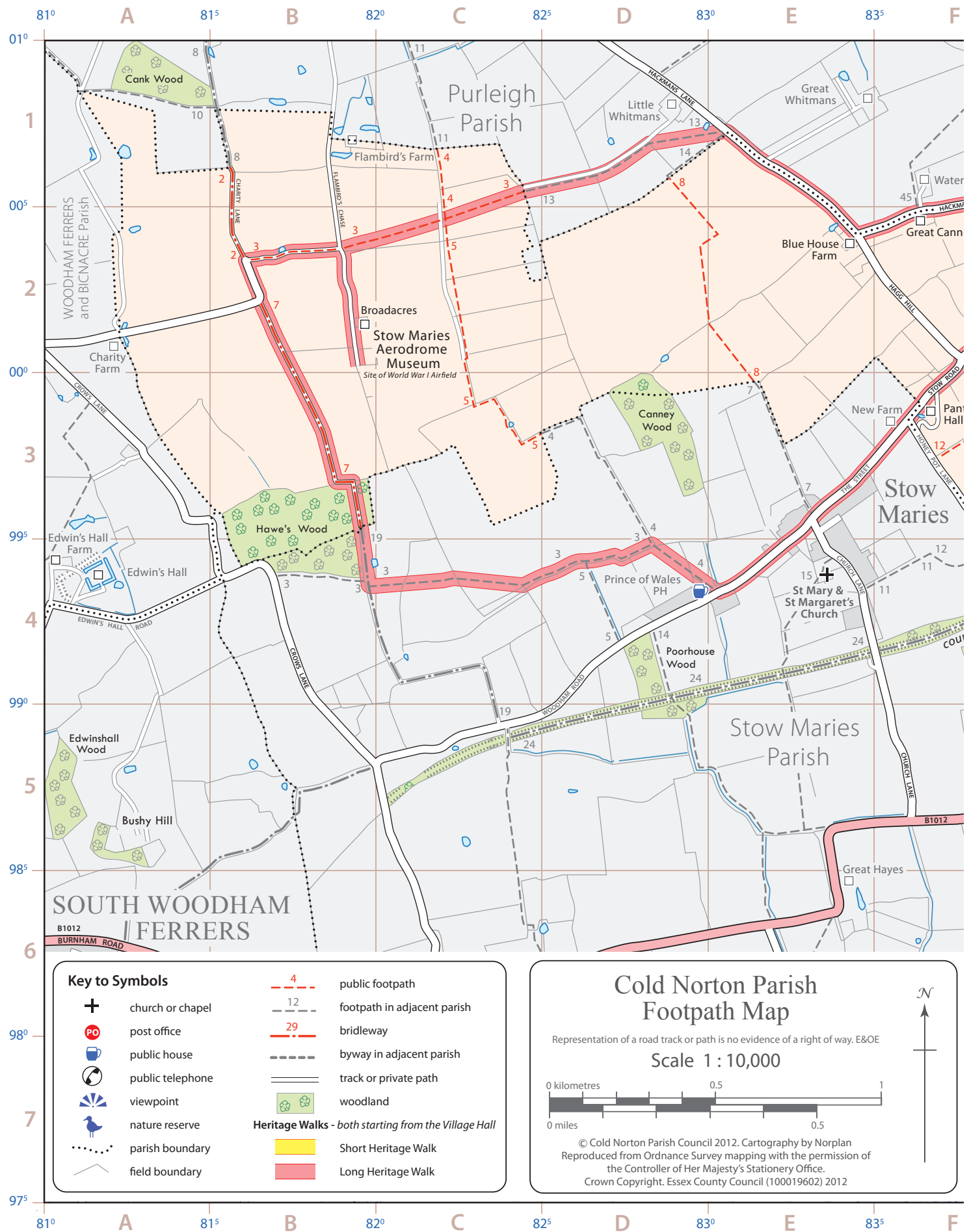


COLD NORTON VILLAGE APPRAISAL



2011



Cold Norton *in the* Year 2011

During the summer of 2011, a village appraisal was undertaken to deepen the Parish Council's understanding of the village to help inform decision making and assess priorities. The Survey also acts as an important record document describing the village at a point in time and provides a useful comparison with the original survey carried out in 2000. Results for the year 2000 are shown in brackets. Trends and changes are highlighted in the report, below. A questionnaire was delivered to every house in the village and 286, being around 72% were returned. The Parish Council is therefore of the view the results are meaningful and representative of the views of the village.

