

**Cornforth Parish Council**  
**Residents Survey 2024 – Results**

Introduction

The survey was delivered to all households in the Village between 24 September to 15 October 2024. (Many thanks to those people who helped with the delivery). Residents were invited to complete and return the survey by 18 October 2024 – 3 collection points were identified, as well as the option of returning by email or WhatsApp. A total of 1270 surveys were delivered – with the following numbers received:-

<b>Collection point/method</b>	<b>Number of completed surveys</b>
Cornforth House	49
Cornforth Library	15
Square and Compass Pub	9
Email	4
WhatsApp	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>

This represents a response rate of **6.22%**

The report gives the number of responses for each topic area and is collated under each heading of the survey as it was designed.

A summary of responses related to improvements identified by residents is given in the final section (Section 3) of the report (collated from the sections of the survey headed “What would you like to see provided or improved in Cornforth” and “tell us what you think”). A number of individual residents made “personal” comments – these are not covered in the report (in the interest of confidentiality/sensitivity) but have been followed up with the individuals concerned.

**GENERAL**

**Question – What do you like and appreciate about living in Cornforth**

(Responses collated and given as a percentage of the total of completed surveys received – many respondents listed more than one observation)

<b>Observation/response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
People/Neighbours/Community	35%
Green spaces/woodland areas/countryside walks	19%
Cornforth Partnership	19%
Peaceful/quiet village	15%
Cornforth Library	8%
Community Centre	8%
Local Businesses	6%
Medical Centre and Pharmacy	4%
Primary School	4%
Proximity to Durham	3%
*Note that 12% of respondents used this section of the survey to express their view that they feel the village is “in decline” and has been for a number of years	

## **Section 1 – The Areas which the Parish Council is responsible for:-**

### **1.1 Bill Wilson Memorial Park (Playground)**

14% of respondents (a mixture of people who use the park regularly and those who don't) said that they feel the park is well used, is well maintained and facilities are good.

Those who use the park regularly (15 respondents) – generally responded positively. Suggested improvements identified as:-

- a) Dog poo – 4 comments received – (suggestions include an additional bin). (Note that this issue is a recurring observation from respondents to the survey and is discussed later in the report).
- b) Cleanliness of the equipment – 3 respondents said they want the equipment to be cleaned more frequently.
- c) Improve facilities in the “toddler” play area – 3 respondents suggested that the play equipment should be renewed.
- d) Install a sports running track – 2 respondents suggested that a running track could be installed.
- e) Replace the current “small” goal posts with full size goal posts – 1 respondent.
- f) CCTV – 1 respondent suggested that this would be helpful in identifying dog owners who do not “pick up” after their dogs.
- g) Lighting – 1 respondent suggested that lighting should be installed.

Comments from respondents who do not use the park regularly (2 respondents said they do not use the park because of their experiences of anti-social behaviour in the past) include:-

- a) Install a sports running track – 3 respondents.
- b) Install “adult” fitness equipment – 3 respondents.
- c) Clean the equipment more frequently – 3 respondents.
- d) Install CCTV – 3 respondents.
- e) Ban dogs – 2 respondents.
- f) Employ a park keeper and lock the park at night – 2 respondents.
- g) Install public toilets – 2 respondents.
- h) Remove seats (to stop people from “gathering” in the park) – 1 respondent.
- i) Remove shrubbery (as a security measure) – 1 respondent.
- j) Install “agility” type equipment for toddlers – 1 respondent.
- k) Install a “zip wire” – 1 respondent.

### **1.2 Village Green**

26% of respondents gave positive responses and said they feel the Village Green is well maintained. 15% of respondents recognised that the Village Green has had a lot of investment in previous years (as a conservation area).

Suggested improvements identified as:-

- a) Road surfaces – at the “bottom” of the Green, and the cobbled area – 4 respondents in total.
- b) Install flower beds/plant shrubs/plant bulbs – 4 respondents.

- c) Install a bench at the “bottom” of the Green – 2 respondents. (1 respondent said that the current benches on the Green are not comfortable).
- d) Dogs should be kept on a lead – 2 respondents.
- e) Trees – 1 respondent felt the trees should be better maintained (crown lifted). 1 respondent said that more trees should be “uplit”, while 1 respondent said that trees should not be uplit at all (concerns about wildlife).
- f) Install a salt bin at the bottom of the Green – 2 respondents.
- g) Hold an annual/biannual village fete on the Green – 2 respondents.
- h) Install a “traffic mirror” at the bend in the road at the bottom of the Green – 1 respondent.
- i) Install display signage to recognise the Village Green as a conservation area – 1 respondent.

### 1.3 Allotment Site (36 plots at bottom of Verdun Terrace (between the two disused Railway lines

3 people who currently hold a parish council allotment responded.

Suggested improvements include:-

- a) Resurface the entry road - 1 respondent.
- b) A regular “tidy up” is needed at the entry road – to remove tree and shrub debris – 1 respondent.

Comments from people who do not hold an allotment include:-

- a) Develop the unused allotments as a community nature reserve – 3 respondents.
- b) Develop a community allotment – 3 respondents.

### 1.4 Open space at Stobbs Cross Road (small “play” pitch)

12 people commented that this area is well used but facilities could be improved.

4 people who regularly use the play pitch responded to the survey – all said the key “problem” with this open space is dog poo.

