

Kinver Neighbourhood Plan First Household Consultation on Issues and Options June 2021 Report on questionnaire responses

SUMMARY

The community consultation on the issues and options for the Kinver neighbourhood plan was held in June 2021. A questionnaire was sent to all households, and provided online. A total of 558 responses were received. This report summarises those responses, and the issues raised by respondents.

Overall respondents were positive about the issues and policy directions put forward, and many additional ideas were suggested. All comments are listed in full in a separate document.

Community: Many were concerned that GP surgery provision was becoming inadequate. Public transport was uniformly considered inadequate. Recreation facilities for teenagers, and sports and leisure facilities, were considered inadequate by a majority, and many also felt provision for elderly and the very young should be improved.

Landscape Character and Diversity: An overwhelming majority (95%) felt that green belt should be protected from further building. There was strong support for all forms of wildlife and landscape protection and enhancement.

Heritage: Respondents greatly valued local heritage, with especially strong support for protecting the rock structures, which are such a special feature of the parish. Local listing for these and other sites was supported. Much concern was expressed at recent developments, particularly on the High Street, which were felt to be too dominant and to detract from local character.

Economy/Business: Most respondents were keen to increase economic activity. Inadequate parking was felt to deter high street shoppers. People favoured encouragement of the visitor economy, and the importance of local heritage and landscape in drawing visitors was emphasised. Many ideas were put forward for improving the local economy.

Climate Change: Respondents were strongly in favour of measures to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change. These included better public transport, walking and cycling routes; low-energy new buildings designed for the future and retrofitting existing buildings; renewable energy installations and community energy initiatives; and EV charging points.

Housing: Current infrastructure and services were felt to be inadequate to support much growth in Kinver village itself. People felt really strongly about reducing flood risk whether to the new or existing properties. Strong majorities favoured developments that were small in scale, with adequate outdoor storage space; and safe play space. The need for smaller and less expensive housing for local people was a recurring comment. Adequate parking, green space, good design, use of local materials and styles, were all favoured.

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Introduction

The Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan was sent in motion by Kinver parish council to give local people more say in planning decisions. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated as Kinver parish. The first major step in evolving the Plan was to consult local residents on their views about the planning issues, and options for change, in the area. In June 2021 a questionnaire was sent to all households, and made available online at kinvernplan.co.uk.

This consultation was an opportunity for everyone in Kinver parish to find out more about the Neighbourhood Plan process, and to take part in shaping the policies at an early stage. A public consultation meeting was held, and Zoom and phone consultation offered since Covid restrictions made public meetings difficult. The key planning issues were set out in more detail in the accompanying Issues and Options document made available on the website kinvernplan.co.uk and through the parish office. In order to ensure that ideas and views were fully captured, many questions included space for free-format comments, and the final question asked for anything which might have been missed.

The document below summarises the responses to the questions, including a summary of the free-format responses. A full list of these comments is given in Appendix 1.

Summary of respondents characteristics

There were 558 responses, from a parish of about 3000 households. Most responses were via the internet survey. Most represented whole households, but respondents had the option to respond individually. Postcodes of respondents were scattered fairly evenly across the whole of the parish, in line with population distribution. A few responses were from just across the border in the Stourbridge/Wordsley area.

