



Sunningwell Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

Second Residents' Survey - Responses

Initial Residents' Survey – 29 May 2025 to 31 July 2025

Second Residents' Survey – 19 Nov 2025 to 13 Jan 2026

Third Residents' Survey - 18 Feb to 15 Mar 2026

Summary of result

1. What is good about living in parish?

Overall summary

Residents see the parish as:

A peaceful, beautiful rural village with strong community spirit, rich character and history, excellent access to nature, and the rare advantage of being close to Oxford and nearby towns while remaining calm, hidden and unspoilt.

In short

A close-knit rural community offering peace, nature, and village character, with exceptional access to Oxford and surrounding towns.

The top strengths are:

- Community spirit and belonging
- Countryside, nature and walks
- Peace and quiet
- Rural charm and heritage
- Proximity to Oxford and Abingdon
- Active and effective Parish Council
- Strong village facilities (pub, church, school)

2. What would you like to see changed or improved in the parish?

Overall summary

Residents want to protect what they love about the parish (peace, nature, safety, rural character) by addressing:

1. Traffic control and rat-running reduction
2. Road safety and pedestrian protection
3. Repair and maintenance of roads and verges
4. Better drainage and infrastructure resilience
5. Stronger environmental protection policies
6. Improved internal connectivity and community cohesion

In short:

People fear that traffic, poor road maintenance and infrastructure strain are eroding the quiet, safety and rural quality that make the parish special, and they want firm action to protect it.

3. What building, spaces or views in the parish do you value and need to be preserved? (List up to five)

Overall summary

Residents want to preserve: A parish defined by open countryside, iconic views, historic religious buildings, and a small number of beautiful, shared green spaces that sit at the heart of village life.

If condensed into priority categories:

1. Open fields and countryside buffers
2. Key views (especially from Boars Hill and across the village)
3. Churches and chapels

4. Village green, pond, and water features
5. Village Hall, school, pub, and community buildings
6. Cricket field and recreation spaces
7. Hedgerows and landscape protection from road development

In short:

This shows a strong desire to protect not just individual buildings, but the whole setting of the parish: its openness, greenness, tranquillity, and historic village form.

4. What do you believe are the challenges facing the parish in the next 5-10 years?

Overall summary

Residents believe the next 5–10 years will be defined by whether the parish can resist being overwhelmed by development and traffic.

The core challenge is: How to protect a small rural parish from urban expansion, traffic growth, and infrastructure overload while preserving its green character, safety, and identity.

In priority order, the challenges are:

1. Rising traffic volumes and safety risks
2. Large-scale housing development nearby (Dalton Barracks, North Abingdon, A34 corridor)
3. Loss of rural character and green belt erosion
4. Environmental damage and habitat loss
5. Flooding, drainage and sewer capacity
6. Pressure on roads and infrastructure

In short:

In essence, people are not opposed to change in principle, but they are deeply concerned that change is happening to the parish rather than with it, and at a scale that threatens its very identity.

5. Any other suggestions you would like the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or Working Groups to consider?

Overall summary

This question shows that residents want the Steering Group to:

1. Continue its work with confidence and support
2. Protect village character through strong planning tools, **including conservation areas**
3. Take firm action on environmental restoration and protection
4. Push hard for traffic calming and pedestrian safety
5. Ensure infrastructure (especially sewage and drainage) is adequate
6. Make engagement inclusive and accessible to all ages and abilities

In short:

Residents are grateful for the work being done, but want it to be bold: defending village character, repairing environmental damage, improving safety, and ensuring that growth does not overwhelm fragile rural infrastructure.

Long version of the results

What is good about living in parish?

The responses are very consistent and strongly positive. Several clear themes emerge:

1. Strong community spirit and belonging
This is the most dominant theme. People repeatedly mention:
 - Community spirit
 - Neighbourliness
 - Familiar faces
 - Feeling of security and peace
 - People coming together to support local events
 - Vibrancy from new residents and young families

This suggests residents highly value the parish as a close-knit, supportive and socially active community. Facilities like the school, church, pub and parish council are seen as central to this.

2. Rural setting and connection to nature
Another major theme is the natural environment:
 - Easy access to open countryside
 - Living with nature
 - Footpaths and walks
 - Watching the seasons change
 - Beautiful surroundings
 - Rural ambiance
 - Peaceful countryside

Residents clearly prize the ability to step straight from their homes into nature, and the balance of beauty, exercise, and tranquillity that this brings.

