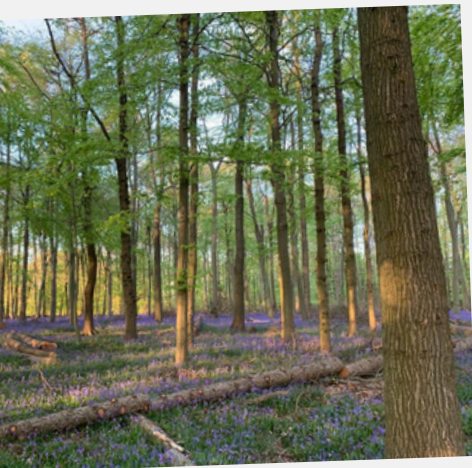


Aldbury and Tring Station Community Survey Report 2021



Contents

Introduction

Community Engagement
Thanks and Acknowledgements

Section 1: Social

Our Population
General Opinions
Facilities
Activities
Community Welcome
Communications
Faith

Section 2: Environment

Sustainability
Energy
Gardening & Allotments
Biodiversity

Section 3: Development & Commerce

Development
Transport
Village Path
Street Lighting
Business

Section 4: Parish Council

Opinion and Comments

Conclusion

Appendices

Useful Contacts
Action Plan

Report created by the Aldbury and Tring
Station Community Survey Working Group,
December 2021 © All Rights Reserved



Photo credits: Birds eye view of Aldbury (Aaron Cooper (Still Cast Photography), top); Aldbury landscape (Brian Dumpleton, middle); Pond under snow (Jack Hingston, bottom)

Front cover photo credits (from top left clockwise): Felicity Aris, Jack Rowan, Brian Dumpleton, Jack Rowan, Felicity Aris, Jack Rowan, Jack Rowan, Lucy Carmody, Jack Rowan

Introduction

The Parish of Aldbury and Tring Station in Hertfordshire covers 816 hectares and has around 450 households. At the time of the last census (2011) the population of 964 was split equally between male and female with an average age of 41. In 2019, the ONS estimate of total population was 906. The latest data on population and households from the 2021 census will be published in Spring of 2022.

Surveys have been carried out in the village of Aldbury and wider parish over the years, the latest being in 1991 and then 2011. The last Parish Plan published in 2011 (found [here](#) on the Parish Council website) ended with the note that 'despite the generally high level of satisfaction expressed, improvements could be made to our local environment and community, and steps could be taken to help preserve the Parish from potential threats.' This seems equally relevant 10 years on. The information collected in this report provides a much needed update on the topics covered a decade ago along with additional issues applicable to the current residing population.

The published report which follows the survey has previously been called a 'plan' but Aldbury & Tring Station has never gone to the extent of communities such as Ivinghoe or Bovingdon who have presented a formal Neighbourhood Plan with local authority funding. In fact, we understand that the existing Neighbourhood Plan scheme is under review by the current government due to poor take up, despite a monetary enhancement of 25% vs 15% of any community infrastructure levy arising from developments for a settlement with an official plan in place. The pilot is for a simpler form of neighbourhood planning to empower and encourage communities to play a direct role in shaping their neighbourhoods with respect to housing, transport and services.

We therefore call this document a 'Community Survey Report' which will be presented by the community to the Parish Council, Dacorum Borough Council and our County Council as a representation of the views of this community, to be considered when making decisions on our behalf during the next decade.

The basis of the report is an analysis of the responses to a detailed survey (provided

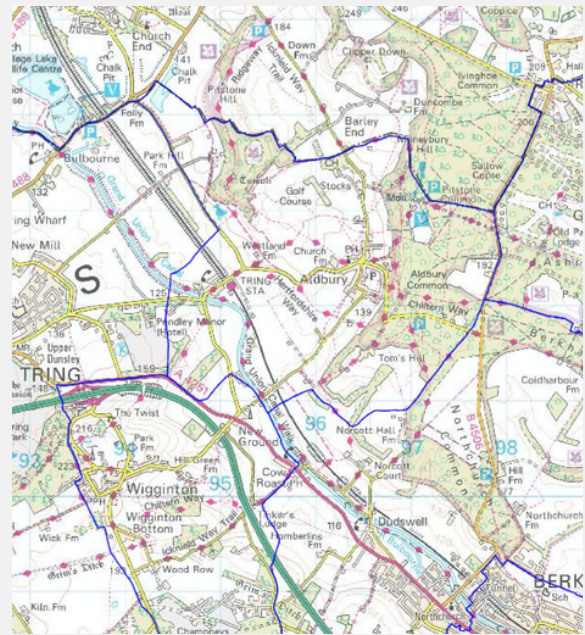


Figure 1: Parish Council Boundary (2021)
Crown copyright and Database Rights 2021. Licence No. 100018935; sourced from Dacorum council website <http://maps.dacorum.gov.uk/webmaplayers8/map.aspx>

online via SurveyMonkey and in printed format made available at the Village Shop) which all adults living or working within the Parish boundaries were invited to complete and submit. Young people and children were also surveyed separately. The aim was to create an 'Action Plan' based on the community's wishes, invite the Parish Council to respond to that plan and encourage the community to take responsibility for delivering on anything outside the scope of the councils. The intention is for this survey to be redone every 10 years but, as the process is online and analysis is more straightforward, it may be that a 5 year horizon is preferred to hold ourselves to account in delivering on the wishes expressed here.

Community Engagement

The survey has been compiled by a group of volunteers, not by the Parish Council, although one volunteer was a Parish Councillor. All residents and people working in the community were invited to participate and there was a separate online survey provided for those aged 11-17. Children's views were expressed during a focus group held at Aldbury Primary School. Care was taken to offer support to elderly residents and those without internet or computer access, and some volunteers helped neighbours complete and submit their surveys. Regular posts were put on the community Facebook sites, in Aldbury Outlook and posters were placed at the shop and station to remind residents to submit before the due date. Postcards were put through every door and a stall was hosted at the Village Party in September 2021. A planning event was held at Musette Café to introduce all the volunteers and debate the wording of the questions to be asked.