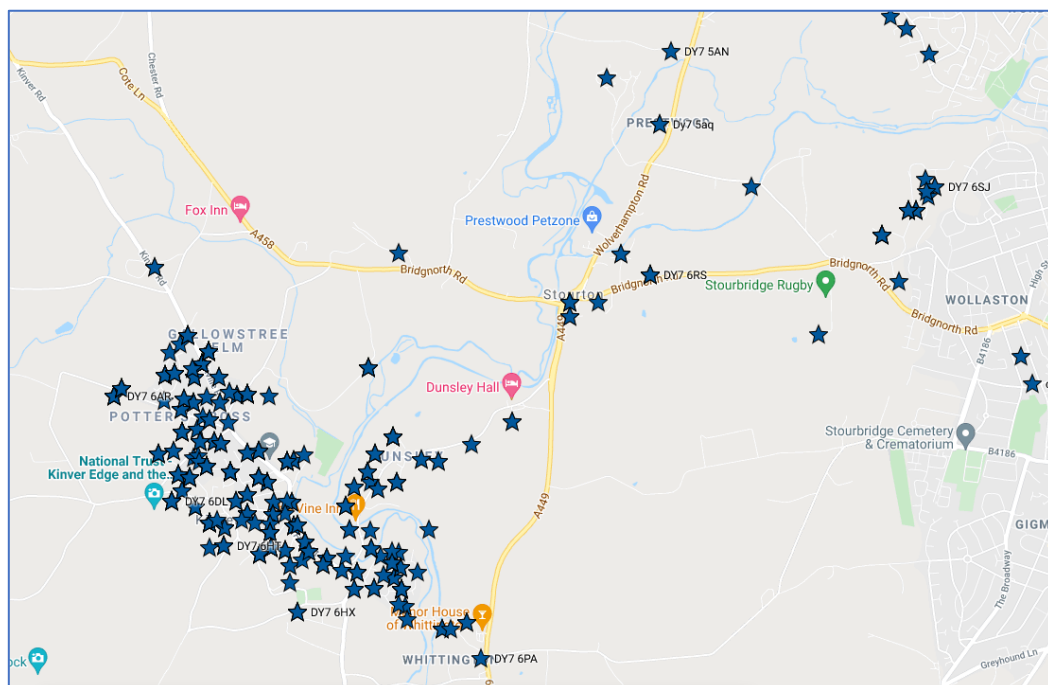


Fig. 1. Distribution of responses by postcode

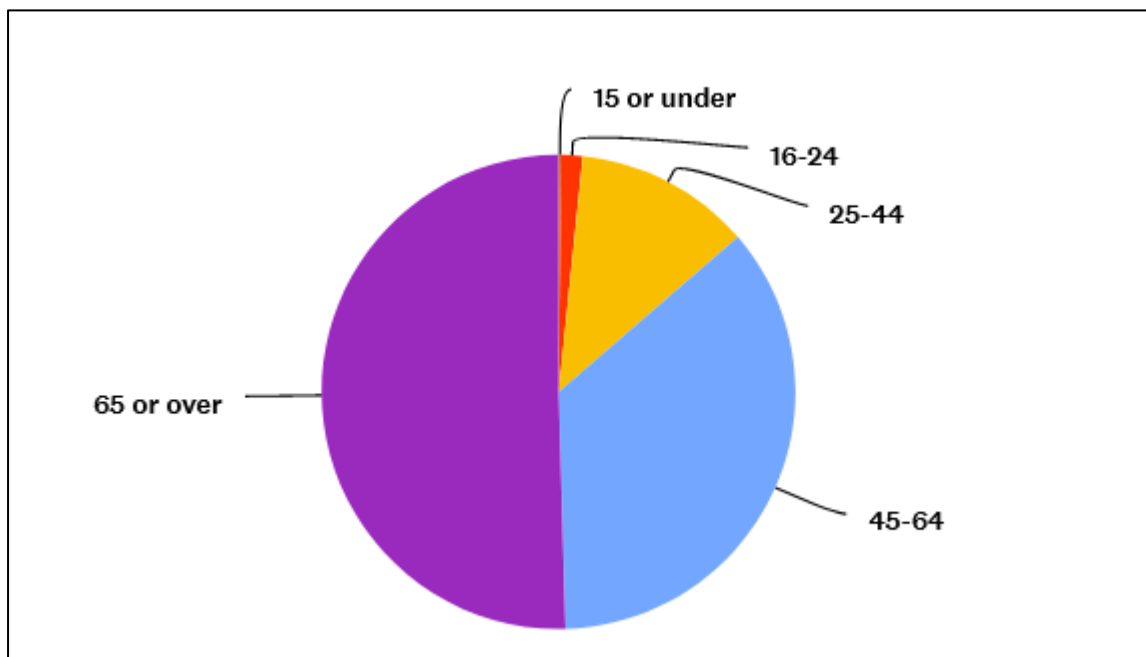
Gender:

51% of respondents were female, and 39% male. (10% skipped this question)

Age:

Over 65's were over-represented, and adults of working age under-represented as responders. Many of the responses were from households which included young people, however taking account of household composition did not fully remove the trend.

Age of respondents:



	Percentage of total		
	Age of all household members represented in responses	Age of respondents	Age distribution of population, 2019
15 years or under	9	0	13
16-24	5	1	7
25-44	10	12	16
45-64	27	36	31
65 or over	49	50	32
	100%	100%	100%

Further contact:

Most people were interested in receiving information on future consultations. 81% gave an email address, and 44% gave a postal address.

Responses to Questions

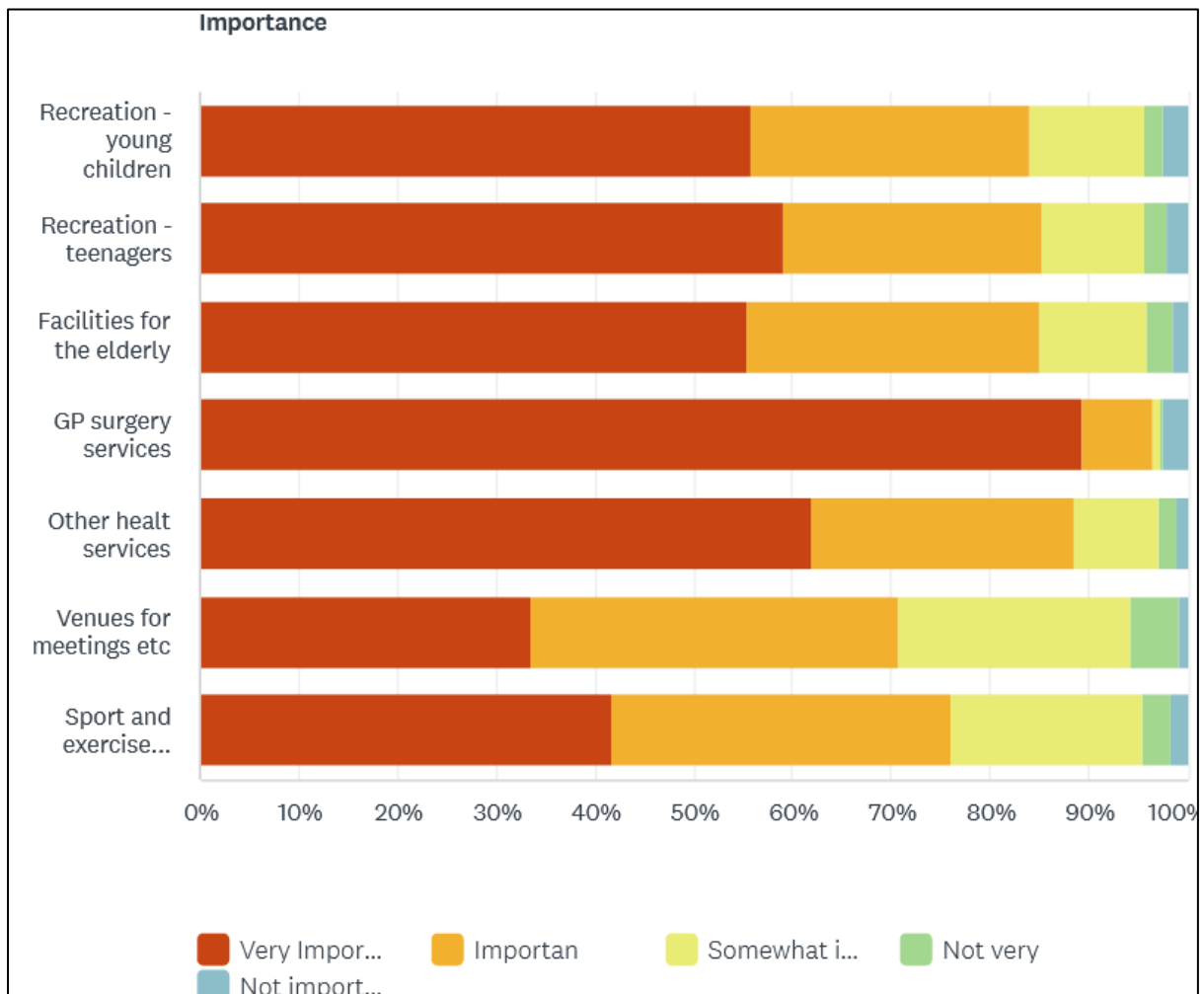
Q1. Local amenities: Please rate their importance, and how good you think they are.

GP services were rated most important of all the local amenities listed, and half of respondents rated them as inadequate. Other healthcare services were rated slightly less important, and more adequate.

Recreation facilities for all ages were rated important or very important by about 80% of respondents. Facilities for teenagers, and sports facilities, were classed as not adequate by a majority of respondents who gave a view.

