

Countryside Survey 2021

Introduction

A survey was undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan to gather the perceptions of the countryside within Fawkham Parish from residents of Fawkham Parish and those of other areas who visit the parish.

Methodology

The survey comprised eight questions and a copy is attached as Appendix 1.

The survey was available both in paper format and online via SurveyMonkey.com; completion via the telephone was also made available.

The survey was publicised on the Parish Council's website as a News item on 3rd September and 17th September 2021: <https://fawkhampc.org.uk/news/>, and via posts on the Fawkham Community Facebook Group five times during September 2021. It was also shared to other local community Facebook groups.

The survey was further publicised via inclusion in the church's weekly newsletter.

A paper flyer, shown as Appendix 2, was distributed to many houses in the parish with a paper copy of the survey, particularly to those known not to be active online. Six members of the Steering Group/working groups/ Parish Council delivered copies of the flyer and survey and offered to complete the survey on the doorstep if the resident wished to do that. Ten paper surveys were completed in this way.

Paper copies of the survey were available to complete at the Neighbourhood Plan stall at the church fete on 18th September 2021. Sixteen paper surveys were completed at the fete.

The flyer (see Appendix 1) was also handed out at the church fete on 18th September 2021 and placed in the parish noticeboards.

Results

In total, 163 surveys were completed between 27th August and 22nd October 2021. 90 residents of Fawkham Parish completed the survey. One person entered "Fawkham Green" as an "other" response which has been included in the non-residents' analysis.

The analysis of the survey has considered the responses of those who live in the Parish separately from those who live elsewhere.

Fawkham Parish Residents

What residents like most about the countryside within Fawkham Parish

The features residents like most about the countryside within the Parish are the peace and quiet, and the trees and woods. The open character of the countryside is also valued highly. Features

such as wildlife, local green spaces, hedgerows, public rights of way and the steep slopes of the dry valley are also valued. The historic buildings were the lowest scoring feature.

Q2 What do you like about the countryside within Fawkham Parish? Please choose all that apply and rank in order, where 1 is what you like most.

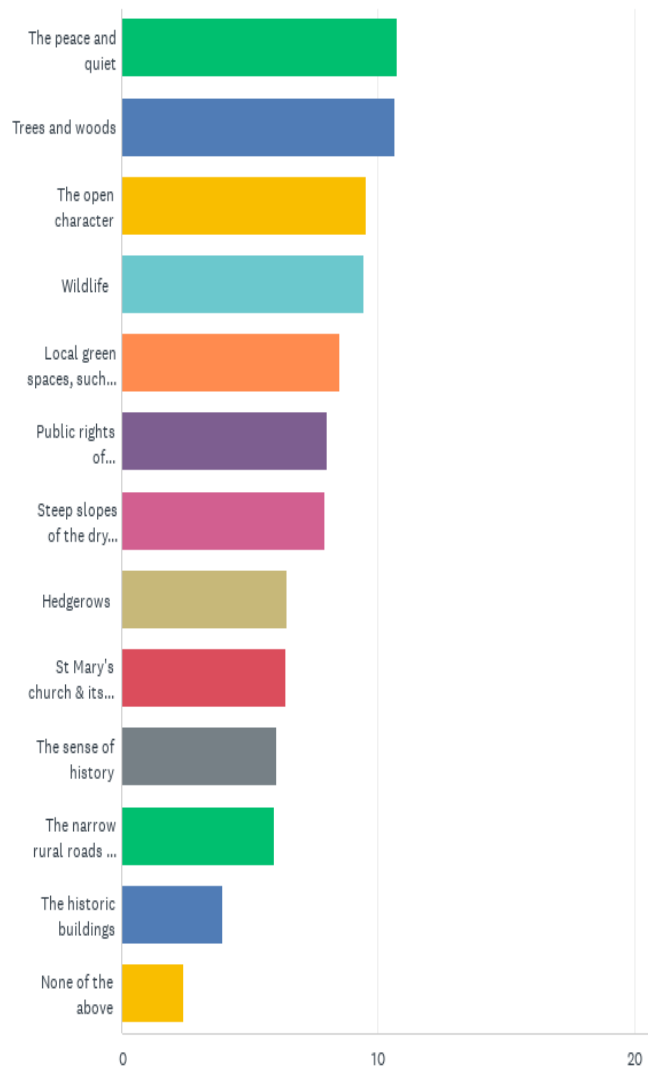


Fig.1: What residents of Fawkham Parish like about the countryside within the Parish

What residents consider detracts from the countryside of Fawkham Parish

Almost all respondents (96.7%) consider fly-tipping detracts from the countryside of the Parish. HGVs and the volume of road traffic are detracting features cited by 82.2% and 77.8% respectively. Pylon lines are considered detracting by around a third (34.4%) and inappropriate modern buildings by over 27%.