Executive Overview

- Cold Norton has a relatively static population – 44% of the respondents have lived in the village for over 15 years compared with 34% in the 2000 survey. Only 9 people have lived here for more than 50 years.
- 22% of people are aged under 16 whilst 32% are aged over 60. The comparable figures from 2000 are 24% and 15% indicating an ageing population.
- 97% of residents want the rural character of the village preserved. There is a general desire for any future development to be of a small scale and of smaller types of property in order to protect the village environment.
- The majority of the respondents are concerned with speeding traffic and pedestrian safety, and would welcome some sort of traffic calming or further speed restriction.
- Most people use private transport to go to work with buses being mainly used for shopping and leisure. There is a demand for later and more frequent trains.
- Local utilities are considered to be good. The village is relatively split on the provision of re-cycling facilities with a significant proportion wanting more facilities to re-cycle, e.g., plastic and batteries whilst a similar amount are satisfied with existing provision.
- Respondents had a lot of ideas for new clubs and societies, although only a handful of names were put down as potential leaders. The playground equipment is generally considered to be reasonable, although many people have asked for improvements.
- The local shop has a very high degree of support from the community with 546 users; the Church is viewed as a significant focal point in the village whilst 310 people use the newly re-opened community pub.
- Most people think that the Parish Council publicises its decisions reasonably well.

This summary deals with the headline findings in the Appraisal. Many of the answers to the questions provide interesting insights into the village and the needs of its people and in comparison to the findings from the 2000 Village Appraisal provide an indication of change in the period.

Cold Norton – a synopsis

The Parish of Cold Norton lies approximately 4 miles south of Maldon and 10 miles south east of Chelmsford. It is situated at the south-east end of the Danbury Ridge. The village is inconspicuous from distant viewpoints as it is set within a dip of the gently undulating landscape. To the south of the village lies Beacon Hill from where the land slopes down the Crouch Valley. North-eastwards from the village the land falls to a low lying plain and the Blackwater Estuary.

The main part of the settlement is astride Latchingdon Road between Three Ashes Corner and the railway bridge towards Palepit Corner, and to the south near North Fambridge. The Parish Church of St. Stephens is located on a south-facing slope on the road leading to North Fambridge.

The built core of the village is generally well landscaped with many mature trees and established hedgerows. The rural parish beyond is partially wooded with scattered areas of dense vegetation, particularly along the disused railway. The golf course to the south of the village includes Beacon Hill, which is a dominant feature in the landscape.

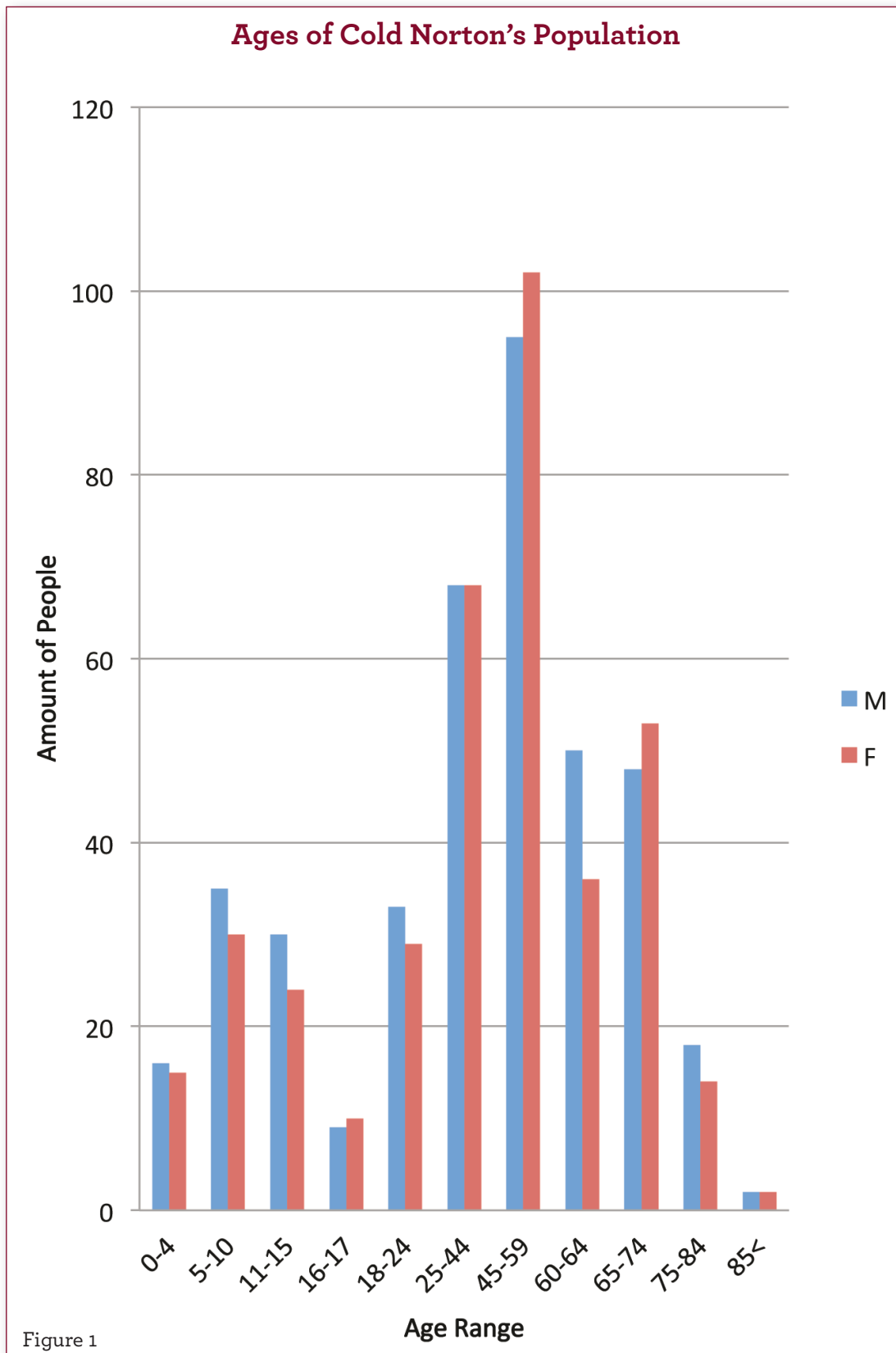
Views of the Blackwater and Crouch estuaries can be enjoyed from Hackmans Lane, St Stephens Road and Beacon Hill. The meadow to the north of the playing field affords an excellent view across the fields to Purleigh. A network of footpaths criss-crosses the parish.

