#RuralCounts

Community Action Suffolk's Rural Services Survey 2022

Data Set

Published May 2023

Photo by <ins>Niklas Weiss</ins> on <ins>Unsplash</ins>

Suffolk Rural Services Report 2022
Results from the Community Action Suffolk Rural Services Survey

Community Action Suffolk
Brightspace
160 Hadleigh Road
Ipswich
Suffolk IP2 0HH

Telephone	01473 345400
Fax	01473 345330
Email	info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk
Website	www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Foreword

Many people find rural Suffolk a wonderful place to live, valuing its quality of environment and sense of community.

For some, this may compensate for the absence of some facilities and services that are easily available elsewhere.

Many Suffolk communities benefit from access to a variety of facilities but there are those, especially in smaller or isolated villages, who are not so fortunate.

Community Action Suffolk (CAS) supports '**rural proofing**' as a means of achieving fairer outcomes for everyone in the rural communities and believe that no-one should be disadvantaged because of where they live.

Rural communities often take it upon themselves to fill the gaps in basic service provision that others take for granted. For example, Good Neighbour Schemes are helping people to carry out everyday tasks such as getting to doctor and hospital appointments, to get to a banking facility, or simply to the shops.

This social action not only fills the gaps, but is helping communities to thrive and be sustainable, which is central to Community Action Suffolk's mission.

CAS and Suffolk ACRE previously have been periodically undertaking the Rural Services Surveys since the 1990's. This report provides a detailed picture of what exists in rural communities across Suffolk and an improved understanding of the complex and changing picture of service provision in rural Suffolk, following on from the information gathered in previous Rural Services Surveys and particularly the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic on community services. We hope the report will help local agencies to identify the gaps and better target their limited resources, as well as identifying the many community assets which can be supported and developed further.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who responded to this survey and contributed to a fantastic 84% response rate.

Christine Abraham
Chief Executive – Community Action Suffolk

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Executive Summary

Community Action Suffolk carried out the Rural Services Survey to present a snapshot of rural services available throughout Suffolk as at Summer 2022.

The survey determines the type and number of services and facilities currently in rural parishes across Suffolk and whether there have been any significant changes in these numbers since previous surveys carried out in 2015/16, 2012 and 2008.

CAS invited appropriate respondents from 419 eligible parish and town councils[1] in Suffolk to contribute to the survey. Responses covering 350 Parish Council. Town Council and Parish Meeting areas were received, giving a response rate of 84%.

It is important to note that all the responses are from the parishes themselves.[2,3] Community Action Suffolk has chosen not to validate this information. This reflects the perception of the services that exist as well as those that actually exist that those respondents are aware of.

Areas of Highest Concern

The survey asked participants to rank their top concerns for their parish, these were:
1. Roads and Road Issues
2. Transport and Bus Services
3. Land and Development

Roads (repairs and maintenance)

Concerns around potholes, the condition of the **road** and the poor quality of **road repairs** were raised by the most parishes and received the highest combined severity of concern rating. Potholes were by far the most mentioned concern, followed by poor road conditions and poor quality of repairs, then fourthly speeding was also raised as a key concern.

Transport and Bus Services

Concerns around a lack of **public transport** / inadequate services were also raised by most parishes; other issues raised included the need to increase services/frequency and the loss of bus routes and cuts.

---

[1] The 11 towns which have populations of over 10,000 are Ipswich, Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Haverhill, Kesgrave, Lowestoft, Mildenhall, Newmarket Stowmarket, and Sudbury.

[2] Some have responded as a collective from the Parish Council, Town Council or Parish Meetings; others are the views of an individual respondent.

[3] Whilst all rural parishes were invited to take part in 2015, 2012 and 2008 Rural Services Survey, there were some parish representatives that completed one and not the other survey, and this should be borne in mind when considering the comparisons. 2012 and 2008 Surveys were carried out by CAS predecessor Suffolk ACRE.

The number of parishes with scheduled **bus services** in rural areas has declined. Only 42% of parishes have any scheduled bus service serving them (2015-16: 53%, 2011/12: 68%, 2008: 73%).

However, communities are still working together to address the lack of public transport in rural communities, with 31% of parishes having a formal or informal voluntary or community transport scheme available in the parish (2015-16: 49%, 2011/12: 51%, 2008: 44%). This could include community car schemes, good neighbour scheme car journeys, community minibuses and dial a ride services.

Land and Development

Concerns around **land use** and over **development** were raised by a lot of parishes, with many citing the numbers of houses going up and the size of developments, along with the lack of infrastructure and facilities being put in place to support such developments.

153 parishes specified this as one of their areas of concern 72% (110) of those stated this was of moderate, severe. or very serious concern to the parish. Concerns raised were also the lack of truly affordable housing in parishes, however the concerns and severity of concerns about potential urban sized developments in rural areas seemed to dominate this area of concern.

Communications Technology and Broadband

24% of respondents reported having a "Good or Excellent Quality" **Broadband** coverage, which is an increase on the 13% of parish respondents rating this level in 2015-16.

With regards to **mobile phone** network coverage, 19% of parishes respondents had a "Good or Excellent" mobile phone coverage, compared to 10% of parishes rating this level in 2015/16.

Strengthening Communities and Community Life

Village Halls are often seen as the hub of village activities and 66% of parishes have a Village Hall, Community Centre, or Community Building which is comparable with numbers in previous surveys.

Youth organisations have seen a significant drop in number since the time of the last survey. Disappointingly this has not recovered from the reductions in numbers recorded in previous surveys, with only 14% of parishes still having a youth club, youth faith group or youth uniformed group within them (2015-16: 25%, 2011/12: 23%, 2008: 44%).

Shops - 37% of parishes have some form of Shop, with 20 shops continuing to be run by their community since at least 2008, evidencing that community shops run for their communities, by their communities, are sustainable.

Mobile shops or delivery services have increased up to 73% of responding parishes (2015-16: 52%, 2011/12: 60%, 2008: 57%). This may be due to the increased availability of online supermarket orders and deliveries, and online shopping which is now a popular way of shopping.

Post Offices are in 26% of parishes (2015-16: 28%, 2011/12: 24%, 2008: 26%), with 7 parishes having community run post offices (2015-16: 5, 2011/12: 3, 2008: 3). A further 6% of parishes reported having a mobile or outreach service that visited.

There is a trend of depleting **Banking Facilities** in rural areas, as noted by the BBC[4]. In our survey, there were just 17% of parishes that still have some form of Banking Facility other than a post office (Bank or Building Society, Cash Point Machine, PayPoint Facility or Credit Union) (2015-16: 25%; 2011/12: 31%, 2008: 39%).

Regarding safety, the number of parishes which have a **Police Community Support** Officer has fallen to 16% (2015/16: 52%, 2011/12: 57%, 2008: 56%)[5].

Public houses are present in 46% of parishes, with some parishes having more than one pub in them (2015-16: 50%, 2011/12: 55%, 2008: 60%). This downward trend is being addressed by certain communities throughout the county, who are coming together and taking ownership of the problem. 8 pubs are run by the community, and although a relatively low number, the number of community-run pubs is broadly what it was previously (2015-16: 10, 2011/12: 6).

Affordable Housing[6] is present in 28% of parishes, which remains a positive number (2015-16: 40%, 2011/12: 42%, 2008: 22%), with 16% of parishes actively pursuing plans for new or further affordable housing developments.

Education, Health, and Wellbeing

There continues to be a decline of **Adult Classes** in Literacy, Numeracy and/or IT, with only 3% of parishes having such (2015-16: 5%, 2011/12: 25%, 2008: 48%).

11% of parishes have a permanent or visiting **Doctors' surgery**, which has remained reasonably static over the survey periods (13% in 2015-16) and 9% of parishes have a **Pharmacy** within them (10% in 2015-16).

---

[4] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57941001
[5] Percentage of all rural parishes (population of less than 10,000) in Suffolk: - 2022-419 parishes, 2015-421 parishes, 2012-413 parishes, 2008-411 parishes
[6] This is local needs housing including social rented accommodation, mid-market rented accommodation, shared ownership, shared equity, discounted low-cost housing for sale including plots for self-build, and low-cost housing without subsidy.

Residential care homes or facilities for Older People has remained fairly consistent since the survey began, with 18% of parishes having these facilities (2015-16: 20%, 2011/12: 17%).

Early Years Childcare Facilities continues to show a small decline with 32% of parishes currently have some form of provision (2015-16: 35%, 2011/12: 42%, 2008: 39%). With regards to **out of school childcare**, the availability of such services remained the same with 15% of parishes having this facility (2015-16: 15%, 2011/12: 17%, 2008: 12%).

Conclusion

Overall, there remains a good spread of services and facilities across rural Suffolk. However, there are facilities that are showing a declining trend in rural Suffolk, such as Banking Facilities and Pubs, Public Transport services, Adult Education Classes, plus a smaller decline has been seen in Youth Provision and Early Years and Childcare facilities in rural Suffolk parishes and towns.

