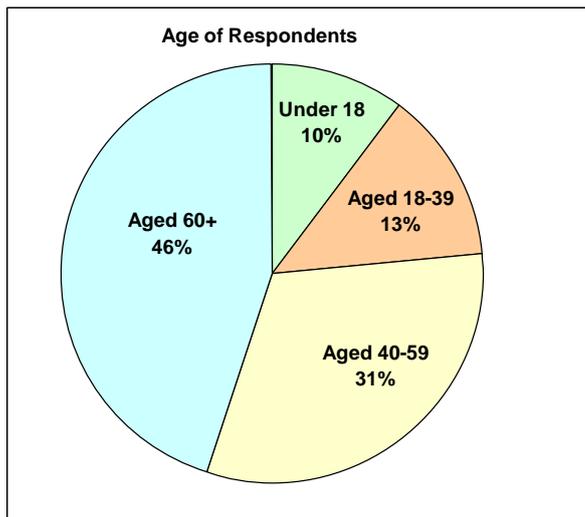


**Feedback - Newton Parish Plan survey.**

Many, many thanks to all of those households who took part in the Parish Plan survey in October. We delivered 226 questionnaires and had 133 returned; just short of 60% of households, which means the results we got are a reliable reflection of the community’s views of the issues we asked about. A full breakdown of the results will be published in the New Year, but we wanted to give you a flavour of what you have told us.

Responses represented 280 people, 46% of whom were over the age of 60, and represented 61% of total households in Newton. In terms of young families, they make up less than 5% of households.



**Village Activities**

We asked what you thought of activities that take place in the village. Awareness of the existing clubs was high, although a few people didn’t know what the Fireside Club was. The most common barriers to joining clubs given were work commitments and that people felt the clubs are for older people or ladies only.

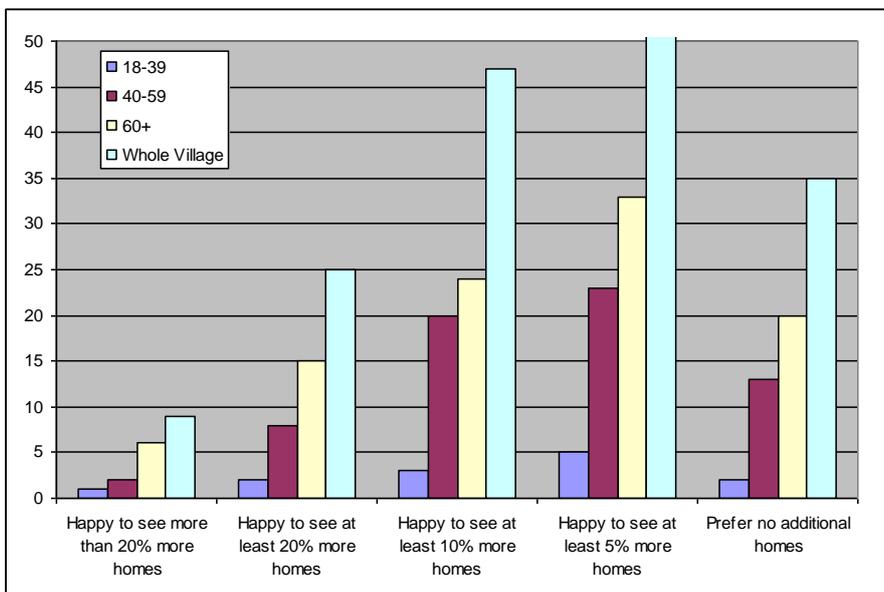
The most popular village event is the Midsummer Munch, followed by the Coffee Mornings, Theatre at the Village Hall, Village Christmas Party and Burns Night. Bingo, Beetle Drive and Winter Wednesdays all scored low.

Plenty of ideas for new activities were made, commonly for the evenings so those who work can take part. The proposal for Newton to host a village cinema was quite popular.

Comments and suggestions for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics appear supportive of what is being proposed, so clearly the first thing to mark on your 2012 calendars is our village event on the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012.

**Housing**

We asked you what your appetite was for more housing in the village. The cumulative results show the majority of respondents are happy to have up to 5% more homes built in the next ten years, and a significant number prepared to see more. The main reason given is to encourage more young families in Newton, to improve the sustainability of village facilities. People also



said it was important that any new housing fitted in with the character of the village, and voiced concerns that location could cause issues with traffic. A proper housing needs analysis will be done in the New Year, to establish what number of additional houses is actually needed.