Only 2.2% of respondents say they consider horse paddocks/stables detract from the countryside; 6.7% say golf courses detract from the countryside.

Q6 What features, if any, do you consider detract from the countryside of Fawkham Parish?
Please tick all that apply.

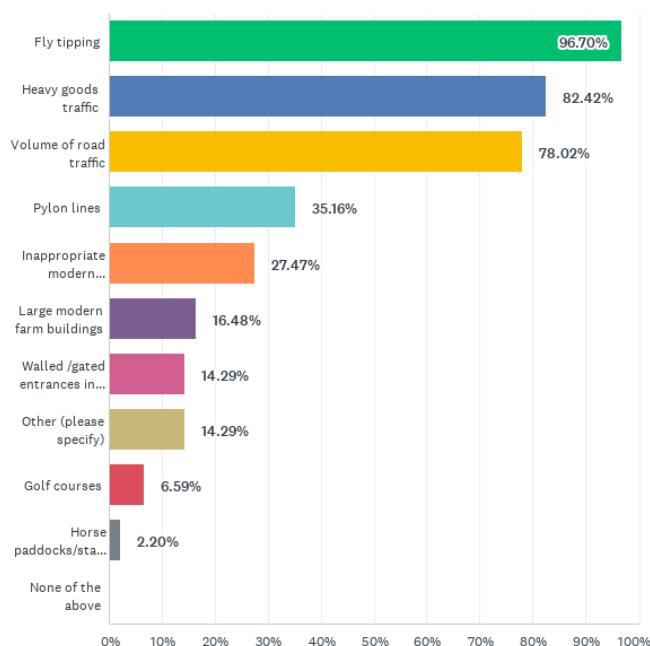


Fig.2: What residents consider detracts from the countryside of Fawkham Parish

Residents' Favourite Views

There were 84 responses to the question asking where people's favourite view is in Fawkham Parish. A total of 17 different views were mentioned, which could reflect the location of the respondent's residence, their available public rights of way and the variety of attractive views available.

The most popular view is from the edge of Churchdown Wood looking east across the valley towards Hartley, with the view of the church and its setting from this viewpoint frequently mentioned. 20% of respondents saying this is their favourite view.

The second most popular view is from the top of Speedgate Hill looking north-east along the valley towards Longfield, which was stated by 13% of people.

These are followed by the view west across the valley from the fields and woods to the north of Michaels Lane (7.1%), the view from the top of Parsonage Down looking east and south east across the valley (4.8%) and the view of the valley and church from the PROW SD212 across Forty Acre field (also 4.8%).

All these views are from the valley ridge or sides looking either across the valley to the opposite side or along the valley itself.

Other locations mentioned for views along the valley were from the top of Sun Hill (3.6%), from PROW SD223 from Manor Lane to Corinthians (2.4%), and from the northern end of Churchdown Wood looking towards Longfield (2.4%). The view across the valley from Three Gates Road was mentioned as the favourite view of a further 2.4%, although the exact location is unclear and may be from private residences/gardens.

More enclosed views mentioned included the village green with the public house (2) and from within church meadow (2).

Seventeen people said their favourite view was from their own house or garden.

Appendix 3 shows the locations of the most popular views.

Places where residents have a feeling of “being away from it all” in “peace and quiet”

A total of 81 responses were made, with one response of “no”. Twenty different locations were given as places where respondents have a feeling of “being away from it all” in “peace and quiet”.

Within various woods are the most often stated locations, mentioned 43 times. Woodland covers nearly a quarter of the land in Fawkham Parish (22.3%). Churchdown Wood was cited 13 times, and Saxten & Cages Woods 12 times. Other publicly accessible woods mentioned were: woodland above Corinthians golf course, Wilmay Copse, Fawkham Manor Estate woodland and the woods behind Michaels Lane, along with Rogers Wood which is not publicly accessible.

