

BIRLINGHAM

QUALITATIVE SURVEY

1. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative survey was developed by the Residents Views Working Group with three aims:

- To further explain VDS and involve the wider community – belief that this would filter to others through community contact
- To ensure that working groups had represented all issues and shown these at Open Day. This proved very successful in aiding the development of materials.
- To truly represent the village voice in the nature of the report and the guidelines that were recommended.

Once agreed with the wider team 4 team members door knocked a broad cross section of the community by age group, longevity of residence, area lived in, family style, residential and business, and asked to conduct an interview. 42 villagers completed these, each taking about 40 minutes. Results were compiled by the team in a series of meetings breaking down responses into categories and support or concern.

These were fed back into the other working groups and to the Parish Council where matters could be addressed to facilitate village life but not necessarily relevant to the VDS.

2. RESIDENTS QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Q1. What characteristics made Birlingham different from other villages and how important are they?

Off the main road, no through traffic, destination village, peace and quiet, little road noise or pollution	23
Community Spirit & Friendly	10
Rural, no street lighting or kerbs	8
Working pub	5
Separation between properties	4
Church at heart	4
Good walks	3
Highly individual	3
Not densely populated	2
Cricket Ground	2
Village Hall	2
Atmosphere	1
Numerous Listed buildings (seen as a misunderstanding as there are not many but recorded as given)	1

Q2. What would improve the village for you

Now? Over the next 10 years?

Repairs to Roads	13
Accessibility – buses, footpaths & cycle tracks to towns	11
Speed Management, HGVs	7
Hedgerow & Verge Maintenance	6
Track Maintenance	4
Better signage	3
Shop	3
Amenities for children	3
Small starter homes	3
Faster internet	2
Securing village assets long term	1
Bench on 3 K walk	1
Dog fouling bins	1

Q3. Is there anything about the village that you find a problem or irritation?

Traffic, Speeding, lack of due care and attention for elderly & children*	19
Hedgerow & Wall Fence Maintenance declining	6
No public transport	3
Dog fouling – Withy Walk/roads & footpaths	3
Inappropriate lighting of garden fires	1
Music in fields in early mornings	1
Fear of increased traffic, farm recently expanded again	1
Upsizing of houses	
Inconsiderate Parking (in heart of village)	1
Litter	1
New metals kissing gates – loud and inaccessible	1
Solar Panels	1
Lack of volunteers	1

***Breakdown of above:**

HGV	18	Difficulty for walkers & cyclists
Speeding	6	20MPH suggestions
No safe footpaths	1	

Q4. What would improve the village's connection with local amenities for example to those in nearby towns and villages?

Buses	22
Cycle Path	9
Community sharing – lifts, prescription collection, forum for comments on services & trades, church affiliation with other churches (denominations and locales)	7
Looking at road entry and exit points further afield (walking on A4104 difficult due to hedges, blocks at Three Springs Road/Worcester Road & at Eckington Bridge with flooding)	4
Improved taxi service	3

Q5. If you could change anything in the village what would it be?

Reduce speed limit to 20 PMH	5
Introduce a playing area for children	2
Reducing size of lorries admitted to village	2
Move Red Star to main road	2
More cultural activities (concerts & films)	2
Introduce a shop for basics somehow	2
Need do fouling bins	2
Better access to river	2
Limiting speed on approach to village	1
Cutting of grass verges at top of village for safety	1
Removing mud on roads	1
Better signage for lorries	1
Bring bus into village twice a week (<i>note this comment prior to new service</i>)	1
More one off houses in selected sites	1
Rural affordable housing	1
Do not introduce street lights	1
Do not build on flood plain	1
Look at bend at lower end, recent hedges creating a safety issue	1
Need for communal open space	1

Cooperation between church and village hall	1
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Q6. What is it about Birlingham that you think is important to preserve?

Key areas of village hall, church, cricket ground, pub	13
Community spirit	9
Housing - not large scale, not infilled, little sub hamlets, not a commuter village	7
Openness in spaces and vistas	6
Rural English village; archetypal, hamlet, agricultural	6
Quiet, but “not slipping into a coma”	6

Q7. a. What attributes of *landscape* are important?

Horizon and vistas, view of Bredon Hill	17
Significant and large scale trees, tree avenues	8
Stone Walls	2
Walk around water meadow, to, and from the river/lock	5
Village green	1
Gwen Finch Reserve	2
John Bennett wetland	1
Nafford Lock	1
Jubilee Wood	1
Cricket Ground	1

Q7. b. What *current landmarks* are important?

Church	Old school house	Serpentine Walls
Village Hall	Cricket Ground	Weir
Public house	War Memorial	Village Pump Site
The Row	Graveyard	Village Green

Q7. c. What attributes of *the current architecture and housing* are important?

Individuality, diversity and variety	9
New building not to overwhelm the old	3
Large gardens and space surrounding houses	2

Q8. The VDS will be looking to cover a number of aspects we have not discussed so could I ask you to comment in any way you see fit on :

Public footpaths:

Poor access for disabled, particularly to wetlands an ideal spot for disabled users to enjoy the environment

Keeping verges to ensure safe pedestrian movement within the village

Production of walking maps for villagers and possibly guests

Signposting for lock and approach both to and from Eckington

Trees:

Keep the views, look at program of maintenance to ensure these are not lost on Church Street

River:

Smith Industries maintain the river banks well and should be thanked by the Parish Council as many villagers use and appreciate these

Wetlands:

Can this be added to the Village map by hall?

Better track access

Q9. Do you have any concerns about the future of the village?

Yes	36
No	2

Housing or development based:	
No large scale development	9
No further development	3
Wary of effects of expansion	1
No brick estates	1
Do not want to see a sea of houses on farmed land	1
Development in wrong place (<i>unspecified</i>)	1
No street lighting	1
No pavements	1
No change to road layout	1

Related to housing or development:

No street lighting	1
No pavements	1
No change to road layout	1

Positive approaches to development

Need small selected development	2
Need smaller houses for young buyers	1
Need some infill to stop us being static	2
want to avoid being a holiday village	1

Other

Concern about an aging population	5
Care of whole village not just core	1
No playground	1
Loosing traditional events	1
Lack of volunteers	1
Better/broader use of church	
Make sure we keep pub	1
Make pub a real pub	1

Q10. How important is it to you to feel part of a community?

Yes	32
Somewhat	2
No	1

What would improve that for you?

Social Events	11
Wider involvement of community	1
Different events	2
Ensure we involve all areas of village particularly fringe areas	1
A real pub	1
Younger participants	1