

Fittleworth Community Shop and Cafe Survey Results

1 THE SHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

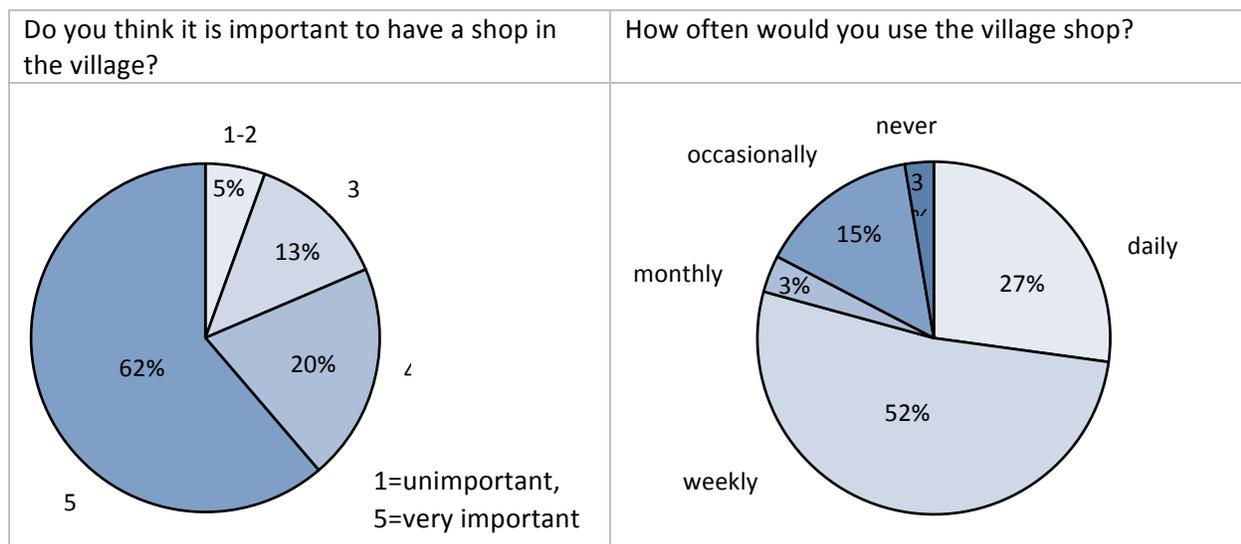
In April village shop questionnaires were distributed to 437 households in the Parish. The purpose of the questionnaire was to see whether residents would support and use a community owned and run village shop and café and to seek some initial views around a possible location for it. 60% of the questionnaires were completed and returned, providing a clear indication on the views of the Parish.

Additional surveys were completed by members of the Fittleworth Sports and Social Club who live outside the Parish, as some of the location options would impact on the activities of the club. Parents of children at the Fittleworth Village School who live outside the Parish were also given the opportunity to complete the survey as they are likely to form part of the customer base for the shop and cafe. In both cases the results have been analysed separately and have not been included within the main survey results shown below (although mention is made of the views of both groups in this newsletter).

This newsletter sets out some of the key findings from the survey. If you would like to see the full results, they are on the “Village Shop” page of the village website (www.fittleworth.info).

2 HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE A SHOP AND CAFE?

The survey showed that there is very strong demand for a shop and café. The questionnaire asked residents to rate the importance of a shop and café, with 5 being very important and 1 not important. 82% gave a rating of 4 or 5. Of the 5% giving a rating of 1 or 2 and therefore stating that a shop was unimportant to them, a number commented that they were used to not having a shop in the village and had adapted their shopping habits accordingly.