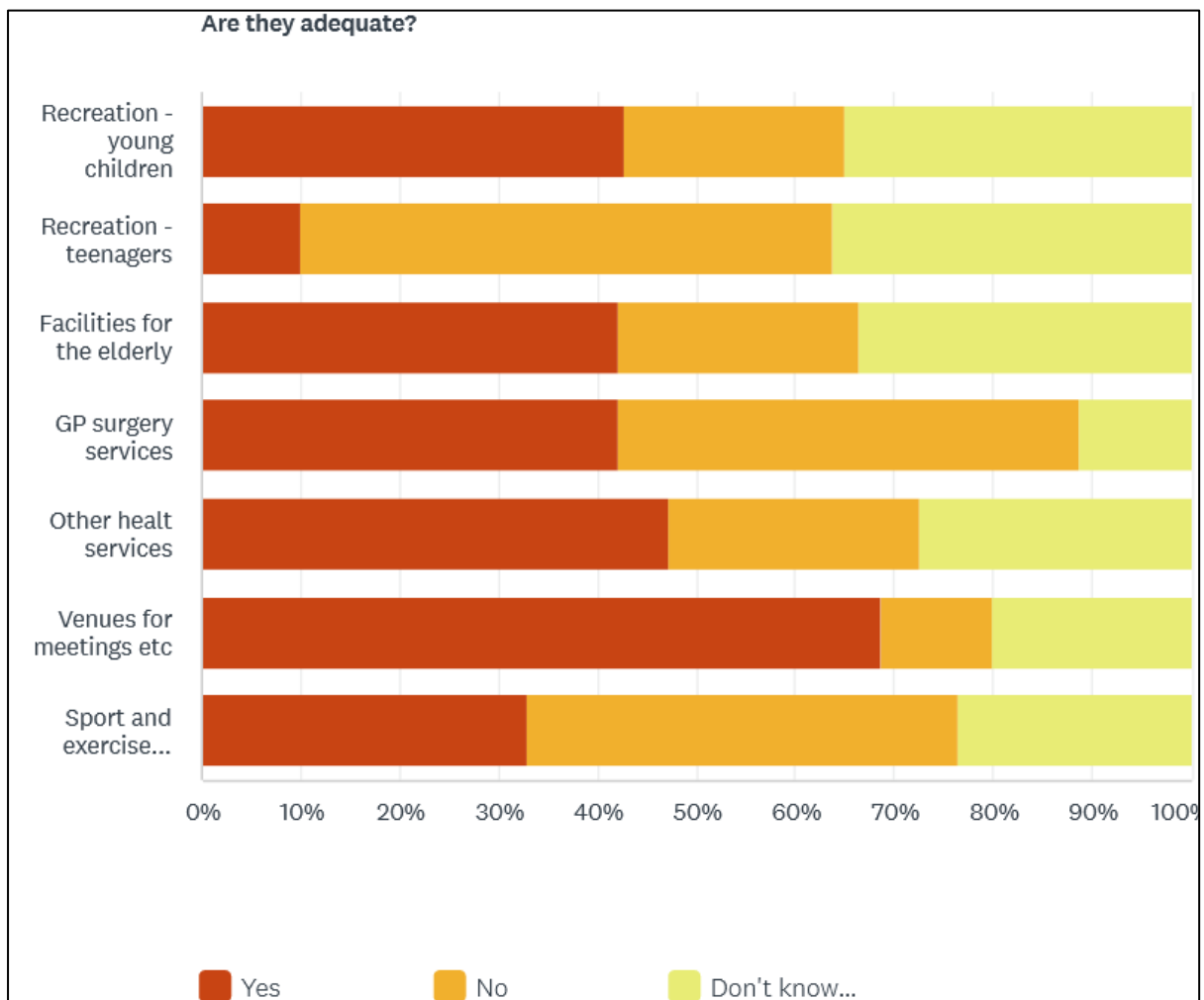
Venues for meetings were rated adequate by most people, and of relatively low importance.

Importance of local amenities:



Importance						
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Recreation - young children	56% 285	28% 145	12% 59	2% 9	3% 13	511
Recreation - teenagers	59% 304	26% 134	11% 54	2% 12	2% 10	514
Facilities for the elderly	55% 288	30% 154	11% 56	3% 14	1% 7	519
GP surgery services	89% 467	7% 37	1% 4	0% 1	2% 13	522
Other healt services	62% 320	27% 137	9% 44	2% 10	1% 5	516
Venues for meetings etc	34% 174	37% 192	24% 122	5% 26	1% 4	518
Sport and exercise facilities	42% 216	34% 177	20% 101	3% 15	2% 8	517

Adequacy of local amenities:



Are they adequate?					
	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW OR NOT RELEVANT		TOTAL
Recreation - young children	43% 175	22% 92	35% 143		410
Recreation - teenagers	10% 42	54% 223	36% 150		415
Facilities for the elderly	42% 171	24% 98	34% 136		405
GP surgery services	42% 173	47% 191	11% 46		410
Other health services	47% 191	25% 102	27% 111		404
Venues for meetings etc	69% 277	11% 45	20% 81		403
Sport and exercise facilities	33% 133	44% 176	24% 95		404

Q2. Please comment on services you feel the parish needs, or which need improving.

The services mentioned most often as needing improvement were:

- **GP services**, GP surgery, the fact that often services can only be accessed by going to Kingswinford.
- **Bus service**, including more useful timings eg early and late
- **Facilities for teenagers** – other age groups were also mentioned
- **Senior citizens club** in poor state
- **Sports** More local sports and exercise facilities, exercise classes, including use of sports facilities at the High School (currently out of action) . Tennis courts in the village. Swimming pool. More recreation space.
- **Parking**, notably for shopping.
- **Shops** (range, and size)
- **Police presence** – many felt it was inadequate for the size of population
- **Signage for visitors:** Improve/ update information boards and signage
- **20 mph limit** to reduce driver aggression/speed, instead of traffic calming in high street

Q3. If allotments were available would your household use one?

11% of respondents would use an allotment if available, and 80% would not (the remainder were unsure).