There are 396 dwellings, some industrial and commercial enterprises and the Three Rivers Golf and Country Club.

Cold Norton has a number of facilities, which are appropriate to the size of the village. In St Stephens Road there is a thriving primary school, with 157 pupils in attendance. The Village Hall is centrally located and has recently been refurbished and extended with the aid of a Lottery grant. The Hall is the base for many groups and clubs, including the Pre-School group, WI, Badminton Club, Rainbows and Guides, Disabled Group, a Mother & Toddler Group, Keep Fit Class and has attracted a number of new user groups following its refurbishment. Alongside the Village Hall is a playing field and recreation land totalling 2.03 hectares. The playing field includes a range of playground equipment, a full-size football pitch, and a hard-standing, marked out for netball and basketball. The recreation land to the north of the playing field is intended as a natural meadow, where residents can enjoy its quiet and scenic beauty. There is a well used and maintained area of allotment land adjacent to Clarke Rise. There is an excellent general store that also houses the Post Office. 'The Norton' public house is situated on the Latchingdon Road and has recently celebrated its second anniversary since re-opening as a community pub based on a strong group of volunteers. A Mobile Library unit visits the village once a fortnight.

The Population

The ages and genders of the population are shown in Figure 1, which shows that the majority of people living in Cold Norton are of working age, between 25 and 59. There is no real significant difference between males and females, although there are more males overall. This is very similar to the results from the Village Appraisal completed in 2000.



56% (66%) of the population have lived in Cold Norton for less than 15 years, with 5% (6%) having moved into the village within the year. See Figure 2. Conversely 44% of the population has remained in the village for over 15 years which is indicative of a relatively static population.

Housing and Planning

95% indicated that they had no-one in their family in need of alternative accommodation, compared to 88% in 2000. This difference could indicate that the houses which have been built in Cold Norton over the past 10 years have helped to fill the gap that the previous residents felt were there in the way of housing opportunities.

However, for 5% who were in need of alternative accommodation, 35% said that the reason was due to price, the second most quoted reason was the lack of suitable accommodation to buy. See Figure 3.

How long have you lived in Cold Norton?

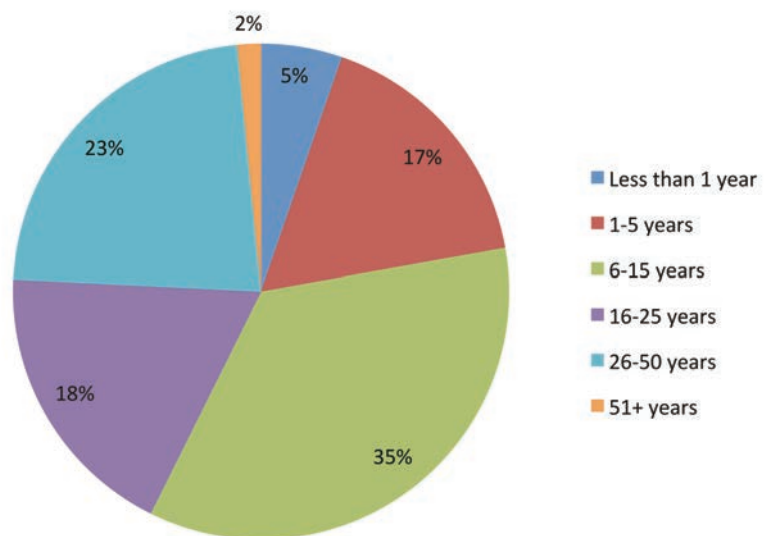


Figure 2

If unable to move, is this because of...?