Appendix 3 shows these locations.

What residents consider would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish

The highest scoring item that Fawkham respondents felt would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish was fewer HGVs (chosen by 86.2%), followed by fewer cars (59.8%).

Q7 Which, if any, of the following do you feel would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply

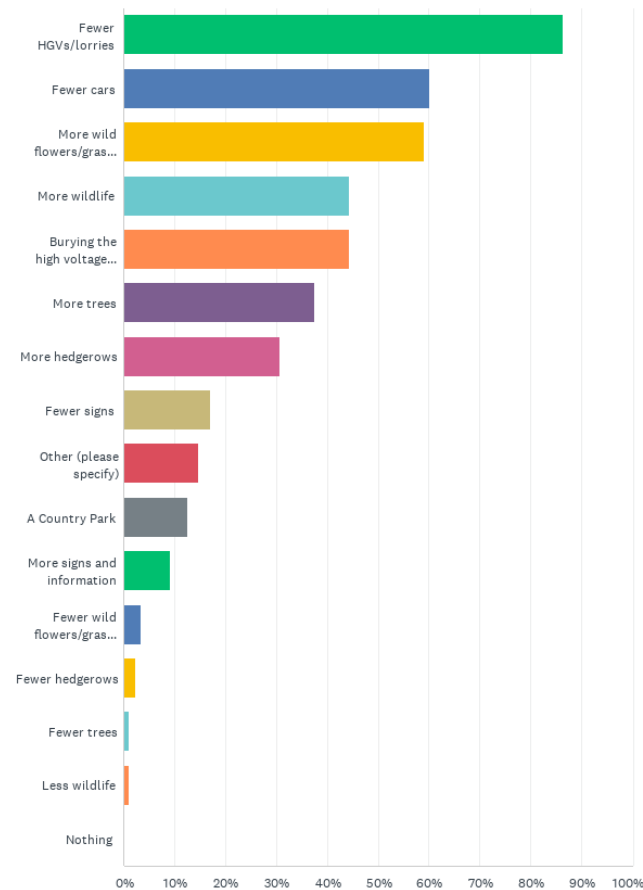


Fig.3: What residents consider would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish

The most popular natural improvement was more wild flowers/grassland meadows with 58.6% choosing this, followed by more wildlife (43.7%), more trees (36.8%) and more hedgerows (29.9%).

Burying the high voltage cables was chosen by 44.8% of respondents.

Ten people (11.5%) felt a Country Park would improve the countryside. Within the final question for any other comments, two people said that they opposed the idea of a country park as they considered it was not necessary in an area of working farms with open spaces.

Regarding signs, 15 people felt fewer signs would improve the countryside, whereas seven people believed more signs and information would improve it.

Outdoor Leisure Activities

In terms of outdoor leisure activities, over two thirds of respondents view wildlife daily and almost 50% walk daily in the countryside. Photography is the next most frequent daily activity.

Respondents who cycle for leisure tend to do it less often than monthly (23.2%). Those respondents who ride horses (just under 18%) most frequently ride less than monthly, although 4.4% do ride daily.

Around 40% picnic in the Parish's countryside, mostly less often than monthly, and just under 30% of those responding take part in geocaching, again mostly less often than monthly.

Sporting activities are undertaken by just under half of respondents, with 19.4% participating weekly.

Other activities are undertaken by around 1/3rd of Fawkhams respondents, with activities including spiritual practice to connect with nature, tending a small holding, history and archaeology, and driving a veteran car.

Q5 What outdoor leisure activities to you do in Fawkhams Parish? Please tick all that apply and for each you tick, please show how often you do it.