Village Halls and Community Buildings continue to be an important central hub of activity for communities across the county, and these along with other community assets are essential in creating and maintaining resilient and sustainable communities in the future, serving as a base for activities such as lunch clubs, parent and toddlers, sports clubs, dance and fitness classes, brownies, cubs, guides and scouts, dog training, faith groups, photography classes, knit and natter groups and carpet bowls.

Rural areas have seen an increase in the availability of mobile shops and delivery services helping those that don't have access or ability to travel, and mobile library services offer the opportunity to access library services.

With the majority of parishes (62%) having a parish newsletter or village magazine, there are mechanisms in place to communicate local news and what is going, which all helps to nurture community wellbeing. Technology has also improved with both Broadband and Mobile Phone coverage improving over time. This has been embraced by parishes who have taken on websites to promote their parish and activities within it, acting as a virtual social meeting place.

Despite closures and decline of some rural facilities and services, others seem to be developing and adapting to the changes and new demands being placed upon them to start up and survive. With the communities that live and work in them, with the support of the strong local communities and local volunteers breathing life into them, rural life continues to thrive in Suffolk throughout the county.

1.   Introduction

The Suffolk Rural Services Survey was undertaken by Community Action Suffolk in 2022. All parish and towns whose population did not exceed 10,000 were invited to participate, there were only 11 towns with a larger population that were not included [7]. 419[8] Town Councils, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings were invited to take part in this survey. 350 Town Councils, Parish Council and Parish Meetings responded to the invitation and took part to some degree, though not all participants answered all of the questions. This was an 84% response rate.

The purpose of the survey is to establish the type and number of services and facilities currently in rural Suffolk parishes and whether there have been any significant variations since previous surveys were carried out in 2015/6, 2012 and 2008. This survey is undertaken periodically and builds on similar work in the past undertaken by Suffolk ACRE. These reports enable Community Action Suffolk to present a picture of rural communities and changes that have occurred over time. This survey presents a snapshot of rural services available as at Summer 2022.

Parish representatives were asked to rate what the most important concerns in their community at present were. 63% (266) parishes took this opportunity to raise the areas of concern that were most important to their community.

Most concerns raised were around roads (repairs and maintenance), with respondents raising concerns with speeding and the conditions of roads. The second highest concern raised was around transport and bus services, and the third most important concern was Land and Development (concerns around development for new housing or land availability for affordable housing), followed very closely by the Environment and Technology, which included Broadband availability as well as Mobile Phone coverage.

Community Action Suffolk will use the findings in this report to support our rural advocacy and influencing work for addressing rural inequalities, increasing community empowerment and social action. We hope partner agencies will use this information alongside other research, plans and profiles in their service planning and in considering new models for service delivery.

It should be borne in mind throughout this report that all the responses are from the parishes themselves, some have responded as a collective from the Parish Council, Town Council or Parish Meetings; others are the views of an individual respondent. Community Action Suffolk has chosen not to validate

---

[7] The 11 towns which have populations of over 10,000 are Ipswich, Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Felixstowe, Stowmarket, Newmarket, Kesgrave, Sudbury, Mildenhall and Beccles.
[8] Some Parish Councils are joined up parishes of two, three or even four civil parish areas to form one council.

all the information, as this does reflect the perception of the services that exist as well as those that actually exist, and respondents are aware of.

2.   The 2022 Suffolk Rural Services Report

Responses to the survey came in from all over the county. Response rates from each district/borough across the whole survey were as follows:

- 17 % of parishes responding were from Babergh.
- 27 % of parishes responding were from Mid Suffolk.
- 35 % of parishes responding were from East Suffolk.
- 21 % of parishes responding were from West Suffolk.

In terms of responses within the districts, response rates were as follows:

- 80 % of parishes in Babergh responded (59 parishes)
- 85 % of parishes in Mid Suffolk (101 parishes)
- 81 % of parishes in East Suffolk (143 parishes)
- 80 % of parishes in West Suffolk (79 parishes)
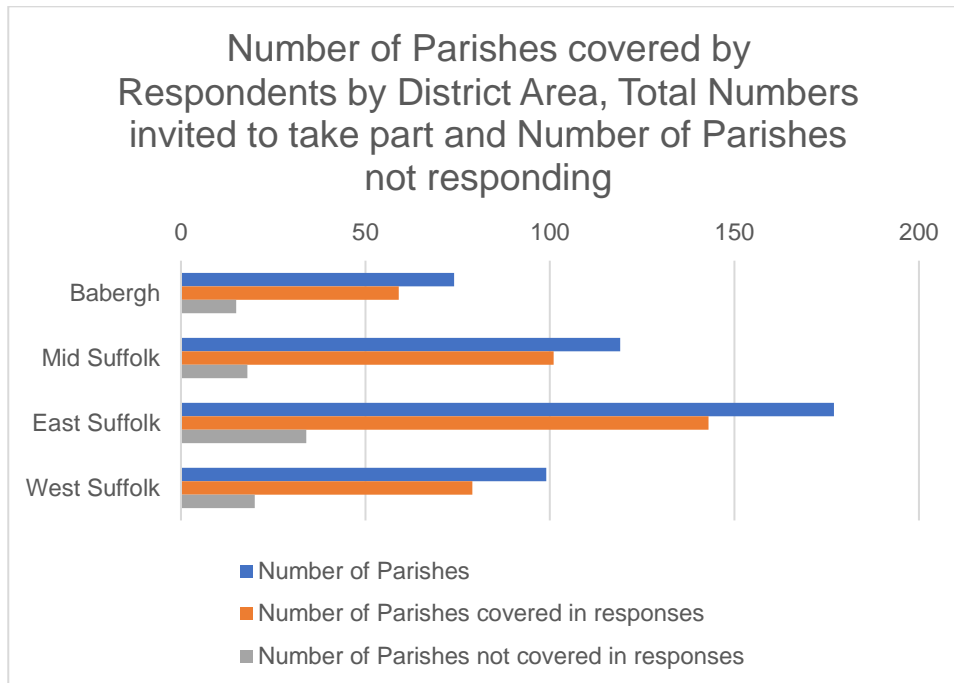
Figure 1: The Number of Parishes Surveyed, Responding and Not Responding

Figure 2 illustrates the location of responding rural towns and parishes.

Suffolk Rural Services Survey Respondents 2022

Key
Responded (383)
Did not respond (97)
Over 10,000 popn (11)
Local Authority Boundary
Civil Parish Boundary

Contains © Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government
Licence v.3.0 and contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022
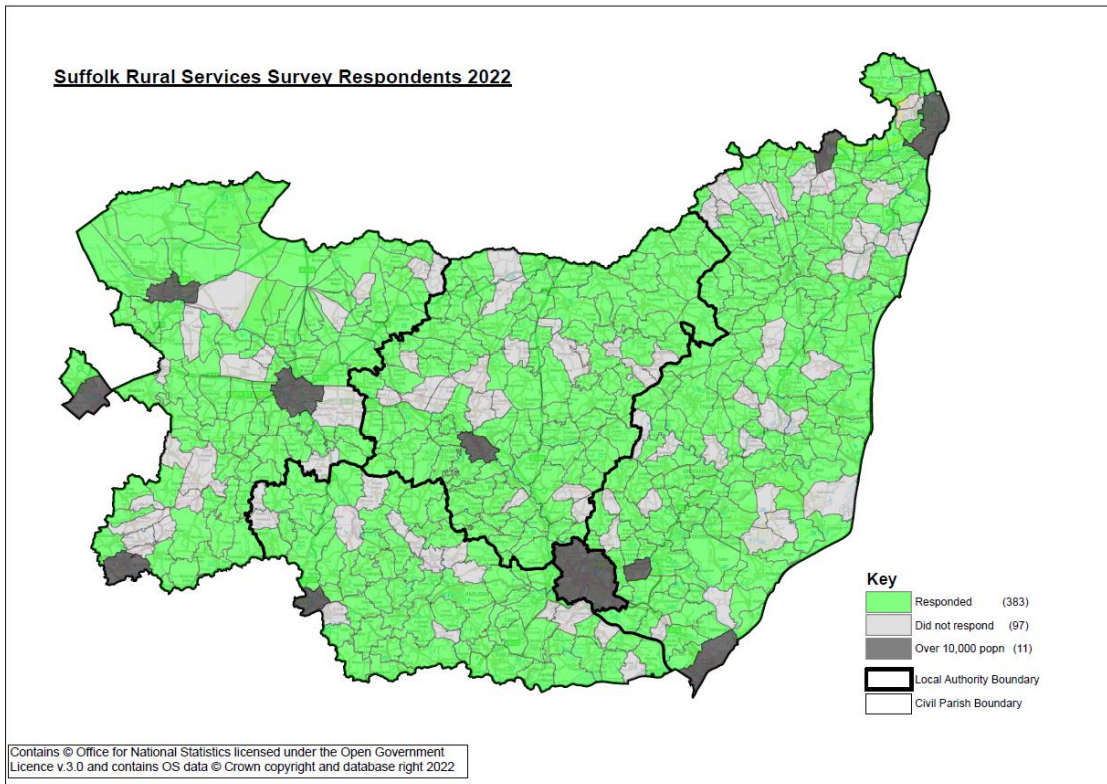
Figure 2: Suffolk Rural Services Survey Respondents