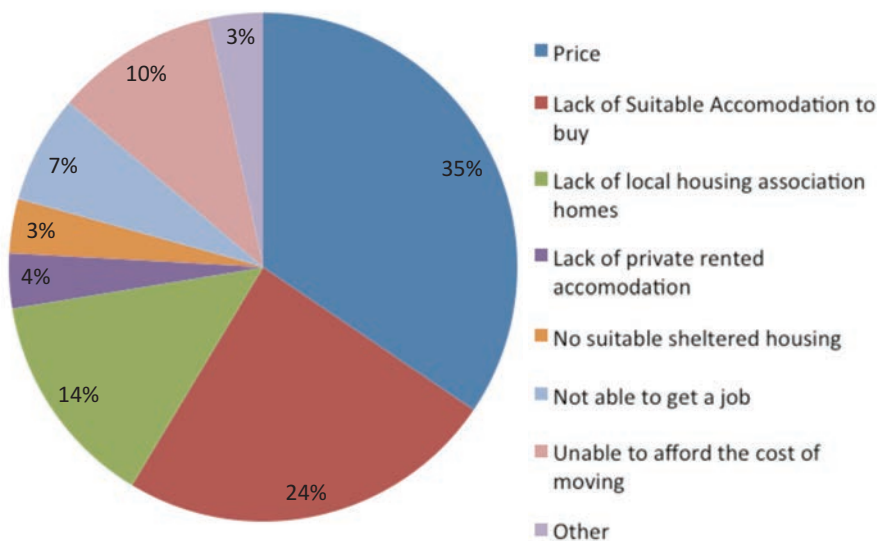


Figure 3

These are the same top two answers as in 2000, although the numbers now are much less significant. 64% of respondents answered that the most useful sort of accommodation would be smaller dwellings, e.g. flats, with 40% requesting them, and 36% responding with houses

There is a strong perceived preference for future development to be focused on smaller types of accommodation. 83% proposed property in this range of categories. See Figure 4. 16% favoured retirement property and

there were also a series of responses in the surveys to this question saying "none required".

When asked 'what do you think about the new houses that have been built in Cold Norton in the last 10 years?', 58% said the provision was 'about right', with only 13% saying 'too much new' and 14% saying 'too expensive'. This is compared to, in 2000, only 39% saying 'about right', with 18% saying 'too expensive' and 14% saying both 'too big' and 'too much new'. The decline in negative responses shows how the housing, since the previous Appraisal, has generally been well received and is in-line with residents' preferences. See Figure 5. Over 70% of respondents are at least satisfied with the appearance of the new houses built in the last decade.

What type of additional homes are needed in Cold Norton?

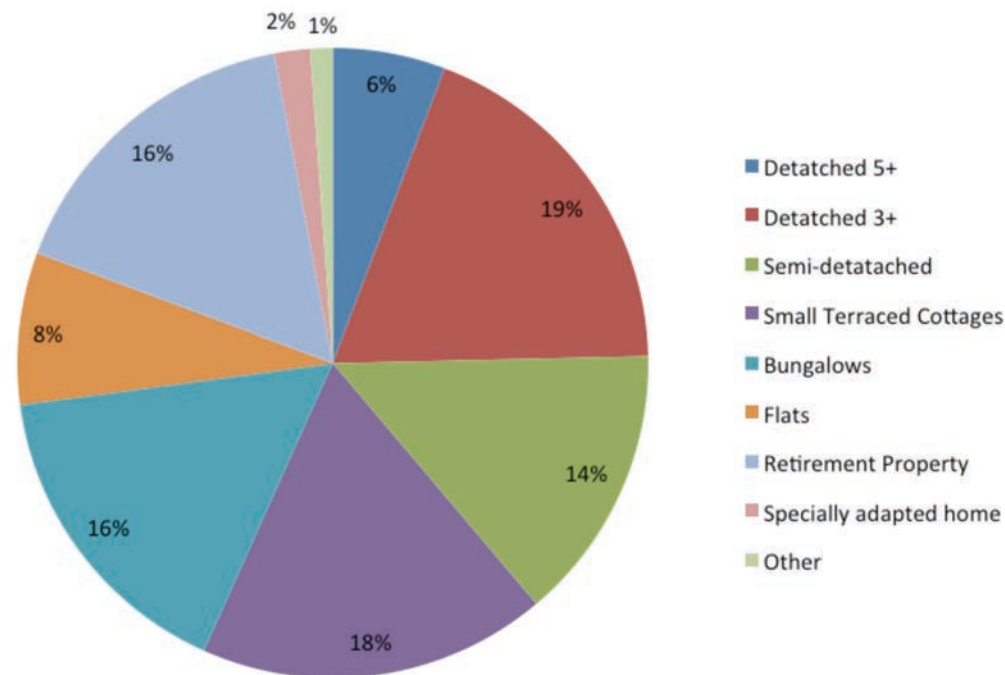


Figure 4

When asked 'which type of developments would you support in Cold Norton?' 33% of people preferred small groups of houses. Less than 1% favoured building large estates, suggesting a strong desire to keep the village rural and small in size. 97% of respondents wanted the rural character of the village preserved with 43% favouring no further development. 23% would find the development of small scale workshop units acceptable.