3. Peacefulness and quiet
Many comments mention:
 - Quietness
 - Peacefulness
 - No street lights (enabling stargazing)
 - Being “hidden” or tucked away

This shows the parish is valued as a calm retreat from urban life.

4. Ideal balance: rural but well connected
A very strong message is the “best of both worlds”:
 - Easy access to Oxford and Abingdon
 - Accessibility to urban areas when needed
 - Oxfordshire’s “best kept secret”
 - Near a town and a city but still rural

This balance between isolation and connectivity is one of the parish’s biggest perceived strengths.

5. Character, heritage and identity
People value:
 - Sense of history
 - Sympathetic architecture
 - Quaint village feel
 - Church building, pond, pub
 - Distinct character of the parish

This shows pride in the parish's identity and traditional village features.

6. Active and effective Parish Council
Several comments highlight:
 - Excellence of the Chair of the PC
 - Active PC
 - Good initiatives
 - Positive impact on the community

This indicates trust in local governance and appreciation of leadership.

7. Facilities and amenities
Specific assets mentioned:
 - Pub
 - Church
 - School
 - Footpaths
 - Countryside for exercise and play

These are seen as enhancing both community life and quality of living.

Survey responses

Accessibility to be Oxford. Oxfordshire's best kept secret. The people and character of the parish Excellence of the Chair of the PC and the resulting initiatives. Community spirit. Easy access to open countryside in all directions. Proximity to urban areas when needed (Abingdon & Oxford). The peacefulness, neighbourliness, sense of history and rural views that result from living in a small village community with generally sympathetic architecture in a rural location... yet all within easy reach of both a town and a city. The quiet and community Living with nature. Sharing a community that values nature and a healthy environment. Being out of town and having familiar faces living all around. Being able to walk in the countryside directly from the house and to enjoy watching the seasons change and experiencing nature. The rural ambiance, the variety of footpaths, the sense of community "It is mostly hidden (although not at the moment with all the roadworks affecting our village). We have the advantage of living near a town and also a city but still being rural. Also it is quiet (mostly) and no street lights make it easier to enjoy the stars and planets." A good sense of community due to our small population, school, church and other facilities. the PC is active, and there has been a pleasing amount of incoming new residents including young families. This will always add to the vibrancy of a community. We are lucky to have such beautiful surroundings, and areas for exercise, nature and play. "There are lots of good things here, the community spirit of the people, where folk come together and support local events. The views and walks in the surrounding area are stunning." Beautiful

area Peaceful countryside; rural settlements not suburban. Community belonging , feeling of security and peace. It's a quaint village in the countryside with a superb pub. We also love the church building and the pond.

2. What would you like to see changed or improved in the parish?

The responses show a very strong and consistent focus on **traffic and road-related issues**, with environmental and community connectivity concerns secondary but still important.

1. Traffic and rat-running (dominant theme)
This is by far the biggest concern. Residents want:
 - Reduction in rat-running by taxis, vans and through-traffic
 - Traffic calming measures
 - Speed control and clearer 20mph markings
 - Less road noise, especially from the A34
 - Improved pedestrian safety

There is anxiety about:

- Temporary increases from current roadworks (e.g. Boars Hill)
- Future increases from developments such as the Diamond Junction

Overall feeling: traffic is threatening the parish's peace, safety and rural character.

2. Road condition and maintenance
Another very strong theme:
 - Potholes getting worse
 - Roads in "dreadful state of disrepair"
 - Poor quality and narrowing of approach roads
 - Verges and hedges no longer maintained as well as they once were
 - Poorly defined road edges causing surface damage

This links closely to traffic concerns, as heavier use is seen as worsening deterioration.

3. Drainage and infrastructure
Specific but important technical concern:
 - Drainage capacity is insufficient
 - Surface water entering foul sewers
 - Recurring issues near Dark Lane
 - Risk of flooding or system failure

This suggests a need for infrastructure investment and investigation.

4. Pedestrian safety and walkability
Residents want:
 - Safer walking conditions
 - Reduced vehicle dominance
 - Traffic calming to make the parish easier and safer to move around on foot

This ties into both community cohesion and quality of life.

5. Connectivity within the parish

One response highlights:

- Poor connectivity between physically separated parts of the parish

This suggests people feel divided by roads or geography and would like stronger internal links.

