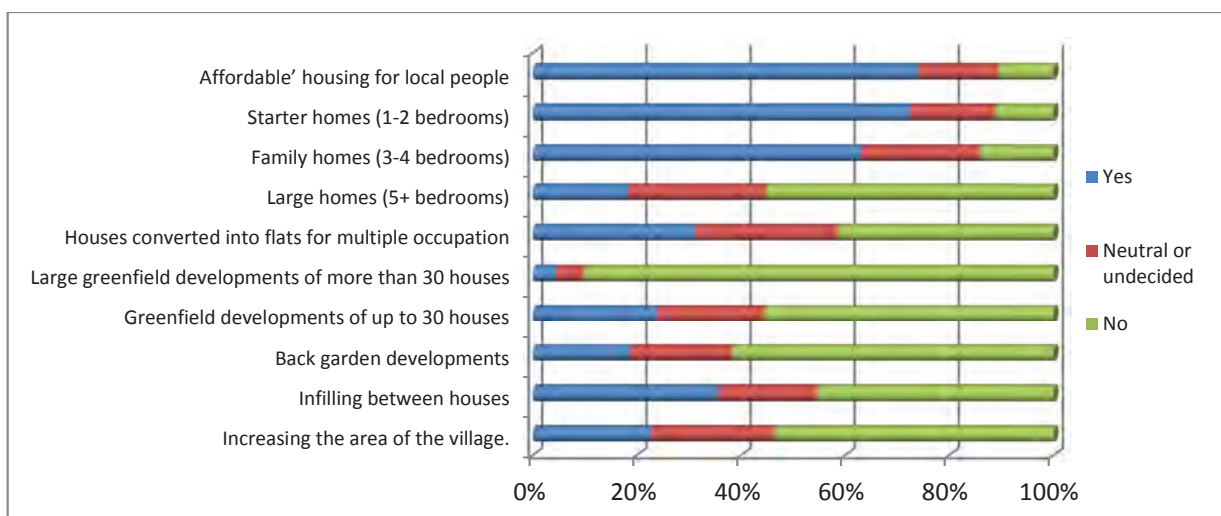
Here, 'other' came out as the top answer with a large number of the 'other' responses saying that the person emphatically did not want to move away and 15 even saying that death would be the only reason they would leave! Other reasons for moving echo those given elsewhere in the survey such as family reasons, the impact of development, lack of suitable housing and access to services. Another question in the survey revealed that 99% of residents said that Swanmore's rural nature was important to them; here is a breakdown of the other responses to the question about the village's character;



Facilities and Development in Swanmore

Since asking the question below the new government has put a plan in place to remove the Local Development Framework from legislation. They believe that the decision to develop an area should be made by the people that live in that area. Although the questionnaire did not ask where the residents of Swanmore think development should take place, it did ask about what types of areas should be developed and what types of houses should be built there, which can be used to help make future development decisions. The question we asked with the corresponding results are shown below, the neutral or undecided results have been included as they illustrate feelings as much as yes/no answers.

What Types of Development should be considered in Swanmore?



As you can see from the results, large Greenfield developments of more than 30 houses got a thumbs down with a huge 90.2% of residents against, developments up to this level fared little better with a 55.6% rejection.

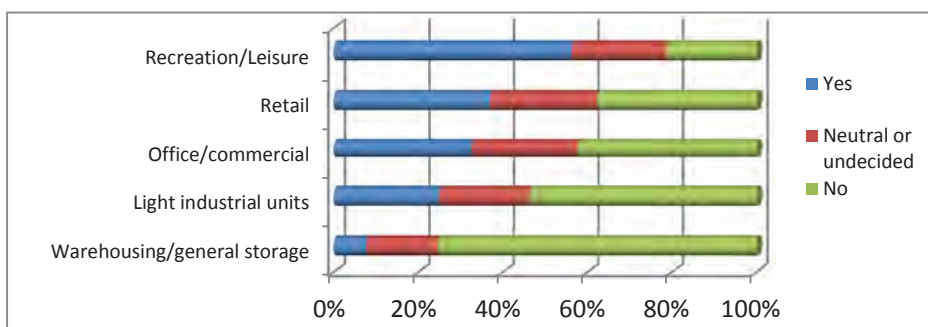
It was also clear that even the smaller development projects in back gardens and infilling between houses did not meet with the approval of residents with 61.8% and 45.6% respectively giving a negative answer.

