

Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages Community Partnership

Priorities survey results

In July and August 2021, we ran a survey with Community Partnership members and other organisations to gauge views on how the CP is going. This was the first opportunity to check this since the CP started and since the Covid pandemic. It was also an opportunity to share views on what our priorities are and should be. We had 25 responses. A longer version of the results is later in the document and there is a summary box with the key headlines.

Summary of results

- Of the 25 responses, 16 responses were from 13 town and parish councils, 7 were responses from Community organisations and charities and 1 response was from a District councillor
- 16 responses were from members of the CP
- 8 responses were from organisations/parish councils not on the CP
- Of those not on the CP, 2 had previously attended and one had attended community engagement meetings but hadn't yet had chance to attend the CP
- Respondents wear multiple hats with 40 different organisations and groups being mentioned (long list below)
- Experiences of the CP were generally positive especially about the CP being informative and a good place to share ideas, although some responses commented about boundaries of CP areas, level of resources and that the CP needs to keep working on progress towards our priorities
- The biggest barrier to engagement is time – other barriers put forward included staffing and the nature of meeting (Zoom and face to face meetings)
- Generally the timing of the meeting tends to work okay although some would prefer it to be held in more working hours
- When asked about whether our current priorities are still resonant and relevant now, the priority with the biggest 'no' response was Priority 1 "Develop active and sustainable transport solutions/ community transport" (18 yes, 6 no, 1 blank response)
 - Reasons for yes included the risk of rural isolation, the fact we haven't been able to look at this yet and that public transport and walking/cycling may be the only way for some people to travel
 - Reasons for no included that the CP budget may be too small to tackle this and there are already schemes around
- Priority 2 (Tackle social isolation and loneliness) and Priority 3 (Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and enable people to live healthy lives) both had 23 saying yes, 1 saying no and 1 response being blank
 - Reasons for yes for Priority 2 included that this existed before but has increased because of the pandemic – it was noted that we need to be

remindful of results vs value for money and some people may be alone but not necessarily lonely

- Reasons for yes for Priority 3 included the pandemic has had a big impact on this and that it is a basic thing people need – some points were offered about being mindful about how best to deliver this (e.g. is this an NHS area?)
- We asked respondents to select priorities from a list from the first CP workshop in November 2019 which they feel may have surfaced or resurfaced as more important over the last 18 months – the top three were:
 - 1. Enable, encourage and support everyone to be more physically active (7)**
 - 2. Support people on low income, including to access essentials and manage their money better (6)**
 - 2. Communication, including about community activities (6)**
 - Reasons for answers included the point that communication is key to everything and getting the fundamentals of a community start with smaller building blocks
- When asked if anything had become a priority as a result of Covid-19, answers included keeping safe, the economy, isolation, mental health support, supporting children to catch up and sustainable planning
- Reasons for these answers included the fact that many people hadn't had face to face contact for a considerable period, the point that people have got less active over lockdown so small steps may make a difference, and the local economy is key to East Suffolk's economy
- Other comments put forward included that the CP is a good forum, we need to create better networks with third sector organisations, it can be "just words" at times and CPs can be very councillor focussed

Wider context – summary

To accompany the survey results from our CP area, the Community Partnership Board also undertook some consultation with strategic partners. The Board asked seven key strategic statutory and voluntary sector partners to identify priorities/key areas of demand for them as we move into Covid recovery.

The nine priorities collectively identified by seven partners are as follows:

- Isolation and Loneliness (top priority for the Board)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (third priority for the Board)
- Young People – education, aspirations, emotional wellbeing and physical health
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and Town and Parish Council Resilience
- Health Inequalities, including Vaccine Inequalities
- Community Recovery – health and wellbeing, employment, financial insecurity, long Covid
- Health and Wellbeing, Admission Avoidance and 'Waiting Well'

- Domestic Abuse
- Vulnerability

The seven partners are:

1. Suffolk Community Foundation
2. Community Action Suffolk
3. SALC
4. Suffolk Police
5. Suffolk County Council
6. Norfolk and Waveney CCG
7. Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG

These priorities have also been mapped to assess what is already happening around these priorities and what more could be done to support these themes. Potential projects have been identified as areas for future investment and the Board will consider worked up proposals later this year.

Responses

Who responded?