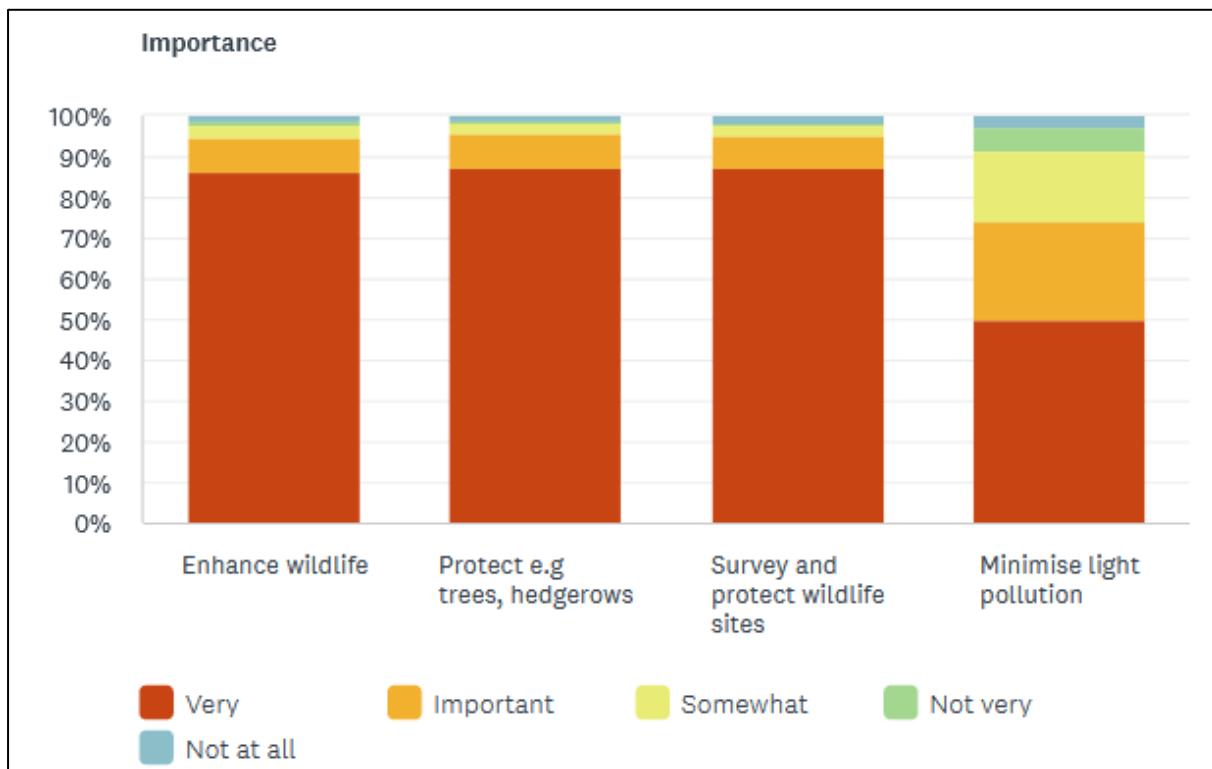
Q4. The Plan can include policies to protect and enhance local landscape character and biodiversity. How important is it that we include these options?:-

There was very strong support for all forms of protection of landscape, habitat and wildlife, with about 95% considering this protection important or very important. Feelings were less strong but still favourable (74%) in relation to light pollution.

Additional comments included:

- Preserve Green Belt land and green fields from development (the most frequent comment)
- Encourage wildflower verges.
- Create a public orchard
- Survey current wildlife and habitats
- Protect wildlife corridors
- Restore local wetlands
- Protect meadows and unploughed grassland
- Improve relationship between village and National Trust / Kinver Edge
- Tree-planting, habitat re-connection and rewilding to address climate change

Importance of protection landscape and biodiversity:

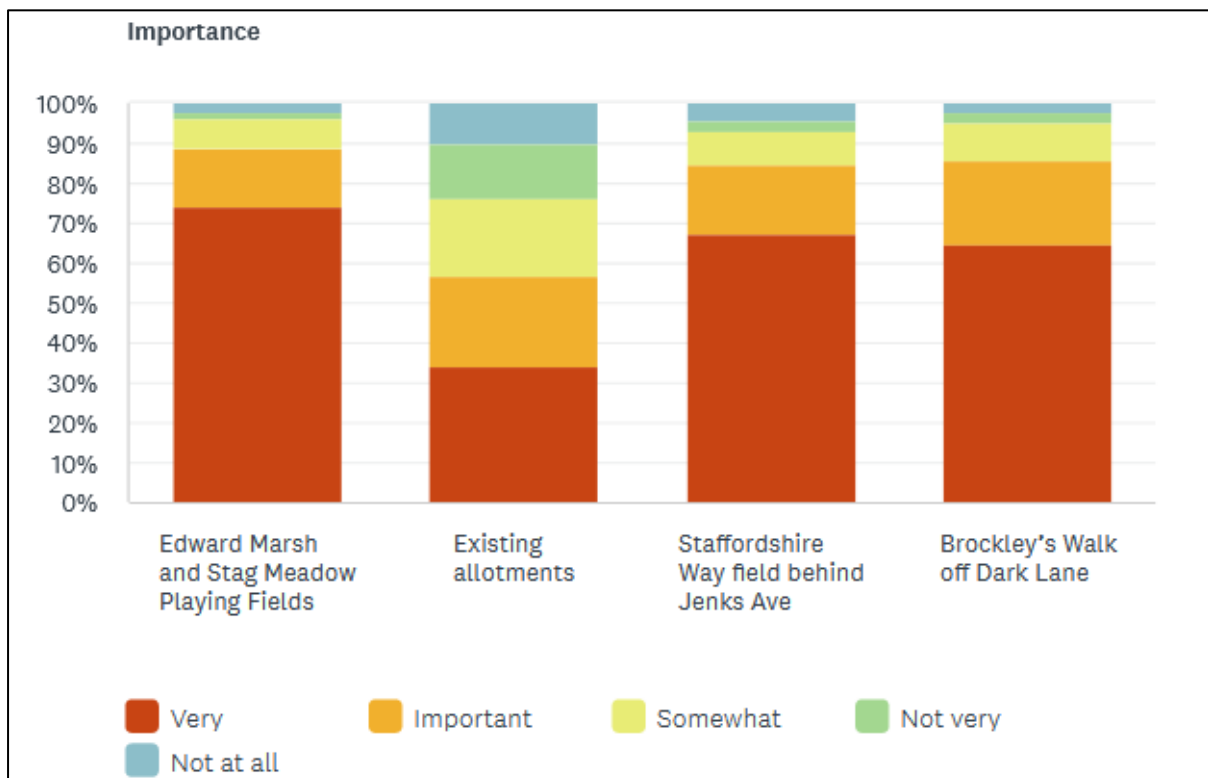


Importance						
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	TOTAL
▼ Enhance wildlife	86% 439	8% 43	3% 16	1% 5	1% 6	509
▼ Protect e.g trees, hedgerows	87% 446	9% 44	3% 13	1% 4	1% 5	512
▼ Survey and protect wildlife sites	87% 444	8% 41	2% 11	1% 5	1% 7	508
▼ Minimise light pollution	50% 247	24% 121	18% 87	6% 28	3% 13	496

Q5. The Plan can provide protection for important local open/green spaces. Please tell us how important the following spaces are to you:-

Respondents expressed strong support for protection of green spaces, notably playing fields, the Staffordshire Way behind Jenks Avenue/White Hill, and Brockleys’s Walk public space, with about 85% of respondents marking them as important or very important. More than half also felt allotments were important. The results reflect the fact that most families use the open spaces at some point, but not all are in a position to use an allotment.

Importance of protecting local green spaces:



Importance		VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL
▼	Edward Marsh and Stag Meadow Playing Fields	74% 378	15% 76	7% 38	2% 8	2% 10	510
▼	Existing allotments	34% 167	23% 112	20% 96	14% 68	10% 48	491
▼	Staffordshire Way field behind Jenks Ave	67% 336	17% 85	8% 42	3% 14	4% 21	498
▼	Brockley's Walk off Dark Lane	65% 323	21% 106	9% 46	3% 15	2% 10	500

There was particularly strong support for the land behind Jenks Avenue which is crossed by the Staffordshire Way (White Hill 2 on the development plan), and village green status or similar was suggested by some. Many reported regular use by family, for exercise and fresh air, for dog walking – and particularly for sledging.