3.   Key Services: Analysis and Results

3.1   Post Offices

348 Respondents answered this question. 110 parishes (32%) indicated that they had a post office or a mobile post office service of some sort. 25% indicated that they had a physical post office within their parish.
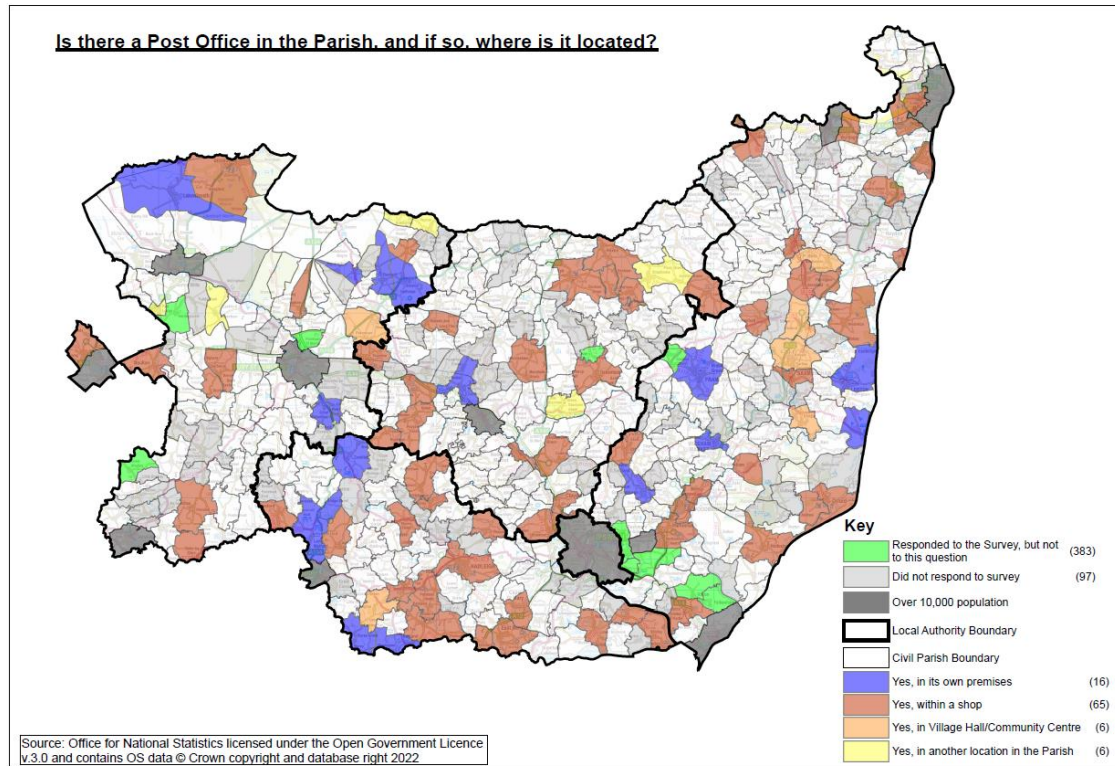
Figure 3: Physical Location of Rural Post Offices

A breakdown of post office locations in percentage terms is shown in Table 1:

Is there a Post Office in the Parish and if so, where is it located?	Number of Parishes Answering	Percentage of Parishes responding
Yes, in its own premises	19	5%
Yes, within a Shop	60	17%
Yes, in the Village Hall / Community Centre	6	2%
Yes, Mobile / Outreach Services	20	6%
Yes, in another location in the Parish (please specify)	5	1%
No	238	68%
TOTAL	**348**	**100%**

Table 1: Post Office Locations
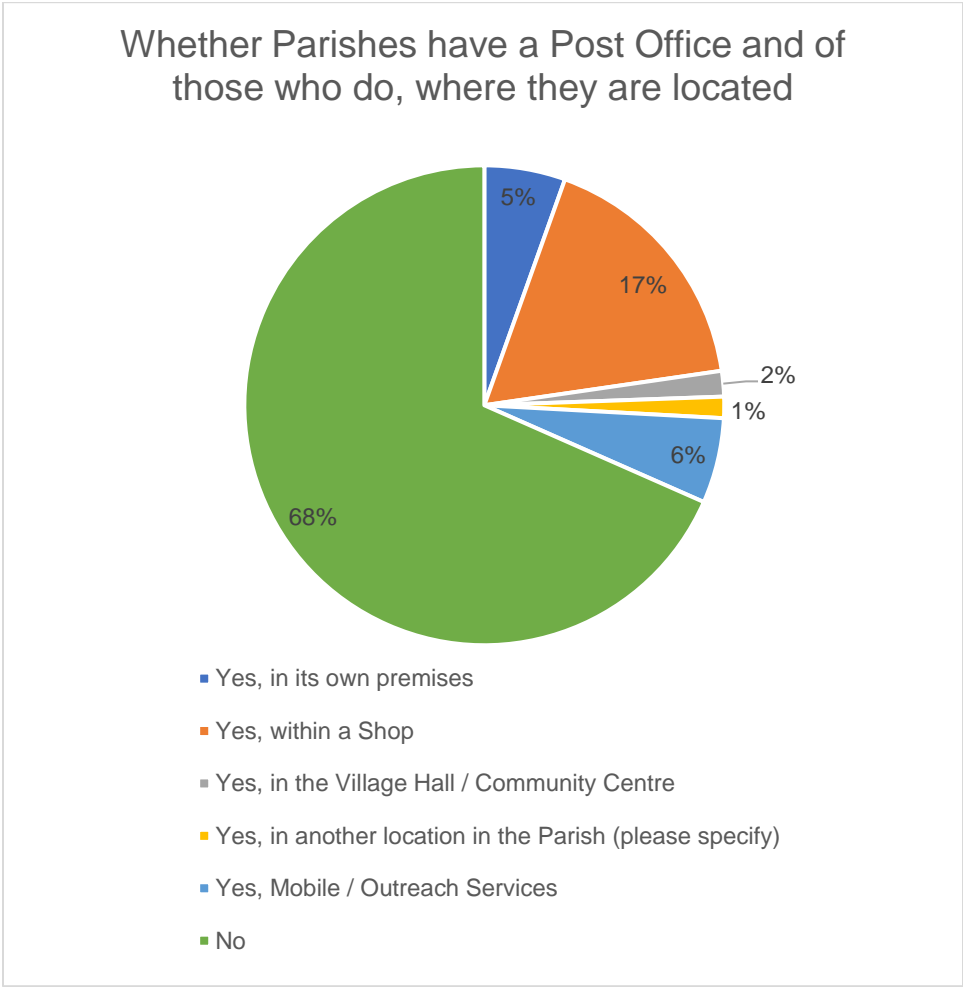
Figure 4: Whether Parishes have a Post Office and where they are located.

3.2 Post Office Management Model

Management Type	Number of Parishes Responding	Percentage of Parishes Responding
By the community on a part time basis	3	3%
By the community on a full-time basis	2	2%
Privately on a full-time basis	56	61%
Privately on a part time basis	31	34%
Total	92	100%

Table 2: Post Office Management Type

3.3   Banking Facilities

Type of Banking Facility	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
No banking facilities	246	59%
Post Office Counter	84	21%
Bank or Building Society	7	2%
Cash point Machine	37	9%
PayPoint Facility	11	3%
Credit Union	1	0%