We had responses from the following:

- 16 responses from 13 town and parish councils
- 7 responses from Community organisations and charities
- 1 response from a District councillor
- 1 response where they didn't state the nature of the organisation they were

CP responses and non-CP responses

This breaks down into:

- 16 responses were members of the CP
- 8 responses were from organisations/parish councils not on the CP
 - Of those not on the CP, 2 had previously attended and one had attended community engagement meetings but not the CP as yet

Other hats respondents wear

We asked respondents which other organisations they are part of and what other 'hats' they wear. Organisations that respondents are also part of include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Neighbourhood Plan steering group | • Alzheimer's Society |
| • Halesworth Campus | • DANES |
| | • Connected Communities |

- Member of the People and Places action group
- Halesworth Campus
- ESTA
- East Suffolk Line Community Rail
- North Halesworth Millennium Green
- HVC
- BVMT
- HDCF
- U3A
- Suffolk Libraries
- Prestige and First Choice Care
- Kinda Education
- Suffolk Guild of Bellringers (incl Beccles and Worlingham)
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- bungayndp.org.uk
- Worlingham Community Facility
- Bungay Community Support
- Cookpole Energy Action
- Walpole Old Chapel
- Rural coffee caravan
- Bungay Royal British Legion
- Bungay Community Support
- Suffolk Family Carers
- Lunch Club
- Coffee Caravan
- Meet up Mondays
- Churches together in the Blyth Valley
- St Edmunds RC Church
- Halesworth Museum
- HCSL Sport
- Twinning
- Halesworth Day Centre
- Halesworth Business Association
- Halesworth Unappropriated Estate
- Halesworth United Charities
- Halesworth Community Sport and Leisure
- GirlGuiding
- National Women's Register
- Westhall community pub ltd
- Waveney Enterprises Craft workshop
- Bungay Community Support
- Variety of charities and community groups, public and health sector, private sector

How the CP works

Experiences of the CP

When asked about experiences of the CP, respondents said the following:

- I went to the first meeting when they were being set up. I have also had a meeting with someone to discuss community transport issues that the ESC are looking at. Other than that they haven't really featured.
- Very interesting, well managed and informative
- Early to say about CP – Positive experience of the Bungay Community meeting that we attended - help forging connections.
- Good - we had a very informative introduction at a PC meeting.
- It is good and well intentioned, but as an unpaid representative of our community who struggles to get residents involved, it can feel like we are paying lip service to the aims and objectives.
- Only attended once, so no comment yet
- It has been a difficult time for all due to covid
- Positive

- Useful forum for sharing of ideas and initiatives. Need to keep working on progress towards our priorities
- initiating CP projects and participating in their delivery within Bungay
- I am biased but I think the funding is well distributed
- Very positive
- Not very positive - your boundaries don't really match the 'on the ground' reality
- Very good and positive
- very positive
- Positive. Welcoming, relaxed but professional.
- Not sure yet if it is value for money in terms of Officer time and the amount of money available to use.
- No comment
- Excellent
- Initially uncertain but now very positive. Still difficult to reach into communities though

Barriers to engagement

When we asked respondents to posit barriers to engagement and how these could be overcome, the following responses were received:

- Only lack of time because of engagement with other things
- Had not heard of the Partnership
- Time / staffing
- Time at the moment and one Cllr short. The Clerk is employed for 4 hours a week and have a backlog of work.
- I have some issues with the transparency and 'joined up thinking' of translating good policies into actions re: East Suffolk Council.
- Lack of local involvement
- Lack of Time, Husband unwell at the moment
- Time
- I am looking forward to face to face meetings and the opportunity for informal chats to get to know other members better
- Hours in a day!!!
- None other than time
- I chair a Parish council outside of the CP area and live in Walpole. Both areas connect with Halesworth and not those which your boundaries impose
- time
- Measurable benefits – avoid members using the partnership as a political tool
- Zoom meeting
- Difficult to pick action from the talk

- Large 'councillor' contingent - feedback when trying to get others to come to meetings. It would be better if councillors could be 'twin hatted' with their role in local community groups or charities.

Timing of meetings

We asked respondents about the timing of meetings and whether the current time is best/most workable. Respondents said the following:

- I would prefer earlier 16.00 hrs or a bit later say 19.00 hrs
- Evenings fine apart from Tuesdays
- Late afternoon or early evening good
- OK.
- I am retired; timings are not an issue for me.
- Ok for me
- I can attend according to my diary which isn't always fixed to a particular evening or day
- Early evening works well for me but I can be flexible about other times if necessary
- Good time of day, but clashes with GirlGuiding commitment on a Tuesday
- current times are convenient
- No preference
- No problem
- Usually any time will be ok unless I have a meeting etc.
- Early evening
- early evening is fine
- I would prefer the meetings to be held in 'working hours'.
- either is ok
- No problem
- Perfect
- Works OK - it does allow those who are working to attend if they wish.

