

A Say in Our Future

A Parish Plan for Cottenham



COTTENHAM PARISH COUNCIL



 The
Countryside
Agency



This Parish Plan was compiled by an organising Committee following an open meeting held by the Parish Council in January 2003. The organising Committee members were:

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Particular thanks is reserved for the network of 85 volunteers who distributed and collected the questionnaires for the consultation exercise

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Introduction

Cottenham is a 'Fen-Edge' village about six miles north of Cambridge in the East of England. It has a long association with farming in general and fruit growing in particular. As with most of the rest of the country, farming accounts for an ever smaller proportion of the local economy. However, the rural heritage of Cottenham is strong and has a major influence on the appearance of, and activity in the village.

Over the course of 2003, a group of people from the village (including members of the Parish Council) organised a survey of

factual information and opinion on a variety of subjects. This initiative was supported by the Countryside



Agency. The intention was to provide data and information on local opinion to the local authorities

and public agencies that are active in the village and in the region. This report describes the results of the survey and contains proposals for actions and initiatives based on the survey outcomes.

More than half of the households of the village responded to the survey which was conducted in the late autumn of 2003. In total, 1334 households returned surveys with 3314 individual contributions from members of those households. Consequently, the results presented in this report are based on the responses of more than half of all the residents of Cottenham.

People

Cottenham is a large village with around 2500 households and a population of around 6200. Of these 52% are female and 48% male. There is an even distribution of the population across the age groups, with the 18 to 24 age group slightly under-represented when compared with other ages. That is to be expected in a village, as these age groups tend to leave to pursue education and jobs elsewhere

The village population has grown significantly in recent years with the completion of the new housing developments of Tenison Manor and Brenda Gautrey Way (roughly 400 new households in the last six years). This has continued a

Education

With a number of pre-school groups, one of the largest primary schools in Cambridgeshire and a village college that serves Cottenham and a number of nearby villages, education is central to life in the village.

Based on the survey response we estimate that there are 160 children in the village attending pre-school of one form or another with a little more than 500 children attending primary school (mostly but not

pattern of rapid growth that began in the 1960's and

across a number of different duration ranges.

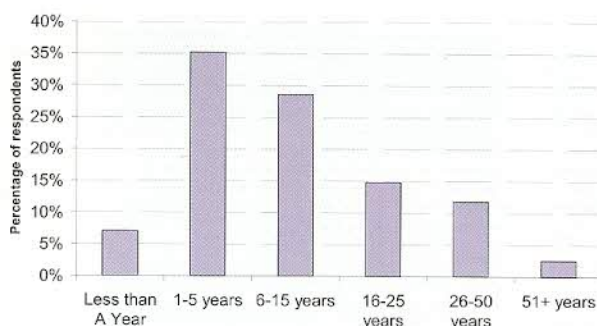


Figure 1: How long have you lived in Cottenham?

1970's. Of respondents who replied, more than 42% have lived in the village for five years or less. Figure 1 shows the distribution of how long residents have lived in Cottenham

exclusively at Cottenham Primary School). Just under 400 young people attend secondary school.

Further education is well represented also with more than a hundred young people from the village attending sixth-form college and a lower but similar number attending University. Between 40 and 50 people are undertaking a training course. All in all, more than 1200 Cottenham

We asked villagers why they chose to live in Cottenham if they had moved here. Just over 20% cited employment in the area as their reason for moving here. Another 20% said they came because they were attracted by the area. 14% said they relocated to Cottenham because their family had moved here, with 13% saying they moved here because of family connections in the area. Just over 5% of respondents said they chose to retire to Cottenham with a similar proportion saying they moved here for the schools.

residents are pursuing education of some form.

All of the village-based educational institutions were well regarded and regularly receive positive feedback from the OFSTED inspectorate. One issue of concern which was expressed was that of class sizes – with the recent rapid growth in population there is some concern that this is putting pressure on school intake.

Employment

The village survey revealed some detail about patterns of employment in the village. Not surprisingly, nearly half of all respondents (48.5%) were employees at the time the survey was carried out. However, employers (3.5%) and the self-employed (6.9%) were also well represented.

The second largest group represented were retired people (20.9%). There are some organisations and facilities at the disposal of retirees, but the fact that one in every five respondents is retired indicates that serious consideration should be given to providing additional facilities for retirees.

More than one in ten (11.5%) of the respondents said that they were in full time education. Unwaged

spouses represented 6% of respondents, with 1.4% unemployed and 1.2% permanently sick or disabled.

In recent years, Cottenham has seen many new businesses established and providing employment for locals and people from outside the village. This is reflected in the fact that nearly a quarter of those surveyed (24%) actually work in the village. Of course, the majority of people work outside the village with Cambridge representing the largest single destination for 34% of respondents. Other local destinations such as Ely, Milton and Waterbeach were regular destinations for between 1% and 2% of respondents. The remaining 36% work at a variety of unspecified destinations outside the village.

200 respondents said that they ran a business and 65% of those are based in the village. Optimism among local businesses is strong with 96.5% of



respondents expecting the number of employees in their business to remain the same or increase.

Transport

Cottenham is situated at the junction of a network of minor roads. The principal North/South route carries a considerable amount of commuter traffic both from and through the village to the A14 and Cambridge. There is also a road linking villages to the West with the A10 to the East. Another road runs South, parallel to the Cambridge road linking the village to the A14 and M11.



A total of 1844 cars (1.4 per household responding) and 110 vans were recorded in the survey. 87 motorbikes, 6 lorries and 28 specially adapted vehicles were also reported, giving an average of 1.6 vehicles per household. Of the cars and vans, some 72% are used for educational or work-related journeys outside the village. All but 9% are usually parked off road, but some

61% of respondents reported difficulties in parking within the village, and 59% saw street parking as a safety risk.

A total of 1460 roadworthy bicycles were recorded, an average of 1.1 per household. There is a shared pedestrian/cycle path between Cottenham and Histon, and between Cottenham and Rampton. Within the village itself there are few other specific facilities for cyclists. Some 30% of respondents believed that cycle facilities within the village were good or reasonable, but almost 48% considered them to be poor, and over 45% said they would like to see more cycle paths.

The principal form of public transport used in the village is bus. There is a frequent service between Cottenham and Cambridge, and a much less frequent service to towns and villages to the North. The Cambridge route also serves the villages of Rampton and Histon and Impington, but only extends as far as the centre of Cottenham village. The northern end of the village has very few buses per day. Four percent of respondents use the bus service

daily, 6% at least weekly, and 20% at least monthly. However, almost 35% never use the bus.

There was a strong response to possible improvements to the bus service. Support was expressed for a direct service to Cambridge, cutting out stops in Histon and Impington and the suburbs of Cambridge. A very similar number of respondents looked for cheaper fares and improved reliability of service.

Traffic-calming measures were introduced into the High Street in 1993. They include speed bumps, traffic islands, chicanes and interactive speed signs as well as road markings indicating parking and non-parking road areas. In spite of these measures, almost 72% of respondents felt that there are major 'danger spots' on Cottenham's roads and 80% believed speeding to be a problem.

By far the most widely noted area of concern was the High Street at the Co-op corner. Considered equally as dangerous was the High Street in general, and in particular its junction with Lamb's Lane.

