CARBON REDUCTION COMMUNITY SURVEY – WANTAGE AREA (OCT-DEC 2020)

SURVEY RESULTS AND REPORT

Responses, findings and key conclusions

INTRODUCTION

Survey Objectives

- To better understand people's activities and use of services which impact carbon emissions and climate change the most.
- Gather their views towards improving those services and reducing their impact - whether by their own actions or those of the service providers.
- Focus on OX12, where Sustainable Wantage (SW) and Wantage Town Council (WTC) operate.
- The survey was conducted with a combination of paid help and volunteers. The project was funded by the WTC.

Survey Design

- The survey ran from 15th October to the 3rd December 2020 using mainly social media and the Sustainable Wantage website to promote it: owing to Covid-19 restrictions*, only two sessions of in-person interviews were possible, conducted in the marketplace. A £100 local shopping voucher was offered as a prize draw incentive.
- The survey contained 7 sections of questions with a mix of tick box and comments: Transport, Home Insulation, Home Energy, Waste & Recycling, Food, Wildlife & Nature and The Mix Services.
- Results are broken down for each of the 4 postcode districts and analysis of the main themes coming from the many additional comments and suggestions.
- Google Forms was used to create the survey: relatively easy to set up, able to be shared across various digital channels and free.

*On 14th October the new Covid-19 tier system was launched, with VoWH in tier 2 (medium risk). While shops remained open, social gatherings were not allowed and people were on heightened alert. Our plans for market day stalls and leaflet drops were cancelled, and the reduction in face-to-face interviews and reliance on digital channels is likely to have meant we did not get a good representation of older respondents.

Overall Response

- From 563 total responses, 97% were online (from newsletter, website, Facebook and email link) and 3% were face-to-face (Wednesday market x2).
- There were 537 responses from valid OX12 postcodes, which is 3.7% of adult residents in OX12. This is above the 2% sample size needed to be statistically significant (Survey Monkey Sample Size Calculator).
- There were a further 26 responses from non-OX12 postcodes which were discounted from further analysis.
- The distribution of responses across the four postcode districts shows the highest proportion were from OX12-9 (Wantage West and Villages – see “Full Results” doc for maps):

- OX12-0 16% - Grove West and Villages (GrW)
- OX12-7 23% - Charlton and Grove East (Ch&GrE)
- OX12-8 23% - Wantage South and Villages (WaS)

- OX12-9   37% - Wantage West and Villages (WaW)

N.B. The survey had a high level of engagement, with over 700 additional comments & suggestions given and 374 opting in to receive additional information.

RESPONSES & FINDINGS

Notes:
- If all 537 people responded to a question, it will say "*(all 537)*". If less, just the number will be shown eg *(150)*.
- Regarding comments: in some cases, responses will exceed number of respondents where people have made multiple points within one comment.

Section 1. Transport

Frequency of car and public transport use:
- We asked respondents to say what their likely frequency of car and public transport use would be in the coming months *(all 537)*: the difference between the two is stark, with the importance of cars to the community very high: 84% of respondents are using cars most days/once or twice a week, whilst just 4% using public transport most days/once or twice a week. 35% said they never use public transport. N.B. Benchmarking the results against historical data is tricky as 2020 was so unusual, so re-running this question (as part of the wider survey) would be beneficial.
- Further statements on transport use *(all 537):* car ownership is 84%, similar to UK average for rural towns & fringes (86% - DfT survey 2018/19). Over three quarters of respondents (78%) walk regularly and a significant percentage, 26%, regularly cycle. OX12-0 (GrW) responses below others for walking (64%) & cycling (22%), OX12-8 (WaS) much higher for cycling (29%) & also with 6% wheelchair/mobility scooter users (over 50% of total) and OX12-7 (Ch&GrE) much higher for car ownership (91%).