Police and Crime

To the question 'Is your dwelling within a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?', only 29% said that they were whilst 50% said that they did not know; this has increased since 2000, when only 31% did not know if their house was included in the scheme.

43% of individuals regard police coverage of Cold Norton to be poor, 22% reasonable and only 4% good, the other 31% had no opinion. This is very similar to 2000, whereby only 4% said police coverage was good and 51.9% said it was poor. This indicates that the perception of police coverage of the village has not changed much over 10 years with Police coverage remaining a pressing issue.

What do you think about the new houses that have been built in Cold Norton in the last 10 years?

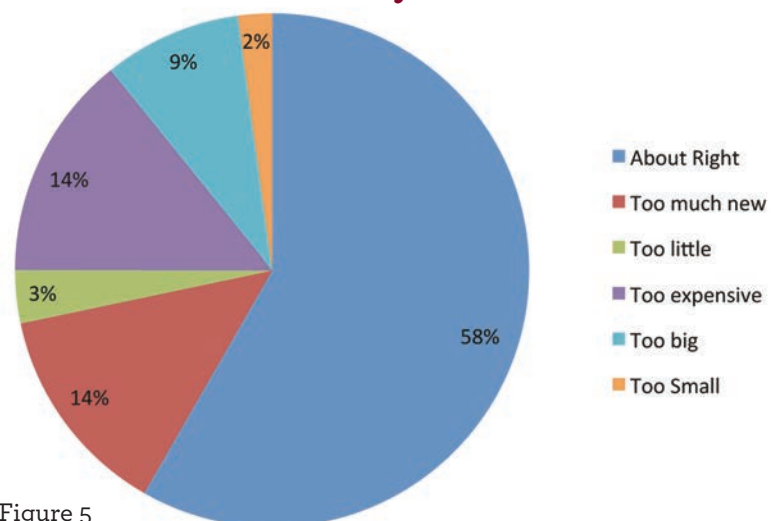
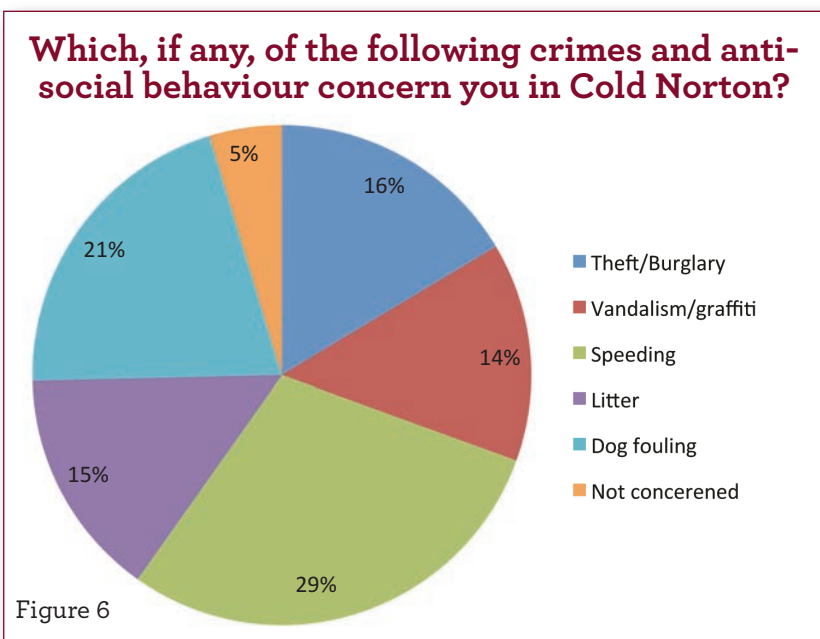


Figure 5

The main problem in 2000 was considered to be vandalism, with 68% recording concern. However, in 2011, only 14% consider it to be of concern, speeding at 29% and dog fouling at 21% are now bigger issues. See Figure 6. However, when specifically discussing the playground, the main concern is about the amount of vandalism and graffiti.



Highways and Road Safety

As previously stated, the main concern in 2011 is over speeding with a strong response to support various speed control measures. There were many comments over the speed of traffic throughout the village, including how visual display indicators do not always deter the speed of traffic and a single request to not put speed bumps in as it can affect people's backs.