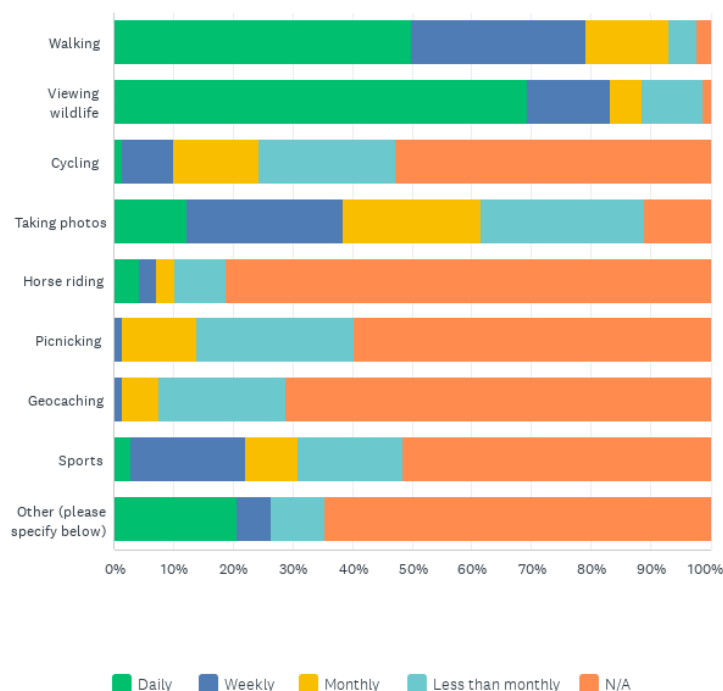


Fig.4: Outdoor leisure activities undertaken by residents of Fawkhams Parish

Other comments

Other comments were made by 54 respondents, although they often related to non-countryside issues such as better drainage, broadband/mobile improvements and road conditions.

37% of comments were concerned with “protecting” Fawkham Parish’s countryside. There were 11 comments made around protecting Fawkham’s countryside and “rural setting”, and nine comments said the Parish needs to be protected “against development”.

Other comments concerned better maintenance of the hedgerows/grass verges (3). Road issues were also prevalent: roads feel unsafe to walk/cycle/more paths needed (4) and traffic needs to be reduced in volume/calmed (4).

Three respondents expressed concerns over the survey:

- *“My main concern is how these loaded questions will be answered and how this information will then be used and shared. For instance, does the Parish Council know that the church meadow is private land? Does the PC know that one family have planted approximately 25000 trees in Fawkham since the war?”.*
- *“I am suspicious of the author of this. It feels like a biased questionnaire and not representative of local people's true feelings or questions they want to ask and answer. I disagree with the undemocratically elected parish council making a decision to do a neighbourhood plan and then CHARGE US FOR IT. People that have the time and money to do the voluntary job of the parish council (respect for giving up your time) are not likely to be a representative sample of society and therefore have representative pressures / experiences / priorities. I would love an amazing playground that is designed by experts, using beautiful wood and sustainable materials. That has sensory areas, herbs and planting, a playhouse etc. But who is funding it, it would need parking and appropriate facilities. Who is cleaning it. It isn't feasible. This questionnaire didn't offer the option of a playground as one of the default selections because I suspect the person writing this doesn't have young children. Yes a country park was an option but that suggests a whopping great parcel of land is needed (coming from where?) and so is definitely not going to happen. A playground is a more attainable suggestion”*
- *“The countryside exists because it is worked on by the rural businesses (horse stables, farmers, tree surgeons etc) and is not a right, I think this survey was extremely biased, and not representative of my views as a local.”*

Residents of other areas

73 residents of other areas completed the survey. The majority are from adjoining Parishes: 40 live in Hartley, 12 in New Ash Green, 9 in Longfield, 4 in West Kingsdown and 2 in Horton Kirby and South Darenth Parish. One person entered “Fawkham Green” as an “other” response which has been included in this analysis.

Q1 Where do you live?