Transport use, suggestions and concerns:
- We then asked a series of questions over three sections about transport use and concerns.
  - Comments on their transport use *(155)*:
    - Over a quarter of comments (26.5%) relate to issues about using public transport, including:
      - Lack of required public transport (9.7%)
      - Reduced public transport due to COVID-19 concerns (6.5%)
      - Public transport takes too long/is too indirect (4.5%)
      - Public transport a last resort (2.6%)
    - 20.6% commented about the essential need for a car: 10.3% work, 5.8% shopping, 2.6% school run, 1.9% disability
    - 9.7% concerned about provisions for cyclists.
    - N.B. 12% working from home / minimal travel during Covid-19
  - Do you have any other suggestions or concerns about transport in the area? Tick which statements apply *(all 537)*. Top answers were:
    - Need better cycle lanes/routes (60%) and need better safety for cyclists (35%).
    - Town centre should have fewer cars/be more pedestrian friendly (51%),
    - Need better public transport (46%),

    N.B. Similar trends seen in all postcode sectors: OX12-8 (WaS) had more interest in volunteer transport schemes correlating with higher % of wheelchair/mobility scooters.
  - Other suggestions/concerns about transport in the area *(136)*: around a third of comments related to public transport improvements (33.7%), including faster routes and better rural access; also important is provision for cyclists (20.6%) and better traffic 'management' which has different aspects to it and includes improving parking (11%), reducing antisocial parking (8.8%) and more pedestrianisation (8.1%) (but not at the expense of access, especially for the elderly).

Overall conclusions on Transport:
- Car use is currently seen as very necessary to the area and related actions should recognise this eg planning of pedestrianisation should consider vehicle access, sufficient parking and better enforcement to improve flow.
- People want fewer cars in the town centre and more pedestrianisation. Suggestions include park and ride away from town centre and market place for blue badge holders only.
- In terms of public transport, although use is low, responses suggest there is demand. Covid-19 has created anxiety for some in using public transport, and there is a communication job to be done to allay these concerns. There are then the wider issues of routes and frequency, however lack of information (on and offline) is also an issue and an easier one to address in the short term.
- Encouragingly, significant numbers are walking and cycling, and there is a great opportunity for the area to really embrace both groups: create more cycleways and safe walking routes, improve safety through traffic management (reduce antisocial parking and speeding) and support cycle maintenance and safety courses.

KEY POINTS ON TRANSPORT

- Strong demand for better traffic management and fewer cars in town centre, whilst current high levels of car use seen as necessary for many.
- Significant barriers to using public transport, but interest and demand is there.
- Cycling and walking popular, with many wanting better provision – safety and access.

Section 2. In The Home - Home Insulation

- We asked respondents how good their home insulation is *(all 537):* 44% said it was fully insulated to a high standard, 27% said it could be better, 12% weren't sure and 16% said they weren't the decision maker/owner (2% other eg listed property). There were fairly significant differences by postcode district for those answering 'could be better' - OX12 0 (GrW) 20%, OX12 7 (Ch&GrE) 32%, OX12 8 (WaS) 27%, OX12 9 (WaW) 26%.
- We then asked about improving your insulation *(391):* 45% did not see it as a priority, around 26% said they want to improve insulation but need more information and 26% want to improve but are concerned about cost (similar across each district for both).

Overall conclusions on Home Insulation:
- Whilst just under a half of respondents are happy with the standard of their insulation, most people either aren't happy, aren't sure or can't do anything about it. Barriers for those wishing to improve are cost concerns and lack of information.
- This represents a sizeable opportunity, to help people better understand what their options are across a range of spend levels. In addition, to provide guidance on what can be done for those who aren't the home owner/decision maker or those in listed buildings.
- There's also some variation between postcode districts and it's worth a closer look whether this correlates to how modern the housing stock is or perhaps private v LA housing. Local targeting of information may be effective.
- For all residents in the area, but particularly those that do not see this as a priority, an informative campaign on the added-value benefits of insulation could help win them over. Highlighting grants and incentive schemes would also make sense, especially to those concerned about cost. Also provide links to resources such as the EPC checker.
- VoWH sits above UK median for energy efficiency for existing homes and below for new homes. Targeted information/support for owners of and prospective buyers of new homes should be considered.

