

# Fawkham Parish Survey 2019

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## Introduction

Fawkham Parish Council designed and conducted a survey of households within the Parish in January and February 2019. The survey aimed to enable the Parish Council to build a better understanding of the community, giving residents the opportunity to express their views, and enabling the Parish Council to represent the needs of residents more effectively.

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## Methodology

The survey was distributed using electoral roll information to households in Fawkham in 2019 – 211 in total, which excluded empty properties.

A small team of Councillors and volunteers delivered the surveys to each household, and offered to complete the survey face-to-face. If that was not convenient, or residents were not at home, a survey was left for completion, along with a stamped-addressed return envelope.

Residents were also offered the option of telephoning a member of the survey team to complete a survey over the telephone, or to arrange a suitable time for face-to-face completion.

All responses were confidential and anonymous.

A total of 130 surveys were returned, which represents a very good response rate of 62%.

Around half the surveys were carried out face-to-face, with the other half completed and returned by post over a four week period. Only one household declined to complete a survey.

The survey can be found at Appendix 1.

The key findings are described below.



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## The length of time people have lived in the Parish

The survey shows that many people have lived in Fawkham for a long time:

- the average length of residence is just under 24 years
- 35% have lived in Fawkham Parish for at least 30 years
- Over 1 in 12 has lived here for more than 50 years
- The longest someone has lived in the Parish is over 80 years.

0-9    10-19    20-29    30-39    40-49    50-59    60-69  
70-79    80-89

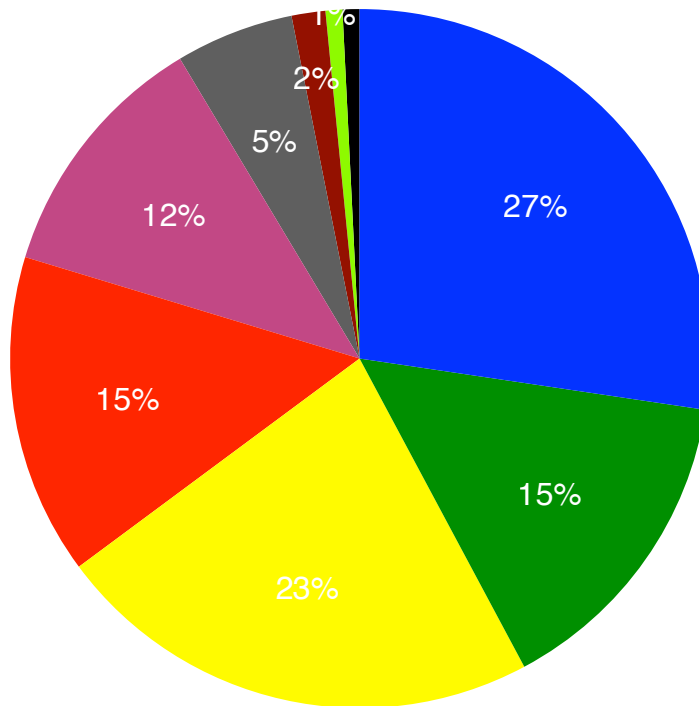


Figure 2: Number of years of residence in Fawkham Parish

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## What residents see as the main benefits of living in Fawkham

- There is a clear and consistent theme here, which can be summed up as: *“The best of both worlds”*. People living in Fawkham really value the fact that they live in the rural countryside with natural surroundings and yet in an accessible location, close to good transport links. Many respondents mentioned both of these factors as main benefits.
  - The countryside and natural surroundings were frequently named benefits, mentioned in 50 surveys
  - Fawkham is regarded as a rural area (28 surveys mentioned this as a benefit of living here)
  - The Green Belt and open spaces were frequently cited as benefits, along with views, wildlife and woodland
  - ‘Accessible’ was often stated as a benefit (32): transport links, train stations at Longfield and Ebbsfleet, access to M25/M20/A2
- Fawkham is seen as a ‘peaceful’ place to live, with many respondents valuing this benefit (55).
  - Allied to this, a lack of ‘trouble’ and lack of graffiti were mentioned (4), along with ‘safe’
  - Peaceful was the most commonly used word to describe Fawkham
- The high street shops of Longfield are appreciated, with 11 surveys stating these as a benefit.
- The recreational walks around the area using public footpaths are also seen as a benefit (8).
- “Community” was mentioned as a benefit on 4 surveys.
- Fawkham is seen as a good place to raise children (4), with schools (2) and local groups for children also mentioned (1).
- The Rising Sun pub was stated as a benefit on 3 surveys.
- The following each received one mention:
  - St Mary’s Church
  - Brands Hatch villagers’ pass
  - Village fete (the survey shows that the majority of respondents attend the Church fete)
  - Housing
  - Little light pollution

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## What residents see as the main drawbacks of living in Fawkham