Table 3: Type of Banking Facility

NB: Some parishes have more than one type of Banking Facilities, so the maps have been produced separately.
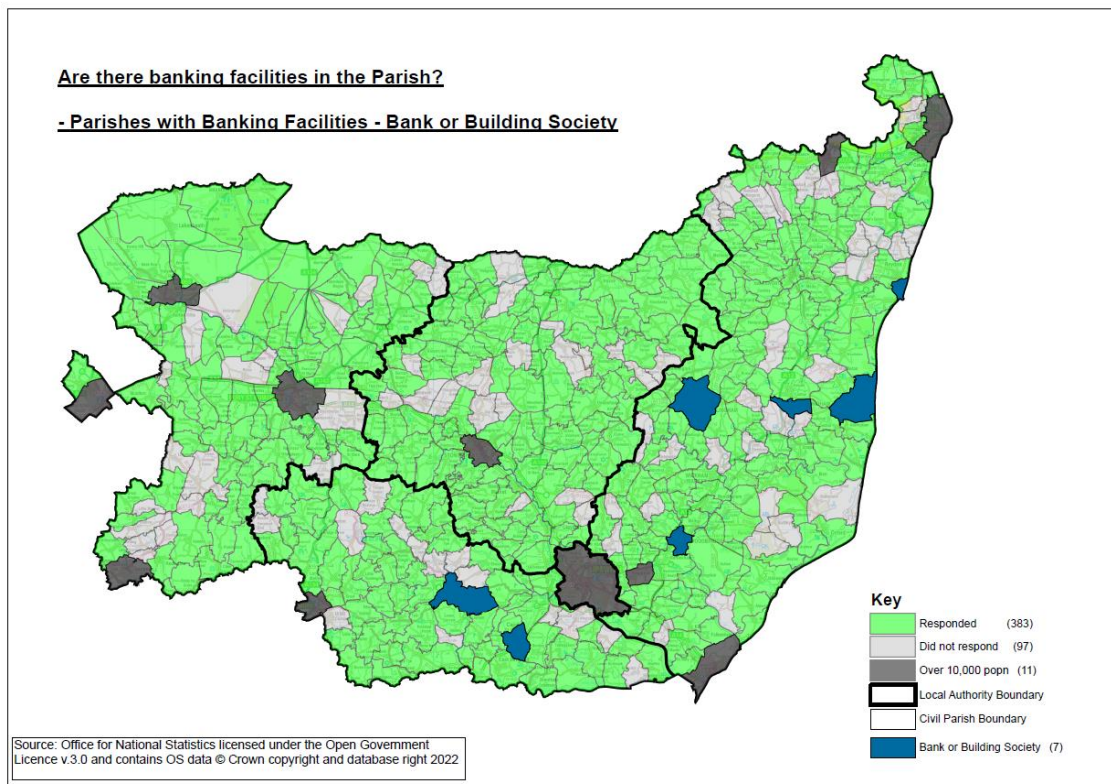
Figure 5: Location of Banking Facilities – Bank or Building Society
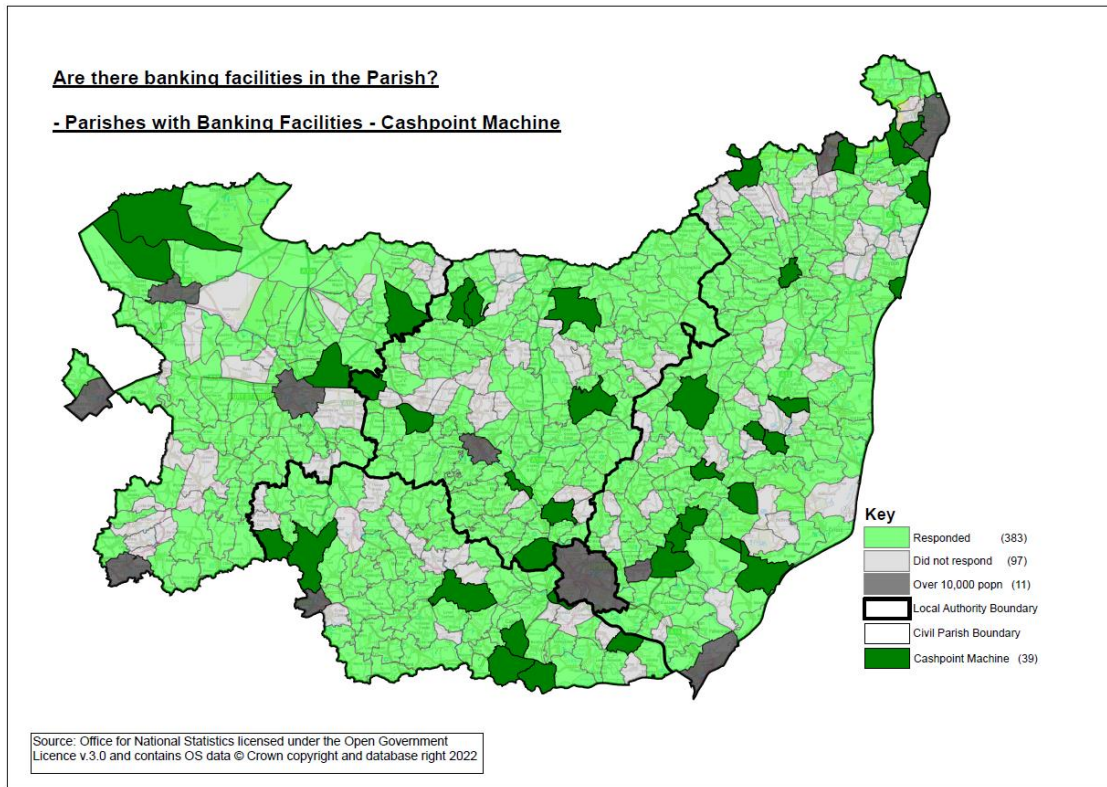
Figure 6: Location of Banking Facilities – Cashpoint Machine
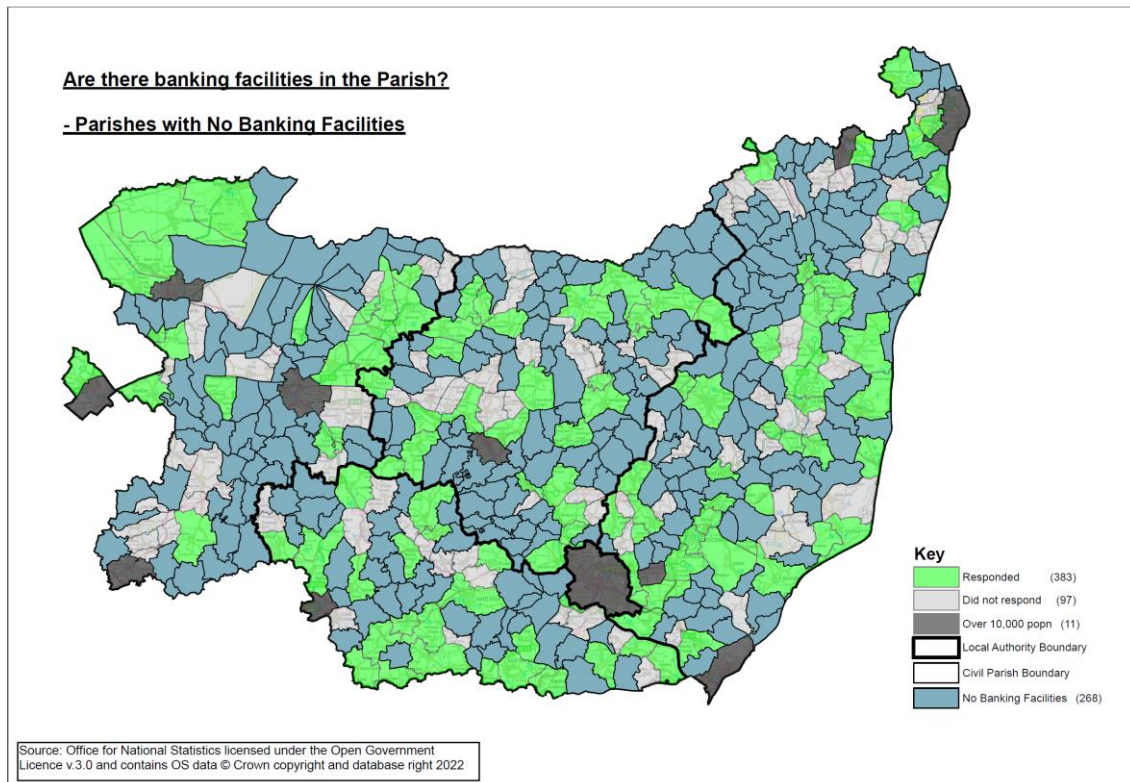
Figure 7: Location of Banking Facilities – No Banking Facilities

3.4   Shops

Types of Shop	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Bakery	27	16%
Butcher	33	20%
Chemist	29	17%
Farm Shop	36	21%
General Store	106	27%
Greengrocer	17	24%
Newsagent/Confectioner	46	11%
Other shops	41	100%
None	18	16%
Total Respondents to this question	169	20%