CP priorities

Current priorities

Priority 1 - Develop active and sustainable transport solutions/ community transport – still consider to be resonant and relevant now?

- 18 said yes
- 6 said no
- 1 response was blank

Reasons for yes	Reasons for no
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of rural isolation - people need to be able to access population centres for key facilities and for social contact • Reliable transport, required for everybody but especially the aged who require to visit hospitals etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within the budget available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because we have not focussed properly on transport yet • It's an issue for some in my village and is an important element of the next two priorities • Clearly an issue for rural communities, but also for smaller market towns • There is NO community transport in 'my' areas. • So important for people whose only option of travel is public transport • poor or non-existent bus services to outlying villages • To capitalise on the cycling and walking activities that residents have adopted during lockdown. We have too few resources to support cycling in our towns with cycle lanes being ignored by vehicle drivers/parking. We need more cycle lanes. • Transport is probably the key issue in rural areas - has been for 20 years and has still not been addressed properly. • I think they are resonant and relevant, but I'm not convinced it is achievable for our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst this is important within rural areas the funding for this goes beyond the scope/budget of the Community Partnership so if we are revising the 3 most important then we need to consider such things as the increasing risks to our community as a result of reduction in benefits, rising inflation etc that will place a growing number of families into fuel and food poverty. • I don't think there is enough money available to do this. • Already exists. Not enough budget to do much. Maybe advertising • The area is covered by Community Transport. Massive budgets needed to create other alternatives. Low demand.

Priority 2 - Tackle social isolation and loneliness – still consider to be resonant and relevant now?

- 23 said yes
- 1 said no
- 1 response was blank

Reasons for yes (no reasons posited for no)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But need help to be able to identify those people • Social isolation and loneliness has increased in our communities during the pandemic - it is one of the greatest social challenges we face going forwards. • This is a huge issue, but I am wary of crossing the fine line between being actively concerned and becoming prying or invading privacy of residents who may want to be left alone. • loneliness and isolation destroys peoples life's. contact means everything as does a smile • Something I focus on every day as it is a real issue, not only in present times • It's easy to feel isolated if you live in a geographically spread out village. • Certainly been an issue for many over the past 18 months • This runs in parallel with priority 3 • This has been magnified since Covid. Demand for services has increased. • Difficult to address - alone people are not necessarily lonely, and those in a crowd at not necessarily OK. It us hard to penetrate traditional social groupings in rural areas - especially if you have limited local connections. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always exists one way or another - people die, move - leave others on their own. • Since becoming involved in the village hall, I have realised that there are so many lonely and troubled people in our community • a number of older, single people • These problems have been compounded by lockdown. Many social opportunities that were available pre-pandemic are yet to open again. • It needs doing but again results verses value for money. • Can be done by footwork and volunteers |
|---|---|

Priority 3 - Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and enable people to live healthy lives – still consider to be resonant and relevant now?

- 23 said yes
- 1 said no

- 1 response was blank

Reasons for yes (no reasons posited for no)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But need to work in partnership with local sports clubs • The mental and physical health and wellbeing of many residents has declined during the pandemic. People need support to reintegrate into society/community and develop greater personal resilience • again, I'm not sure how achievable this is without stepping into 'nanny state' territory. • Just agree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With few pubs/shops (but Bramfield has both) there is often nowhere where people meet • It is so basic! Walking helps your mental health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is something which needs to be worked on in the rural communities • An important priority for us all • Always important and impacts on so much of wider life • we have experienced an unprecedented period of social deprivation due to the ongoing pandemic which has had a detrimental effect upon all groups within society therefore we need to do all we can to mitigate against the impact of this where ever we can. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people shielding and not going out for over a year • Use of alcohol and domestic abuse have both increased in the past 18 months. Long-covid has exacerbated previously recognised conditions and created new ones for many more people. • yes but does this cross over with the NHS, it is a massive challenge, is this the right format to do that. • Link folk to organisations • Need to 're-boot' since Covid. Demand for mental health services has increased. • Links closely to Priority 2. Lack of public open space in rural areas is a real issue (oddly).

Other priorities

We asked whether there are any priorities from the list first discussed at the workshop in November 2019 which respondents felt have come to the surface or resurfaced as more important over the last 18 months.