6. Environmental protection and nature

There is a clear desire for:

- Stronger protection of environment, nature and wildlife
- Long-term environmental protection plans
- More nature-friendly events and gatherings
- Ban on fireworks (for wildlife, pets, and disturbance)

This aligns closely with earlier responses about valuing nature and tranquillity.

7. Community development

One response calls for:

- "Greater community"

This suggests interest in stronger social connections, shared activities, or better integration across the parish.

Survey responses

Traffic Connectivity between the physically separated regions of the parish 1. Drainage - capacity appears insufficient, made worse by surface water getting into foul sewers and apparently regular issues with the main pipes just past Dark Lane; 2. The quality of the road verges in the approach roads to the village - lack of clearly defined edges and poor surface maintenance leading to pot holes. Greater community Better protection of the environment, nature and wildlife. Future protection plans for our environment. More nature friendly gatherings. The banning of fireworks. Better road maintenance and speed controls. "I'd like to see the hedges and verges along each side of the approach roads better maintained. They used to be cut back regularly. There is a feeling of the roads actually being narrower than they used to be. " Measure to reduce rat running, improved pedestrian safety, reduction in road noise from the A34 "The taxi's and vans not using us as a rat run. The roads leading into the villages are now in a dreadful state of dis-repair. " Traffic is a major issue. Currently we are experiencing a notable increase due to the work on Boars Hill but I worry about the new Diamond Junction and the impact that will have. "The potholes are getting worse with the extra flow of traffic. To remark the 20mph signs on the road." Roads Reduction in rat-running Improved road safety to make walking easier. Traffic calming.

3. What building, spaces or views in the parish do you value and need to be preserved? (List up to five)

The responses show very strong agreement on a small number of key assets that define the parish's identity. These fall into three broad groups: **landscape and views, historic/community buildings, and green community spaces.**

1. Open countryside, fields and landscape setting (dominant theme)
This is the strongest and most consistent priority:
 - Open fields between the village and the A34
 - Open countryside surrounding Sunningwell and Bayworth
 - Separation between villages and Abingdon
 - Bagley Woods, old golf course on Boars Hill
 - Glebeland, village hall field, parish footpaths

Residents clearly value the parish as a *rural settlement set within open landscape*, and strongly wish to preserve:

- The feeling of openness
 - The green buffer around the villages
 - Protection from urban sprawl and infrastructure encroachment
2. Views and visual character
Views are repeatedly highlighted:
 - Views from Boars Hill to Oxford
 - Views from Lincombe Lane
 - Views across Sunningwell from the Glebe and village green
 - Views down the main road opposite the village green

These show that *long-distance and village-scale views* are seen as precious and part of what makes the parish special.

3. Church and chapels (core heritage assets)
Almost every response includes:
 - Sunningwell Church
 - Bayworth Chapel

These are seen as:

- Historic landmarks
- Community anchors
- Visual focal points in the landscape

They represent heritage, continuity, and identity.

4. Village green, pond and water features
Very strongly valued:
 - Village green
 - Village pond and willow tree
 - The Flow / Flowing Well
 - Bayworth Triangle

These are seen as:

- Central meeting spaces
- Important wildlife habitats
- Visually defining village features

They combine beauty, heritage, and community use.

5. Community buildings and facilities

Repeatedly mentioned:

- Village Hall
- Bayworth Chapel Hall
- School
- Cricket Club / Cricket Field
- Pub (especially the Flowing Well)
- Art School

These are valued as:

- Social hubs
- Spaces for activity and gathering
- Essential to community life and cohesion

6. Sport and recreation spaces

Especially:

- Cricket field / Cricket Club
- Open green spaces

These are seen as integral to the parish's character and social life.

7. Environmental protection concerns

One response specifically highlights:

- Impact of the A34 slip road
- Need for mature hedgerow replacement
- Noise barriers
- Maintenance and increase of farmed hedgerows

This shows anxiety about infrastructure threatening landscape quality and wildlife.

