

Summary of the findings from the Residents of Rough Common

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Parish Council's residents' survey. We received 117 responses from across Harbledown, Upper Harbledown and Rough Common, providing valuable feedback that will help shape the Parish Council's future priorities and the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The survey showed a remarkable level of agreement about what residents' value most and where improvements are needed.

What residents' value most

Residents overwhelmingly identified the parish's greatest strengths as:

- Our green spaces, woodland and surrounding countryside.
- The peaceful rural character of the villages.
- The distinct identity of Harbledown, Upper Harbledown and Rough Common.
- The strong sense of community.
- Easy access to Canterbury while retaining village life.

Protecting these qualities was the strongest message throughout the survey.

The main priorities for the future

Residents identified several clear priorities for the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan:

- Protect green spaces, farmland, woodland and the green gaps between villages.
- Improve road safety by reducing traffic speeds and addressing parking problems.
- Restore a regular and reliable bus service, particularly for Rough Common.
- Improve walking through better footpaths, safer crossings and improved accessibility.
- Support local facilities including the village shop, village halls and valued community assets.
- Ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with any future development.

Development and housing

Many residents expressed concern about the impact of further development on the character of the parish. While there was limited support for large-scale housing, there was greater understanding of homes designed to meet local needs, provided they are appropriately located, sympathetically designed and supported by suitable infrastructure.

Walking and cycling

Walking is an important part of everyday life for many residents. Respondents supported improvements including:

- Better maintained pavements and footpaths.
- Safer crossing points.
- Reduced traffic speeds.
- More benches and improved accessibility.

Residents also indicated that safer roads and lower traffic speeds would encourage more people to cycle.

Public transport

The loss of local bus services was one of the most frequently raised concerns. Residents highlighted the importance of reliable public transport, particularly for older people, those without access to a car and anyone wishing to reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Community facilities

Residents value the parish's community facilities, particularly:

- The Rough Common Shop.
- Village halls.
- Duke's Meadow, Neal's Place Meadow and other open spaces.
- The potential reopening of the Old Coach and Horses public house.

These facilities are seen as essential to maintaining a thriving community.

Additional comments

Many residents provided helpful suggestions, including improving pedestrian safety, tackling speeding and parking issues, maintaining footpaths, enhancing biodiversity and protecting the parish's natural environment. A number of respondents also expressed appreciation for the work already being undertaken by the Parish Council.

What happens next?

The survey provides a strong evidence base for the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The findings will be used to:

- Inform future planning policies.
- Help protect the parish's green spaces and rural character.
- Support discussions with Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council and transport providers.
- Guide future Parish Council projects and investment.
- Help secure external funding for local improvements where opportunities arise.

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who completed the survey. Your views will play an important role in helping to shape the future of our parish while protecting the qualities that make it such a special place to live.