There is a general consensus that cars drive too fast throughout the village, but also that during school-pick up times, cars are driven and park dangerously and often block in the residents of St Stephens Road, Station Crescent and Ferris Avenue. 60% of respondents agreed that there should be designated pull-in zones for school buses or better identified pick-up areas.

Local Environment and Facilities

Compared to 2000, the amount of houses complaining of 'many' flooding problems has decreased significantly, from 12.4% to 1%; only 11 houses recorded currently suffer from many flooding problems. This is a significant improvement. 69% of houses either have no problems or no opinion on the matter. This is compared to 54.5% having no problems with flooding in 2000. However, those who do have flooding problems are not traceable as the questionnaires were anonymous, so further feedback to the Parish Council would be useful.

When asked whether Cold Norton could be improved by a number of specified amenities, works or facilities, the most popular were better maintained pavements, requested by 25% of the population, underground utility cables and a gas supply. However, a lot of 'other ways' were also suggested for this question, ranging from more dog bins to better transport facilities to more road lights.

There was little consensus on the issue of recycling, with 43% of respondents considering that the current facilities were adequate and 47% claiming that they were not; the remaining 10% had no opinion. However when given the choice of recycling textiles, plastics or batteries, 48% asked for the facilities to be able to recycle plastic, compared to 28% for textiles and 24% for batteries. These questions were not addressed in the same way in 2000 as the same level of facility was not provided by the District Council although 90% were then prepared to re-cycle. The response to this section reflects a change in expectation over the decade since the original Village Survey.

Countryside

97% of respondents wanted the rural character of the village preserved, and the other 3% all had no opinion. This is consistent with 2000. Throughout the Survey people stated how the bushes and hedges need to be kept in better condition and how, in many places, they interfere with people walking safely on the pavement. With regard to the public footpaths, 430 people knew where the footpaths were, 329 people thought they were well signposted, compared to 150 who did not.

Transport

The main means of transport to work, training or study for 84% of the respondents was either car or van; 7% used the train, 4% took the local bus and 4% walked, the remaining 1% either travelled by taxi, motor bike or moped. The use of car or van is a definite increase from 2000, when 72.3% drove to work, training or study. It was commented in many cases, that if the bus facilities were better then they would be more open to using public transport; this is reflected by, of the people who did use the bus service, 64% used it for shopping and social or leisure, with only 8% using it to get to work. 45% of people would use a later and more frequent train service if available from North Farnbridge Station.

A significant number of people, 221, have difficulty getting to health services, for example, 53 of these people had trouble getting to the hospital, and 35 people had problems getting the doctors.

Shops, Services and Facilities

When asked, ‘do you use the following facilities?’ the most popular answers were the village shop and Post Office, with 546 people, and The Norton Pub with 310 people. The result for ‘The Norton’ is particularly encouraging given that it only re-opened 2 years ago as a “community pub” staffed and managed by local volunteers. See Figure 7. Only 6 people used the allotments; however they are almost fully let.

A large range of activities and sports were suggested, the most popular being a swimming pool, football, fitness training, yoga/Pilates and netball, some of which either are or could be provided at the Village Hall. The facilities provided in the children’s playground were rated by 41% of respondents as being at least reasonable, however, 46% responded as having no opinion on the matter. When suggesting ways the playground could be improved, people came up with such as ideas as, a better skate/bike park, more equipment for older children, better football facilities and football goals and commented that where equipment had been removed due to vandalism, they have not always been replaced.

Do you use the following facilities?

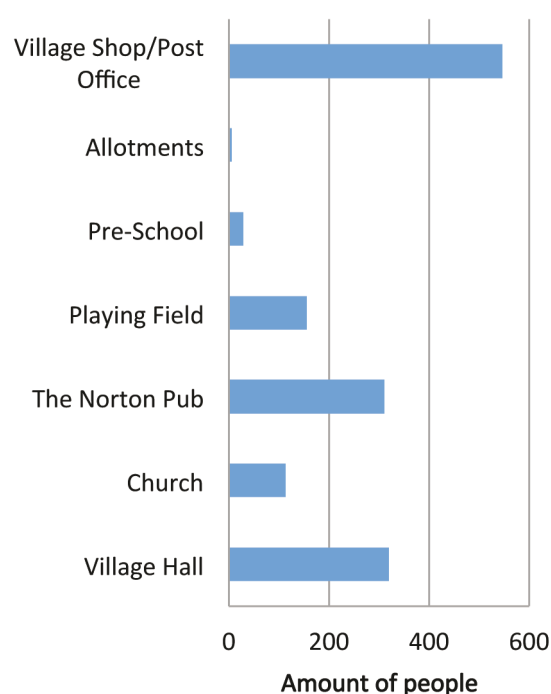


Figure 7

Church

113 people stated that they use the Church; 266 people see it as a focal point for the community and 199 people see it as important to the village as a historic building. 71 people said that the Church was not important to them.