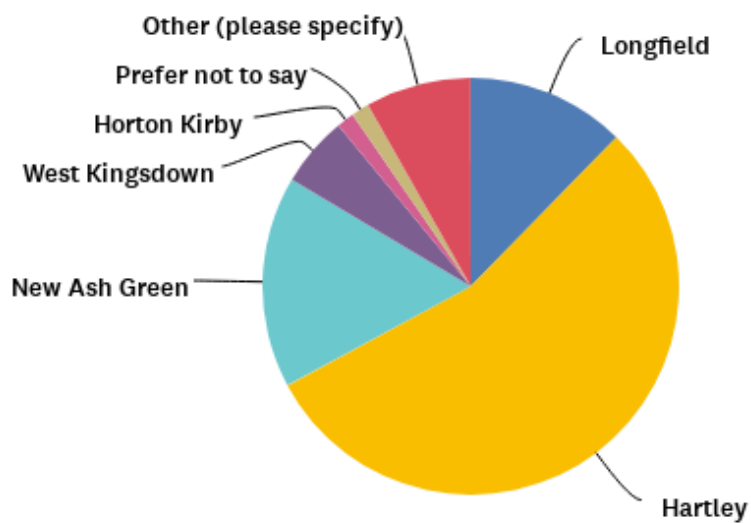


Fig.5: Where respondents live who do not live in Fawkham Parish

What non-residents like most about the countryside of Fawkham Parish

The features non-residents like most about the countryside within the Parish are the trees and woods, and the peace and quiet - the same top two answers as residents. These are followed by the open character, public rights of way and wildlife. As with residents, the historic buildings were the lowest scoring feature.

Q2 What do you like about the countryside within Fawkham Parish? Please choose all that apply and rank in order, where 1 is what you like most.

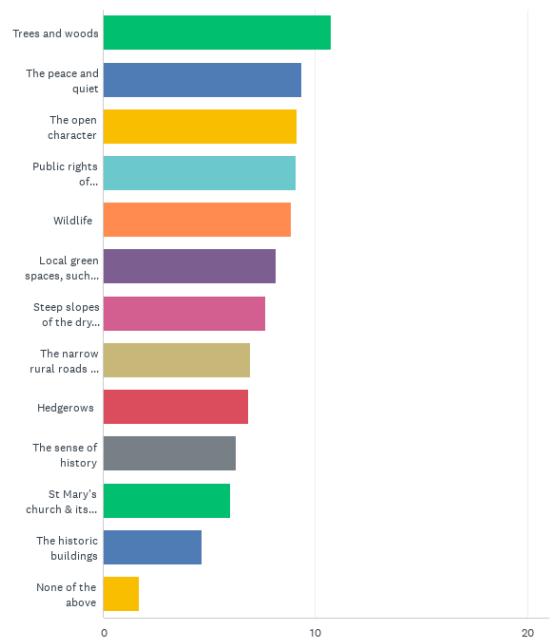


Fig.6: What non-residents like most about the Countryside of Fawkham Parish

What non-residents consider detracts from the countryside of Fawkham Parish

The top three selected items are the same as for residents: fly-tipping, HGVs and the volume of road traffic. 46.6% cited inappropriate modern buildings, higher than the 27.4% of Parish residents.

As with Parish residents, very few consider horse paddocks/stables detract from the countryside (1.37%) and a similar proportion say golf courses detract from the countryside (6.85% versus 6.7%).

Q6 What features, if any, do you consider detract from the countryside of Fawkham Parish?
Please tick all that apply.

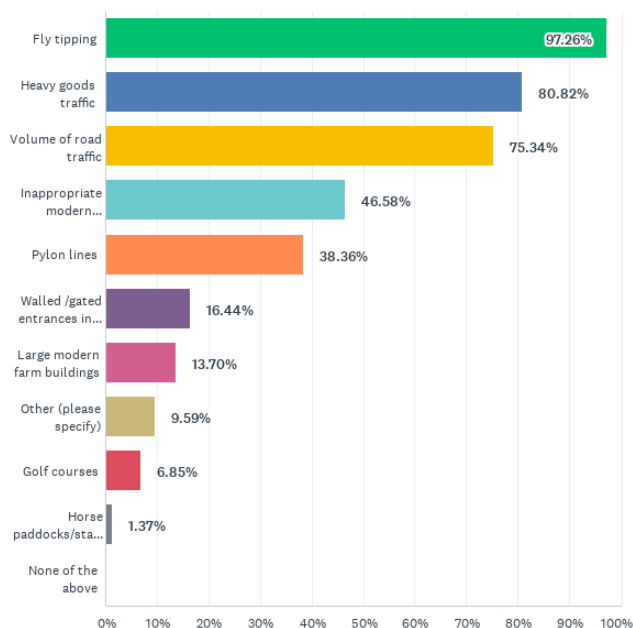


Fig.7: What features non-residents consider detract from Fawkham Parish's countryside

Non-residents' favourite views

There were 65 responses to the question asking where people's favourite view is in Fawkham Parish.

As with residents, the most popular view is from the PROW entrance of Churchdown Wood looking east across the valley towards Hartley, with 13.8% saying this is their favourite view. The second most popular view is around the church and church meadow, including the views from it, mentioned by 12% of respondents. These choices may reflect that non-residents often visit the church, its meadow and Churchdown Woods opposite as it is possible to park there.

