

# The Berinsfield Parish Plan 2009

The results of the Parish Plan Questionnaire have proved to be an interesting and informative basis for the Parish Plan which is a means of informing the appropriate authorities of the views of Berinsfield when they are considering the future of the village.

Some of the issues raised have already been, (or are being) dealt with, i.e. the drains and sewer issue, and a committee has been formed to look at the question of a mini bike/moto cross club.

One million pounds was allocated to the village after the sale of council houses to SOHA, and the projects identified then have been completed with improvements around the Library, Sports Centre and Family Centre.

There is clearly a great pride and community spirit in Berinsfield, 47% of people have lived in the village for more than 20 years, and in surveys carried out by a local housing association over 70% rate Berinsfield as a good or very good place to live.

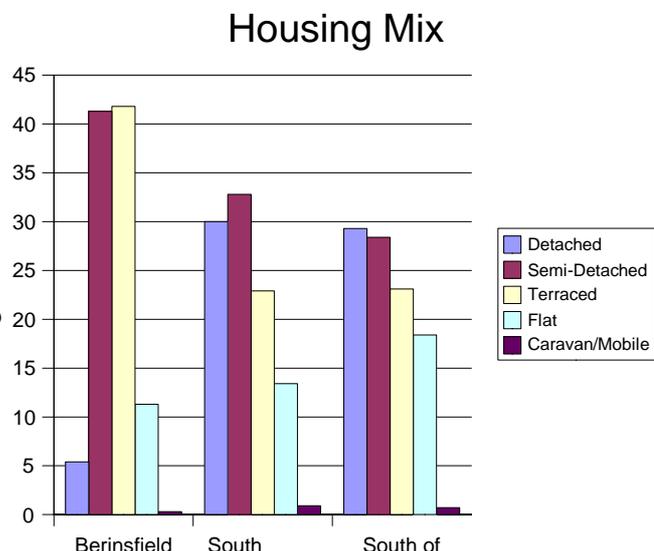
Our green spaces and playing fields are regarded as a great asset, and there was a clear mandate to keep them as they are with no building allowed with 92% saying 'No!' It is unrealistic to hope that there would be no further building in the village and estimates seem to vary from 50 to 150. This could prove to be a great opportunity for environmentally friendly houses with good infrastructure to be built on the outskirts of the village, and that could prove an asset to Berinsfield.

## Housing

When the Parish Plan committee started the views were that we as a village wanted a different housing mix, more 4 & 5 Bedroom houses, now that some time has passed we see that we also need more 2 bed bungalows for the older members of the community who would like to stay here in Berinsfield, but find the upkeep of a house too much. Also the need for accommodation for single people, both young and old, who would like to stay in the village, but be independent.

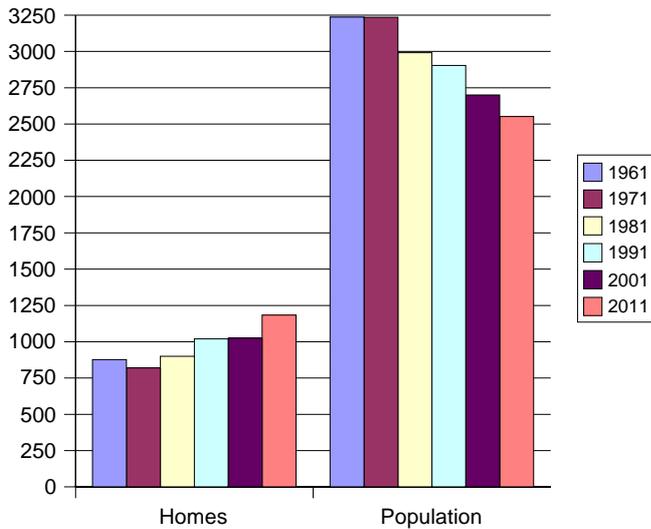
Berinsfield is unique in being the first new village in 200 years also has some other unique characteristics compared with other villages in South Oxfordshire and the South of England. The density of population is 8.9 people per hectare compared with Dorchester 1.3 and Benson 2.2 people per hectare. [Information from the 1991 Census]

