

In times past everyone had a bicycle to go to school and work. There was a frequent train service from Frankton and Ellesmere.

One thing that is vital in the rural community is transport. Having access to a vehicle is virtually imperative to living and working in the rural Parish (Cox 1998).

The incidence of two cars or more in a household is significantly higher in North Shropshire than the national average. Therefore reflecting the need for a vehicle for work, education and access to services, i.e. health and shopping. Public transport is fairly regular through Dudleston Heath/and Welsh Frankton, however this still has to be accessed from the hamlets.

In the past each settlement had a doctor residing in the village plus a district nurse or midwife, all of whom were accessible outside normal working hours. Ellesmere also had a cottage hospital providing a health service from the cradle to the grave.

Health services are now centralised at the Ellesmere Medical Practice and hospital provision i.e. accident and emergency and maternity, can be accessed at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital or Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

We only have one post office left at Dudleston Heath where our only village shop has just been resurrected. No garages remain. We have one public house on the edge of the parish and one Indian restaurant.

Historically the parish boasted at least 6 drinking establishments. We also have 2 social clubs and Dudleston Heath and Welsh Frankton both have a village hall. These provide the villages with such things as W.I., Senior Citizens, youth groups, whist, bingo, art classes and computing.

Football can be played at Criftins, as can crown green bowling and tennis. Ellesmere College also has some facilities for the public to use at certain times. Golf can be played at the Brow, Welsh Frankton, as can cricket at Frankton cricket club.

The parish has therefore changed over the last century from an affluent landowning, fully employed population to a mainly residential community with few facilities or jobs within it. The parish therefore relies on transport to take its population to school, work or hospital.

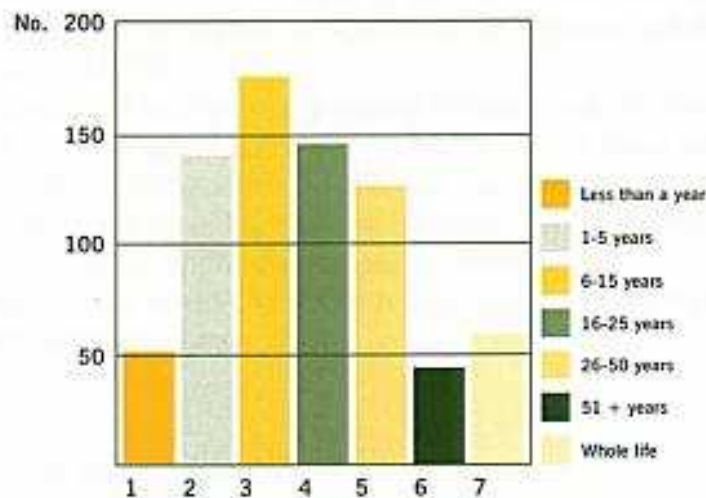
ONS = Online National Statistics

Cox P., (1998) Poverty in rural areas, British Medical Journal, Vol. 316 , p.p. 722

Living in Ellesmere Rural Parish

Population Features

The data highlighted interesting information about population stability in the Parish. 743 people over the age of 11 years responded to the question about how long they had lived in the Parish. Only 8.3% (62 respondents) said they had lived here all their lives, with only 5.5% (44) living here for over 50 years. Given the age range of respondents, this suggests that many people have moved into the area.



The main reason cited for coming to live in the area was "love of country life" (39.4% of respondents). The other key reasons for living in the Parish were "work in the area" (20.3%) and being born here (20.2%). 9.6% stated that they had retired to the area.

There is conflicting information in that 20.2% said they had been born here, but in an earlier question, only 8.3% said they had lived in the Parish all their lives. Responses to these questions should be viewed with caution.

335 households responded to the question asking whether a member of the household had moved out of the Parish in the last 15 years. Approximately 20% said that this had occurred, but few went on to give details. The main reasons cited were "moving to live independently" (47 households) or "setting up a household elsewhere" (49 households). Only 11 individuals said they had moved because of employment difficulties and only seven had left due to lack of suitable accommodation.

