

2023 Survey Feedback

Once again we'll start by stating what a great job the Neighbourhood Planning Sub-committee did with the 2023 survey. They were all volunteers giving up their time to help shape the future of Marnhull. They put a lot of work into it and according to the figures published, achieved around 24% response rate, which is a great start. We mean no disrespect to them when we criticise how the results are being used. They are likely unaware of some of the issues and why the data should not be used in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Summary

- The Parish Council have claimed in writing that the survey was independent and impartial - this is misinformation
- Bias can be demonstrated - An independent and impartial study should have been commissioned
- Manual entries should not have been carried out by the Parish Council Members
- Duplicate entries are likely included and the team have not disclosed their process for handling these
- A maximum of 24% of the village were represented
- 70% of respondents were retired - largely misrepresentative of the demographic
- 95% of respondents were home owners - largely misrepresentative of the demographic
- Several technical errors were present in the survey settings causing data to not be valid
- There appears to be analytical errors present in the survey reports
- Figures in the Neighbourhood plan do not match the survey data and no explanation is given to how these were modified
- We would also like to address some misinformation circulated due to this survey
- The inappropriate behaviour of some Parish Council members

The Neighbourhood Plan should not be based on, or include figures from the 2023 survey. An independent and impartial study should be carried out.

Challenging the 2023 Survey

The Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee worked very hard to conduct a survey of the village in 2023. Unfortunately, despite it being distributed to every home and the team attending various events, the responses represented less than 25% of the village population. The demographic of those that did complete the survey were skewed and do not represent the demographics of the population. Furthermore, due to some errors in how the survey was conducted, there are interpretation issues and opportunity for bias to be applied.

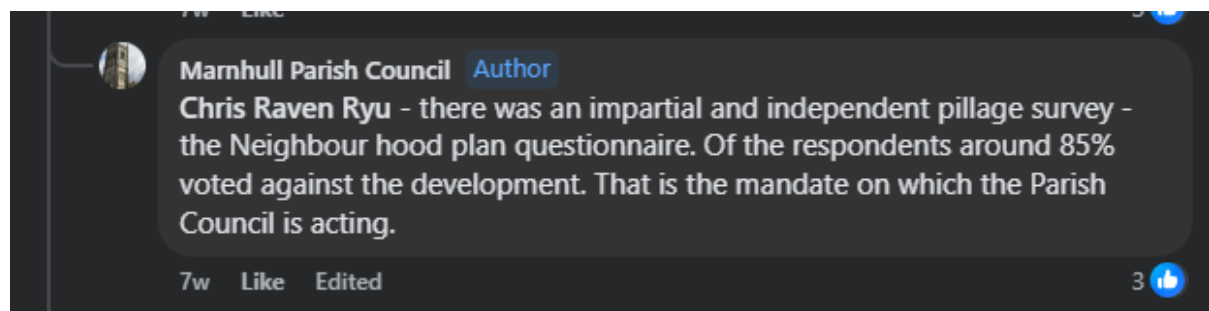
Being the only data that the Parish Council had available, they have aggressively campaigned against a particular application, referred to as Tess Square. This includes a Crowdfunding campaign using residents' money to fight an appeal.

To be clear; It is NOT our stance as a committee that Tess Square should go ahead and our results will be out long after the appeal has ended. We just believe that before the neighbourhood plan is finalised, the village consensus should be reached. Our goal is to convince the Parish Council that an independent and impartial study is needed.

It should be also noted that it would have been prudent for the Crocker Family to have conducted a survey before submitting the initial planning application to ensure that it fit the needs of the village.

We need a clear detailed survey, with a much higher response rate. There needs to be protection from abuse and protection against the reporting errors that affected the previous survey. This survey should be independent and impartial.

When it was suggested recently that a survey be done specifically on the Tess Square development, the Parish Council made a statement saying that the 2023 survey covered this and that it was an independent and impartial survey. The Parish Council's minutes demonstrate that it was not an independent survey and that a large number of surveys were hand entered by Parish Council members. While we do not question the honesty of the Parish Council members, there is too much opportunity for bias and the majority of Parish Council members have publicly declared their personal objections to the Tess Square application.



Furthermore, we believe that the methods of obtaining or representing the data from the 2023 survey were flawed. Many of these issues arise from the survey being incorrectly

set-up allowing respondents to skip a question, or answer a question that they should not have seen due to their previous answer. This corrupted the data and in some cases, make the survey data impossible to use. We believe that some results may have been mis-interpreted due to these issues. This could have caused a large swing in the data. The impact of this could mean that the Parish Council is using resident's money (from a crowdfunding campaign) to fight a development that **might** be desired from the village. We believe in transparency and so below we will break down some of the issues we perceive with the previous survey (2023).

Issue 1

The scope of the survey was chosen to be 5-10 years. This should not be used to determine the neighbourhood plan for 15 years. For a truer picture of resident desires, a survey based on 15 years would have been more relevant. Due to the nature of property development, 5-10 years is not a significant period to see change, particularly when we are already 2 years into the plan date range.

Issue 2

15 of the respondents didn't give permission to use their data and should have been removed from the results.

Issue 3

Question 6: The numbers don't add up.

You'll see that the other results show a total at the bottom, but it is not shown on this page for some reason. You will note however that it totals 1,846 people - removing the 809 as that is the (incorrect) total.

Some of these will be duplicates from various submissions in the household. However, we know that 499 responses were made, so on average, each one said that 3.69 (rounded to 4) people live in their household. This is considerably higher than what is expected. The Parish Council's own data shows that the average is 2.06.

What makes this even more unusual is that the latest census shows that 42.9% of our homes are occupied by one person aged 66+ or a couple all aged 66+. You'll also note that later in this survey 70% of respondents are retired. We would therefore expect the average number of people per property to be much closer to 2. There are similar anomalies later in the survey.