Table 4: Types of Shops

169 Respondents answered this question. 106 parishes (26%) have a
<u>General Store</u>. Of these, 87 (82%) were privately operated, and 17 (16%)
were community run. Two respondents (2%) didn't specify.
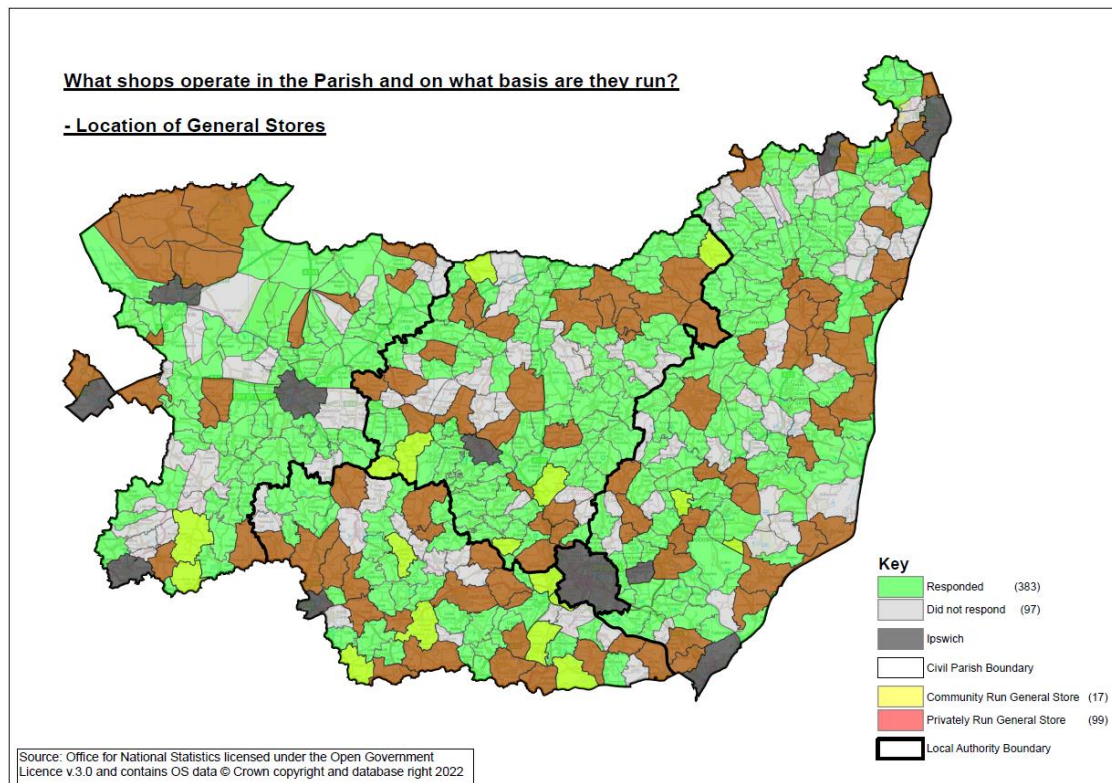
Figure 8: Location of General Stores

27 parishes (16%) have a Bakery, none (0%) of which are run by the community.
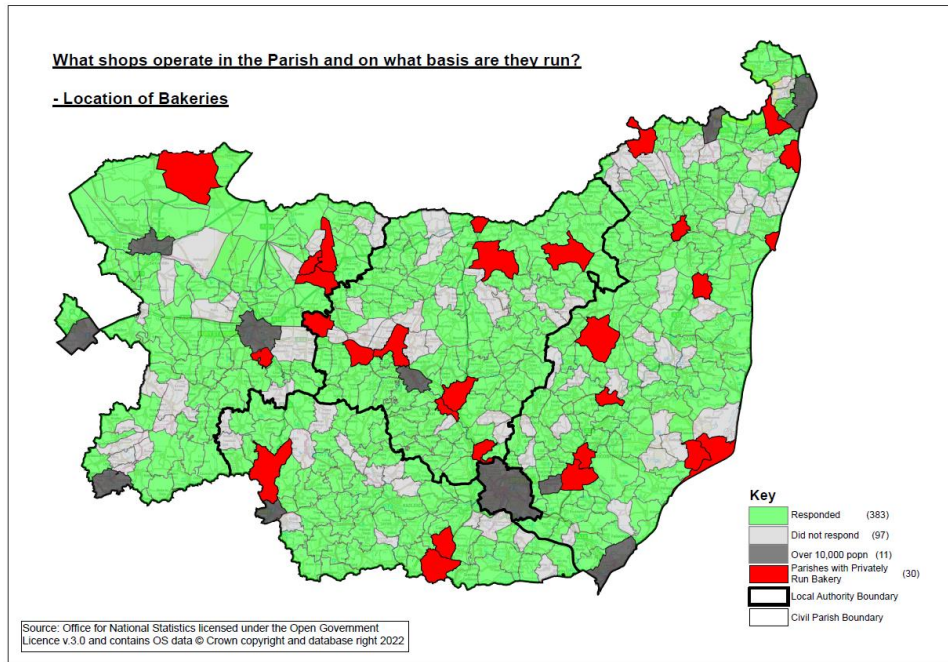
Figure 9: Bakery Locations

33 parishes (20%) have a Butcher, of which 1 (less than 1%) said they were run by the community.
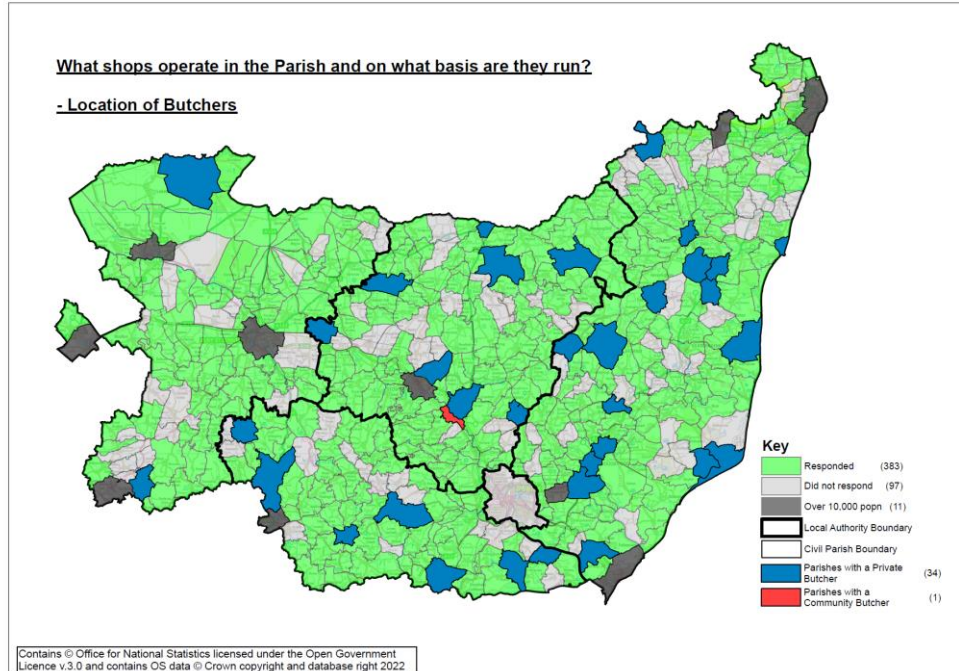
Figure 10: Location of Butchers

29 parishes (17%) have a <u>Chemist</u>, of which 1 (less than 1%) said they were run by the community.
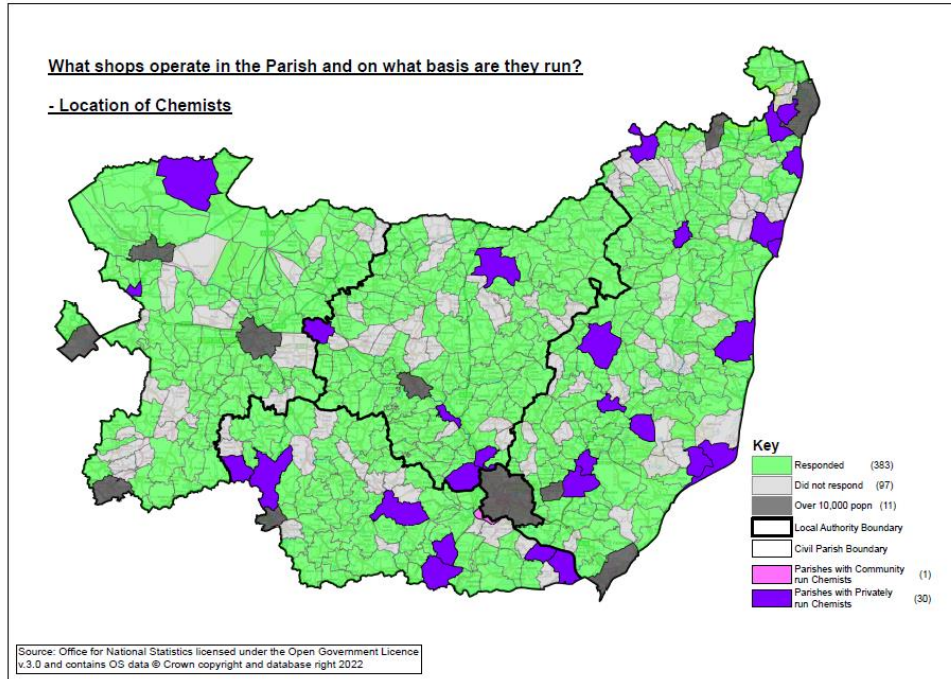
Figure 11: Location of Chemists