The Survey

The main survey committee, known as the Community Survey Working Group (CSWG), of around 14 volunteers divided into working parties and these parties were further divided into sub-groups of 2-3 people to compile the questions in the various subject areas of the questionnaire, e.g. social, traffic, business. The survey went through several drafts and the working group trialled the questions on each other and their families. The final version was then created in SurveyMonkey and paper copies were made available from the Village Shop. Although the intention was for each individual resident over 11 to complete their own survey, some households submitted only one survey and some individuals submitted two responses - representing the views of two people. Where possible, the CSWG checked these and made sure these identical submissions were not due to technical errors. Respondents were encouraged to give personal details so that the CSWG could put them in touch with community groups. Around 40% of respondents chose to remain completely anonymous and 14% did not give their postcode. Data security was a top priority for the committee and only two people were permitted access to the full data set, which will now be held in a secure online SurveyMonkey account until the report is published and responses made. Following that the individual responses will be deleted from SurveyMonkey.

The Office of National Statistics estimates that, in 2019, there was a total population of 906 adults and children living in Aldbury and Tring Station; 795 of these were aged 11 or over. The number of responses from residents and working persons in Aldbury & Tring Station in response to the survey we released in November 2021 included:

282

adults
(aged 18+)

12

young people
(aged 11-17)

Focus Group

77

Aldbury School
students
(aged 5-11)

(a separate, shorter survey was conducted on students at Aldbury Church of England Primary School; the results are excluded from statistical analysis although a selection of figures have been included in the report where applicable)

(the above figures include responses received online and the 20 in written format we received. Twenty responses were subsequently excluded from statistical analysis as each appeared to be one of multiple entries from the same individual, likely due to a technical server error)

Based on 2019 estimates of the number of adults living in Aldbury and Tring Station, this results in an adult response rate of approximately 38%. This is higher than the UK average in market research of 33%, with anything over 25% considered fair, but much lower than the target 60%, despite the lengths the team went to in engaging the community. Previous surveys requested one response per household and there is a conversation to be had about which method provides the fullest and fairest outcome. The highest average UK survey response rates (which average 57%) are from in-person interview surveys, a method that was not considered for this survey due primarily to lack of resources and funding, the length of the final questionnaire and the sensitive nature of some of the questions.

Where in this report we refer to percentages of people, they are sometimes given as a percentage of the total survey respondents and sometimes the percentage of question respondents. Where this distinction is important, we have made clear which this is. The open-ended questions produced many varied and wide ranging comments and suggestions. We would like to extend thanks to the responders for being, on the whole, inventive, collaborative and frank. All views have been anonymised and passed on to the relevant organisations, such as the Parish Council, the Church, the Garden Club and Aldbury Outlook. Where respondents specifically requested a personal contact or registration form from a club, society, or a personal contact from the Council, these email addresses have been shared with the relevant responsible persons. Some replies to the open-ended questions suggested activities or facilities that have been considered and often provided in the past, but then stopped or closed owing to lack of support or suspended during the pandemic.

Many respondents expressed gratitude (much appreciated) for the questionnaire and the work which had gone into it. Some felt that Tring Station issues were not sufficiently

addressed and one person said that there was too much emphasis on climate and the 'eco-angle'. We will note for the next survey that it was also suggested that we could include questions specifically on cyclists and dogs.

Definition of terms used in this report

Community

We use the term 'community' to mean all people living or working in the Parish of Aldbury and Tring Station.

Respondents

We refer to the people who shared their views online and in written format as 'respondents'.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many people who gave up their time to fill in the very detailed survey and who came up with some illuminating and insightful views and ideas.

Thank you to Aldbury Parish Council for providing funding support of £500 to produce this survey (covering printing and survey costs) and their ongoing dedication, time and energy spent working on Parish matters.

Thank you to Simon Voysey of Musette Café for providing the prize of a meal for four for the survey prize draw.

Thank you to the Community Survey Working Group who compiled the questions, reminded residents to respond and wrote sections of this report. The CSWG consisted of people from as wide a variety as possible of ages and locations within the Parish and the many hours of work they put in have enabled us to get to this stage. We extend grateful thanks in particular to Tess Alps, Ian Brown, Jane Brown, Nick de la Bedoyere, Caroline Ellwood, Isabel Irwin, Sue Justice, Margaret McHugh and Nicola Simpson without whose support this survey would not have come to fruition. A particular thanks should be extended to Felicity Aris for offering her social media, design and layout skills to this project.

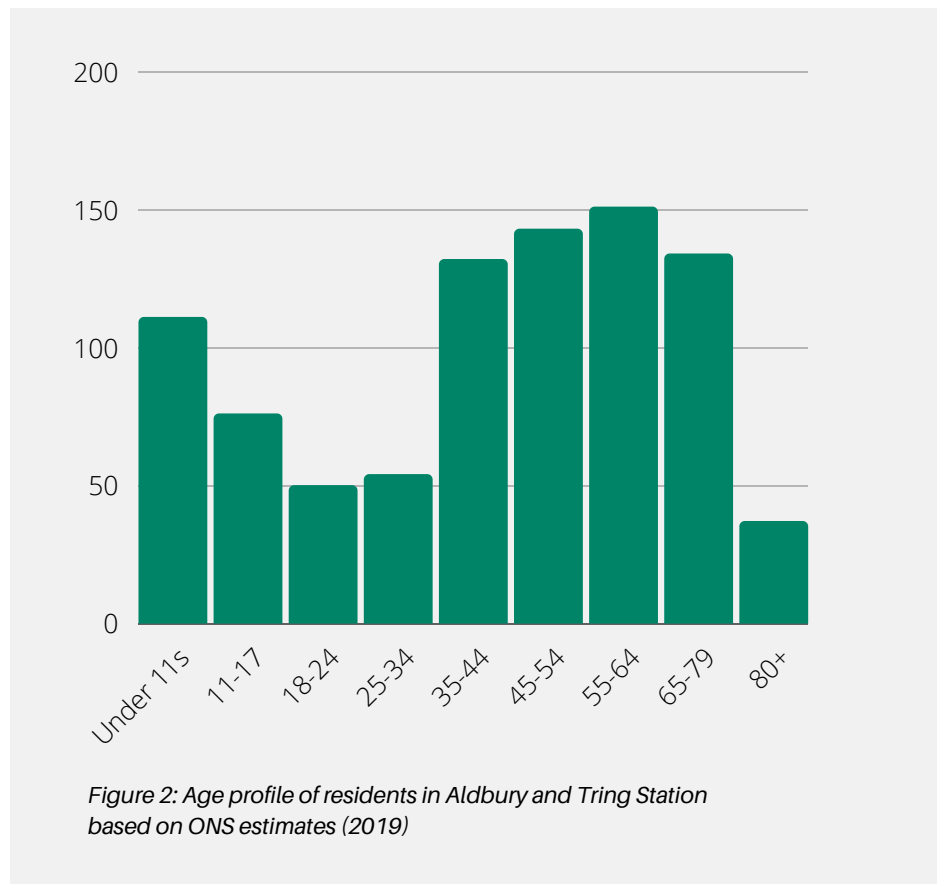
Last, but not least, a big thank you to Lucy Carmody who set up the CSWG, guided it through the many stages and oversaw all the work, including inputting the survey questions into SurveyMonkey and analysing the resulting data. Her determination to see the project through and keep to schedule was vital to its achievement.