Where do you usually find out about events taking place in the Parish?

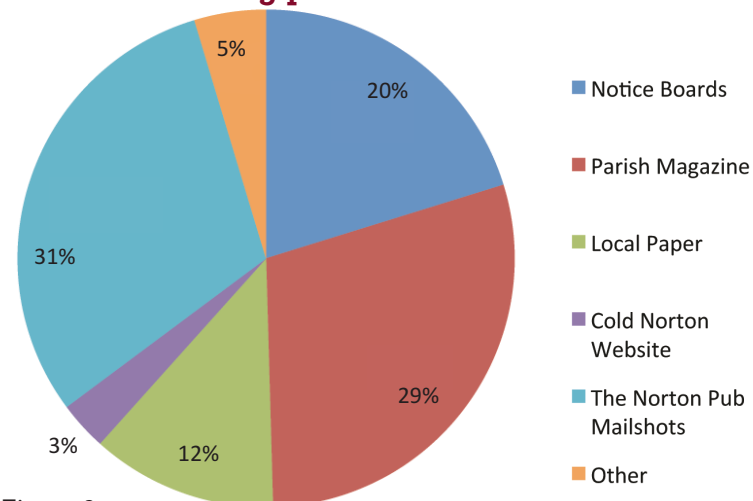


Figure 8

Publicity

73% of respondents thought that the Parish Council publicised its decisions and activities at least reasonably well. The most common source of information for finding out about events taking place in the parish are 'The Norton' pub mailshots, with 31% of people using them and the Parish magazine with 29%, compared to 20% looking at the notice boards. See Figure 8. There were 1009 respondents to this section suggesting that communications throughout the village are quite effective

Cold Norton Youth Survey 2011

107 respondents contributed to the youth survey aimed at young people in the age range 6-16. This is the first time such a survey has been carried out in Cold Norton. Survey forms were distributed to all of the houses in the village and with a response rate of around 72% the results can be considered to be meaningful.

1. 53% of respondents were boys, 47% girls
2. 55% of respondents were aged 11 or under. 45% were aged 11-16
3. 90% like living in Cold Norton
4. In answer to the question "what do you like to do in your spare time?"
 - a. 16% like to watch TV or play computer games
 - b. 14% visit friends
 - c. Otherwise there was a fairly even spread of the range of choices offered
5. In answer to the question "could these facilities be improved?" respondents answered:
 - a. 53% thought improvements to the playground would be of value
 - b. 21% thought improvements to the football pitch would be of value
 - c. 18% thought improvements to the skate board area would be of value
6. How would you like the facilities identified above improved:
 - a. Skateboard area: more ramps
 - b. Play equipment: often damaged, more needed for older children, safer monkey bars, zip line, big slide, roundabout
 - c. Footpaths require cutting more often
 - d. Basketball net: hoop is too high
 - e. Playing field: more even surface with holes filled, sand or rubber instead of bark, art trail in wooded area, tennis court, two goals and better marked pitch, more lights in winter
 - f. Clubs: Brownies, gymnastics, tennis club
7. What additional equipment and facilities would you like to see at the playing field?
 - a. 78% wanted a zip line
 - b. 75% wanted equipment for older kids
 - c. 53% wanted dirt jumps
 - d. A seesaw, tennis courts, obstacle course, roundabout, a slide, another football goal and a sandpit were also mentioned
8. Could any of the existing equipment be improved?
 - a. 64% wanted better swings and other equipment
 - b. 47% wanted improvements to the goal posts
 - c. 38% said that the football pitch could be improved
 - d. 35% wanted the skate boarding area improved
 - e. Other respondents mentioned improvements to the basket ball nets
9. Which places do you visit for leisure activities?
 - a. 78% go to Woodham and Maldon
 - b. 54% go to Chelmsford
 - c. 36% go to Burnham
10. Would you be interested in additional sports clubs or activities, if available?
 - a. 61% said "yes"
11. What sports, clubs or activities would you be interested in?
 - Tennis
 - Football (boys/ girls)
 - Badminton
 - Youth club
 - Rugby
 - Dance, singing, acting
 - Netball

- Karate
- Cricket
- Scouts, Cubs, Beavers
- Arts and crafts
- Trampoline
- Gymnastics
- Photography
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Swimming
- Dirt jumps
- Baseball
- Moto-cross
- Squash
- Rounders
- Mini-golf
- Cycling

12. Do any of the following cause you a problem or worry in Cold Norton?

- a. 55% said speeding traffic
- b. 40% had “nothing to do”
- c. 44% are bothered by dog fouling
- d. 17% were worried about being bullied, 14% about being attacked

13. Footpaths

- a. 79% know where the local footpaths are
- b. 54% say they are well sign posted
- c. 80% can use them without difficulty
- d. Concerns about the footpaths included: close to dangerous places, poor sign posting, dog fouling, overgrown