36 parishes (21%) have a <u>Farm Shop</u>, all of which were run privately.
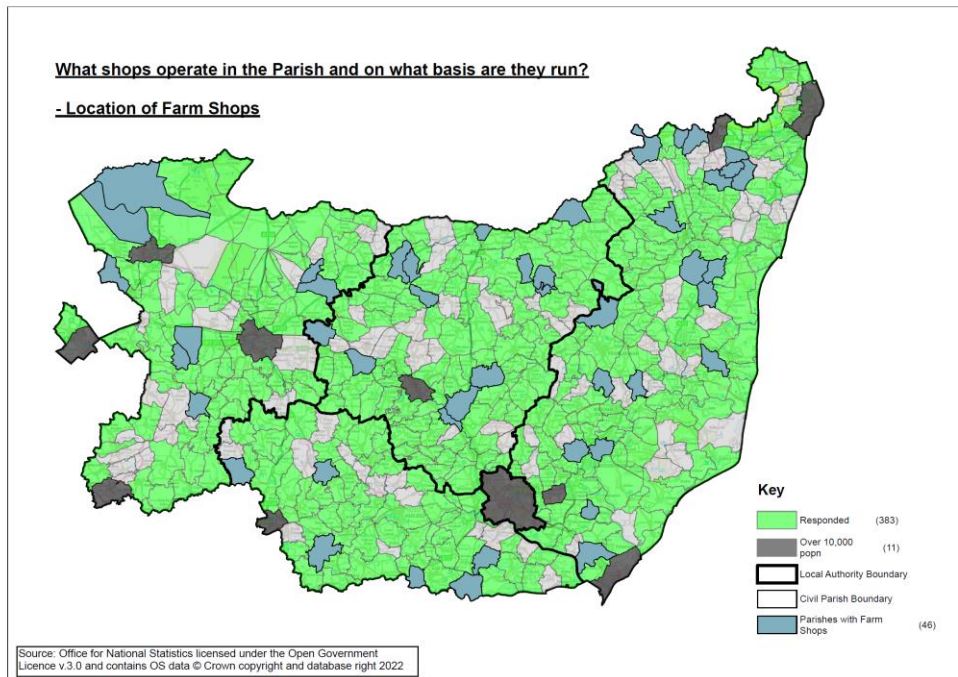
Figure 12: Location of Farm Shops

46 parishes (27%) have a <u>Newsagent/Confectioner</u>, all of which are privately run.
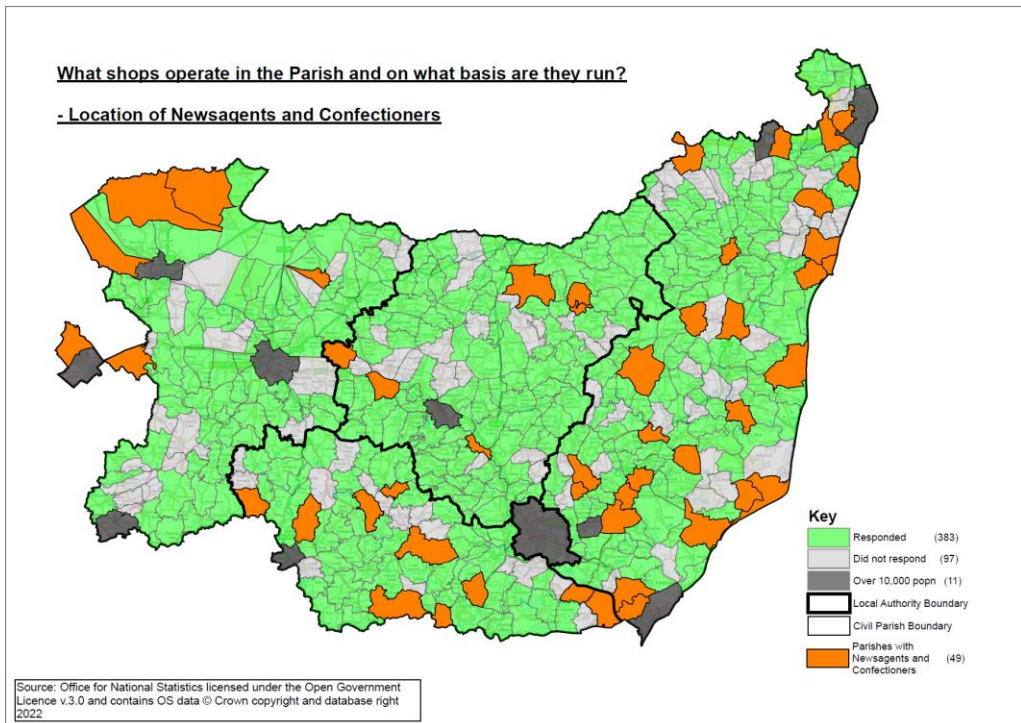
Figure 13: Location of Newsagents and Confectioners

17 parishes (10%) have a <u>Greengrocer</u>, all of which are run privately.
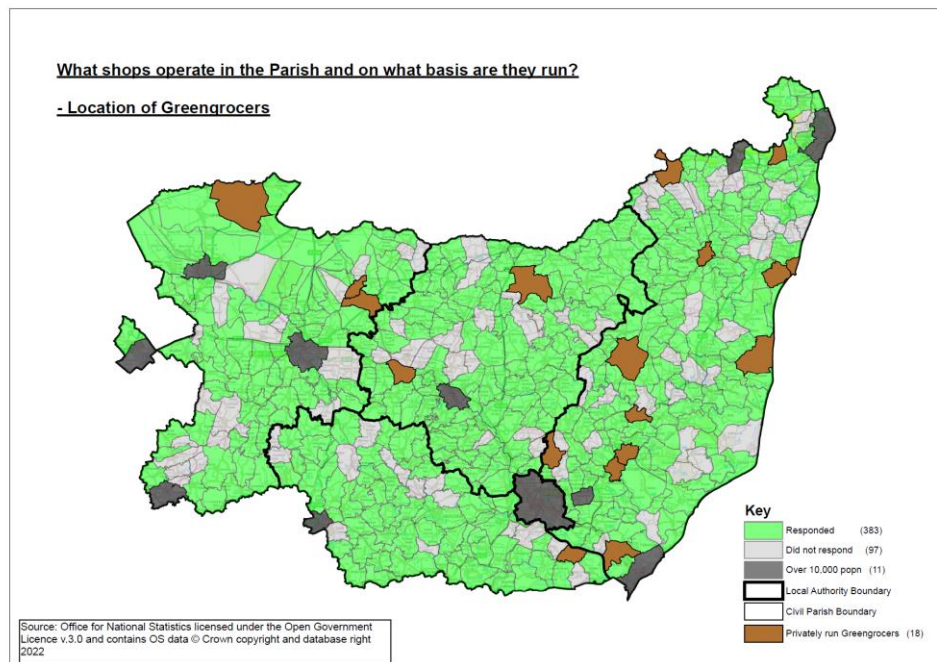
Figure 14: Location of Greengrocers

41 parishes (24%) stated that they had an "Other" shop available within the parish, of which 1 (less than 1%) were community operations.

3.5 Local Food Support Systems

Respondents were asked whether their town or parish have any form of local food support system in place.

Types of Food Support System	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Community Fridge	6	10%
Food Pantry (limited low-cost food)	10	17%
Take and Leave Point (Bring what you can, Take what you need)	19	33%
Food Bank (free food usually in an emergency)	38	66%
Total Number of responding parishes	58	100%