Section 1: Social

Our Population

Age & Demographic Profile

According to ONS estimates from 2019, the majority of our population are adults aged over 35. Data gathered from the survey matched this, revealing that a third of all respondents are those 'preparing for retirement', aged between 55-64. Only nine respondents are over 85 years old. The survey additionally showed that most respondents are part of a family with children or students (42%), followed closely by those living as a couple with no children (39%) and 19% living alone. Of those in families, 13% have under 11s, 9% secondary school age children and 6% have both. Another 6% have students returning for holidays, 8% have adult children living at home and seven respondents were parenting alone. Two residents reminded us they live with a disability and are blue badge owners.



Fun Fact

The most popular name amongst respondents was David (7), followed by Kate (5).

Work Profile

41%

are in full time work

17%

are in part-time work

30%

are retired

41%

of respondents work from home; 20% do this 1-2 days a week and 15% work 3-4 days per week; 6% of respondents work from home 5 days a week

General Opinions

Most popular responses to what respondents **enjoyed** about living and working in our community:



Most popular responses to what **concerned** respondents most about living in our community:



Most popular responses to what respondents felt were **the biggest challenges** for our Parish in the next decade:



Most popular responses to what respondents would **most appreciate in the local area** over the coming decade:



Focus group: Aldbury Church of England Primary School

Students voted on what they most liked about Aldbury and Tring Station. Their top responses were: **1) the village shop 2) being able to go to school in the village 3) having local places to play**. Students were also asked to suggest what could be improved, and suggestions included: providing more recycling bins around the village (in particular on the Ashridge Estate), upgrading Aldbury Playground with some equipment for older children and setting up a Go Ape on the Ashridge Estate.

Facilities

Respondents were asked to consider the various local facilities situated in Aldbury and Tring Station. A large majority of users gave a rating of 'excellent' or 'good' to The Memorial Hall (89%), allotments (84%), the Chapter House (83%) and the Iron Room (76%). The Peace Institute, Aldbury Playground and Tring Station Playground were considered by over 80% to be 'good' or 'fair' and 76% of users considered the Tennis Court to be 'good' or 'fair'. However, the Sports Pavilion and the Basketball Court at the Recreation Grounds in Aldbury were thought to need attention and were both mainly rated 'poor' or 'fair'.

Use of Facilities



Village Shop, Aldbury (Photo credit: Jane Brown)

82% 
use the Village Shop;
68% use it at least weekly




Tring Station (Photo credit: Felicity Aris)

30% 
use the railway station at least
once a week; half of respondents
use it monthly or occasionally


48% 
use the Post
Office weekly

16% 
visit the Church
monthly; **5.5%**
visit weekly

8% 
visit a golf club
as a member at
least weekly

62% 
use the Aldbury
Garage

30% 
visit Musette Café at
least once a month

29% 
visit Brownlow Café
at least once a month

49% 
visit the Greyhound Inn
at least once a month;
25% visit weekly

25% 
would visit the Valiant
Trooper at least once a
month (if it reopened);
13% weekly

Activities

The survey revealed that the community is involved in a variety of activities and clubs, and has the potential for many more. Activities and clubs currently available include:

- Aldbury Garden Club & Allotment Association (AGC&AA)
- Bellringers
- Book clubs
- Bootcamp
- BoxFit
- Bridge Club
- Coffee Morning
- Discussion Group
- Film Club
- Golden Girls Fitness
- Lunch Club
- Men's Football
- Morris Dancers
- Photography Club
- Pilates
- Royal British Legion
- Table Tennis
- Tennis Coaching
- Toddlers Group
- Yoga

The AGC&AA and the Film Club were the most popular groups amongst respondents.

No fewer than forty respondents expressed an interest in joining a new Events Committee to help organise community clubs and activities. There was an extensive list of eighty-two ideas and suggestions for these activities ranging from physical pursuits to crafts to a new meditation group that received interest from a noteworthy forty-three respondents. Concerns over lack of sufficient social activities for children, young adults and the elderly were expressed by many respondents and will be addressed in the coming months. A meeting will be arranged to coordinate the various offers of help, analyse the suggestions and set up the Events Committee in the new year.



Childrens' tennis at Aldbury tennis court (Lucy Carmody), top; the Lunch Club held at The Greyhound Inn (Fenella Woodus), bottom

Community Welcome

40% of respondents said they had moved to the village in the past 10 years

On average respondents rated their feelings of being welcomed at about 70% in a range from 'not at all' to 'very'. Eight people (7%) sadly felt nobody noticed when they moved in and sixteen people (14%) felt most warmly welcomed. Clearly there is a connection to be made here with outreach from social clubs and societies as well as a more coordinated approach to welcoming new residents proposed in comments for the Church and the Parish Council.

Communications

96% 

found the Aldbury Outlook useful

77% 

use or read the noticeboard outside the Village Shop

72% 

of those who use it found the Tring Station newsletter useful

71% 

found the [Everything Aldbury Facebook Group](#) useful

50% 

found the [Parish Council website](#) useful; 40% did not know about it

Some respondents mentioned that they were 'not good on the internet yet' and need help to use it properly. In addition, eight respondents said they had no internet access. Despite these being minority concerns among respondents, it is clear that multiple communication channels are required to support all members of the community.

63% of survey respondents said that they read Aldbury Outlook. This figure is a credit to the demanding work put in by all the volunteers involved with editing, layout and distribution of the magazine. Most respondents expressed that they like the local news (84%) and general content featured in the magazine, as well as information on events. 48% would like to receive it in printed form while 11% would prefer an online version, and 36% would like it in both formats.