Housing

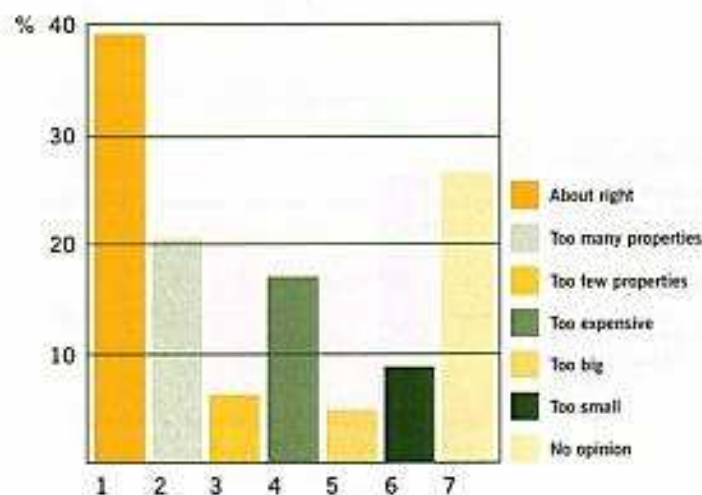
The type of housing in the Parish was not addressed, as this information is available from other sources. However, some features of the housing stock were explored.

The main method of heating the 386 homes is oil (52.8%) followed by gas (26.9%). A large proportion of the homes zones 3, 5 and 6 were heated primarily by oil, (86%, 81% and 70% respectively), with a smaller proportion in zone 4 (29%). The survey does not distinguish between homes heated by mains gas and those heated by LPG gas. Nearly half the homes in zone 4 are heated by gas, reflecting the availability of mains gas in this area. It was clear that few homes used solid fuel, wood, electricity, solar power or other renewable energy sources.

Sewage disposal typifies the rural nature of the Parish. Only 31.9% of households surveyed had mains drainage facilities – reflecting the pattern of housing development, the majority of these households (85%) were in zone 4. Across the Parish, 63% of households use a septic tank or cesspit. A very small percentage use more modern sewage treatment plants (4.9%).

Respondents were asked to identify energy-saving features used in their household. As expected, 80.6% have a lagged hot water tank and 78.2% have loft insulation. 67.9% have some double-glazing while 36.8% use low-energy light bulbs. Only 3.4% of households said they have no energy saving features. 400 residents felt that recycling and energy saving ought to be improved across the Parish.

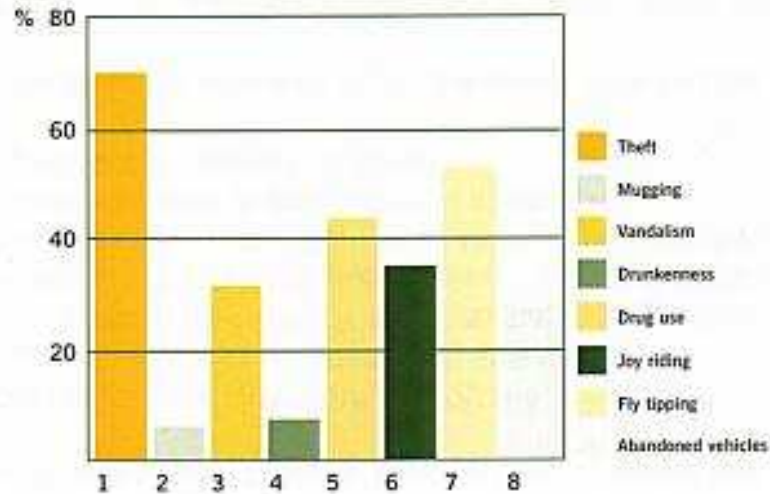
687 people responded to the questions about house building in their zone during the past 10 years. Their views are shown below.