There is another data input problem on this question whereby not everyone completed the total occupants field. This should have been a mandatory field, as should the rest.

Issue 4

95.10% of respondents own their home.

This is largely a reporting issue we believe and compounded by the "with or without mortgage" addition, but highlights the recurring issue with this survey. The organiser failed to deduplicate by household leading to an inflated number. The latest census shows a figure of 79.7%. That's a 19% inflation made by this survey. Without the raw data and home addresses, this data cannot be cleaned.

Issue 5

While the survey did ask residents if the household might need a different home in 5-10 years, offering options for smaller/larger homes, it failed to consider if additional homes would be needed (children, etc). Members of the household may likely require a home of their own in the next 15 years (the length of the plan). This is of course just an oversight, but worth noting for future surveys.

Issue 6

Q9 asked if respondents would be likely to move. Only 118 said they would be likely to move. Due to incorrect settings on Q10 about this new home had 449 responses.

Issue 7

A similar issue exists on Q11 & Q12. The questions starts with "If you answered yes" but more results have been processed making them invalid.

Issue 8

There appears to be a reporting issue with Q14. Each option was optional (they forgot to tick the mandatory box). For the reporting to work and the averages to be valid, 0 (zero) needs to be entered where no-one in that category lives at the address. Unfortunately this did not happen, so the table averages column and the graphs presented are showing the wrong information.

Issue 9

Number of bedrooms was capped to "3-4" presenting inaccurate data. This could be resolved by using a number field.

Issue 10

According to the Parish Council Minutes, a separate survey was to be run for existing businesses in the village. Having spoken to multiple business owners, this did not appear to happen or was selective if it did.

Issue 11

We previously reported that analysis was shown that approx. 70% of respondents were retired. The survey's issue listed as Issue 8, could possible be causing that and not the actual responses being skewed. Even with the raw data, it would need deduplicating to obtain usable data.

Issue 12

The business questions; 12 said they had plans to open or expand a business in the Parish. A note on the task forced business owners that multiple options apply to, to only vote for one of their businesses. Further to this, due to the same issue described above, 28 people responded to questions 17 & 20 to Q18 making their data unusable.

Issue 13

Q19 has the same issue with empty rather than zero answers. This has largely made the data unusable. The clearest indicator that there is an issue with the data would be the

average number of off-road parking spaces for the property being 4. Considerably higher than expected.

Note: The mandatory question issue affects almost every question in the survey, but we will stop mentioning it now.

Issue 14

Q45: If the Parish Council wished to remain neutral then the wording could have been selected to be more neutral. However, the main issue here is that Q46 and Q48 were supposed to be dependant on "Yes" being selected to Q45. This has resulted in the answers to those questions being unusable in their current format.

Challenging The Dirty Tactics

It is a natural human trait to take criticism as a personal attack. However, when we are talking about future generations in the village, it is important that we don't let ego get in the way. These might sound like 'fighting words', but it is for good reason. Since we announced our project, there has been a campaign led against us by Parish Council members, past & recently present. There have been requests to have our posts taken down, requests to identify our members who choose to remain anonymous and the Parish Council have made a public statement to attempt to discredit our work. It would be easy to believe that the Parish Council would support studies in the village, but for whatever reason, they are against ours.

These same people placed pressure on the Chairman of the Marnhull Messenger who set up an emergency meeting with the Marnhull Messenger Editor, Chris Ryu (now a member of our committee). Chris was asked to make a declaration in the April issue that contained false information that would discredit our group and so he refused. He was asked to implement a new editorial rule that seemingly only applied to this group. He again refused. At the March Marnhull Messenger Committee meeting another attempt was made to bring in this new editorial rule. Thankfully the rest of the Marnhull Messenger Committee also believe in fair practice and voted against it. We thanks the editor for his continued support of free speech and the Messenger Committee for allowing free speech to prevail.

Another natural human trait is bias. We all have it even if we believe we don't. The issues only arise when your bias is so strong that it overcomes logic. When you're unable to accept verifiable evidence because of a bias, it's a problem. When you treat someone differently because of a bias, it's an even bigger problem. We have witnessed the personal attacks online and several villagers have been suspended from the Village Facebook group - almost all of them passionately against the Tess Square application. This could be a coincidence or it could be the natural tendency of someone against a policy being more vocal than those for, or neutral.

A member of the Parish Council was suspended from the Marnhull Facebook Group for posting an inappropriate meme (that he'd made) about Mr Crocker. This is not the behaviour one would expect of a councillor.

So far our survey software has caught 5 suspicious entries that need investigation. 4 of these are directly related to Parish Council members.

Our local MP Simon Hoare arranged for a letter to be delivered to every home in the village. In said letter there were a few exaggerations and a false claim.

In response to the above letter, the Crocker Family delivered a leaflet titled "dispelling the myths". We're just looking into this now, but questions have been raised over the claim of a waiting list on allotments.

Challenging The Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is a great document and well worth a read. Unfortunately, it currently displays data from the survey which we believe we have demonstrated to be flawed and to not show statistical relevance. We therefore suggest that references to such data are removed until accurate data can be sourced. Likewise, any recommendations in the plan that are due to this data, be removed or amended.

Examples:

- Point 4.1 – the plan says that the survey represents more than half of the households in the parish. This conclusion cannot be reached. This is misleading as surveys were conducted on an individual basis meaning it is more reasonable to say 24-25% of the Parish.
- Statistics throughout the plan, provided by the Survey should be excluded due to the inaccuracies raised.
- Page 67 – household composition. The figures here don't match the original survey data. Information should be given as to why/how the data was edited to get to the figures now presented