Other suggestions for the community magazine included:

- printing on recycled paper
- moving online to reduce waste
- featuring more content about sustainability, rural life and regular seasonal articles about farming

75% of respondents would be keen to see a **community website with news, events, venue booking, and a business and service directory**

Lucy Carmody, Jont Cole and Emma Verity are the team leading this project and the survey has provided them with a list of volunteer contributors and photographers. They will be seeking some admin volunteers and community funding of around £400 for three years to launch the non-profit online hub which will have news, events, history, a photo gallery, contacts, links and a business directory. There will be no advertising on the site and it will, hopefully, include downloadable back issues of Aldbury Outlook.

There is also need for some additional admin help managing the Facebook Group, Everything Aldbury. Please contact sophie.hanson2@btinternet.com to express interest.

Faith

Respondents were asked if they identified with, or practised, a religion. Replies showed that respondents practise a variety of faiths in different locations.

37% of adult respondents identify as Church of England

In addition, 5% identify as Catholic and three respondents as 'Other Christian' (such as Methodist, Baptist or Church of Scotland); the total of 44% of respondents identifying as Christian can be compared to the ONS 2019 estimate of 51% in England and Wales. Six respondents identify as Jewish (including one Orthodox) and three people identify as Buddhist. No respondents identify as Muslim, Sikh or Hindu.

Only a third of total respondents specified a location where they practise their faith. Of these, three quarters attend services at St John the Baptist Church in Aldbury. Seven others travel to Berkhamsted to practise their faith, six travel to Tring, two to Northchurch and one to Wigginton. One person practises at the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in Great Gaddesden and one respondent 'claims Woodstock as their spiritual home'. Three respondents specified that they practise their faith at home, and two 'in the forest' or 'wherever they are'.

In addition to the above figures, a number of respondents feel very much part of the local church community even though they do not attend services. These include flower arrangers, bellringers, churchyard workers, along with visitors who attend coffee mornings and Toddlers Group.

Several comments were raised by respondents about how the local church could offer additional support to members of the community and these have been passed on to the Church Council who are grateful for the feedback and will respond in due course. If respondents wish to follow up their comments, they are encouraged to get in touch with Rev. Michelle Grace or the Tring Team (contact details provided on page 36).



*St. John the Baptist church, Aldbury
Photo credit: Jane Brown*

Section 2: Environment

Sustainability

There is a keen interest in this topic and more than fifty adults indicated they would like to join a new sustainability club which will be set up next year (name tbc). Ideas shared by survey respondents (outlined below) along with further options will be discussed when we have our quarterly meetings. For those interested in joining who have yet to share their email, contact details are provided at the end of the report.

Over half of respondents to the question 'What could be done to help us reduce, re-use and recycle?' suggested more recycling bins - especially to be placed next to the shop and with regular pick-ups for electrical items, batteries, light bulbs, plastics and pet food pouches. Respondents also wanted Dacorum to provide:

- improved labelling and instructions for recycling and a monthly 'bulky item' pick-up (i.e. where residents pay an additional fee to have mattresses or furniture taken away for proper recycling)
- support, advice and funding relating to sympathetically incorporating insulation, secondary glazing, renewable energy (i.e. solar panels, air and ground source) into our conservation area
- advice on how Aldbury & Tring Station could go carbon neutral

84% of respondents said they would appreciate a regular Aldbury Repair Café to be held in the Memorial Hall

The concept of a 'Repair Café' gained one of the strongest response rates in the whole survey. Ten people offered specific skills: sewing, restringing guitars, handyman, DIY, leatherwork and mending, but there are probably others with general repair skills who might lend a hand. Interested parties or volunteers are encouraged to step forward to make this happen (see page 36 for more information).

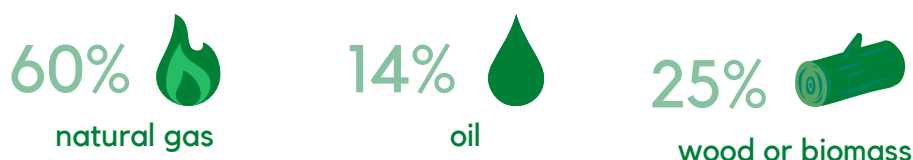
Other suggested ideas included:

- An 'upcycling' shed for items of value to be left for others. This is very popular in Scandinavian countries and requires a garage or shed with access via a punch code. Volunteers would be required to find an appropriate space, fund-raise for rental and security, make the display attractive and easy to navigate, and dispose of items which linger too long unloved.
- In addition, in the same space, there could be a tool and electric equipment 'library' for community members to sign items in and out. Members would pay an annual fee to borrow and return items such as ladders, drills, saws, leaf blowers, etc. Everyone signs a waiver and accepts responsibility for their own actions and safe use of the tools. Again, this requires volunteers to step forward to manage.

- There were many requests throughout the survey for more fresh, local and unpackaged produce to be available - either in the Village Shop or in a new concept farm shop. There were also requests for a regular weekly visit from a baker, butcher and fishmonger, or perhaps a 'mini market' day where suppliers of seasonal and local produce are invited to attend.
- An honesty box was suggested where people can place garden or allotment produce with proceeds going to fund village activities. All that is needed for this is someone with a suitable space in front of their home (which would not be a hazardous place to stop) where there could be a covered shed and a lockable box for funds.
- Clothes swap events were suggested where you hire one of the halls, drop off your clothes and shoes in advance, get credits, pay to enter and get swapping. This is another opportunity for a village fundraiser.

Energy

Respondents heat their homes using:



Eight low-carbon households have solar panels, one has an air-source heat pump and four have ground source. There are also several homes which are both heated and powered with exclusively renewably sourced grid electricity and a fifth of respondents have already sourced 100% renewable electricity from their energy supplier. For those interested in doing this, most suppliers now allow residents to pay a slight premium for securing electricity from non-fossil fuel means and then the National Grid matches the amount of electricity the 'renewable' suppliers require with the amount they buy from renewable sources.

Three houses use propane gas, most likely for cooking, and many of those who burn wood or biomass use it as a secondary fuel. This 25% figure is way in excess of the UK national figure of 8% of homes burning wood (Burning in UK Homes and Gardens Research Report, Kantar, 2020). The new sustainability club will assess lower carbon replacement biofuel options which will still allow us to use them.