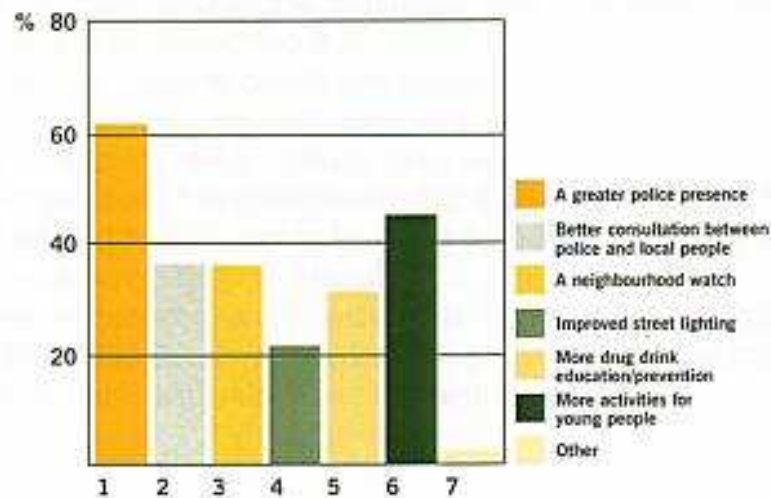
48.7% (333 respondents) said "no more developments" in response to the questions about housing developments in their area. This opinion was evenly represented across all six zones. The survey also identified a need for homes for young people (25.3% = 173 respondents) and small family homes (18.9% = 129 respondents).

Crime

When asked about the types of crime and anti-social behaviour causing concern, 611 people responded. The table below shows the differing levels of concern. This pattern of response seems consistent across all zones.



655 residents gave their views on crime prevention strategies. The table below shows the pattern of response to seven possible strategies.



With a high proportion of respondents indicating a fear of theft, just over a third feel that a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is important. Nearly half of households (48.2%) state that they are not currently part of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and 33.4% "don't know". Only 15% state that they are definitely part of such a scheme.

Environment

522 respondents commented on what they like about living in the area. The response pattern across all six zones was similar. The 10 most popular reasons are shown here.

- 226 people said they enjoyed the peaceful, tranquil nature of the countryside
- 211 people said they appreciated the beauty, clean air, the canals, meres and the wildlife
- 103 people said they preferred the rural way of life, the slower pace and the quality of life
- 89 people said they had good, or friendly neighbours
- 43 people said they enjoyed access to Ellesmere and its facilities
- 41 people said they enjoyed access to bigger towns, motorways and airports
- 35 people said they liked the lack of traffic and problems caused by congestion
- 30 people said they appreciated their privacy, seclusion and lack of neighbours
- 21 people said that they felt safe with no trouble and little crime
- 16 people appreciated the facilities for walking and cycling

Residents were presented with a list of potential environmental problems and asked to state whether any affected them - 541 people responded. The three most significant are litter (71.3% of respondents), dog mess (43.1%) and low flying aircraft (24.2%).

Perceptions about litter and dog mess are consistent across all six zones. However, low flying aircraft is a significant problem in zone 6.

Residents were asked for their views on what could be done to make their local roads, lanes and paths more attractive. 670 people responded. The three most "important" or "Very important" measures to be considered are:

396 people (59.7%) want to preserve canals and towpaths

323 people (48.2%) want to keep verges mown and tidy

297 people (44.3) want to stop vehicle damage to verges

Almost half of all respondents want to preserve existing trees and plant more trees.

294 people (43.2%) felt that hedges should be kept low, but 145 people (21.3%) believe that hedges should be left to grow naturally.

Respondents were asked to comment on measures that might protect and improve the quality of life in their zone. 353 people responded. For the purpose of this report, measures raised by 10 or more respondents are highlighted below.

Roads

Road safety is clearly an issue in the Parish. 60 respondents commented on the need to introduce and enforce speed limits. 31 responses related to problems in zone 4, the other 29 responses being evenly distributed from the other five zones. Most of the responses from zone 4 commented on the speed of traffic along the B5068 between Ellesmere and St Martins. Particular problems in walking to Criffins School were highlighted by nine respondents. 17 residents highlighted the need for traffic calming measures and the need for a footway to enable people to access the village of Dudleston Heath and Ellesmere safely.

The need to reduce speed on quiet country lanes was highlighted by a number of respondents, some suggesting the introduction of "Quiet Lanes" for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. 13 people, from all zones, suggested an increase in the number of cycle routes and marked footpaths with improved maintenance of existing ones.