### Road Safety

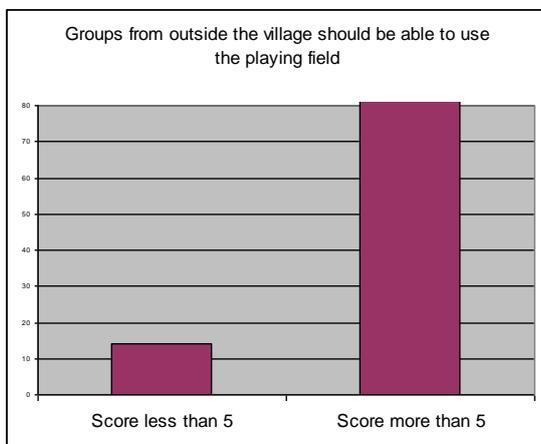
The question on Road Safety certainly got your pens moving. Whilst 71% of you were in principle supportive of a safe haven crossing on the A134, many of you voiced a concern also held by the Parish Council, about how safe it would be. We have not seen any drawings yet, but we will reflect your concerns in discussions with the County Council.

Not surprisingly, the number of people who agreed speeding traffic was a problem was very high. Although plenty of people pointed out it was the volume of traffic that made both crossing the road and pulling out on to the A134 difficult in the mornings. In terms of traffic control, there were quite varied views on the effectiveness of a single speed-activated sign, particularly if the village has to fund it. There were lots of alternatives suggested, including the construction of roundabouts at some of the more difficult junctions. Concern for the speed of traffic along Valley Road was also expressed.

Several people took the opportunity to highlight their annoyance at car sales in the lay-by causing dangerous obscuring of drivers' views turning out of Rectory Road. We are working on finding a legal solution, but the easiest thing would be for the villager(s) doing it to stop!!

### Playing Field

The villagers are overwhelmingly delighted with the playing field and how it is maintained.



Two key findings are that the village are very happy to share their field with others, but do not like rude and inconsiderate use making their own enjoyment difficult. The most common complaint by far was the manner in which some golfers use the field and this was reflected in the high score given to limiting their use of the field. This will be down to the Newton Trust to implement.

### Sustainability

68% of households said they would support a can bank (sorting out your cans from your general recycling) A lot of people asked for a paper bank and a clothes bank to be put in the village hall car park where the second bottle bank is situated. All these will raise funds for the Parish and keep the precept low.

75 households expressed a strong interest in a community heating-oil buying group, perhaps not surprisingly as 79% of homes in Newton are heated by oil.

### **Parish Council**

We asked for ideas to attract more people to the Annual Parish Assembly. The general opinion seems to be we liven it up a bit, so we will work on that for this April. The proposal for a village twinning association got one of the lowest scores of the whole survey. This is a shame as Councillors were looking forward to the fact-finding mission.... However, support for community wireless broadband was very high, which we can feed into the County Council's plans around improving Broadband speeds in Suffolk.

### **Young Newton**

Plenty of young people took part in the survey – we think 29 is about 75% of people aged under 18 living in the village.

Young people were very supportive of any proposals for new leisure activities, with the idea of a zip-wire in the play area scoring highest of all. Freely available sport equipment also scored highly, closely followed by community sports facilities – a multi-sports hard surface being popular with young people and adults. These facilities don't come cheap, so some fundraising will be needed to get them off the ground.

Support for a Newton Youth Club does exist, but wasn't overwhelming. It also seems that the Young Annual Parish Assembly remains valued, with the majority wanting to meet at least twice a year rather than annually.

### **Church**

The church questions were also answered by over 100 respondents and we will pass over the results to Rev Judith. What we can say is that the church holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Newton, with more than 60% of people visiting it.

Many thanks to everyone who took so much time to complete a questionnaire, and to all the Councillors and their families for distributing and collecting it. Also thank you to Dave Crimmin and Roy Gardner who number-crunched questionnaires for me.

Next steps will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting in January. We will spend some more time analysing the results and bring forward proposals to the parish for a Parish Plan based on these findings.

It isn't too late to add your views. If anyone still has their survey and wants it collected, please contact Dave Crimmin and we will come and get it from you.

Colin Poole  
Chairman, Newton Parish Council