The housing mix is also very different compared with other villages in South Oxfordshire and the South of England and it is felt that this also needs to be reviewed and any proposed new housing needs to take this into account. The private to rented proportions of the village are 59% owner occupied to 41% social or privately rented, which is higher than the rest of South Oxfordshire at 71% owner occupied to 29% social or privately rented. Also with the mix of type of house is very different compared with South Oxfordshire and the South of England with 5% detached in Berinsfield compared with 30% and 41% Semi-detached in Berinsfield compared with 32%.



Terrace housing is 42% in Berinsfield, which is nearly double the 23% found in the whole of South Oxfordshire.

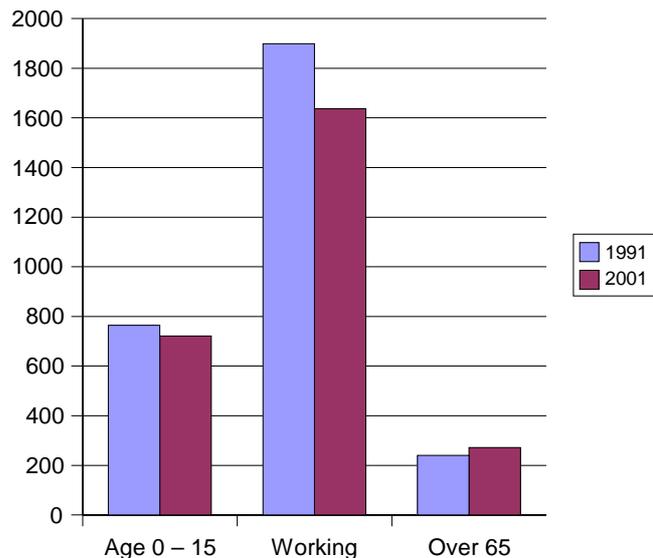
### Homes / Population



As a village we have a close community with 3 and 4 generations on the village and as shown above we are quite literary a close community with 8.9 people per hectare. For future developments the village is quite clear that our green centre is to remain 'GREEN' with 92% saying **NO** to building on the Parish or School fields and only 4% saying there should be 'infill' within the village and 37% want no further building programmes for the village. There are many reasons for not building in the centre of our village and a major reason is the infrastructure cannot take it. The drains and sewers put under pressure causing problems as shown with 57% reported in the Parish Plan Survey having had problems with Drains,

Sewers and Flooding. The flooding caused by new build and replacement build in the middle of our village. So the centre of the village is not the place for our village to expand. There is a working group working with SODC to get Thames Water to adopt our drains and sewers with 44% of those being surveyed having problems with sewers and drains, with a further 13% having issues with flooding caused by the blocked drains from new build. The survey showed that they thought either Thames Water, SODC or OCC were responsible for the Sewers and the Drains with 82% saying that Thames Water should adopt the Drains and Sewers. The good news this is being progressed. The transport issues have not even been taken into consideration.

### Age of Berinsfield Population



Although 37% said they were opposed to further build for the village, 59% have said they are not opposed to building beyond the village boundary or on brown field sites. [Green field site - extend the village boundaries, Brown field site' - re-using land within the village (built on before). 33% of the younger members of our community were asked if they would require housing over the next 10 years. As a village we need to encourage the younger members of the community to stay and promote extended family support, we are currently going through what our neighbouring villages and towns are experiencing, in that we are getting older, the number of homes have increased and the population of Berinsfield is going down.

The survey put forward the question, which had been part of South Oxfordshire District Council [SODC] housing development programme of where to build in South Oxfordshire. Question 6 - South Oxfordshire District Council is currently consulting on where development should take place in the district. The building will be over the next 20 years. Berinsfield is classed as one of the larger villages with Benson, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Dorchester, Horspath and Wheatley. Didcot is not included as a town for further building as it already has plans agreed for its future.