Additional spaces suggested for protection included:

- Ridgehill Woods
- Friar's Gorse and fields to the west of it
- Lawnswood
- All local woodland areas
- Canal and river areas
- Footpaths and woodland at top end of White Hill
- Sterrymere (at Edward Marsh centre)
- Fields west of Hyde Lane
- Field on RHS (north) of White Hill beyond Edge View Walk housing.
- The old orchard within the boundary of the South Staffordshire pumping station building
- Land off Dunsley Road and Drive
- Fields behind Hunter's Ride and Balmoral Road
- Fields at top of Church Hill, leading to Cookley
- The Hyde hamlet, and surrounding wet woodland near Hyde Lock
- Daneford and Jubilee Gardens in the village
- Chance Wood nature reserve
- Stag Meadow and adjacent fields between river and canal
- Pony paddock on the Compa
- Land adjacent to Kinver Edge
- All of Staffordshire Way
- Hyde Lane walk and the walk adjacent Edward Marsh centre to canal

Suggestions were also made for improvement of some existing spaces, e.g. by addition of benches, better signage, play facilities; and improving access to Brockley's Walk by building the planned bridge over the river.

Q6. The Plan can specify important views, to protect them from being spoiled by development. How important do you think it is to protect the views listed below? :-

Support for protecting the important views suggested was very high, especially with regard to Kinver Edge. Support was also high for views around Ridgehill Woods and Bunker's Hill, which contribute to the clear topographic and visual separation between the conurbation and nearby settlements. Although they are somewhat removed from the village, they are close to the conurbation, and thus are also appreciated by a much wider population than just this parish.

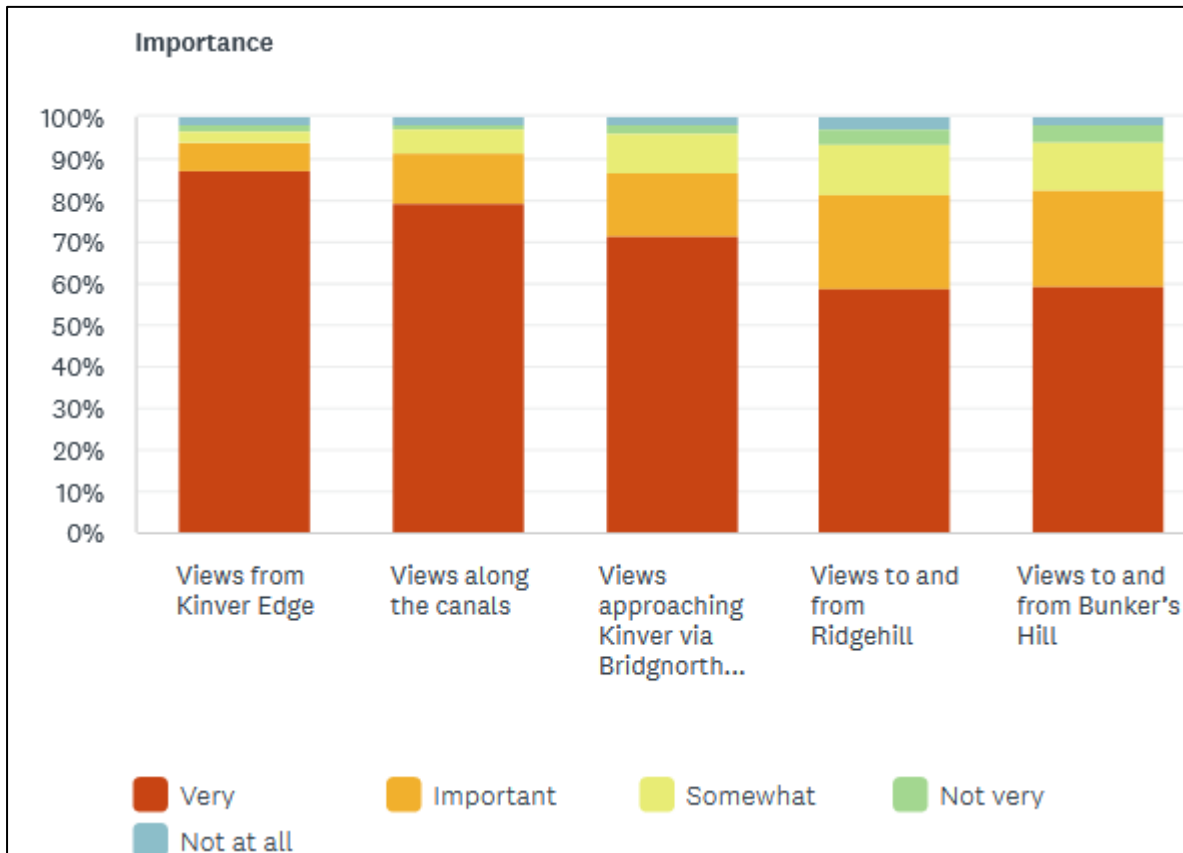
Additional views which people wanted to protect included

- Views of Kinver (and surrounding countryside) from the top of Kinver Edge
- Views from St Peter's Church
- View from Hyde Lane across stream towards East.
- Key views within the village, including the High Street, and views of the Church and the Old Grammar School.
- Views from White Hill towards Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses

- Views of the church and village from the canal
- Views from the bridge at Dunsley
- Views along Dunsley Road approaching Kinver from A449
- View from Lawnswood Road to A449
- View from Sheepwalks across Compton to Kinver Edge – and reverse
- Views from Gibraltar
- Views along Staffordshire Way
- Views from Rocky Wall
- Hyde Lock
- Views around Gypsy Lane
- Views to/from Whittington and Cookley Lane
- Views from Friar’s Gorse and the waterfall
- The view across the canal from the bend with the magnificent beech trees (below Dunsley Hall)
- View towards Birdgnorth Road/Fox Inn from Hillboro Rise
- View from footpath 96 towards the church
- Views on Church Hill and the Compa
- Views towards Kinver from Iverley/ Fairy Glen
- View towards Kinver from Bridgnorth Road

Many comments were made that Kinver is all about the lovely views, and that proposed developments notably at White Hill are a major threat to important towards and from Kinver Edge.

