

## **Parish Survey – results now in!**

Local residents know they have a Parish Council and whilst some are not sure what it does, they are happy with the facilities and services it provides.

These are the findings of the recent survey carried out by the Parish Council to seek residents' views and identify their priorities for the local area.

Upton-by-Chester and District and Parish Council carried out a survey of residents which included questions covering their understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Parish Council and what residents saw as their priorities. The survey was designed to capture a 'snapshot' of opinion and to inform potential future targeted work for further insights.

The online survey was supplemented by paper copies which were made available at key locations within the parish or upon request; the Parish Council received 226 results. Statistically this is an adequate sample size for the population. The results were 'weighted' to reflect the population demographics of Upton, the Bache and Moston.

### Key findings

90 per cent of respondents were aware of the Parish Council (PC) and whilst over-half (60 per cent) said that they were not aware of what the PC does, awareness of specific services and facilities was higher: for instance, 93 per cent were aware the council is responsible for the Upton Pavilion and 74 per cent were aware it is responsible for the tennis courts at QEII Playing Fields.

Over half of survey participants showed good awareness of PC staff, social media, website and noticeboards with half of respondents wanted to receive newsletters in an online format in future.

However, 38 per cent believe the PC is responsible for overgrown hedges and trees and 20 per cent thought the PC was responsible for bus shelters. These are not within the PC's remit.

### Paying for Parish Council Services and Facilities

The Annual Parish Precept for 2022-23 of £43.43 is equivalent to £0.83 per household, per week and 58 per cent of respondents felt this was good value for money. 15 per cent said it was not good value and 28 per cent were unsure.

### Local priorities

Residents were asked about their priorities for the local area and how they would like the PC to prioritise its spending in future years.

Pavilion – 51 per cent

Youth provision – 46 per cent

QEII Playing Fields – 41 per cent

Hosting community events – 31 per cent

*"I think the events you have organised have been great. What I have enjoyed about them is the sense of community they bring ... we feel part of something."*

Much lower on the priority list were the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts with 6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively. Both have seen significant investment in recent years and are well-used by local people.

#### Issues for Cheshire West and Chester Council to address

Many residents took the opportunity to make comments on the upkeep of Upton's public spaces such as roads, pavements, grass verges and hedges. Also mentioned were cycle lanes, dog fouling and support for children and young people. These are the responsibility of the principal authority and were the biggest source of negative comments and dissatisfaction; they will be escalated to the Borough Council.

#### Next steps

The PC has noted that the survey garnered the most responses from home-owning and retired or non-working residents. There were fewer responses from those full- and part-time work as well as those renting, privately or socially. A lower level young people took part. To address these issues, survey results were weighted to reflect the demographic make-up of Upton, the Bache and Moston to make them a representative sample.

These findings will inform future targeted approaches to further support the work of the Parish Council and help to develop future priorities. Areas for focus will likely include environmental enhancements for Parish Council assets, investing in our facilities, further partnership working on issues like youth and more community events as well as communication and promotion.

From the survey snapshot, we can see that the majority of people are happy with the facilities and services provided by the Parish Council and believe that they represent value for money.

As one local resident told the survey:

*"I feel lucky to live in an area such as Upton."*

We couldn't agree more.