The priorities selected by respondents were:

- 1. Enable, encourage and support everyone to be more physically active (7)**

2. Support people on low income, including to access essentials and manage their money better (6)

Communication, including about community activities (6)

- Support people to heat their homes and improve the condition of houses in the rural parts of the CP area (4)
- Tackle childhood obesity through healthy eating and exercise (4)
- Support people to age well e.g. money, activities, social activities, support (4)
- Quality of and access to community buildings and spaces (3)
- Housing – availability and affordability (3)
- Encourage people to be environmentally active and make compromises to help the environment (2)
- Help to improve the life chances of Children in Care (2)
- Support people with dementia and their Carers (2)
- Vibrant sustainable economy (2)
- Reduce life expectancy gaps by improving health and wellbeing in specific areas (1)
- Waste Recycling (1)
- Engage all communities in Community Partnerships (1)

Reasons for answers:

- Physically active - will help address obesity and poor health. Heating houses and improving condition - will help with longer term costs and likely to free up hh income to spend on other things such as healthier food, physical activity etc.
- There is nothing more important than getting children on the road to a healthy life style. The fundamentals of a Community start with having somewhere to meet and organize things
- life expectancy disparities in or area are shameful and we need to take responsibility as individuals, communities and leaders to address this. There is no planet B. Again, leadership is required if we truly believe there to be a climate emergency.
- average age in Bungay is higher than other areas
- Unless we get to grips with recycling we won't have a healthy planet to live on! Communication is the key to everything
- In such small communities some of the above aren't perhaps relevant but some people do live in houses which are no longer manageable and aren't able to move.
- We are poor at communication. We need to ensure we support every group, not just flavour of the month or per projects.
- People on low income are more likely to have many of the other issues highlighted (be in the older age group, suffer from life expectancy gaps, have childhood - and adult obesity issues, etc etc. And communication of everything that the CP does is key to its success

- So difficult to choose only 2! If these 2 issues could be addressed it would help in improving the remaining choices.
- Both my parents had Dementia, so understand what pressure this put on families and carer. Early eating habits, go with you through life, as does introduction to sport at a young age.
- Too busy at the moment to engage.

Anything that has become a priority as a result of Covid-19

We asked respondents if there was anything that had become a priority out of the pandemic. Responses were:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Economy and physical activity | • Fear and anxiety in working towards a normal |
| • Tourism development | • Keeping safe. Keeping healthy. Helping neighbours around us. |
| • Mental health support / helping people to live well with long-term health conditions | • Isolation |
| • Sustainable planning that is sensitive to the rural environment and more 'forward thinking' than we are currently seeing (with regard to businesses and agri-industrial units in particular). | • Nil in my perception / not aware / don't think so |
| • Loneliness, and isolation, mental health | • Mental Health and Loneliness appear to be the priorities. |
| • Supporting children and young people to catch up and/or overcome the deprivations to the education and social development as a result of the pandemic | • Overall health and ways to make small steps to improve health - people tend to focus on the big things - lose 2 stone, not the small ones - walk to the postbox rather than drive. |

Reasons for the answers above included:

- we don't know how small market towns such as Halesworth will survive economically given forces made worse by Covid. Lockdowns showed how important physical activity is
- Essential to East Suffolk's economy
- Impact of COVID-19
- we are currently still in opposition to an application for an intensive poultry unit of 3 sheds housing some 140,000 birds in our village, 150m from a fragile, designated grade II listed building and less than 500m from residents and the local pub. It will destroy the quality of life in our village and is quite inappropriate for the location.

- Months alone not seeing family/friend. Fear at getting covid
- Without some form of reparation the impact of the deprivations on children and young people's lives caused by the pandemic will could have lasting and detrimental effect on their life chances and wellbeing for decades to come.
- Many people have not had face to face contact with another person in over a year.
- We only have one another
- shielding and not going out
- Isolation
- Many people have put on weight, got less active, feel less positive/mentally OK, all since Covid - so they need some small steps that will make a difference and that are less likely to fail.

Any other comments

- I think the CP is an excellent forum through which to target areas that need improvement in the local rural communities
- We need to create better and strong third sector networks in partnership with the public and private sector to take a system approach to supporting our communities.
- No time to consider.
- I feel it's all just words, tbh.
- Thank you for putting this survey together
- I've said this before and will say it again - your boundaries don't 'fit' the networks, contacts etc which exist in the rural areas I know and it is quite difficult to respond to some of your questions.
- Personally we need more activities and facilities for young people ... the swimming pool in Halesworth disappeared and that's what we need more of!
- You're all doing very well...
- No
- CP's are very councillor focussed - I understand that their purpose is to engage the councillors with their local area but the CP's need to better reflect the range of people/orgs who are active in the CP area, and to make the CP's attractive to those that ESC wants to engage.