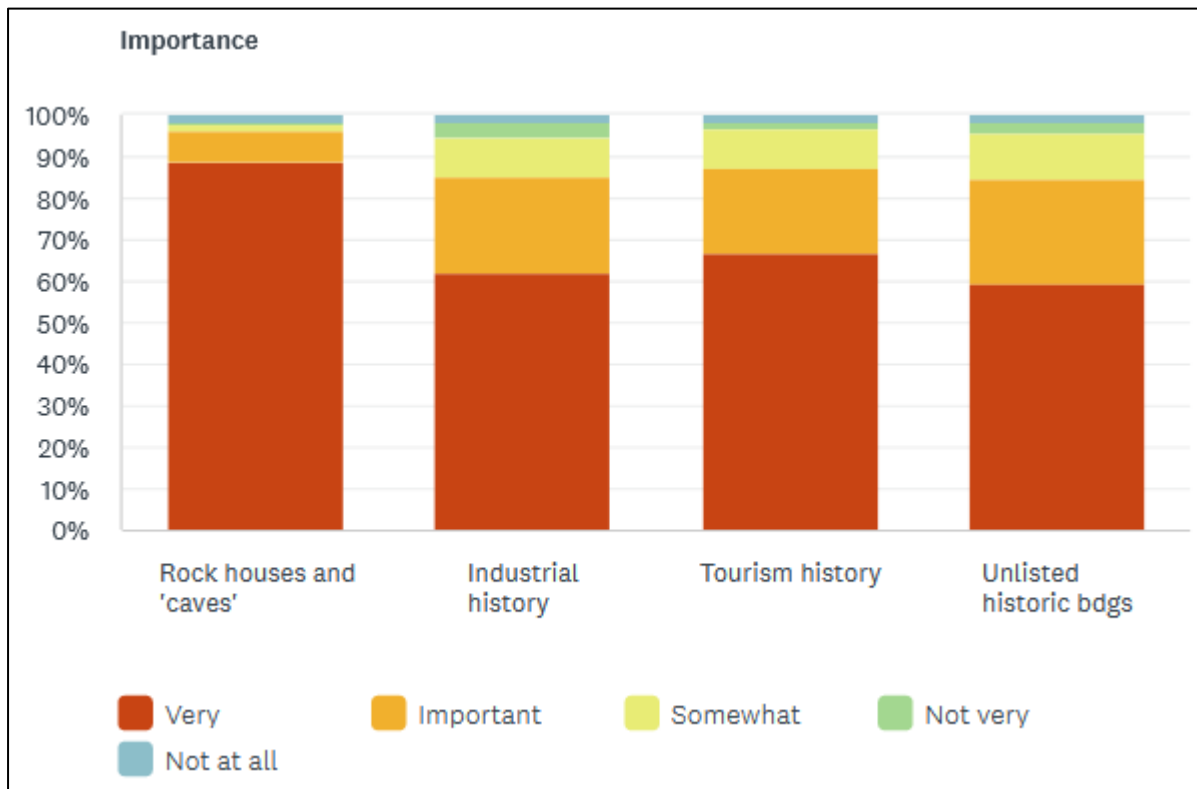
Importance of protecting views:



Importance						
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL
Views from Kinver Edge	87% 447	7% 35	3% 14	1% 7	2% 8	511
Views along the canals	79% 402	12% 62	6% 29	1% 5	2% 8	506
Views approaching Kinver via Bridgnorth Rd, Enville Rd, Dunsley	71% 363	16% 80	9% 46	2% 12	2% 8	509
Views to and from Ridgehill	59% 291	22% 110	13% 62	3% 17	3% 13	493
Views to and from Bunker's Hill	60% 292	23% 112	11% 56	4% 20	2% 9	489

Q7. The Plan can seek to protect historic buildings, and historic remains. (NB Listed buildings already have legal protection). Please tell us how important these are to you:-

More than 95% rated protection of rock houses in the parish as important or very important, reflecting the unique nature of these structures. Protection of other historic sites was also rated as important or very important by over 80% of respondents.



Importance						
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL
Rock houses and 'caves'	89% 457	7% 38	1% 7	1% 3	2% 8	513
Industrial history	62% 317	23% 119	9% 47	4% 19	2% 9	511
Tourism history	67% 338	21% 105	10% 49	2% 8	1% 7	507
Unlisted historic bdgs	59% 292	26% 126	11% 53	3% 15	1% 7	493

The most frequently mentioned heritage assets included

- the High Street, as a whole, and many individual buildings
- the Vine pub; and also the White Harte (links to civil war), Royal Exchange and Cross pubs
- the canalside areas, the Hyde and Hyde Lock and ironworks area,
- the 'Roman' baths on Bath Lane, the waterworks, St Peter's Church, Kinver Edge and the Conservation Areas, and the rockhouses.
- In addition the following were mentioned:
- Local Meadows farmhouse on White Hill
- Many unlisted farm buildings
- The old tramway
- Nail and spade factory (between Whittington Lock and the Horse Bridge)
- The dog cemetery in Chance Wood nature reserve
- The Home Guard hut on Kinver Edge
- Rows of workers cottages throughout the parish eg Enville Road, White Hill, Stone Lane
- The Clock Tower/ bus shelter in the High Street – although not new, already appreciated
- Other topics raised included:
- The importance of maintaining the High Street and other heritage areas as a whole;
- the depth of interest in place which our heritage engenders;
- using our history to encourage the visitor economy; and the need for signage and information about heritage sites.
- the very special nature of Kinver with its industrial revolution heritage but still within a rural setting (not swallowed up by the conurbation).
- The need for an archive for all.
- The need for balance to allow buildings to evolve to meet current needs
- Some dismay at various recent developments which were felt to be too large, and out of keeping with the village style.

Q8. The Plan could include detailed policies on building design, to ensure materials, scale and appearance of local buildings are in harmony with their surroundings, including the Conservation Area. How important do you feel this is for Kinver?

90% rated a building design policy as important (10%) or very important (81%).

Q9. How often do you use Kinver Parish's shops/services?

83% of respondents said they used local shops and services on a weekly basis, and many comments were made on additional provision which would be appreciated. The most frequent wishes expressed were:

- Another, larger, supermarket
- A bank
- Free parking and more parking (20%)
- Restaurants and cafes
- Hardware shop
- Post Office
- Clothing shop

Many also expressed dismay at the empty Spar supermarket which they considered an eyesore, spoiling the appearance of the village and occupying valuable space.

Q10. Should the Plan seek to promote and support local businesses, for example by encouraging visitors

This concept got very strong support: 88% of respondents said yes, while only 5% said no.