KEY POINTS ON HOME INSULATION

- Less than half respondents have a high standard of insulation.
- Concerns around cost and lack of information are main barriers to change.
- Variations by district, housing type and ownership point to targeted support.

Section 3. In The Home - Your Energy Supply

- We asked respondents if they had a renewable energy supplier or would be interested in switching *(all 537)*: 42% already use one, 24% said it's not a priority, 23% said they were interested, 11% are not the homeowner/decision maker.
- We then asked about barriers to switching to a renewable energy supplier, with 54% *(292)* answering. Only 10% said it was lack of time, 28% are concerned about cost and 40% need more information. There were 20% relevant 'other' answers, spread across a variety of specific issues including switching and other cost-related reasons eg happy with current supplier, already changed my supplier and currently locked into contract, as well as switching supplier regularly to get the best deal and using the cheapest supplier. Also, more information needed on the fuel mix of the biggest energy suppliers.
- We asked about other renewable technology in their home (eg solar panels and heat pumps) and their potential interest in it, with 73% *(476)* responding: 66% said they had no renewable technology; of those interested in getting it, the main issue is cost (33%), with information the barrier to getting solar panels (24%) and heat pumps (18%). Within 'other' *(48 responses)*, many comments concern the lack of a suitable location for installation (eg Design of roof, house direction, dormer windows, lack of outdoor space for ground-source heat pump). OX12-0 (GrW) had the lowest scores for interest in renewable technology.

Overall conclusions on Energy Supply:
- With around half of respondents not with a renewable energy supplier, just under half of these are interested in switching: however, by addressing the barriers it's possible this would persuade some of those that don't see it as a priority or don't have the time.
- It's important to recognise that though many people are concerned about cost, there is a wider communication job to be done: this could include myth-busting (Green is not more expensive) as well as service levels, understanding how to switch and environmental credentials eg Uswitch guide.
- There is interest in switching to renewable technology but it's clear that the barriers to doing this are complex: lack of basic info, daunting process, cost (initial outlay and running), choosing the right product, installing in particular building types, finding suitable suppliers etc. This area warrants further investigation and we need to be very confident before providing information or guidance in this area. Again, this could include providing myth-busting information where applicable eg "I am not interested in the use of solar panels since my friend's caught fire and they have been out of their house for over a year"; "I am not convinced about air source heat pumps. I cannot see how they are energy efficient".

KEY POINTS ON ENERGY SUPPLY

- Around half of respondents aren't with a renewable energy supplier, with under half of these interested in switching. Two-thirds don't have 'other' renewable technology.
- By addressing the issues around cost and lack of clear information, there may be an opportunity to engage not just those currently interested in switching.
- Myth-busters/FAQs should address common concerns, whilst recognising renewable technology issues are more complex.

Section 4. Waste and Recycling

- We asked if people are clear on how to separate waste and recycling in weekly bin collections *(all 537):* 89% were clear or very clear and 3.3% specifically mentioned the usefulness of the Binzone app. We asked for further comments on this and responses were overwhelmingly positive (58% happy). Digging a little deeper into the other comments, people want more clarity on recycling (17%), including labelling, separating and cleaning different plastics and understanding where recycling ends up. There were also a number of comments relating to service improvements, including more collections (12%) and not leaving mess behind (3.8%) or bins unemptied (2.2%).
- We then asked if people were clear on how to recycle or reuse other sorts of waste *(all 537)*: 97% said they were clear with recycling household items and garden waste. Other types of recycling were less clear: only

58% are clear on getting advice on repurpose or repair of household items; 47% are clear on taking items to charity during COVID-19; 66% are clear on getting advice on reducing food waste. Not interested only ranged 1-11% throughout, suggesting good engagement, with the highest score (11%) for advice on reducing food waste.
- We asked what other info people wanted on waste and recycling household items *(61 responded)*: two-thirds of all comments fell into three main categories of where / how to repair, recycle and reuse items.