The most popular option was to distribute the building between Towns, Large Villages and Small Villages. Option D with 33.33%

The options were;

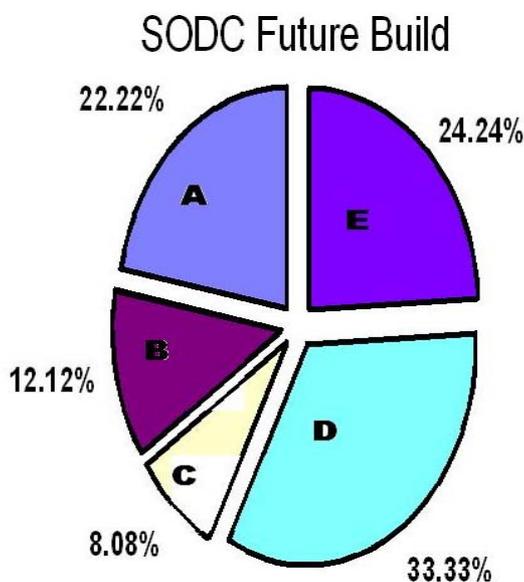
A - 100% of new housing to be built around the towns of South Oxfordshire (Henley, Wallingford & Thame)

B - 80% of new housing to be built around the towns of South Oxfordshire & 20% around the larger villages

C - 60% of new housing to be built around the towns of South Oxfordshire & 40% around the larger villages

D - 60% of new housing to be built around the towns of South Oxfordshire & 20% around the larger villages and 20% distributed around the smaller villages

E - Don't know



The survey showed the largest percentage 33.33% believe any new build should be distributed between the towns, larger villages and the smaller villages.

If there is to be new housing for the village all the issues above needs to be taken in to account and the environmental issues covered by the survey below. Comments made on the survey for in-fill or future build, as quoted on the questionnaire ' *Infill in this context means no more than 4 dwellings to fit into the space*' Fane Drive opposite the dentist, bottom shops, Beyond Barrington Close, Drayton side of Fane Drive, Car Park at the end of Lay Avenue, but not on the school field or Parish council fields, make better use of area behind Costcutters, opposite Foxs' Diner and car boot field, next to the Reading Road.

## Environment

### **Recycling**

As we are all well aware the recycling arrangements have been changed recently with more wheely-bins and 2-weekly collections, but we are sure that SODC will be holding a review to assess the progress of this latest initiative. However, the question of re-opening 'Whalley Corner', Question 54, which Oxfordshire County Council [OCC] closed as a cost saving to them, but deferred the cost of travelling to the Redbridge, Oakley Wood or Drayton recycling centres to us, 80% indicated they would want Whalley Corner re-opened as a re-cycling centre. In the comments about retaining the collections at the water tower, which should include garden waste. There were concerns that fly-tipping may become an issue if something was not done.

### **Energy**

Question 55 said 'Do you want to make use of our waste to create fuel and/or heat?' to which 87% said Yes and Question 56, 'Would you be interested in making your home more energy efficient?' 79% said 'Yes', so any new build should take this and the following answers into consideration. However, Question 57, 'Would you be prepared to use renewable fuel in your home (eg. Wood)?' and 61% responded 'No'.

## Amenities

In the survey we indicated that we were lucky as a village that we have many amenities.

### **Communication**

The survey did show that 39% who answered the survey had used 'Number 39' [39 Fane Drive – Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre] and 40% were aware of the Parish Web-site. However, the best means of staying in touch with what is happening on our village is by the village news letter 'Your Village Voice' with 94% of you reading it with 62% indicating it shouldn't change and 14% saying it needed changes. It has been suggested that we as a village need to hold a 'Village Diary' so village events do not clash.

### **Village Hall / Coffee Shop**

A question that has come up on numerous occasions at Parish Council Meetings is is there a need for a 'Village Hall'. The survey identified 15 locations which are hired for functions and meetings. 55% stated that they had used one or more of the 15 locations indicated with the BCA, Abbey Sports Centre and Church Hall being the most popular venues. Out of the 45% that stated they had not used these venues 97% had stated that they hadn't had a need. The finding of the survey indicates that there is not an need for a 'Village Hall' as we as a village have sufficient venues for our needs.