Electric Vehicles

13% of question respondents already own an electric car

A noteworthy twenty-seven respondents are planning to buy an EV next year and by the end of 2025 there could be an estimated two hundred and twenty present in the Parish. At least twenty-five on-street charging points will be required by respondents with requests from nearly every street (these requests have been passed on to the Parish Council who are assessing the options for future charging).

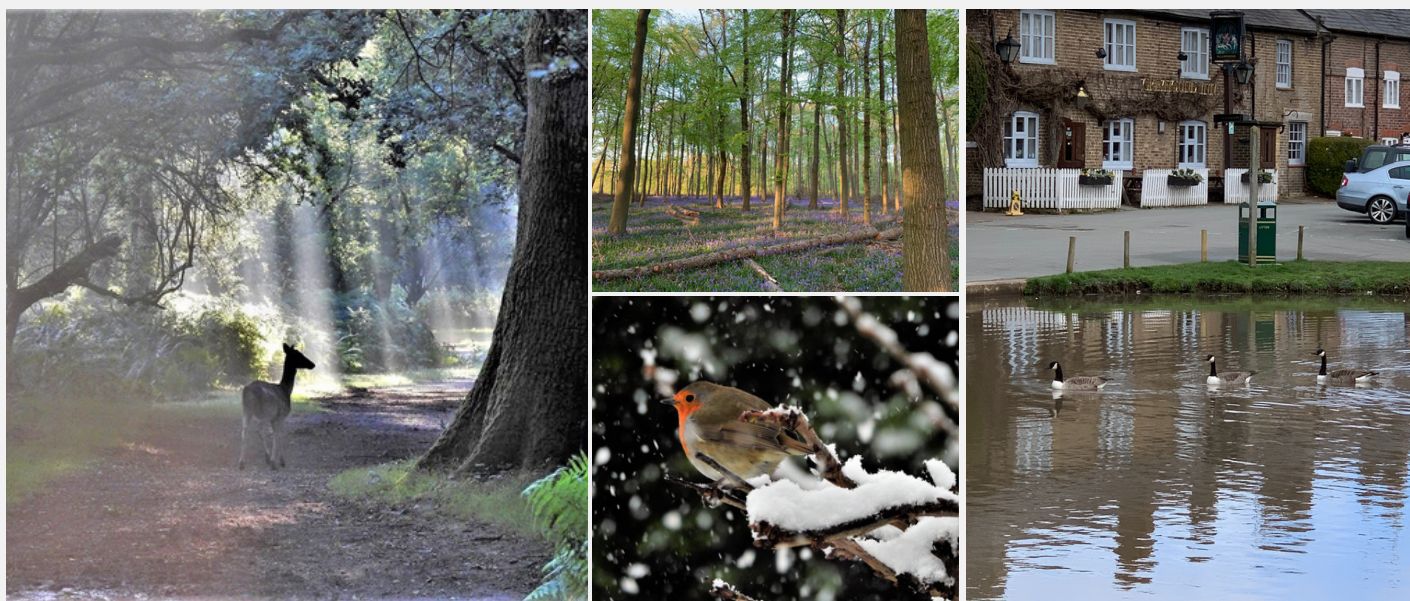
Gardening & Allotments

The survey questions regarding gardening revealed that gardening is something 66% of respondents do regularly and enjoy, though more in the summer than winter unsurprisingly. 24% of question respondents already belong to the Aldbury Garden Club & Allotment Association and another twenty-six households have asked to join.

Given its valuable role in supporting the community's health and respondents' stated desire to do more for sustainability and biodiversity (63% of respondents say they are already taking measures), gardening is only going to move up the agenda. Many question respondents made useful suggestions for things that would help them get more out of gardening as well as how to further reduce their environmental impact (e.g. by reducing the use of peat compost, the sale of which is likely to be banned by 2024 or earlier in the UK); these have been passed on to the gardening club who will consider what can be done practically and they will come back to the community with their proposals early in 2022. Some suggestions, such as plant and seed swaps, already take place but such activities need to be publicised more widely. There were also requests for various improvements to the allotments, especially an improved water supply and waste management, and these have been passed on to the Parish Council.

Biodiversity

Almost 40% of respondents have agreed to commit to helping Aldbury and Tring Station become the most biodiverse parish in Hertfordshire and the newly formed sustainability club will contact the eighty-one people who requested more information. This club will likely hold a quarterly meeting in the evening with members supplying refreshments.



Clockwise from left: Deer in woods (Brian Dumpleton); Ashridge Woods (Lucy Carmody); Geese on the pond (Jane Brown); Robin redbreast (Brian Dumpleton)

Section 3: Development & Commerce

Development

Development and housing together generated many comments and were the second most common group of concerns about living in the Parish at this time and in the future.

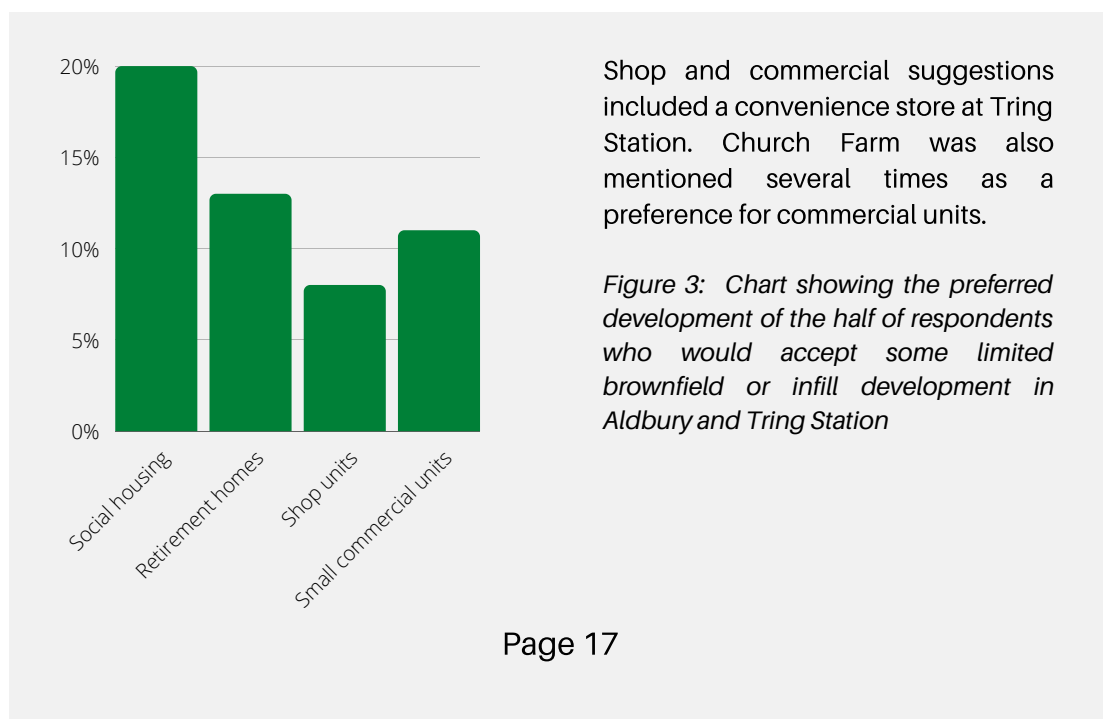
Around half of question respondents stressed that they would not like any development in the local area; however, conversely, half were prepared to consider social, starter or retirement housing developments. Additionally, 10% declared an interest in further shop or commercial unit development.