14. Danger spots on the roads in Cold Norton were identified as:

- a. Cars not stopping at the zebra crossing
- b. Walking to school
- c. Lights by the pub
- d. Lack of pavement or narrow pavement made worse by overhanging branches
- e. Visibility down St. Stephens Road when crossing by the Latchingdon Road

15. Speed Controls

- a. 49% wanted to see an extension of the 30mph speed limit
- b. 45% wanted children at play signs
- c. Others included traffic calming and a lower speed limit

16. Access

- a. 73% wanted cycle paths
- b. 46% wanted more or better footpaths
- c. 38% wanted better maintained pavements
- d. Others wanted a bus shelter for the school bus

17. Facilities at the Village Hall

- a. 78% said that they were at least reasonable

18. Suggestions for improving the facilities at the Village Hall included:

- a. More clubs, improved facilities at the playing field, the development of the site at the junction with Cherry Blossom Road

19. If you could change one thing about Cold Norton...

- More clubs and activities for older children
- Safer, better maintained paths, increased lighting, slower traffic
- Take-away restaurant
- Places for teenagers to hang out and not be a nuisance
- Better facilities at the park
- Better bus service; earlier and later, more frequent to Woodham and Chelmsford
- Dance club
- Bike ramps
- Youth club
- Another zebra crossing near the traffic lights and by the shop
- Swimming pool
- Surveillance of the park to cover people smoking and drinking
- New or better skate park
- Better play equipment
- Vets practice

Cold Norton Business Survey 2011

Ten businesses contributed to the first Cold Norton Business Survey as part of the Village Survey to which 72% of households responded.

1. **How long has your business been in operation?**
 - a. 20% have been in business for up to 5 years
 - b. 50% have been operating for over 10 years
2. **How long have you operated from your present location in Cold Norton?**
 - a. 30% for less than 5 years
 - b. 40% for over 10 years
3. **Is your accommodation in the right sized accommodation?**
 - a. 70% are based at home
 - b. None responded by saying that their accommodation was of the wrong size
4. **Are you currently seeking new accommodation?**
 - a. None were
5. **Not applicable in view of answer to 4 above**
6. **Of the people employed in Cold Norton?**
 - a. 80% are aged between 20 and 59
 - b. 50% are full time and 50% part time employees
 - c. There is no distinction between ages and part/full time employment
7. **Is this more or less than you employed last year?**
 - a. 80% said the same
8. **Staff Type**
 - a. Skilled manual 38%
 - b. Technical 29%
 - c. Professional 14%
 - d. Clerical 14%
9. **Where do your employees live?**
 - a. 20% live in Cold Norton
 - b. 20% each come from Woodham and Maldon
 - c. 7% travel more than 10 miles
10. **Why do your employees leave?**
 - a. 20% cited lack of transport to and from work
 - b. No other responses were received
11. **What changes could be made within the village that would bring benefits to your company?**
 - a. Better broadband
 - b. Lower taxation
 - c. Upgrade electricity and gas supply
12. **Are the electronic communications at your business adequate for your business?**
 - a. 60% yes
 - b. 40% no
13. **What are traffic movements like for your business (excluding commuting traffic)**
 - a. 50% had cars coming to and from their business every day
 - b. Only 10% had HGVs coming to and from their business
14. **Does your business benefit from being located in Cold Norton?**
 - a. 57% yes
 - b. 42% no
15. **Any other comments**
 - a. Know a lot of people in the village
 - b. Work from home
 - c. Accessible for clients and peaceful location
 - d. Village location provides more acceptability
 - e. Could operate from anywhere, so Cold Norton has no impact
 - f. No promotion

In Conclusion

Whilst many of the findings of the last survey are replicated in the 2011 Survey such as the value the community places upon the rural aspect of Cold Norton, the desire for smaller scale development, the reliance upon private transport for work and social activities it is clear that Cold Norton has a largely static and aging population hence requirements may alter in the future.

Local amenities are in the main well supported with the newly refurbished Village Hall and re-opened pub being appreciated. There is also significant demand for additional clubs and recreational opportunities; new leaders required!

For the first time a local business survey was undertaken. Most employees live locally and there is an even split between part time and full time employment. Poor broadband and lack of public transport are potentially limiting factors.

The Parish Council has a number of new issues to consider including improving and increasing provision of facilities for younger age groups as indicated in the first ever Youth Survey, particularly at the playing field. Re-cycling has also evolved in the last decade with a continuing demand for more opportunity to selectively re-cycle.

The Parish Council would like to thank the following for their help in organising the Survey, distributing and collecting questionnaires, analysing the responses and writing up the results: Edward Dyer, Maria Dyer, Sue Garnham, Alison McDonald, Rosie McDonald, Jenny Wakeling and Philip Wakeling. A grant was received from Essex County Council which has covered the cost of the exercise.





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