Another question asked was is there a need for a 'Coffee Shop', a meeting place, 45% stated that there was a need of which 57% who responded were female between 20 and 45 years of age.

### **Berinsfield Health Centre/Pharmacy**

The Berinsfield Health Centre/Pharmacy is a very important facility with 91% stating that they used these facilities and 84% said the opening times of the Pharmacy suited their needs. However, there were many comments made that opening Saturday mornings would be really useful.

### **Post Office**

As we are aware there have been numerous Post Office closures in the county and the UK and it shown by the survey that the Berinsfield Post Office is an important service used by 97% of those who responded. However, when asked to comment about additional services, TV Licences, Road Tax, Passport Forms, Foreign Exchange and paying bills all are done at the Post Office. An action for the Post Office to advertise their services.

### **Shops**

During the time the Parish Plan has been in existence there have been changes to the shops with some closing and others opening in there place. The survey asked the questions 'If you shop outside the village, what are your reasons for doing so?' the majority of the responses were that 'Prices are cheaper' and 'Need a wider range of goods'. From the comments there is a need for a 'Butchers', Green Grocers for more vegetables and organic food. Also comments made for a shop for Clothes.

### **Bank/Building Society/Credit Union**

The comments have been an important part of this survey and will be passed on to the relevant groups for further action. Under 'Amenities' it has been suggested that a Bank/Building Society would be an important addition to our facilities. However, in Question 31 would a 'Credit Union' be an advantage to you only 14% said 'Yes', 61% said 'No' and 25% responded 'Don't Know'

# Transport

The Parish Plan Questionnaire had a number of specifically related transport questions, with a number of comments on particular problems.

## **Roads**

In Question 28, 42% of people surveyed wanted more road signs showing the way to Berinsfield, despite the very few signs actually pointing the way here.

However, 82% of people did not want another entrance road to the village (Question 48), which may indicate that we have enough roads already for the current size of our village.

For Question 49, 32% of people thought that there should be a mini-roundabout at the hazardous junction of Fane Drive with Burcot Lane (the road to Drayton St Leonard).

Important Neighbourhood Action Group issues (Question 75) showed that 22% were concerned with speeding, 12% that cars were dangerously or illegally parked, 10% with anti-social riding/driving, and 4% with vehicles being over the weight limit. There was a request to put a 20 mph speed limit for Cowell Road, this has been done for the area around the Sport Centre, Library and Family Centre so perhaps would be reconsidered in light of this survey.

## **Parking**

Although much has been done about parking in the village one third (34%) of people thought there issues (Question 26) and as shown in 'Crime & Safety' - Cars parked illegally/dangerously is a major problem. This is probably due to the housing mix and with a much higher density of people per hectare than our neighbouring villages. There were many comments made about parking. Here is a summary of them:

Inconsiderate parking is a general problem throughout the village, with particular problems reported in: Colne Drive, Colwell Road, Fane Drive (by both sets of shops), Kennett, Lay Avenue/Evenlode Drive, Leach Road, Ock Drive, Shadwell Road, West Croft, and Windrush (the other roads may not have had full replies to the survey). Major problems include:

A - Parking on or across pavements

B - Parking on or near road junctions, giving poor visibility for other road users

C - Less use of garages for parking, leading to congested roads

D - Some lay-bys are little used: e.g. on Fane Drive, both opposite the allotments and between Leach & Wey roads.

E - High sided work vehicles (especially vans) take up spaces used by cars, and reduce road visibility.

## **Public Transport**

Nearly all people (89% in Question 81) said that a Road Crossing was needed for safe access to the Bus Stop on the main A4074 road. Of these, 40% wanted a Pelican crossing, 39% wanted a bridge, and 32% wanted an island in the road. OCC should take this up as a priority issue as a matter of safety and to encourage the use of public transport.

Another crossing brought up by the survey in Question 79, 'Do you think we need a proper road crossing at the shops/surgery?' , 64% responded 'Yes'.