16 respondents noted the problem of very large vehicles and farm machinery using narrow lanes. 11 respondents highlighted the problem of mud and slurry from such vehicle. 11 residents highlighted problems with drainage. These were from all zones.

Quotes from respondents

Zone 1 "We need traffic calming outside ETC Sawmills"

Zone 4 "We need speed cameras in the 40mph zone on the main road"

Zone 4 "The B5068 from Ellesmere to St Martins should be 30 mph with speed cameras"

Zone 4 "Police need to reduce the speed of cars and lorries travelling through Dudleston"

Zone 4 "Limits on speed and weight of trucks would help"

Zone 5 "Open up old footpaths and bridleways"

Zone 6 "Introduce dog flaps to stiles as used by National Trust"

Zone 1 "Roads could be better maintained and kept cleaner"

Zone 3 "More road names. Better care of roads"

Zone 1 "Clamp down on farmers leaving the road in a filthy state"

Zone 6 "Several cars have been damaged by skidding on farm mud"

Zone 1 "A large amount of road drainage ends up in my garden instead of in the drains."

Other issues

- 10 respondents suggested improved bus services in the area across the Parish.
- 10 residents specifically mentioned a reduction in the amount of litter across the Parish
- Broadband was cited by 12 people as a means of improving quality of life
- 11 respondents representing all 6 zones equally identified improving shops and facilities in Ellesmere. Some specified the need to develop the old Dairy site in Ellesmere
- 12 respondents from zones 2 and 4 identified the need for a School and Community Sports Hall at Criftings C.E. School
- Residents in Tetchill/Lee have concerns about the narrow road on leaving Tetchill towards Ellesmere. 11 respondents from zone 6 commented on the dangers
- 13 respondents from zone 6 highlighted parking on Birch Road in Ellesmere as a problem
- 12 respondents from zones 4, 5 and 6 felt that no changes should be made to the area.

Typical comments were:

Zone 4 "Please keep some parts of England green, peaceful and beautiful."

Zone 5 "Leave well alone!"

Zone 6 "Keep the countryside as countryside – don't urbanise it!"

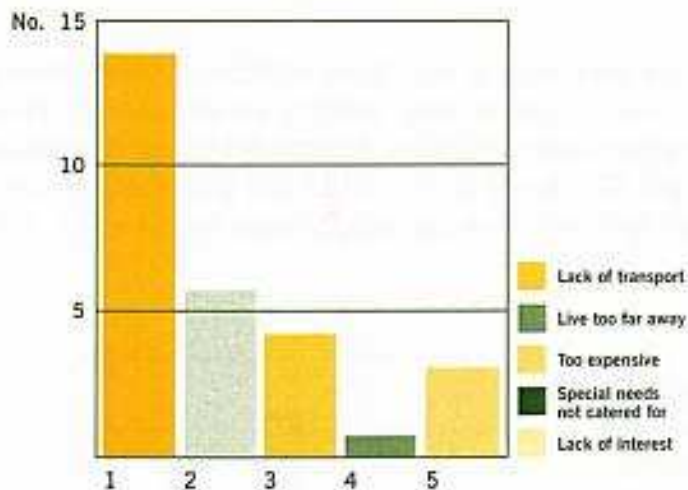
Education and Employment

Education

Of the 54 pre-school children represented in the survey, 16 attended a Mother and Toddler Group, 11 attend a playgroup and 15 attend a nursery. Some children attend more than one of these facilities.

Of the school-aged children represented (5 –15 years), none attended schools for children with special needs. 53 children attend Primary School and 39 attend Secondary School. Seven attend an educational establishment described as 'other'. (The number of children reported as attending various schools is greater than the 91 school-aged children represented in the responding households. As a result, it is not possible to complete the analysis.)

The graph below highlights the various reasons for not taking part in after-school activities. Nearly all households affected by lack of transport live in zones 4, 5 and 6. Nearly all households affected by distance from school lived in zones 4 and 5.



Households were asked about the numbers of people over the age of 16 who attend institutions offering post-compulsory education. Eleven people attend a sixth form college, seven attend a further education college and 17 attend an institute of higher education, such as a university. There were no apparent differences in this pattern across the Parish.