Concerns about further development in the Parish included:

- over-expansion of Tring
- inappropriate building
- threat to the countryside
- dilution of the green belt from too much building development
- protection of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status and the picturesque village setting
- loss of village identity

A consistent 85-95% of respondents are concerned about the impact of development on all of the topics they were asked to comment on (incl. our rural nature, physical infrastructure, community infrastructure, parking & traffic, views & landscape). A similar proportion of respondents thought most of the development conversations featured in the survey were important for current and future developments (incl. considering traditional design, energy efficiency, sustainable design, maintaining low-cost housing needs, providing garden space and off-road parking). Parking in particular had almost unanimous support as a concern and for consideration in future developments.

Overall support for different types of development included:





Houses around the pond
Photo credit: Jack Rowan

The most desired type of development for the area for those who accepted we should have any development was starter homes (supported by 33% of question respondents) and comments supporting housing development typically mentioned the need for affordable housing for the next generation. Limiting development to ensure our infrastructure is not overwhelmed and in keeping with local architecture was mentioned in individual comments, especially in relation to the school. Infill or brownfield sites were mentioned a few times as the only sensitive way to develop and many respondents argued against greenfield development.

Transport

Traffic volume, speed and parking were listed as the top concern by 37% of survey responses. There was some variation by street on which was the most important issue, but parking came out top overall.

Parking

87% of question respondents think parking is a problem in the village

A large proportion of respondents raised safety and visibility concerns related to parking in and around Aldbury and Tring Station. The worst areas mentioned across one hundred and sixty-six comments include along Trooper Road, around the pond, outside the Greyhound Inn, in front of the Village Shop, on the corner of Stocks Road and Toms Hill Road, Beggar's Lane and Malting Lane. School drop-off and pick-up was expressed as a particular problem, along with Tring Station forecourt.

Over one hundred comments were made concerning visibility at junctions and roughly half were concerned about particular junctions including exiting Stocks Road, the corner by the Valiant Trooper and the exit to the Recreation Ground. A quarter of respondents raised concerns about exits from individual properties, in particular those along Stocks Road and Trooper Road.



Tring Station forecourt
Photo credit: Felicity Aris

Traffic

Volume and speed of traffic made up a fifth of the top 3 concerns raised by respondents.

95% of question respondents would like a 20mph speed limit in central Aldbury, with half of these saying they would support it even with additional signage, chicanes and humps

One comment suggested support for just signage alone, without additional humps or chicanes, would be even stronger, though several others expressed concerns as to whether this would be sufficiently effective. Only 4% of respondents declared they would not support a 20mph limit.

Speed at Tring Station was mentioned by some respondents and many people commented on the speed and dangerous behaviour of cyclists.

In response to whether recent road safety measures introduced in central Aldbury (rumble strips, etc.) have made the roads safer, 60% declared they thought it had improved safety, but 15% say it has worsened the issue, and a notable 7% said they felt it was much worse.

Other concerns raised by respondents included:

- parking and traffic problems at Tring Station are not being addressed
- road markings at the Stoneycroft junction are needed
- bikes and cars descend Toms Hill Road too fast
- the pinch point where the road was narrowed by the school is now dangerous
- converting the village centre (by the Greyhound Inn) into a semi-pedestrianised area




Gearing up for traffic calming operations in September 2020. Photo credit: Jane Brown

Modes of Transport


Question respondents revealed they:


93% 
travel by car several times a week or more

48% 
travel by train several times a month or more

26% 
travel by bike at least monthly

10 
adults said they use the bus at least monthly, but 68% say they never use the bus

27 
adults are regular taxi users, most of whom are employed and are regular train users


many respondents pointed out that they either walk or run as well as use other modes of transport

The suggestion of a minibus service from Aldbury to Tring via the station as a low cost and low carbon alternative to personal car driving (every 20 mins, £1 per journey, tracking mobile app) was well received. On average, respondents declared they would likely use this service around two times a week. This service would most likely require volunteer organisation but is a potential alternative to a costly cycle path to the station. The newly formed sustainability club will further investigate both options.

Focus group: Aldbury Church of England Primary School

Driving by car was the most common mode of transport for students at Aldbury School from all age groups (87%). Walking was the next most common (55%) followed by cycling (29%) and no students declared that they used the bus to travel to the village school. Some children use all three forms of transport as demonstrated by the figures above.

Village Path

95% of question respondents think that a proper cycle and footpath from Aldbury to the station (connecting with the cycle path to Tring) is important with an encouraging 53 people willing to join a community action group to make it happen

Respondents generally felt a path would help in discouraging unnecessary car use and that currently the muddy path dissuades them from walking to the station. Some felt improving the path was necessary only if the current bus service was cancelled.

Concerns about this project were raised regarding:

- the protection of habitats and hedgerows
- the existing path being slippery and intimidating
- that cyclists would make it unusable for pedestrians
- making the proposed path also suitable for wheelchair and pram users
- how much the project would cost and who would fundraise
- ongoing maintenance
- whether a formal path might signal the end of Aldbury being seen as a separate village and at risk of development into a Tring suburb
- whether it was still an important initiative considering more people are likely to continue to be working from home



Sweeping fields (Jack Rowan), top; Footpath by the fields (Felicity Aris), bottom

- some respondents enjoy the unique feeling of living in a rural village that they get from walking home through the fields in the summer
- additional light pollution and late night solo female walkers being targeted, if illuminated
- the need for better signage to encourage use of the cycle path from the station to Tring
- making the use of cycle paths compulsory where they are adjacent to a road (it was noted that, despite there being a cycle path to Tring, many cyclists prefer to continue to use the road, sometimes dangerously)

One suggested temporary option to support train users to walk to the station was the provision of rental lockers for walkers with muddy boots. These, presumably would also be useful for visiting weekend walkers.