Comments raised :

- the need for better parking, (the most frequent comment). - without this, visitor and shopper numbers cannot grow - cooperation from pubs/club premises could allow use of their parking during the day
- promotion of what Kinver has to offer. A 'visit Kinver' website
- Better signage, including information boards at the canal to showcase what the village has to offer (another persistent theme)
- Improved transport / bus service; secure cycle parking
- Drawing visitors to Kinver Edge/ Rockhouses down towards the village
- Special events to draw in visitors , including a farmer's market,
- Promote green tourism
- Niche shops
- Encourage locals to use the shops more
- Make feature of High St flag pole - planter around it. Attractive poster frame and more information. 2. Information outside historic buildings detailing history of property/former occupants etc. 3. Re-instate planter near roundabout bottom of Stone Ln - better a vehicle hits the planter rather than a pedestrian, also put planter at other end of High Street near Church Hill end. 4. Victorian style fingers posts with planters around them directing tourists to areas of interest and walks. 5. Encourage ALL local people to get involved (those that live along the High St are already doing a wonderful job with their beautiful hanging baskets).
- More accommodation for overnight visitors
- Shops should open at weekends and holidays for visitors

Q11. Businesses: Does anyone in your household own or manage a business in Kinver Parish?

10.4% of respondents said they owned or managed a business in the parish. Most employed 1 or 2 people in total, the largest number employed was 14.

Q12. Working from home: Does anyone in your household work from home or expect to do so?

37% of respondents worked from home or expected to do so. Given that many respondents were retired, this figure represents well over half of those of working age.

Internet speed and reliability was by far the most common factor cited to make working from home easier (half of all home workers who commented stated that internet connectivity needed improving).

Other ideas to improve home working included, in approximate order of frequency:

- Alternative spaces locally to work from, for meetings. A local business hub.
- Better mobile signal and service (especially for those living outside Kinver)
- Sound proofing of homes, or reduction of traffic noise
- Better public transport
- Local corner shop (for those not close to centre e.g. in Stourton)
- Facilities to charge electric vehicles
- Local gym and pool

Many cited the advantages of working from home, including proximity to lovely countryside; a pleasant village environment; reduction in travel and associated pollution; local shops; proximity to a good road network and the conurbation.

Q13. Responding to Climate Change and ensuring a decent world for our children presents us with both challenges and opportunities. How important is it that we include the following in the Plan?

Strong support was expressed for suggested actions to mitigate or adapt to climate change (70-90% rating them as important or very important). The listed measures included:

- promoting well-insulated new builds;
- helping owners to improve the efficiency of their homes;
- improving public transport
- improving walking/cycling routes;
- renewable energy generation and use; and
- EV charging points.

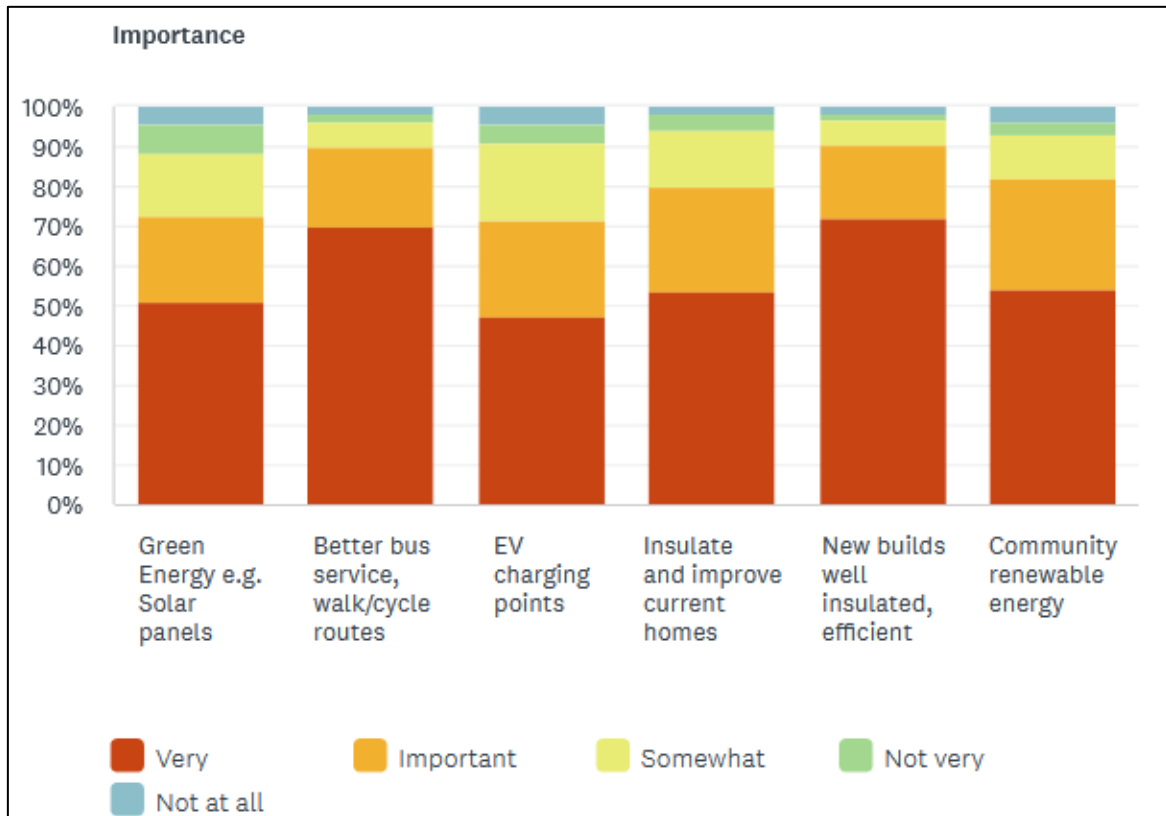
Additional suggestions put forward by respondents included:

- Improve recycling facilities
- Preserve green space, and provide new homes with decent garden space
- A pilot project to build / convert some zero carbon homes
- Insulate existing homes, and provide support for boiler replacement.
- Work out how to insulate in the conservation area, and allow double glazing
- Consider solar, and river power projects
- Enforce sustainable drainage (SUDS) systems to reduce flooding
- Turn street lamps off or down at night, and use low energy lights
- Save water
- Promote walking/ cycling routes, including promoting the Slowways project as a source of routes between local centres.
- Discourage cars

And some concerns were expressed:

- Currently cyclists are often inconsiderate to walkers on the same routes
- There is little space for cycle lanes within Kinver, due to narrow roads

Importance of acting on Climate Change:



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL
Green Energy e.g. Solar panels	51% 259	21% 108	16% 81	7% 36	4% 22	506
Better bus service, walk/cycle routes	70% 351	20% 100	6% 31	2% 10	2% 8	500
EV charging points	47% 236	25% 123	19% 96	5% 26	4% 20	501
Insulate and improve current homes	54% 269	26% 131	14% 70	4% 20	2% 9	499
New builds well insulated, efficient	72% 364	18% 92	6% 31	1% 7	2% 9	503
Community renewable energy	54% 267	28% 137	11% 54	3% 17	3% 17	492

Q14. How important do you feel the criteria below are, in the design of new housing for Kinver Parish?