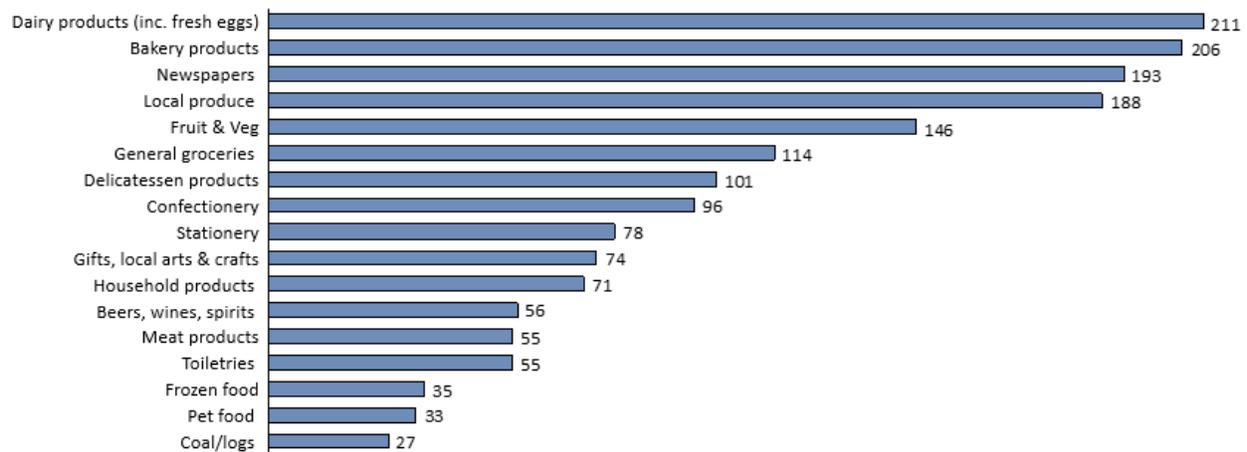


The strong majority of respondents (79%) expect to use the shop on a daily or weekly basis

The Sports and Social Club respondents were generally not supportive of a shop – only 2 of the 24 respondents gave a score of 4 or 5. By contrast all of the School respondents considered a shop and café either very important or important.

3 WHAT SHOULD THE SHOP SELL AND WHAT SERVICES SHOULD BE OFFERED?

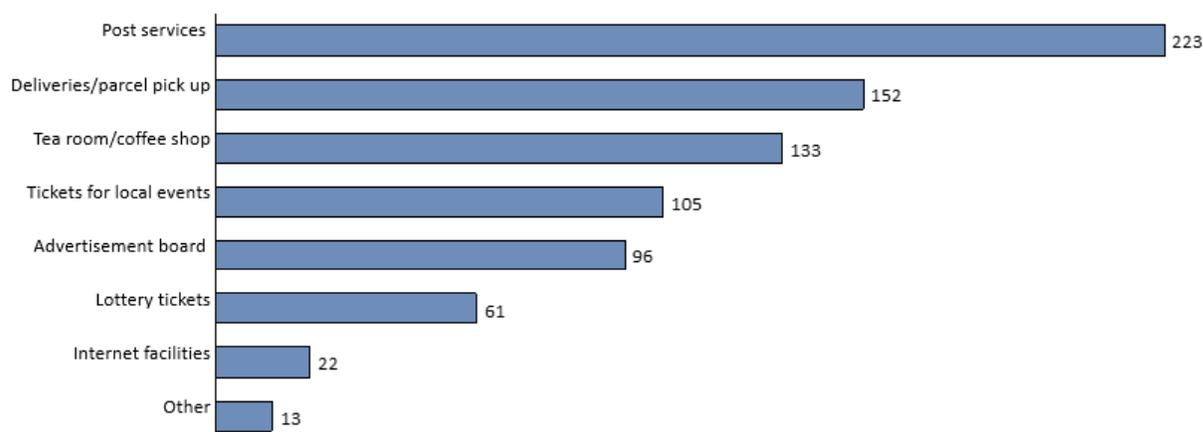
The survey showed that there is demand for a full range of groceries and local produce. Dairy products, bakery products and newspapers were particularly requested. Many said that it would be important to ensure that bakery products, fruit and vegetables and meat are of high quality and locally sourced where possible.



We had many useful suggestions for other items that could be sold with sewing items, postage stamps and over the counter medicines and first aid items being frequently suggested.

Residents are particularly keen to ensure that we provide postal services and a café was also seen as a valuable addition. Many commented that we need to get the ambience of the café right for it to be successful and the coffee must be good! Suggestions for other services included dry cleaning and a pay point for gas and electricity.