Table 5: Local Food Support Systems

The locations of responding parishes with these various food poverty and food support systems in places are shown in the following maps.
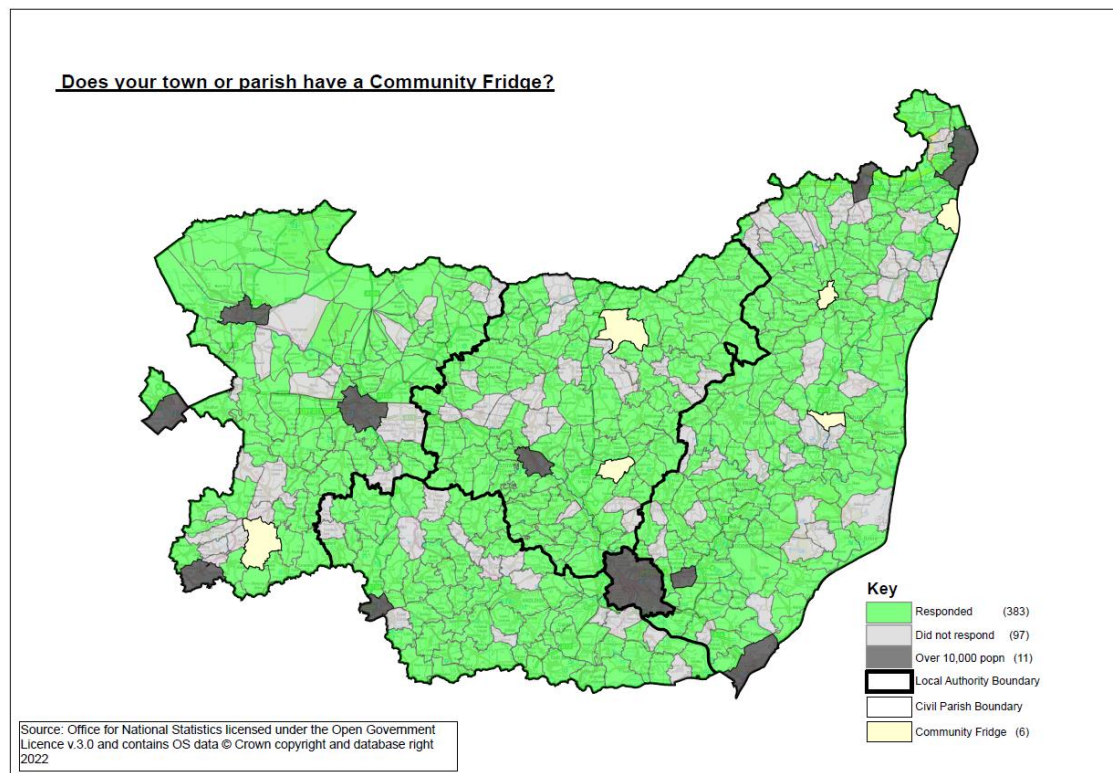
Figure 15: Parishes with a Community Fridge
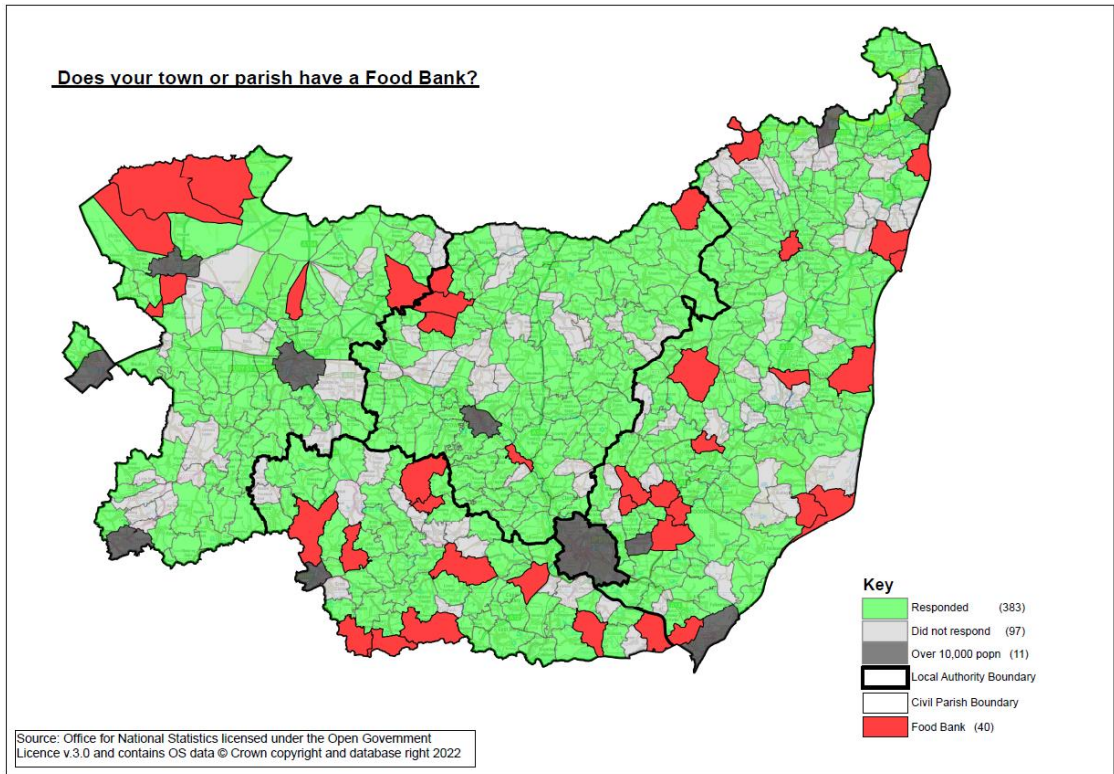
Figure 16: Parishes with a Food Bank
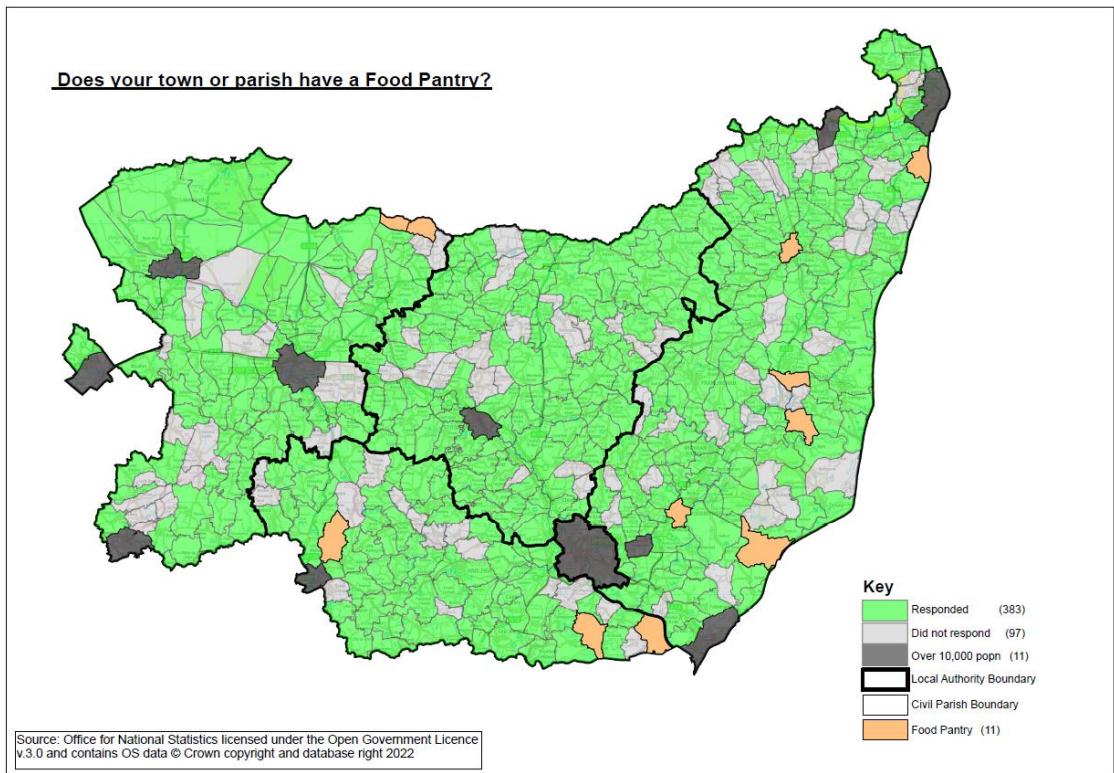
Figure 17: Parishes with a Food Pantry
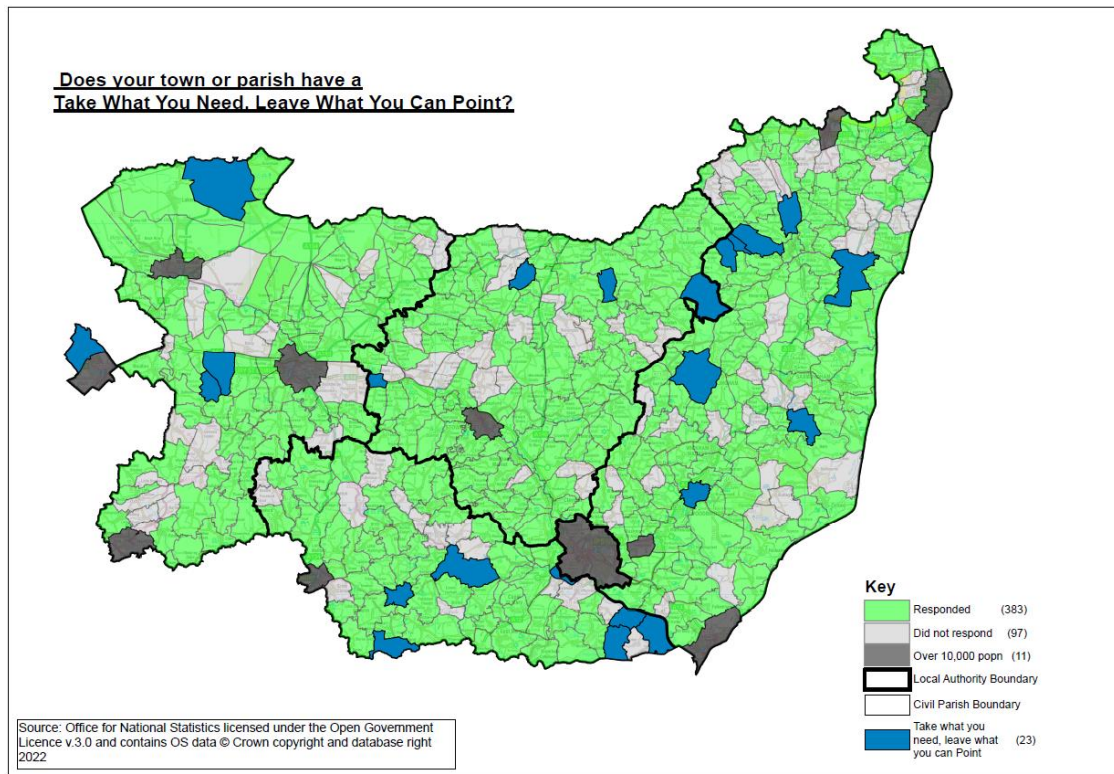
Figure 18: Parishes with a Take What You Need, Leave What You Can Point

3.6 Markets

329 respondents answered this question, 299 of which confirmed that they did not have any form of market.