Respondents rated avoidance of flood risk extremely highly among criteria for new housing, closely followed by ensuring developments were small in scale. There was also strong support for safe walking and cycling routes, and play spaces. Proximity to shops and schools was rated less important by many, possibly reflecting the fact that most people of necessity own a car in order to get to work, since public transport is limited.

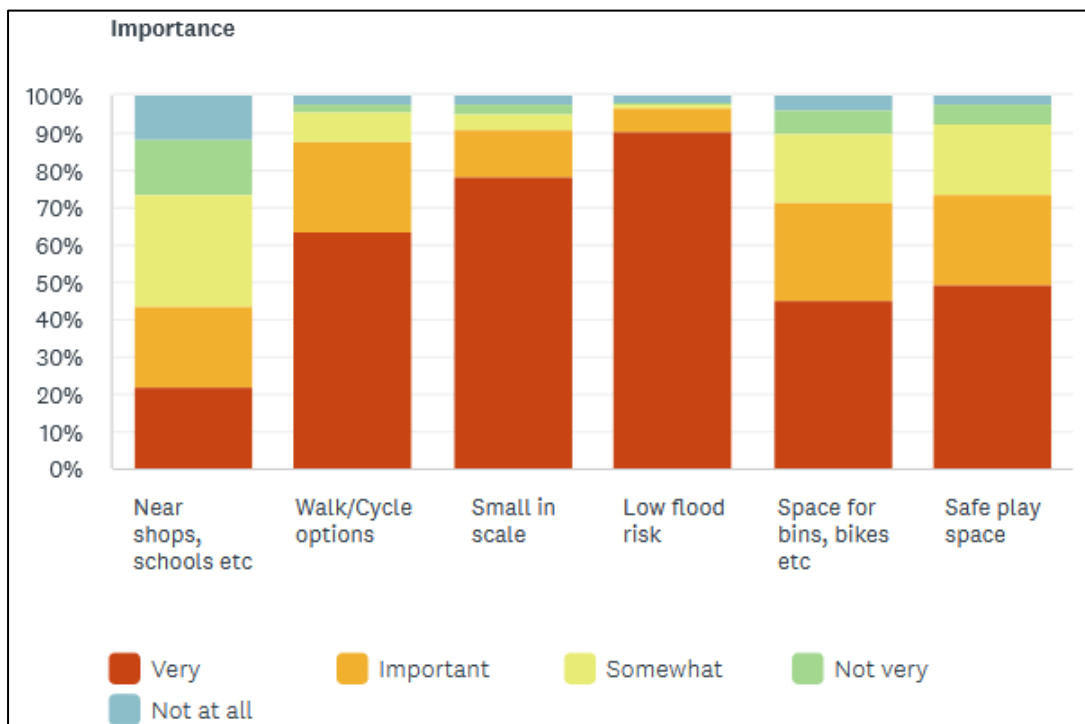
Comments were strongly expressed, and many focussed on

- avoiding damage to a place which is much appreciated and loved by its residents; and
- ensuring housing remained affordable to local people despite the recently widened gap between wages and prices.

In approximate order of frequency, additional comments included:

- No more housing is needed in Kinver, it is damaging the village feel and function
- The current infrastructure cannot cope with any greater population
- Developers should pay for infrastructure costs
- Housing should not be built on green sites, but use infill and brown field sites
- New developments should include more affordable homes for local people, to keep the village alive.
- Developments should fit with and complement the village – some recent developments were criticised for being too large in scale, poor in quality and appearance.
- Adequate parking to avoid on-street parking;
- If developments are far from the centre, parking in the centre must be increased.
- Decent gardens and green space
- Protect biodiversity and wildlife, avoid destruction of green space and tree
- Use local materials, designs and style
- New homes should be energy efficient and have renewable energy installed

Importance of criteria for new housing:



Importance							
	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	TOTAL	
▼ Near shops, schools etc	22% 108	21% 104	30% 148	15% 71	11% 56	487	
▼ Walk/Cycle options	64% 315	25% 122	7% 37	2% 12	2% 10	496	
▼ Small in scale	78% 390	13% 63	4% 21	3% 13	2% 11	498	
▼ Low flood risk	91% 452	6% 30	1% 5	0% 2	2% 9	498	
▼ Space for bins, bikes etc	45% 224	26% 130	18% 89	6% 32	4% 18	493	
▼ Safe play space	49% 241	24% 119	18% 90	6% 27	2% 10	487	

play etc shops possible affordable homes important brown field sites affordable place mix
infrastructure longer new build open property without council age access near
enough increased town happen young people design use social including
cycling New housing losing facilities avoided green space young families
new homes many homes gardens new developments
considered roads afford need provide built vehicles village current
development children houses residents Kinver impact area
younger parking surrounding will green field local Hyde development space
look planned move people adding affordable housing means keeping
stop green belt families schools safe large want services traffic already also new
future ensure type Better proposed developed prices consideration adequate car parks size
White Hill limited developers etc

Word-cloud of the most frequently occurring terms in comments on this question.

And finally! Q15. Do you have any additional comments relating to any of the issues in this questionnaire; or have we missed anything important?

Almost half of all respondents added comments here, and many were long and detailed.

Again, the overwhelming sense was that continued development is spoiling the very reasons why people want to live in Kinver, and visit Kinver in their thousands. Many were also strongly opposed to continued erosion of the Green Belt, which was felt to serve a continuing clear purpose.

“Visitors don't go to the top of Kinver edge to look down on a building site.”
“if over-development continues and Kinver just becomes another satellite town where will people be able to visit to enjoy a gentle step back into the past?”

Many felt scale was an issue, the village by its nature/geography having limited capacity to serve any increase in population.

“We are heading to small town status.”

Concern was again expressed over infrastructure adequacy, which has not been addressed by any of the recent developments; and over the risk that new developments would not integrate into the village, being just housing add-ons with little village contact.

“Are Kinver residents to be solely dependent on cars?”

The need for increased provision of lower cost homes to enable a balanced community.

“How about we get a youth council or school council on the Parish to reflect the views and needs of youth?”

The lack of services and transport which means Kinver residents all need cars, causing congestion and environmental damage.

Other recurring themes, some covered in previous sections, include:

- Need for affordable housing for local people
- Parking capacity in the high street
- Poor high street design (for cars, cyclists and delivery vans)
- Poor services and public transport, limited range of useful shops
- Poor road conditions
- Dangerous conditions at Potter's Cross junction/ schools, “a disaster waiting to happen”
- Protection of green spaces within the village, and in the surrounding countryside
- Flood risk
- Empty sites, including former British Legion, Spar, Shimla restaurant.
- Poor access road to the Edward Marsh centre, where many activities are based
- Poor access to The Hyde (hamlet near the canal) despite recent developments there.

The full comments on all questions are given in a separate document.