Larger homes with five or more bedrooms were not seen as an acceptable alternative either with a 55.4% rebuff. With almost the same being felt about houses converted into flats with 41.7% respondents against.

As you can see there is a real desire for affordable housing for local people with a 73.9% approval rating. Starter homes of 1-2 bedrooms and family homes of 3-4 bedrooms were seen in a similar light with 72.4% and 62.9% respectively wanting these size homes for the village, although there were a few written comments clarifying that the yes was for a maximum of 3 bed houses as 4 would be too big.

The final area for debate was whether existing housing density should be maintained by increasing the area of the village, 53.7% did not wish to see an enlargement of the village to meet any additional housing needs for the village.

The second part of the question asked residents to decide what sort of non-residential development should be considered; the results speak for themselves;



When it came to planning applications, respondents clearly felt that they should be more widely publicised in public areas around the village. The Swanmore Magazine and Village Notice Board are the most popular suggestions (47%). Saying that, some responses did say that planning applications are easy to access if you have a PC and know where to look. However, the apparent lack of visibility of planning applications has led to dissatisfaction about some developments and the Parish Council have come in for some criticism (26%) in this respect.

Facilities in Swanmore

The 10 amenities in Swanmore were rated in the following order of importance;



1. Village shop
2. Post Office
3. Schools
4. Outdoor recreation areas
5. Meeting rooms and halls
6. Pubs and Churches received the same vote
7. Butchers
8. Hairdressers
9. Printers

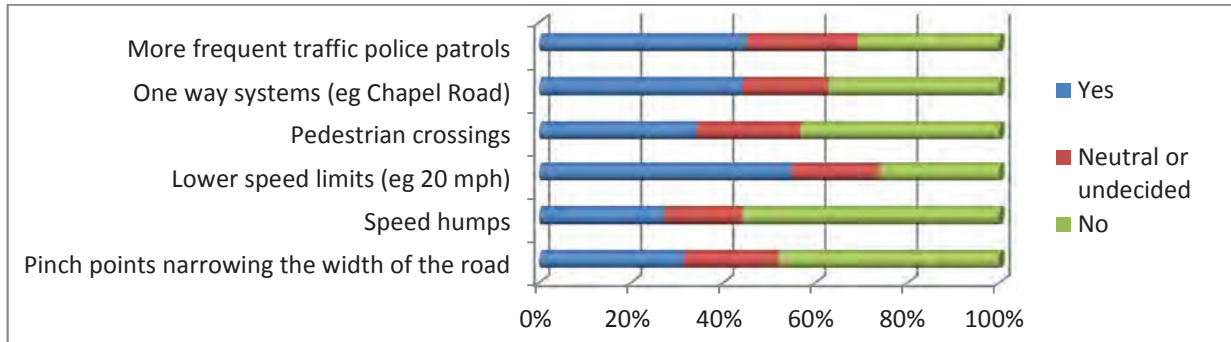
From the collated comments on village facilities, a requirement for Swanmore to have its own 'health related' services accounted for 45% of 114 responses. The next highest group of responses were for a greater number of rural retail outlets with the highest vote being for a coffee shop.

Much comment is made of the fact that Swanmore enjoys its rural character and that status quo should be maintained. Although some (15%) like the idea of an independent Swanmore many (65%) suggest that in order to maintain its village appeal it needs to be dependent upon small market towns like Bishop's Waltham and Wickham, otherwise the village could get busier which could lead to an increase in traffic related issues.

Highways & Pavements

Speeding

Speeding, discourteous driving and parking are some of the major concerns of villagers. When asked what measures should be used to improve the standard of driving around the village the following results were obtained:



There is a clear desire to reduce traffic speeds but there is no consensus on how to enforce it. Comments show that exceeding the speed limit takes place at relatively quiet times; nevertheless the frustration triggered by gridlock conditions caused by selfish parking is seen as causing danger, as drivers become impatient and accelerate past parked cars after being held up.

Parking

The questionnaire results confirm that parking is the other major problem suffered by residents. Both schools create local traffic congestion at start & finish times.