Street Lighting

Only **18%** of question respondents were in favour of more street lighting

Most people who opposed did so due to concerns about light pollution, although some pointed out that 'dark skies compliant' lighting is now available. Some 'traditionally-styled' lighting during dark afternoons and evenings in winter was also suggested. Areas where lighting would be welcomed (by those who responded in favour) were around the pond, Clarke's Spring, Trooper Road, Newground Road, Stoneycroft, Toms Hill Road, and the Recreation Ground - Tring Station and Station Road between the canal and Cow Lane got the most votes for additional street lighting.

Business

The Parish consists of several businesses and organisations including the Village Shop, Tring Station, the Greyhound Inn, the Valiant Trooper, Aldbury Garage, Stocks Golf Club, Brownlow Café (or its National Trust replacement), Musette Café, IMax Repair Service, Farr & Pursey Equine Veterinary Services, Tring Gallops Training Centre, Systema Solutions, Wild Cycles and many other businesses owned by residents who work outside the Parish or from home. Around 25% of question respondents own a business, many located outside the parish and many working from home, demonstrating a unique, thriving and enterprising dynamism in our rural village setting.



*The Greyhound Inn
Photo credit: Jack Rowan*

Additional support was requested from the Parish Council or the Community for several specific things, with the most frequently mentioned being faster, more reliable internet access, which should be solved with the arrival of ultrafast broadband in 2022.

Other suggestions from respondents included:

- workshop or artisan space
- hot desk or co-working spaces in a café environment
- more small business units
- local, seasonal market
- free advertising
- better signposting
- a website with a business directory and noticeboard
- a 'mentoring hub' for village experts to offer their knowledge and experience to others

More concerns for specific local businesses were registered by several respondents including the need to list both the Greyhound Inn and the Valiant Trooper as Assets of Community Value and requesting that the Village Shop sold more local and fresh produce.

Respondents also expressed an interest in encouraging local businesses to be more sustainable, such as providing more recycling facilities and exploring the possibility of a village heat pump scheme (similar to Swaffham in Cambridge). In addition, it was noted that all local facilities rented to the public (Memorial Hall, Peace Hall, Iron Room, the Church Chapter House, the Sports Pavilion) should review their heating and insulation, in particular exploring sustainable energy options. Along the same lines were suggestions to highlight best sustainability practices, have a dedicated person on the Council to focus on sustainable business locally and to launch an annual award for businesses taking sustainable action (similar to B Corp certification, an established certification available only to authentically sustainable businesses).

The most desired new business in the community for respondents would be a farm shop selling fresh, artisanal, local and zero waste produce. A number of respondents also registered their interest in improving the retail offering at Tring Station, in particular with a café or shop with longer opening hours. Other new business suggestions included a new local bakery, nursery, bike shop, yoga studio, butcher, fishmonger and hairdresser. There was also a perceived need for a furniture-maker, more local options for tradespeople such as electricians and builders and a centre for repairs and mending, especially for clothes, technology and tools.

Additional grants from Dacorum Borough Council or other funding sources were requested for EV chargers, composting, recycling (especially e-waste), heat pumps, renewable energy packages and other low carbon innovations.

Section 4: Parish Council

Opinion and Comments

The community has expressed that they continue to expect their Parish Council to be responsible, competent, proactive, consultative, communicative and transparent.

Although the vast majority of comments about the Council were positive, highlighting that they are underfunded and under-resourced volunteers doing a difficult job, there was a strong feeling that improved communications would help the Council appear more approachable with the community.

42% of respondents have never interacted with the Parish Council and a similar number were not aware of its resources, budget and scope as outlined in the survey

In 2021 the Council updated its website and set up its own Facebook group, sharing posts on other Facebook groups, Everything Aldbury and Tring Station Community Group. Respondent comments focused on more regular, informative posts on these community pages, including the agenda for upcoming meetings and posting minutes promptly following meetings. That said, several respondents noted that Council information should not only be delivered online as there were members of the community who still have no access to the internet. Aldbury Outlook was mentioned several times as a place to publish fuller meeting notes promptly and not just the bullet points currently given. Other communication and outreach suggestions included:

- engaging with community 'influencers'
- door knock introductions to new residents moving into the village
- more visibility of councillors at village events
- hosting an annual BBQ get-together for the community
- if there was a community website or hub, the Parish Council should engage with this platform
- running surveys or smaller discussion groups for specific, critical issues such as the state of the pond, traffic, parking and any proposed developments

It was suggested by respondents that meetings should continue via Zoom or, if possible, be livestreamed, however a High Court judgement in May 2021 addressed the issue of public participation in meetings and ruled that they must continue to be physically open to the public. The Parish Council is, therefore, not permitted by law to host meetings purely online.

As a reminder, Parish Council meetings are held on the first Monday of each month in the Memorial Hall at 8pm and are open to the public. The first 15 minutes are open for members of the community who wish to share views either by waiting to be invited to

speak or by sending a question or comment to the Clerk in advance, which is then registered as part of the Clerk's correspondence.

After paying salaries for the Warden and the Clerk (both paid positions), the Council has a budget of just £11,500 (2019-20) collected from the 'precept' (taxing our approximately four hundred and fifty households) for all running costs for the year. Most expenses for improvements or new facilities must be grant-funded.

There are eight positions on the Council with one currently vacant. For information about the Council and who is your Councillor, please visit www.aldburyparish.org.uk where you will find contact details for all Councillors and the dates of all meetings which are open to the public. Contact details are also listed in the Aldbury Outlook. For general questions contact the Parish Clerk on 07956 338073 or parishclerk@aldburyparish.org.uk.

Conclusion

The results of this survey reveal a community that cares strongly about its people and values its quiet but thriving environment, in particular appreciating the strong sense of community, peaceful way of life, and rural beauty of the Parish and wider area.