'Solid paths to all bus stops' was a question answered 'Yes' by 81% of people surveyed. OCC should also take this issue up as a priority for safety and to encourage the use of public transport.

Only 6% of people needed help with transport to get to a regular activity (Question 89).

Observation: Buses around the village are often under-used, especially during the week. One of the better-used buses, the 8 am 105 bus to Oxford is threatened with withdrawal from the end of 2009. The 116 Abingdon bus does not connect with the train at our nearest station, Culham (3 miles), and trains do not stop there at weekends or during off-peak hours.

### **Bicycles.**

For Question 51, 'Would you use a safe cycle route to work?', 41% of people answered 'Yes'.

However, 92% said 'Yes' to Question 71, 'should the school have a bike shed?'.

Forty-six per cent of people also said they would use marked cycle paths in the village; 33% said 'no' and there were 21% don't know (Question 86).

There was another big score (88%) supporting Road Safety training for the younger members of our village e.g. bike riding (Question 88).

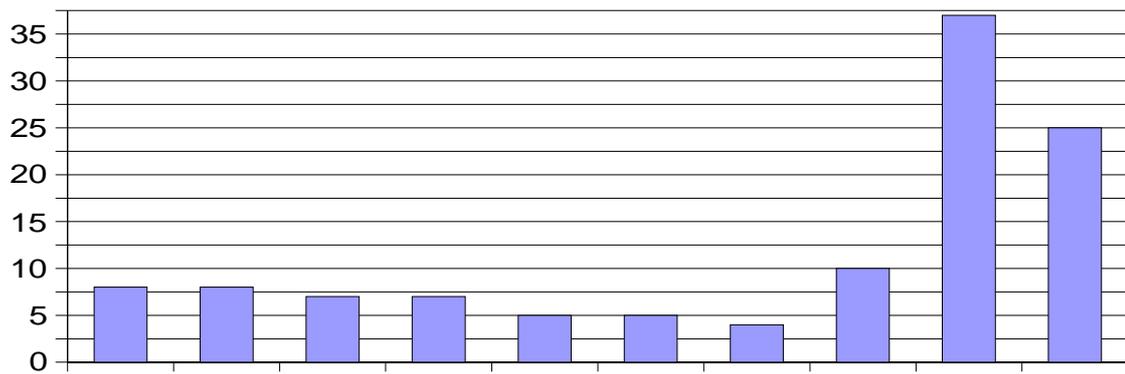
People commented on the need to mark cycle paths around the central field perimeter, and the marking of bicycle paths around the perimeter road (Wimblestraw/Fane Drive).

Should Berinsfield be part of the national cycle network (Question 85), 46 % of those who responded indicated we should be part of national cycle route such as 'Sus trans'. An off-road cycle path to east Oxford [Shotover] and Chiselhampton could be constructed along the Roman road, although measures would be needed to restrict it to bicycles use only.

## **Business**

This is one of the first surveys to include the business in Berinsfield of which 8% who responded to the survey run their own business. 52% stated they didn't need assistance, although 9% were interested in smaller business units. When asked 77% do not recruit locally, although 25% of those surveyed would like to work on the village. When asked local business 'Would you be interested in joining an association for local businesses?' or 'Would you participate in a website for local businesses?' 75% said 'No' and 67% would not be interested in participating in a Berinsfield business directory or events to promote local businesses.