Inappropriate and selfish parking by Primary School parents parking in Church Road, Dodds Lane, Chapel Road, and Vicarage Lane cause havoc with heavy lorry traffic, buses and commuter traffic and bad tempered incidents are common. Informal observation is that the new car park at the top of Brickmakers Hill is full at peak times so cannot alleviate this problem.

The Secondary School commute causes the problem in New Road on weekdays and the Football club on Saturdays. Although the acute problem is parents dropping pupils off, there is a substantial number of cars parked all day on New Road even after the recent extra vehicle provision within the school. Problems around the New Road/Chapel Road Junction are caused by residents and shoppers parking and are not limited to school times.

Excluding heavy traffic from the village and a one-way system in Chapel Road find some favour, others point out that it risks creating a 'race track'. Pinch points to slow traffic would prevent agricultural vehicles passing, some of which have no alternative route.



Getting Around the Village and Beyond

How do you normally get to the village centre?

Foot	81.7%
Motor vehicle	43.0%
Bicycle	13.6%
Motability transport	2.0%

As a high proportion of people travel on foot to the centre of the village, any improvements that could be made to ease access would be welcomed, here are the four most popular answers to the choice of nine given;

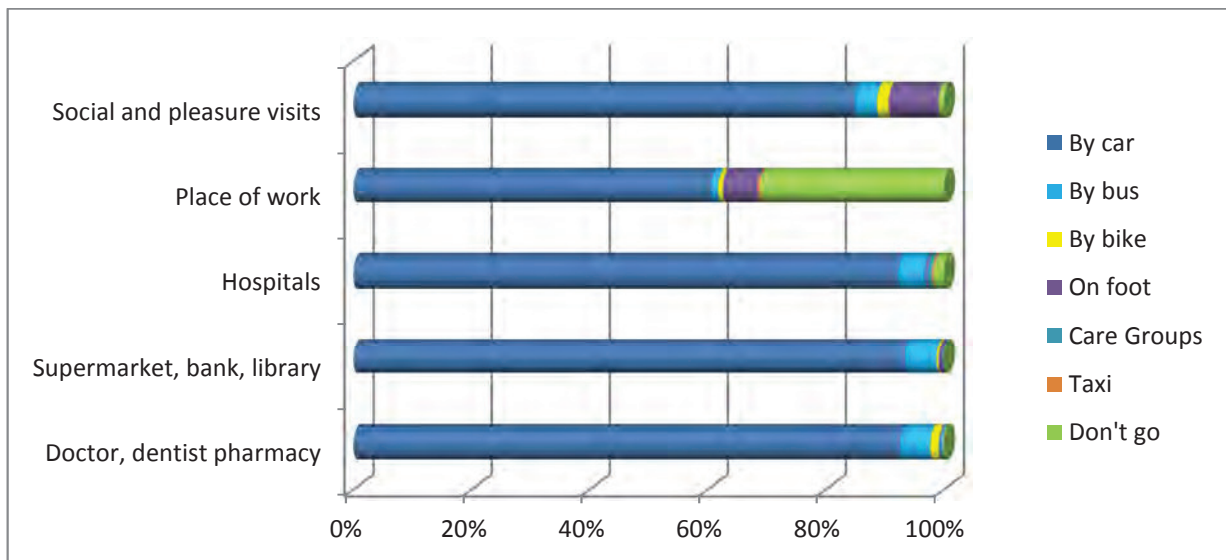
Better control of vegetation alongside pavements or roads	68%
A pavement or footway where there isn't one	62%
Better or wider pavement surface	57%
Enforcement of the law which bans parking on pavements	57%



Many residents commented, not surprisingly, that the problems are worse in the dark due to lack of street lighting. However, better street lighting within the village was voted as the fifth most important improvement with only 35%.

Dodds Lane and Forest Road were identified as two of the most dangerous areas for people on foot due to lack of pavement and the narrow pavement in Forest Road between New Road and the Waltham Chase traffic lights are also reported as danger spots, especially to children walking to and from school. Medium and heavy traffic uses these roads and this traffic comes very close to people on the pavement or road edge because of limited width when two vehicles pass.

The survey also asked residents what mode of transport they use to get to places outside the village; unsurprisingly the car came out top.



One point to note is the number of people who responded 'Don't Go' to the 'place of work' section, this is an example of the skew in figures caused by the high proportion of responses from the older residents of the village.