Again, the view from the top of Speedgate Hill is popular, mentioned by 6%.

Other views reflect locations from where non-residents can view Fawkham: from Castle Hill (6.2%), from wood/field edge close to Banckside/top of PROW SD212 and from Corinthians golf course across the valley (each 4.7%).

Appendix 3 shows the locations of the most popular views.

Places where non-residents have a feeling of “being away from it all” in “peace and quiet”

Sixty responses were made to this question. Over 20% stated the church meadow or churchyard (21.7%), with 11.7% choosing Churchdown Woods and a further 11.7% “woods” (unspecified). Within the church was chosen by 6.7% and 5% chose “farmers’ fields” (unspecified).

Appendix 3 shows the locations of these.

What non-residents consider would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish

The highest scoring item was again fewer HGVs, cited by 84.7% of respondents.

More wild flowers/grassland meadows was the next most popular improvement, chosen by two thirds of respondents. More trees was selected by more than half.

More signs and information were more popular improvements among non-residents, as may be expected, with 20.8% choosing this as an improvement.

Q7 Which, if any, of the following do you feel would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply

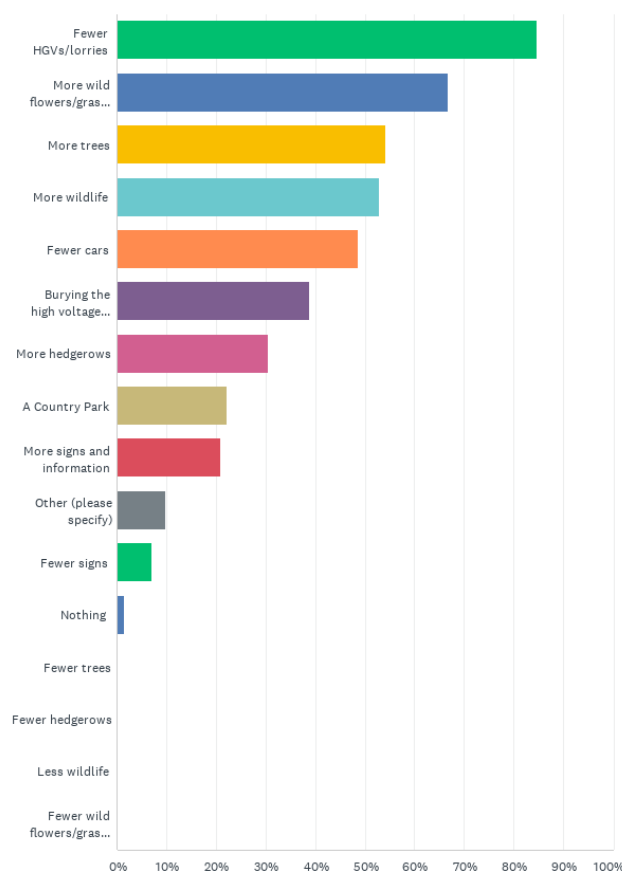


Fig.8: What non-residents consider would improve Fawkham Parish's countryside

Outdoor Leisure Activities

Nearly 40% of respondents walk daily in Fawkham's countryside (38.9%) and a further 34.7% walk weekly. 38% view wildlife daily.

A higher proportion of non-residents ride horses daily (11.7%) compared with respondents who are resident in the Parish (4.4%).

Sporting activities are undertaken by around 41% of respondents, with 24% participating on a weekly basis.

Q5 What outdoor leisure activities to you do in Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply and for each you tick, please show how often you do it.