# Employment to be developed in Berinsfield



## Type of Employment

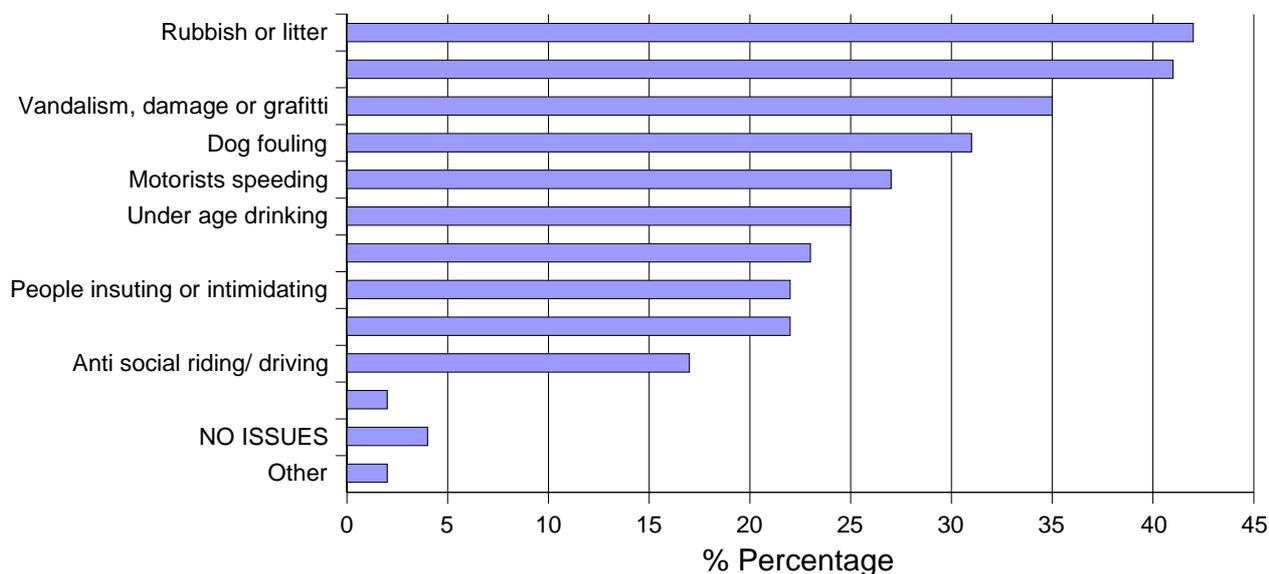
When asked what kind of support would be required to look for work 66% indicated they were not looking for work and 5% stated didn't require support. However, an interest was expressed for an 'Advice Centre', 'Job Postings (library, BIVC)', 'Employment Surgeries' and 'Employment workshops'.

Of those surveyed 12% work from home or in Berinsfield, 49% outside of the village, 8% unemployed and 32% Retired.

## Crime & Safety

In Question 75 the Neighbourhood Action Group for the area is interested in finding out the top issues in Berinsfield that they should be addressing. The combined results for over 20 years of age and under 20 years of age are shown below are the findings. However, the figures for People being Insulting or Intimidating' were 36% for 20 years and below. For 20 years and over it was speeding, parking illegally/dangerously and anti-social riding, which scored higher. Also under age drinking was a concern at 27% for over 20 years of age and 16% for under 20 years of age.

### Top 3 Issues for Berinsfield Residents



Question 50 was how to solve the traffic problems outside the school. A comment made was 'Something should be done before there is an accident!'. Only 2% said there should 'Take no action'. The most popular option was to 'Encourage more to walk', followed by 'A lay-by for parents to picking up/dropping off'. Other options were to put 'Double Yellow Lines' on both sides of the road outside the school. Another option was for the school to implement a walking bus or travel plan. As mentioned above in the Transport section, road safety / cycling training received 88% support and a school bike shed received 92% support. These findings would help OCC and the School Governors set-up a working group to address these issues and work with OCC to develop a solution.

### **Police**

Those surveyed were asked 'Should there be a more visible Police presence on the village?' 95% replied 'Yes' and 92% indicated the police be available to villagers more often to discuss any problems. Those surveyed 78% suffered a crime and reported it to the police, but 55% were not satisfied with the response.

Not all contact with the police is using 999 and the survey asked 'Do you know the number to call to report non-emergency crime?' 56% did not know the number to call.

## **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

The survey asked if you were aware that a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme operating in the village, 58% were aware and 51% stated they would like to join.

## **Lighting**

When asked in question 82 'Are there enough street lights on the village?' 71% responded 'Yes'. However, there were a few areas which need to be reviewed.