Survey responses

The pond and willow tree, the view of Oxford from Boars Hill, the village green, church and the Flow Views from Boars Hill to Oxford, The historic buildings and features in the centre of Sunningwell Village, set in their rural surroundings, Access to open countryside in all directions 1. The open fields between the village and the A34; 2. The church; 3. The Art school and pond; 4 the view down the main road opposite the village green. 5. The open space provided by the village green. Bayworth Chapel (and hall), Sunningwell Village Hall, the fields that surround the entire parish, Bagley woods, the old golf course on boars hill The new slip road construction on the A34 near Lodge Hill needs mature hedgerow replaced and noise barriers to protect the environment on the north of the development. All farmed hedgerow should be increased and maintained. Church, Cricket Field, Village Green, Village Pond, Village Hall Maintain open countryside between the villages, maintain open countryside between the Parish and Abingdon, protect the Flowing Well as a pub, the Cricket Club The fields, the church, the pond, the cricket field, the village hall , the Bayworth triangle and the village green The school, the church, the view from the Village Hall field, the Glebeland, parish footpaths "Sunningwell Church Bayworth chapel" Chapel Bayworth Views from Lincombe Lane over Sunningwell; view from the top of the village green (glebe) over Sunningwell, open fields all around Sunningwell and Bayworth, green character of Lincombe

Lane and Foxcombe Hill. The Cricket Club, the School, the Church , the Pub and the Village Hall. The pond, village hall, the Glebe

4. What do you believe are the challenges facing the parish in the next 5-10 years?

The responses are strikingly consistent. Residents see the next 5–10 years as a critical period in which external pressures could fundamentally change the parish. The challenges cluster around four main areas: **traffic, development, loss of rural character, and infrastructure capacity.**

1. Traffic (dominant and most urgent concern)

Traffic is the single biggest challenge identified:

- Increased traffic from Dalton Barracks, North Abingdon and Park & Ride
- Construction traffic (lorries using Foxcombe Lane and Sunningwell)
- Rat-running through narrow rural roads
- Speeding and safety risks for walkers, cyclists, children and horse riders
- Pollution and noise
- Road damage and potholes

Residents fear that traffic growth will:

- Erode safety
- Reduce quality of life
- Destroy the peaceful rural character
- Make walking and cycling unsafe

There is a strong sense that current problems are only a preview of what is to come.

2. Development and urban expansion

Development pressure is the second dominant theme:

- Housing growth at Dalton Barracks, North Abingdon, and nearby farmland
- Pressure to meet Oxford housing targets
- Fear of speculative developers
- Potential weakening of green belt protection
- Anxiety about being absorbed into “Greater Oxford”

There is a strong narrative that: The parish risks becoming swallowed by urban sprawl rather than remaining a distinct rural community.

People repeatedly describe development as:

- Threatening countryside and farmland
- Increasing density and population
- Driving traffic growth
- Changing the parish from rural to suburban/urban

3. Loss of rural character and identity

This is the emotional core of many responses:

- Fear of losing village charm
- Fear of becoming “subsumed” into a larger urban area
- Strong belief that living rurally is a deliberate choice that should be protected

Preserving:

- Green space
- Open countryside
- Low density
- Tranquillity
- Distinct village identity is seen as the parish’s central long-term challenge.

4. Environmental impact and habitat damage

Several respondents highlight:

- Restoration of habitats damaged by the Lodge Hill junction
- Pollution risks from traffic
- Pressure on wildlife
- Loss of beautiful land

This links development directly with environmental degradation.

5. Flooding, drainage and sewer capacity

A significant practical concern:

- Flood risk from heavy rainfall and blocked gullies
- Increased surface water due to traffic and development
- Inadequate sewer and pumping station capacity (confirmed by Thames Water)

This shows worry that infrastructure is already stretched and unfit for major growth.

6. Infrastructure and maintenance

Mentioned issues include:

- Poor roads and potholes
- Need for traffic calming
- Improved transport planning
- Fly tipping

These are seen as symptoms of increasing pressure on a small rural system.

7. Safety and social stability

One response raises concern about:

- Possible future use of Dalton Barracks as an asylum centre
- Perceived impact on safety

While isolated, it reflects anxiety about large-scale change imposed from outside.