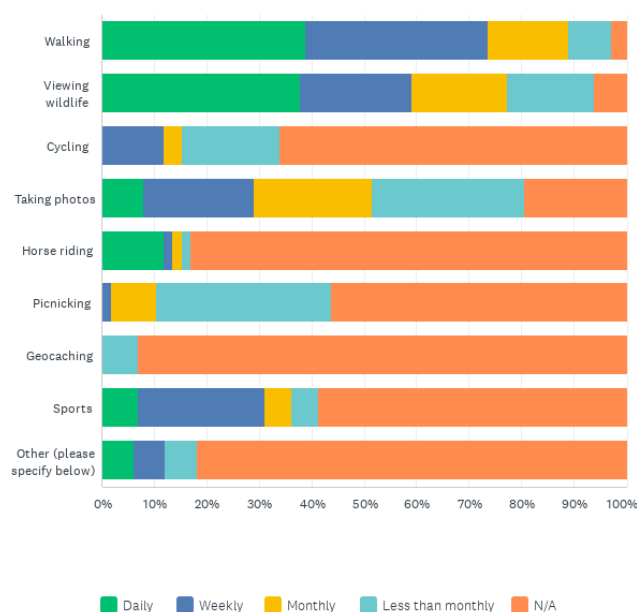


Fig.9: Outdoor leisure activities are undertaken by non-residents

Other comments

Other comments were made by 34 respondents, and followed similar themes to those of residents.

44% of these comments were focused around “protecting” Fawkham Parish’s countryside: there were eight comments around protecting Fawkham’s countryside “against development”, four comments saying Fawkham needs to be protected or “preserved”, and three saying the “rural setting” should be protected.

Road issues and volume of traffic again featured.

There were no comments made about the survey itself.

**Fawkham Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group,
November 2021**

Appendix 1: Copy of the survey questions

Fawkham's Countryside Survey for the Neighbourhood Plan

As you may be aware, the Parish Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Fawkham. The first stage is to gather evidence about the Parish. As part of this, we would like to get your views on our countryside, the appearance of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and human factors.

We would really appreciate it if you could answer the questions in this survey. Please do not worry if you do not have answers for all the questions - just leave those blank.

If you would like to send a photo of any areas or places you mention, that would be great. Please email them to: fawkhampc@gmail.com.

The survey closes on 30th September 2021.

Thank you,
Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group,
on behalf of Fawkham Parish Council

1. Where do you live? Please tick the appropriate box:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fawkham | <input type="checkbox"/> Ash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Longfield | <input type="checkbox"/> West Kingsdown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hartley | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Ash Green | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

2. What do you like about the countryside within Fawkham Parish? Please choose all that apply and rank in order, where 1 is what you like most.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The open character | <input type="checkbox"/> The sense of history |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The narrow rural roads and lanes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hedgerows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steep slopes of the dry valley | <input type="checkbox"/> Local green spaces, such as the church meadow or village green |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> St Mary's church and its setting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public rights of way/footpaths | <input type="checkbox"/> The historic buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The peace and quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and woods | |

1

Landscape Character Survey.docx

3. Where in Fawkham is your favourite view and where would you stand to see it?

4. Is there a place in Fawkham where you get the feeling of being 'away from it all' in 'peace and quiet'? If yes, where is this?

5. What outdoor activities do you do in Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply and for each you tick, please show how often you do it:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than monthly	N/A
Walking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viewing wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking photos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horse riding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picnicking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geocaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If 'other' is ticked, please specify what it is

2

Landscape Character Survey.docx

6. What features, if any, do you consider detract from the countryside of Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pylon lines | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy goods traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Fly tipping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large modern farm buildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Walled/gated entrances in rural roads/lanes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horse paddocks/stables | <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate modern buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volume of road traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

7. Which, if any, of the following do you feel would improve the countryside of Fawkham Parish? Please tick all that apply

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More trees | <input type="checkbox"/> More signs and information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More hedgerows | <input type="checkbox"/> A Country Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer hedgerows | <input type="checkbox"/> Burying the high voltage cables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer cars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer HGVs/lorries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More wild flowers/grassland meadows | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer wild flowers/grassland meadows | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

8. Would you like to make any other comment about the countryside of Fawkham Parish?

3

Landscape Character Survey.docx

Also available online via Survey Monkey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SNB9BYG>
(now closed)

Appendix 2: Copy of the flyer

FAWKHAM COUNTRYSIDE SURVEY

People told us in the 2019 Fawkhams village survey that they value living in the countryside within the Green Belt. Words like landscape, picturesque, beautiful, scenic, green, views, nature and rural were commonly used to describe Fawkhams.

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, we are carrying out a survey to get your views on our countryside. We'd really appreciate it if you could fill in the survey - it's only 8 questions.

You don't have to live in Fawkhams to take part - you just need to know Fawkhams's countryside.