Community Wellbeing

Feeling Safe & Anti-Social Behaviour

Four out of five residents responded to these two questions, 86% said they felt safe walking around Swanmore but 40% of the responses said that anti-social behaviour affects them.

As for anti-social behaviour, two issues were prominent with about the same weighting. The highest response concerned litter and rubbish thrown from cars on the main roads or by loitering youths, especially at school leaving times, at New Road, 'Masons' and other areas where youths gather.

The second largest response was about feeling intimidated by groups of youths, who often used foul language and were aggressive, noisy and often drinking. Most frequently mentioned places were: New Road, the Rec ground, village hall, Spring Vale, the Lakes, centre of village (shops & bus stops), cricket pavilion, swings and the skate-park. Basically, anywhere young people gathered in groups made adults feel intimidated.

The remaining issues were vandalism and graffiti, noise from neighbours in the evenings and late at night, particularly around the pubs or routes going to and from the pub. Speeding on Forest Rd, Hill Pound/Gravel Hill; Spring Lane, New Road and Lower Chase Road and finally poor lighting and/or dark footpaths, particularly mentioned were; Hollythorns to Crofton Way, Swanmore Road, Spring Vale and the Rec, Vicarage Lane and Dodds Lane, Mislingford Rd, the top of Spring Vale, New Road and the car park opposite Paterson Centre.



Does litter in Swanmore affect your sense of pride in the village?

Again this question has four out of five residents responding and 88% of people say 'yes' or 'sometimes' litter affects their sense of pride, to help fix the problem the highest suggested solution was to educate people – run litter education programmes for young people, car drivers and parents. Some felt that both schools should run educational programmes. The next favoured suggestion was some sort of enforcement, fine and/or shaming people in the Swanmore Magazine and some people even wanted more police involvement.

How would you encourage more youngsters to get involved in helping the community?

The largest number of responses (63%) suggested the schools should have community programmes to encourage the young people to get involved. These should range from talks with guest speakers, reward schemes, community projects and school-run events, making community service part of the curriculum and establishing school litter picking teams. The next suggestion was greater guidance & inspiration from adults (not just parents).

How would you encourage more adults to get involved in the community?

Here 47% of the 171 comments centred on advertising and publicising what is needed and what has been done, in the Swanmore Magazine, on the village board, door-to-door, newsletter and web site. Second largest response rate with 12% wanted to involve adults through children and schools and more activities and community events organised. The questionnaire also revealed that the village does not have an efficient way of circulating information to its residents in a way that everybody can or wants to use.

Street Furniture

To the question 'If money were available for improvements to the appearance of Swanmore, which of the following would be the most important to you?' the following results were achieved in order of popularity:

1. Large map in centre of Swanmore with village history and rights of way etc.
2. More traditional finger post signs at road junctions
3. Better quality or enhanced road signs indicating entry to the village
4. 'Swanmore in bloom' flower display in the centre
5. Colourful flower displays below and around Swanmore signs into the village
6. Lamp-posts of distinctive village character
7. Village emblem in the centre of the village
8. Other – please specify below

The most popular answer in the 'Other' box (equating to a third of the responses) was that none of the above were needed, with a few linking this to the cost of council tax bills. However, people's concern about the appearance of the village figured highly, specifically around the centre, Church, Primary School and Village Hall with a degree of criticism on the work undertaken by the Highways Department with regards to the raised road and speed bumps. It was perceived that the centre could be made more attractive.



What happens next?

The Village Plan Steering Group will work with the relevant parties to implement and control changes to the village.

- We will work with the Parish Council (PC), Hampshire Highways and other Agencies to address the issues concerning pavements and roads.
- We will work with the PC and other Agencies to control speeding, parking and improve street lighting in the worst areas throughout the village.
- We will ensure that the Village Design Statement and the Village Plan are used as 'Supplemental Guidance' throughout the planning process.
- We will work with the young people to ensure their issues are dealt with.
- We will try and improve the way we disseminate pertinent village information.
- We will strive to ensure that the rural feel of the village is maintained throughout the inevitable changes ahead.
- We will encourage community involvement in activities around the village.

The Village Plan Steering Group would like to acknowledge and thank everybody who has contributed their time, money and pictures etc.

Swanmore Parish Boundary