# **Recreation & Health**

Since starting this Parish Plan the Abbey Sports Centre has changed from SOLL Leisure to Nexus and now the Health Service is addressing the health issues of smoking and now moving onto the next disease of obesity the last section is to assist us in having a long healthy and enjoyable life in Berinsfield.

Question 61, 'Should we have designated areas/routes for walking dogs?' 70% indicated Yes these could also be for walks around the village as power walking is also good for you and if you don't have a dog you could take a friend.

There are many organisations on the village and 35% indicated they belong to 1 or 2 organisation, 5% said they belonged to 3 or more. However, 63% indicated they were not involved with any Berinsfield organisations, societies or clubs.

Question 58 was designed for the more developed members of our community and asked do you think that there are enough organised activities for you in the village, 53% indicated 'Yes' with Clubs like Over 55's, Silver Threads & Busy Bees, 10% said 'No', 22% 'Don't Know' and 15% 'None Applicable'. In the comments suggestions were made for a 'walking club', 'bowls', 'dancing', 'book club', 'photography club', free membership for the gym and education centre.

Additional comments were made on the support for the senior members of our community. Social Club for day-time use, a decent bus service, a weekly visit, transport to the doctors surgery, hearing aid support, help with gardening and decorating, use the adult education centre as a day centre rather than go to Marsh Baldon and the extra travelling.

Are the play areas in the right place on the village? 97% responded 'Yes', the Parish Council has made every effort to ensure the location meets with everyone's approval, which has involved moving play areas and as shown recently by the consolation for the location of the skate board park soon to be built.

Questions 91 & 92 asked if there are enough organised activities for the youth of the village? 66% responded 'No'. However, when asked are you aware of what is available for 11-16 year olds in the village? 61% responded 'No'.

As a village we are lucky in that we have a sports centre with a swimming pool and fitness centre, but when asked if we use the Abbey Sports Centre? 61% responded 'No'.

# **Recommendations**

There are a number of initiatives that need to be addressed and it is felt that the village should be consulted, which has been done by the Berinsfield Advisory Group [BAG]. BAG was a group used as a sounding board for new initiatives and developments and comprised of the Chairpersons or Vice Chairpersons of the village groups and key stakeholders such as Health Centre, school, Church, Sport Centre, Housing Associations, South Oxford District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Police who met on a quarterly basis. South Oxford District Council has offered to help

progress the recommendations of the Berinsfield Parish Plan and cascade it down to their relevant groups.

Development of an action plan, to show owners and outcomes to be progressed for the benefit of the village.

A working group consisting of the relevant parties should produce a communication plan to advertise what is available in the village and encourage people to participate by using the amenities, services and other activities making use of the village web page and newsletter.

As indicated new housing will be required, but this should be outside of the current village boundaries. These new houses should not be joined onto our current infrastructure [Drains & Sewers] and transport issues need to be taken into account ensuring there are sufficient paths, parking and cycle paths, with access to public transport. In addition any new housing should be environmentally effective and heat efficient making use of renewable fuel, solar & wind to reduce household bills and reducing their carbon foot print. Also using grey water features in their design to reduce the need for processed water for waste and watering.

A working group should be set-up to address the transport issues of road crossings, paths, speed limits, parking, access to public transport, cycle routes. A separate group of the school, OCC and Police could address the requirement of a school bike shed, cycling/road safety training and a travel plan to and from school.

For recycling a forum could be set-up to assist SODC & OCC in meeting our needs to help the environment and review the current recycling initiative.

NAG and the Police to progress concerns raised by the village as part of an overall plan to address these issues. Also passing on information and recruiting new members for the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

This has been the first survey to include the businesses, but on the whole they do not require any assistance, but they will not be excluded from any future initiatives.

Parish Plan Executive – Pamela Brennen, Marc Hiles, Lesley Carrington, Jane Murphy, Alan Gray, David Eldridge, Rob Harwood, Penny Filer, Morage Maund.

Input and help from many volunteers from the village and representatives from interested agencies, which was great fully received.