The graph on the next page shows the number of households in favour of the various categories of services suggested in the questionnaire.



We also asked specifically whether households would like us to sell alcoholic drinks and cigarettes. 14% of respondents said they would prefer alcoholic drinks were not sold, with 32% being in favour and the remainder saying that they did not mind either way. The position with cigarettes was a little different with 42% stating they would prefer they were not sold and only 10% positively in favour.

4 OFFERS OF HELP AND SUPPORT

We were delighted with the many offers of help and support and were particularly touched by the number of elderly residents who said they would have liked to volunteer to work in the shop but felt they were too infirm to be able to do so.

We had a fantastic 66 people who said they would be prepared to volunteer to work in the shop and cafe - a number which will enable us to ensure that volunteering is not a burden to those involved and can be flexible enough to work around volunteers' other commitments. We even had offers from a number of School parents living outside the Parish to volunteer to work in the shop which is much appreciated.

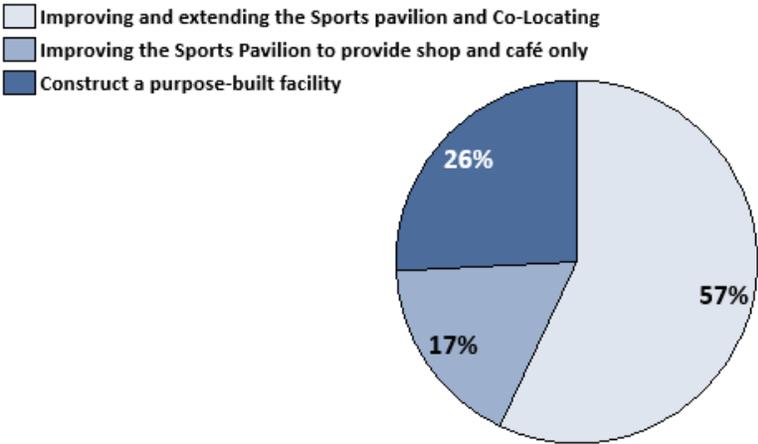
Many are prepared to financially support this project. The concept of shares in particular has been hugely popular with 42% being interested in purchasing them. In addition, 16% were prepared to consider a donation. We consider that this level of financial support, combined with the grant funding we would apply for, gives us the confidence that we can secure the necessary money to proceed with the project.

The questionnaire also asked if respondents might be able to offer professional or other relevant advice or support. There were many responses offering a wide range of skills and experience. They included planning, engineering, building, design, retail, marketing, financial, legal, HR and IT support. We will be in touch with those who have offered to support us as the project progresses.

5 LOCATION

The questionnaire asked for comments and views on some initial considerations around location. The full results on the website contain some of the comments we received on the options.

There was a clear preference for either improving and extending the existing sports pavilion building or building a new purpose built facility. Many of the respondents did comment that they felt a new purpose built facility was the optimum solution but they had not ticked the option as they were concerned that it was the most expensive option. The Sports and Social Club in particular were strongly in favour of a new purpose built facility, with 100% voting for this option.



A number of alternative locations were suggested, which we are now reviewing. The next step is to determine the preferred location or locations bearing in mind the feedback from the survey and our further review of the available options.

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We feel that there is sufficient support and demand in the parish for a village shop so we will continue to develop plans for the village shop and cafe, taking into account the feedback we have received from the village survey. Our next step is to determine the preferred location and prepare detailed plans and costings. When the plans are sufficiently developed we will share more information accordingly.

The Village Shop page on the village website will be regularly updated to show progress we are making. If you have any questions or would like to discuss anything informally, please get in contact with any member of the Village Shop Working Party:

Alison Welterveden	welterveden@btinternet.com	01798 865650
Mick Foote	footemichael1@gmail.com	01798 865156
Shelagh Morgan	shelmorg@btinternet.com	01798 865036
Sammi Leese	sammi@theramble.co.uk	01798 865106
Revd Colin Datchler	colindatchler@hotmail.co.uk	01798 865472