Suggested improvements in response to the question “how could this open space be better utilised?” include:-

- a) Ensure regular cleaning (dog poo), litter picking and shrub/tree maintenance – 11 respondents.
- b) Mark out the football pitch – 4 respondents.
- c) Install fencing (to deter off road bikes) or nets – 4 respondents.
- d) Make this area a “teenager” zone – install fitness equipment and other sports facilities (eg. basketball) – 3 respondents.
- e) Turn this area into a dedicated “dog park” – 3 respondents.
- f) Install an all weather pitch – 1 respondent.
- g) Install lighting – 1 respondent.

### 1.5 Other areas

36 people responded to the question “The Parish Council also has responsibility for a number of litter bins, dog “waste” bins, “salt” bins and benches - In your view, how could any of these facilities be improved?”

10 people said the current provision is adequate.

- a) 12 people said the salt bins need to be renewed, and should be emptied and replenished on a regular basis. As outlined earlier (in 1.2) 2 respondents said a salt bin should be installed at the bottom of the Village Green. 1 respondent suggested that a salt bin should be installed on Station Road.
- b) Dog Poo bins – As outlined in 1.1, 3 people suggested that an additional bin at the top of Cedar Terrace entrance to the park might be helpful. 10 people suggested that dog bins are needed on the main dog walking routes (The bypass road and disused railway lines were identified).
- c) 5 people suggested more signs around the village, reminding dog walkers to pick up after their dog (and reminding them of potential fines) would be beneficial.
- d) Benches – 5 people suggested more benches in the village would be beneficial, with a reminder that areas around the benches should be kept “weed free”.

## **Section 2 – The areas which are not the responsibility of the Parish Council.**

We asked residents to consider areas which are not the direct responsibility of the Parish Council, and to rank them according to how the Council should prioritise its efforts, continue to focus on, and provide discretionary funding (where appropriate) to.

47 people (59%) of respondents ranked the areas.

The average scores from these respondents are shown below (with 1 being the most important priority and 6 being the least).

<b>Priority Number</b>	<b>Issue</b>
1	Measures to improve and maintain services of benefit to the Community (eg. youth projects, activities to support peoples' wellbeing and other community events and facilities)
2	Measures to improve and maintain the “appearance” of the Village. (eg. Keeping “open” spaces clean and tidy)
3	Public transport
4	Maintenance of roads and footpaths
5	Crime reduction measures
6	Traffic and speed calming measures

### **Section 3 – Suggested Improvements.**

This section covers the responses received from the sections of the survey headed “What would you like to see provided or improved in Cornforth” and “tell us what you think”. The number of responses received is shown as a total from the 76 completed surveys received.

#### **3.1 – High Street**

39% of respondents identified this as a key area for improvement the Village

Suggested improvements include:-

- a) Tidy up the empty properties – ensure that property owners keep their property clean and well maintained (15 respondents).
- b) Try to attract more independent retailers to the High Street (18 respondents).
- c) Keep the High Street clean and “weed free” (footpaths) and the “green” areas along the High Street tidy. (7 respondents)

#### **3.2 – Trees/Shrubs and green “open” spaces**

27% of respondents identified this as an area for improvement. Key issues identified are overgrown shrubbery and autumn leaves causing a safety issue.

Areas identified include:-

- a) The Church Yard and the walking path between the Church yard and the rear of Glebe Villas. (14 respondents).
- b) The area between Coronation Terrace and Verdun Terrace (and the “bottom” walkway/road of the terraces). (5 respondents).
- c) Entry roads and footpaths into the Village (6 respondents). In particular the footpath down to Bridge Road from Moneys Buildings and Station Road to Metal Bridge Road.
- d) The area at the Medical Centre and the steps to Reading Street bungalows (2 respondents).

#### **3.3 – Public Transport**

22% of respondents identified the lack of public transport and unreliability of the current bus service to be a key issue.

#### **3.4 – Dog Poo**

21% of respondents identified this as an area for improvement (discussed in Section 1 of the report).

#### **3.5 – Litter and Fly tipping**

21% of respondents identified this as an issue. Key “problem” areas were outlined as being the area between Poplar Terrace and Hawthorn Terrace, the disused railway lines, the bypass road, the “Quarry” Road, Stobb Cross Lane and the woodland area.

#### **3.6 – Empty and Derelict Properties**

8% of respondents identified this as an issue. (See comments in 3.1a above). Other areas identified were Poplar Terrace, Hawthorn Terrace and Verdun Terrace.

### 3.7 – Speeding traffic

7% of respondents said that traffic calming measures should be considered – Bridge Road, Station Road, Garmondsway Road and Beech Parade were identified as key “problem” areas in this respect.

### 3.8 – Off Road Bikes

5% of respondents mentioned the ongoing problem of off-road bikes in and around the Village. (Railway lines, woodland area and play area at Stobbs Cross were identified as the key problem areas).

### 3.9 – Other Improvements/Questions/Observations

Some respondents asked questions as part of their comments. Key questions include:-

- a) Is the Holy Trinity Church identified for closure? (7 people)
- b) When will the site on Station Road (the Scrap Yard) be cleared? (2 people).
- c) Can the Parish Council work more closely with other partners? (County Council, Living and Cornforth Partnership were mentioned) to facilitate more collaborative action. (6 people).
- d) Can the Parish Council try to ensure that our County Councillor is more proactive in the Village? (5 people).

## **Section 4 - Conclusion**

It is unlikely that the Residents Survey activity and this report will have raised any “new” or unknown issues for the Parish Council.

However, it is hoped that by seeking a better understanding of the interests and concerns of residents in a structured way, it will help the Parish Council to better focus its action and prioritise effort and funding according to priorities identified from the survey.

Clearly, more discussion needs to take place to identify action to be taken in response to the survey results, but hopefully this report provides a “starting point”.

Janet Snowball  
Cornforth Parish Council Vice-Chair

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October 2024.