- The main drawbacks to living in Fawkham Parish are seen as transport issues, particularly the traffic along, and condition of, Valley Road, along with the lack of public transport and difficulties for pedestrians. These drawbacks are expressed in a variety of ways:
  - Valley Road:
    - Dangerous in terms of speed (28)
    - Increasingly used by through traffic (13)
    - Too many large lorries, many of which are seen to be using it as a cut through (11)
    - Pot holes (9)
    - Not suitable for the volume of traffic (5)
    - Poorly maintained (4)
    - Not wide enough (3)
  - Lack of public transport was mentioned 34 times, and “*need a car*” 7 times.
  - The lack of pavement/footway to walk into Longfield was often mentioned (25).
  - “*Unable to walk anywhere safely*” was a frequently mentioned sentiment (8). This is borne out by question 2 on modes of transport which showed only 15.5% of respondents regularly walk as a form of transport. Only 1 person stated that they regularly cycle, and only 6 (4.7%) cycle occasionally.
  - Traffic on Castle Hill (1) and speed on the lanes (2) were also mentioned.
- Issues with the local medical practice were raised 13 times, with drawbacks stated around the difficulties booking an appointment and too few GPs.
- The linear or ribbon nature of the Parish, and the impact this has on creating a community feel, was mentioned three times. Linked to this are:
  - Lack of community events/feel (8). This is in contrast to those (4) who saw community as a benefit
  - Lack of ‘things to do’ (6)
  - No central hub (1)
- Litter, fly tipping and infrequent road sweeping were seen as drawbacks (11).
- The lack of a village shop/Post Office/other amenities were stated as drawbacks on 8 surveys.
- No gas supply was stated 5 times.
- House prices were mentioned 5 times.
- A fear of expansion/development was mentioned 3 times as a drawback.
- The following drawbacks were each mentioned twice:
  - No Police station
  - No new housing
- The following drawbacks each received one mention:
  - Clientele attracted by Eureka Naturist Club
  - Lack of a swimming pool

- Parking at the train station
- Noise pollution from Pinden quarry
- Light pollution from Brands Hatch circuit
- Noise pollution from Brands Hatch circuit
- No bank branch
- Does not fall into a Grammar school catchment area
- Poor Council services
- Rural crime
- Badly kept village green

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## What villagers suggested to improve living in Fawkham

- Many people stated “Keep it as it is”(12) and many surveys had no suggestions for improvement. “No more development” was stated ten times.
- Many suggestions were focused on Valley Road:
  - Reduce the speed limits (11)
  - Repair the pot holes (9) and repair/improve the road condition (3)
  - Introduce width restriction (6)
  - Ban white vans/HGVs (3); limit access
  - Stop it being used as a cut-through (3)
  - Introduce speed bumps (3) or a form of traffic calming (5)
  - Paint a central white line along the entire length to prevent people driving on the wrong side (2)
  - Widen the road (1)
  - Introduce a toll (1)
- Public transport was requested 13 times, plus a bus ‘hopper’ service 10 times.

Other suggested improvements were, in order of times mentioned:

- Six surveys requested more activities in the Village Hall, with some for children, and a further three asked for more community events
- Recruitment of more GPs or an additional surgery was mentioned 8 times
- Several suggestions were around creating walking routes, footpaths or pavements (7)
- Seven surveys requested street lighting, mainly around Fawkham Green
- Seven surveys suggested a shop or bank in the village, and four a Post Office
- Unblock the drains to reduce the instances of flooding was suggested five times
- Better broadband service (3) and better mobile signal (1)
- Extension of main gas service was requested four times
- Public open spaces were suggested in four surveys
- A tidy up of the litter along the road was suggested three times
- Lower cost housing was mentioned three times
- Two surveys suggested creating an email distribution list for communication
- The following were each suggested once:
  - Library
  - Better power supply
  - More post boxes
  - Turn Manor Lane into a one-way road

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## Other findings

- Shopping
  - The survey showed that over 80% of Fawkham residents do some or all grocery shopping in Longfield, making Longfield the most frequently used place for grocery shopping, and 14% do non-grocery shopping there.
  - The next most popular destination for grocery shopping is Gravesend, where 37% do grocery shopping (with Sainsburys at Pepper Hill frequently mentioned), followed by Swanley, New Ash Green, online shopping, and other (including Bluewater), with around 17% of residents grocery shopping in each of these locations.
  - Only 3.4% stated they do any grocery shopping in Hartley, with none solely shopping there. Only 2.3% of households do other types of shopping in Hartley.
- Schools
  - over 50% of households either have or do have a child who attends Fawkham Primary School.
  - Longfield is the next most attended primary school, with 15% of households reporting a child who is or has attended school there.
  - 10% of households reported attendance at a primary school in Hartley, where there is a Catholic Church school and a community school, and 9% reported attendance in New Ash Green.
- Location of work
  - Fawkham was the most frequently cited location for households to work or have worked in, with 36% reporting this location.
  - This was followed by London, with 32%.
  - Other locations were reported as a work location by households follows:
    - Other, including Bluewater 18.6%
    - Dartford 10.1%
    - Longfield 6.2%
    - Sevenoaks 6.2%
    - Gravesend 5.4%
    - Hartley 4.7%
    - Online/at home 3.1%
    - New Ash Green, West Kingsdown and Swanley, each 2.3%

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## Actions taken as a result of the survey

The Parish Council used the insights from the survey to create three over-arching action areas. These are shown below, along with key actions taken:

- Building a Sense of Community - planning events for the community, such as VE Day 75, Platinum Jubilee, annual Christmas tree lights switch on, seed growing competitions for children; installing new “Welcome to Fawkham” signs at both ends of the Parish; working with residents in a ‘cleaning team’ to smarten up signs, benches, etc; establishing a community group on Facebook and a new Parish Council website.
- Road Issues - working with Kent County Council to make improvements where possible, including a review of speed limits and drainage improvements; road sweeping and litter picking; setting up a Lorry Watch scheme; reporting potholes and other maintenance issues for repair; preparing a Highways Improvements Plan each year, in conjunction with KCC.
- Footpaths and Walks - ensuring Public Rights of Way are clearly labelled and in good condition; holding ‘Fawkham Walks’ around the Parish; launching “Fawkham Rocks” during the pandemic lockdowns.

In October 2019, an open day was held in the village hall at which the survey results were shared, along with the actions being taken as a result.

The findings of the survey also fed into decisions around the scope and focus of the Neighbourhood Plan, so that efforts could be made to retain or enhance what the community likes about living in the Parish, while trying to resolve or improve issues the community sees as drawbacks.

**Fawkham Parish Council**

**January 2021**



**Appendix 1: Survey form**

Supplied as a separate document