Despite these positives, however, the survey has also given voice to a range of issues that cannot be ignored including road safety, parking, sustainability practices, future housing development, green belt protection, support for businesses, and community engagement.

The rich collection of thoughts, concerns, opinions, and ideas outlined in this report make this document of valuable contribution to further action over the coming decade. It is vital for this community's continued quality of life that the points raised and views shared be reviewed, acknowledged and acted upon. Not all matters can be solved by our Parish, Borough or County Council, or by the current small cohort of volunteers who keep clubs and activities going. To achieve the quality of life we all aspire to will require many more of us to step forward and give time and resources to achieve these things collaboratively. The action chart below provides a detailed list of all the actionable points raised in this report, included below and shared with the responsible parties with the intention that it encourages community action as well as cooperation and collaboration with the Parish Council and Dacorum, as it has done for previous Parish Plans.

It is encouraging to see new projects that are already underway thanks to volunteers and council representatives. These include a match-funding scheme with Tesco to upgrade equipment in Aldbury Playground as well as the organising of ultrafast broadband (coming in 2022) and the planning of a new community website. Assuredly, with the support of the Parish Council and the wider community, even more projects and initiatives will develop and thrive throughout the 2020s, creating an even happier and satisfied population at the time of the next decadal survey in 2031.

LOCAL CONTACTS - 2022

LOCAL ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT	WEBSITE (www.)
Parish Council	Parish Clerk	parishclerk@aldburyparish.org.uk 07956 338073	aldburyparish.org.uk
St. John the Baptist Church	Rev. Michelle Grace	michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk 01442 851200	tringteamparish.org.uk
Aldbury C of E Primary and Nursery School	School Secretary	admin@aldbury.herts.sch.uk	aldbury.herts.sch.uk/contact-details
Aldbury Community Support	Trustees	help@aldburycovid19.support	aldburycommunitysupport.org
Tring Station - LNWR	Customer Services	0800 024 8997 for Passenger Assist	londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk
SPACES			
Aldbury Memorial Hall	Nick de la Bedoyere	bookingsaldburymemorialhall@gmail.com	aldburymemorialhall.org
Iron Room (Tring Station)	Kate McKenna	ironroomdiary@gmail.com	
Peace Memorial Institute (Aldbury Club)	Tracy Wilks	aldburyclubbookings@outlook.com	
Church Chapter House	Rev. Michelle Grace	michelle@tringteamparish.org.uk	tringteamparish.org.uk
COMMUNICATIONS			
Aldbury Outlook	Editor	aldbury.outlook@gmail.com	facebook.com/aldburyoutlook
Tring Station Newsletter	Nicola Simpson	nicola.simpson11@btinternet.com	
Facebook - Everything Aldbury	Admins	contact via Facebook	facebook.com/groups/219687498817989
Facebook - Tring Station Community Group	Admins	contact via Facebook	facebook.com/groups/353967674652728
Community Survey and New Website	Lucy Carmody	lucycarmody@gmail.com	tbc
CLUBS AND SOCIETIES			
Aldbury Garden Club & Allotment Assoc.	Rachael MacRae	rachael28914@gmail.com	
Aldbury Churchyard Maintenance	Ian Munro	imunro959@gmail.com	
Aldbury Lunch Club	Jackie Dyett	01442 851202	
Bell ringers (Tues am, Wed evening)	Ann Denwood	mannenwood@yahoo.co.uk	
Bootcamp	Lucy Lattimore	07976 259823	
BoxHIIT and Cycling Conditioning (NEW)	Kerry McCann	kerrypt10@gmail.com	Insta: kerry_mccanntpt
Bridge Club	tbc		bridgewebs.com/aldbury
Classics Book Club (NEW)	Jacqueline Craze	07790 374252	
Coffee Morning - Tuesday 10.30am	Jane Brown	jane.r.brown@btconnect.com	See Church Website
COGS Dementia Club	by invite only		
Discussion Group	varies - see Outlook		
Events Committee (NEW)	Caroline Ellwood	01442 851300	
Film Club	Lisa Thompson	filmclub@aldbury.org	
Flower Arranging	Jill Timms	0777 6151062	
Friends of Aldbury Church	Tony Tollinton	tonytollinton@gmail.com 851358	
Friends of Aldbury School	Sophie Ficek	friendsofaldburyschool@gmail.com	
Golden Girls Fitness	Nikki Pistak	07876 443392	
Litter Picking (occasional)	Lucy Carmody	lucycarmody@gmail.com	
May Fair Committee	Sophie Ficek	friendsofaldburyschool@gmail.com	
Morris Dancers	John Farthing	bagman@aldburymorris.co.uk	www.aldburymorris.co.uk/home.html
Movement & Mind (Iron Room, Thurs 2pm)	Jo Horder	01442 822732	
Pilates - Jet	Pam	jetpt22@gmail.com	jetpilates.co.uk
Pilates - Park Avenue (Weds 6.45pm)	Vicki	vicki@parkavenuepilates.co.uk	www.parkavenuepilates.co.uk
Royal British Legion	Andy Stephenson	astephenson.britishlegion@gmail.com	
Sustainability Club (NEW)	Lucy Carmody	lucycarmody@gmail.com	
Table Tennis	Chris Fido	chris.fido@hotmail.co.uk	
Tennis - Booking system for court	Lucy Carmody	lucycarmody@gmail.com	fastcourts.com/clubs/AldburyTennisClub
Tennis - Saturday training	Nick Brooks	07788 251015	nickbrookscoaching@gmail.com
Toddler Group	Rebecca Desbois	07759 629718	
Yoga - Soraya Yoga	Soraya Allison	07789 536795	sorayayoga.co.uk
Yoga - Wood Yoga	Mike Farr	07843 063352	woodyoga.co.uk
Yoga - Zest Yoga	Annabel Francis	annabel@zest-yoga.com	zest-yoga.com
CURRENTLY INACTIVE			
Photography Club	tbc	tbc	tbc
Football Club - volunteer required	tbc	tbc	tbc
Aldbury Repair Café - volunteer required	tbc	tbc	tbc

To advertise your activities and events, please contact the editorial committee of Aldbury Outlook and the Tring Station Newsletter. Consider also putting a post on Everything Aldbury, or Tring Station Community Group on Facebook which have over 1600 members. They have restrictions on advertising. To include your club, society or event on the new community website please contact lucycarmody@gmail.com with details.