Survey responses

Traffic, development adjacent to the village, restoration of the habitats torn-up by the Lodge Hill junction development. Maintaining the character of the Parish as number and density of dwellings in nearby areas increase very substantially (North Abingdon, Dalton Barracks). "1. Housing developments - particularly from Northern Abingdon, and at Dalton Barracks - leading to increased traffic through the village... coupled with the development of the Park

& Ride as a magnet for such traffic; 2. The continual pressure from an expanding Oxford - inclusion in a 'Greater Oxford' would likely change the focus of local area management from rural to urban...and likely see the 'spaces' within the area as candidates for housing development; 3. Disregard for the green belt - to accommodate the above. All of the above risk the character of the village being lost as it becomes subsumed within urban sprawl." Development The potential for any housing developments in surrounding farmland. Increased traffic from the Dalton Barracks and north Abingdon housing developments will increase pollution and create environmental risks to life. Concerned about the sheer volume of traffic coming through the village now, which I assume is due initially to the closure of Foxcombe Road, but can't help feeling will only become worse as the new houses being built all around become inhabited. Traffic pressure created by surrounding developments in Abingdon and on the airfield. Pressure to build larger scale housing developments in the Parish due to building targets for Oxford Dalton Barracks, the building work will affect Boars Hill and Sunningwell, lorries will be going along Foxcombe Lane and probably Sunningwell also. If they use it as an asylum centre then we will not be safe as we are now. "Traffic mostly. Many people use the village for walking, riding bikes, walking children to school, riding horses etc. This is a large part of the charm of our community. With our narrow roads, and the reckless speed that too many people drive at, is very worrying and I fear it will worsen. The other is flooding. We have been fortunate not to be affected but cannot be complacent. I regularly clear our gullies nearby to try and facilitate good drainage, but with so many trees there is always leaf litter accumulating. Car speeds again add to the problem and narrow paths have caused a drenching or two in the past. " Expansion of house building, leading to more traffic and the loss of beautiful land. Living in a rural area is a choice. Government wants to build houses

5. Any other suggestions you would like the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or Working Groups to consider?

These responses are supportive in tone but still highlight a few clear priorities. They fall into four main themes:

1. Strong support and encouragement
Several comments simply express appreciation:
 - "Keep up the good work"
 - "Your volunteering is greatly appreciated"
 - Thanks to the Steering Group

This shows high levels of trust and goodwill toward the Neighbourhood Plan process and those involved. People want the group to continue and feel their work matters.

2. Protecting village character and heritage
There is a strong desire to:
 - "Maintain the character of the village"
 - Consider designating **Conservation Areas** for Boars Hill and Sunningwell

This reinforces earlier concerns about development and loss of rural identity. Residents want stronger planning protection tools to safeguard:

- Historic character

- Landscape setting
 - Architecture and village form
3. Environment, habitat and infrastructure damage
There is clear distress about:
- Loss of trees and hedgerows
 - Habitat destruction from Lodge Hill roadworks
 - Increased noise from the A34

And a strong expectation that:

- All lost habitats should be replaced
- Additional natural barriers (tree belts, planting) should be created
- Restoration should happen as soon as possible

This shows residents want environmental mitigation to be:

- Concrete
- Timely
- Enforceable

4. Traffic and pedestrian safety

Traffic continues to appear even in this “other suggestions” question:

- Improved pedestrian safety
- Traffic calming measures
- Reducing traffic flow

This confirms traffic is the most persistent concern across the whole survey.

5. Infrastructure capacity: sewage and drainage

One very specific and serious concern:

- Need for a pumping station
- Sewage backing up into gardens after heavy rain
- Caused by new developments and increased impermeable surfaces

This highlights fear that basic infrastructure is failing and public health risks exist.

6. Inclusion and community engagement

A thoughtful suggestion:

- Provide support for older residents who find IT difficult
- Involve local children in the planning process

This shows a wish for:

- Inclusive participation
- Intergenerational involvement
- Stronger community ownership of the plan

7. Mixed engagement

One simple “No” response suggests some people feel all key points are already covered elsewhere.

Survey responses

Your volunteering is greatly appreciated- thank you. Please try and maintain the character of the village! Perhaps older people who want to be involved in the planning groups and who might find IT challenging could get some support. Also the local children should be involved. Horrified at the loss of habitat : trees and hedges which has occurred due to the intensive road works at Lodge Hill and the resulting constant noise from traffic on the A34. Hopeful that the plans include for replacement of all that has been destroyed and for extra natural barriers to be planted as soon as work is complete. Improved pedestrian safety on local roads A pumping station to stop the back up of waste water from all the new builds where they have covered the fields with concrete. This causes problems every time there is heavy rain and it backs up into people's gardens causing sewage to be left behind.