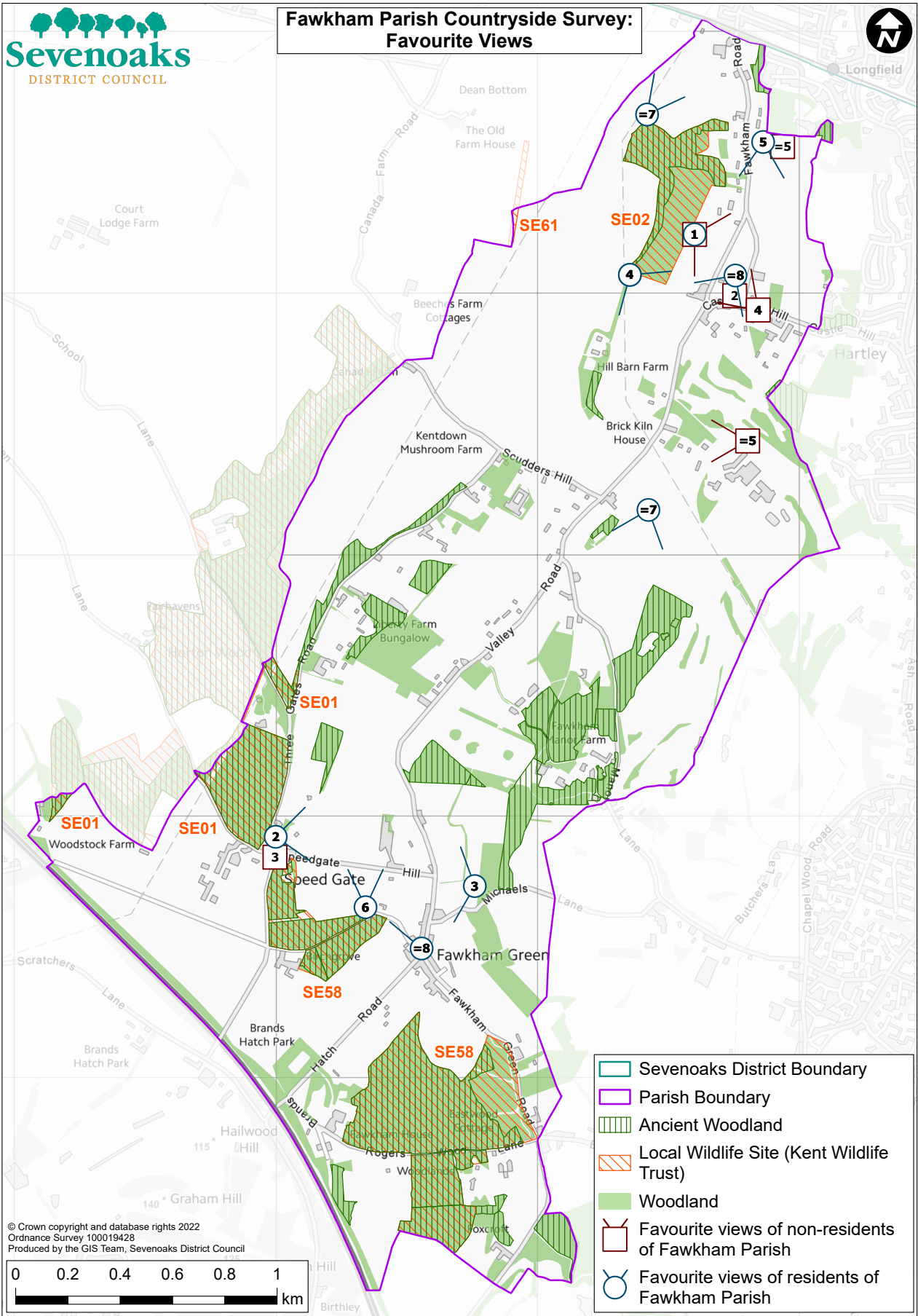
You can find it online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SNB9BYG> or via this QR code. If you can't get online, then you can call 01474 708096 and we can complete it for you over the phone.



Thank you,

Fawkhams Neighbourhood Plan
Steering Group, on behalf of Fawkhams Parish
Council

Appendix 3: Maps showing favourite views and places where people have a feeling of being away from it all



**Fawkham Parish Countryside Survey:
Places "away from it all" in "peace & quiet"**