Overall conclusions on Waste and Recycling:
- The weekly bin collections get a big thumbs up. However, people are keen to know and do more to reduce their waste.
- It's clear that some improvements to the collection service would be welcome, as well as more detailed information across the recycling process, from manufacture through to its re-use.
- In terms of repairing and re-purposing household items, there is demand for more advice. Some of the issues raised will be met by our Repair and Re-use project (mapping all the local service providers), while issues around access to services for those with limited mobility should be addressed by VoWH. During lockdown, many of these services are closed, so providing useful information on alternate resources can help in the interim eg The Mix online repair cafe.
- Whilst most are clear how to reduce food waste, it also had the highest number not interested: perhaps people are not producing much or are not motivated to reduce their food waste. This requires some further investigation before any action is taken.

KEY POINTS ON WASTE AND RECYCLING

- The weekly bin collections are working well, with some opportunities for improvement, as well as more clarity on dealing with different plastics.
- Strong demand for other types of recycle, re-use and repair services, with the need to provide more information, particularly the repair and re-purposing of household items.
- Short-term need to help people understand what's available and what the alternatives are during lockdown (and beyond).

Section 5. Food - Your Shopping

- We asked people to tell us about their food shopping preferences *(all 537):* 22% said they mostly buy food online (BBC report on Waitrose said 32% of their 35-44 yr olds shopping online at least once a week, with 77% of all shoppers doing some – Aug 2020); 69% of our respondents said they buy mostly from local supermarkets and 44% often buy from the local market / producers, with over a quarter wanting more info about local food. 18% said they travel out of town for food shopping. This all suggests that, even with the issues of COVID-19, people's preference is to buy from local shops and from local suppliers.
- Almost half of respondents (46%) said that the amount of packaging influences what they buy and 29% wanted healthier takeaway options; 24% are interested in buying organic food and 16% grow their own with 14% wanting info on how to do so.
- Comments *(65 responses)*: whilst the local market and shops are popular, there's an important theme around the lack of variety of shops, particularly in the lower price bracket. Again, reducing packaging came through as important whilst there were several comments about help with growing your own.
- In terms of eating preferences *(all 537):* 41% are regular meat eaters, 44% reduced meat eaters, 5% pescatarian, 6% vegetarian, 2% vegan, 1% mostly plant-based. The Full Fact report on meat consumption 2018 suggests respondents to our survey are eating less meat versus this national snapshot (3% non-meat eaters, 0-2% reduction in meat consumption, over half saying they eat meat every day). Whether the national behaviour has changed too since the report, our local respondents appear to be embracing the idea of alternative diets and meals without meat.

Overall conclusions on Food:
- The data suggests OX12 is progressive when it comes to attitudes towards reducing meat consumption, buying from local sources and caring about the amount of packaging used.
- It's important not to overlook price as a factor and the lack of value supermarket brands in the area is causing concern for some: residents may be travelling out-of-town to access these services.
- Online shopping is growing, so it's very important that the town meets the needs of its shoppers, addressing their concerns around packaging, variety of shops and providing more information on local food producers. However, these are also things that the area is embracing, so it's important to promote these as positive messages where they are happening already.
- There are also opportunities to provide more information on benefits of reducing meat consumption, growing your own, provenance of local food and finding a healthy takeaway.

KEY POINTS ON FOOD

- There is a strong preference to buy local, with a relatively small proportion relying on online shopping; however, the lack of variety in the town is a concern, ranging from value brands to local providers.
- The amount of packaging strongly influences what people buy.
- Over half of respondents are reduced or non-meat eaters, and there is interest / need for advice on healthier takeaway options, buying organic food and growing your own

Section 6. Wildlife and Nature

- We asked people about their interests in supporting wildlife and nature *(531)*: 54% said they are actively involved in improving nature, 35% said they want to do more but need more info, 28% interested in volunteering on wildlife projects. Only 11% saying they don't have time to consider wildlife at the moment and less than 1% said they don't know why it's important.
- Comments *(36 responses)*: these broadly fell into two areas, the first around getting involved/ volunteering, and the second around concerns for the care of green space and nature, whether by the local authority or private developers.

Overall comments about Nature:
- Very positive feedback from the community on attitudes to nature with high levels of engagement already and with the potential to do more with the right information.
- Lots of interest in Wild Wantage with over 200 newsletter sign-up requests given at the end of the survey.
- People also care about the green spaces around them (also see general suggestions in section 8), and the town should ensure biodiversity is a carefully considered piece in their overall jigsaw of improvements.

KEY POINTS ON NATURE

- Most people are already actively involved in supporting wildlife and nature around them.
- There's a desire to do more, with the right information and opportunity.
- Comments suggest concern for the curation of green spaces and their importance to the community

Section 7. The Mix Community Services

- We asked what services have you used or would be interested in *(528)*: the most used services are collections from the community fridge (33%), refills of toiletries and detergents (25%), crisps and biscuit wrapper recycling (24%) and workshops & courses (17%). Services people would be most interested in are:

repair cafe (68%), crisps and biscuit wrapper recycling (51%), events and talks (50%), workshops & courses (49%) and refills (44%).
- Community Fridge collections had the highest score (34%) for not interested; deliveries had highest use and interest in OX12 8 (WaS), both at 16%: this district also has least daily car use & higher % wheelchair/mobility scooter users.
- We asked what other things you'd like to see us do at The Mix *(57 responses)*: most popular ideas were around more courses and talks (10), moving to a more accessible location (5), more publicity on services / useful information, extend Terracycle scheme (4) and not wanting to take services away from those more in need (4).

Overall conclusions about The Mix Services:
- There's good use of The Mix across its different services and though there is minimal interest in hiring the space and hot-desking, this is likely to be a factor of Covid-19.
- It's very positive to see the high levels of interest from those who haven't used us yet, particularly for the repair cafe, workshops and talks. There's a short-term opportunity to move these online and promote them widely. Longer term, we need to ensure we promote these services once The Mix re-opens.
- We also need to ensure we make it clear that the Community Fridge is for the whole community. Both from some comments and the high 'not of interest' score, some people may not see it as something they could be using.

KEY POINTS ON THE MIX SERVICES

- The Mix services are well used and the potential to reach more people is clear from the levels of interest from those who haven't used us yet.
- The Repair Café has the most potential interest, which fits well with the Waste & Recycling feedback.
- We always need to make it clear that our services are for the whole community.

Section 8. Other Suggestions

- We asked for any more thoughts or suggestions you have about reducing our community's environmental impact. We had *131 comments* with wide ranging suggestions.
- The top themes were Care for Green Spaces (24), Less Traffic/more provision for Pedestrians (23), Environmental Education (18), Reducing Litter (16) and Provision for Cyclists (13). Details as follows:
  - Better use of green spaces such as planting wildflowers/vegetables/herbs on verges and areas of grass to increase biodiversity and productivity; meadows/bigger gardens in new developments; community allotment/more allotments; encouraging tree planting
  - More walking routes, better pavements and more street lighting, more pedestrianisation, better enforcement of speeding, parking and idling.
  - Environmental education in schools, via local scout/guide groups, online and more education on recycling and non-recyclable packaging.
  - Enforce litter fines, introduce litter picking trails/events, more bins in town and on cycle paths ensuring bins are recycling as well as general waste, promotion of national litter picking campaigns.

- Provisions for cyclists including improved and safer cycle paths/routes to common work locations/schools.

KEY POINTS FROM OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- 131 comments across a wide range of subjects – a demonstration of people's engagement, coming at the end of the survey.
- The top five themes are:
  - **Care for Green Spaces** (links to comments in Nature - section 6);
  - **Environmental Education** (ties in with the need for more information throughout survey & specifically includes packaging, linking to Food - section 5);
  - **Fewer Cars/More Pedestrianisation** (major concern in Transport – section 1).
  - **Reducing Litter**
  - **Cycling** (also major concern in Transport – section 1).