Types of Market	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Responding Parishes
General Market - Weekly	10	3.0%
General Market - Fortnightly	0	0.0%
General Market - Monthly	2	0.6%
Farmers Market -Weekly	1	0.3%
Farmers Market - Fortnightly	2	0.6%
Farmers Market - Monthly	13	4.0%
Other form of Market	7	2.1%
Total Respondents with a market	329	10.6%

Table 6: Types of Markets

3.7   Mobile Shops and Delivery Services

Respondents were asked about mobile shops and delivery services that visit the parish. 334 parishes responded to this question. 239 parishes (73%) of parishes confirmed they had a mobile shop or delivery service. Whilst 97 parishes said they did not have any mobile shops or delivery services serving their parish. NB Two parishes said they did not have any mobile shops or delivery vans, but also indicated that Supermarket Deliveries are made to the parish.

Types of Mobile Shop and Delivery Van	Number of Responding Parishes	Percentage of responding Parishes
Baker	3	1%
Butcher	6	2%
Fish and Chip Van	56	24%
Fresh Fish	78	33%
Milk, Dairy and Soft Drinks	94	39%
Veg Box Scheme	29	12%
Supermarket Deliveries	173	73%
Other	38	16%

Table 7: Types of Mobile Shop and Delivery Van

3.8   Pubs, Cafes, and Restaurants in the Parish

237 Parishes responded to this question, 12 of which said they did not have any food establishments within them. It should also be noted when looking at the table below that some parishes have more than one of these venues within them.

Type of Food Establishment	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	Number of which are run by the community
Hotel	25	9%	0
Pub which serves food and provides overnight accommodation	50	18%	1
Pub which serves food, but does not provide overnight accommodations	147	54%	5
Pub which serves only drinks	36	13%	2
Bar/Café	25	9%	4
Café	85	31%	7

Type of Food Establishment	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	Number of which are run by the community
Restaurant	33	12%	0
Take Away	57	21%	2
Other	22	8%	6
None	12	4%	0

Table 8: Type of Food Establishment
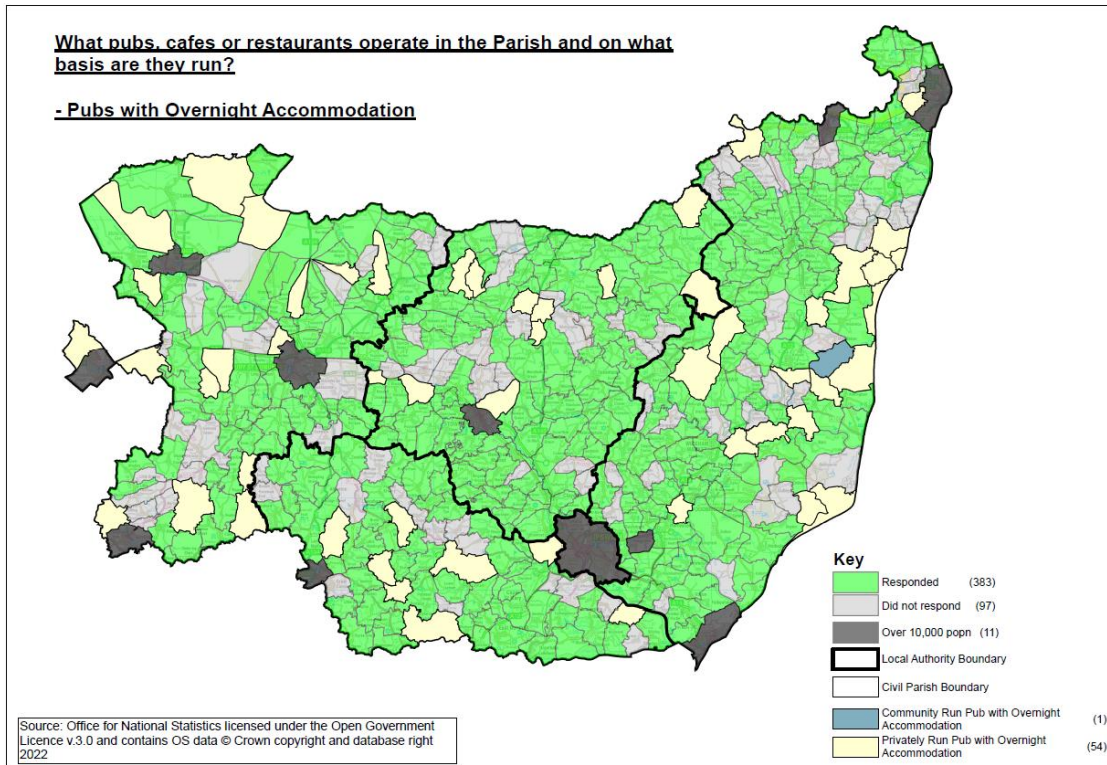
Figure 19: Pubs with Overnight Accommodation
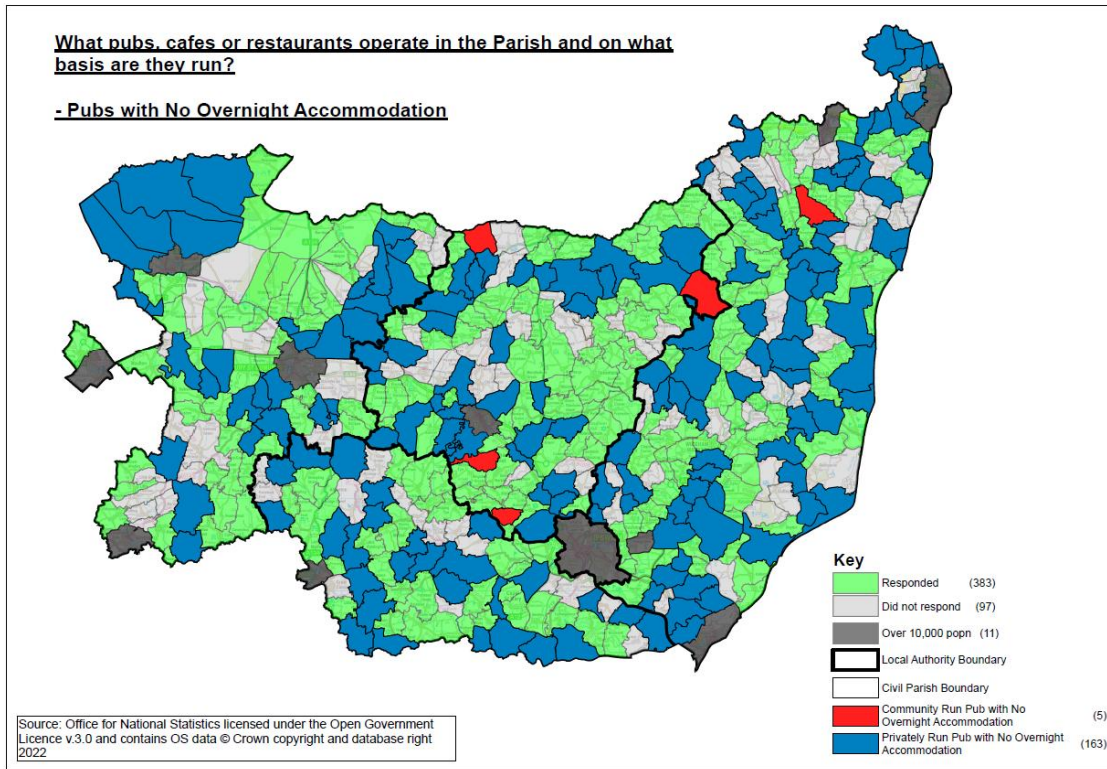
Figure 20: Pubs with No Overnight Accommodation
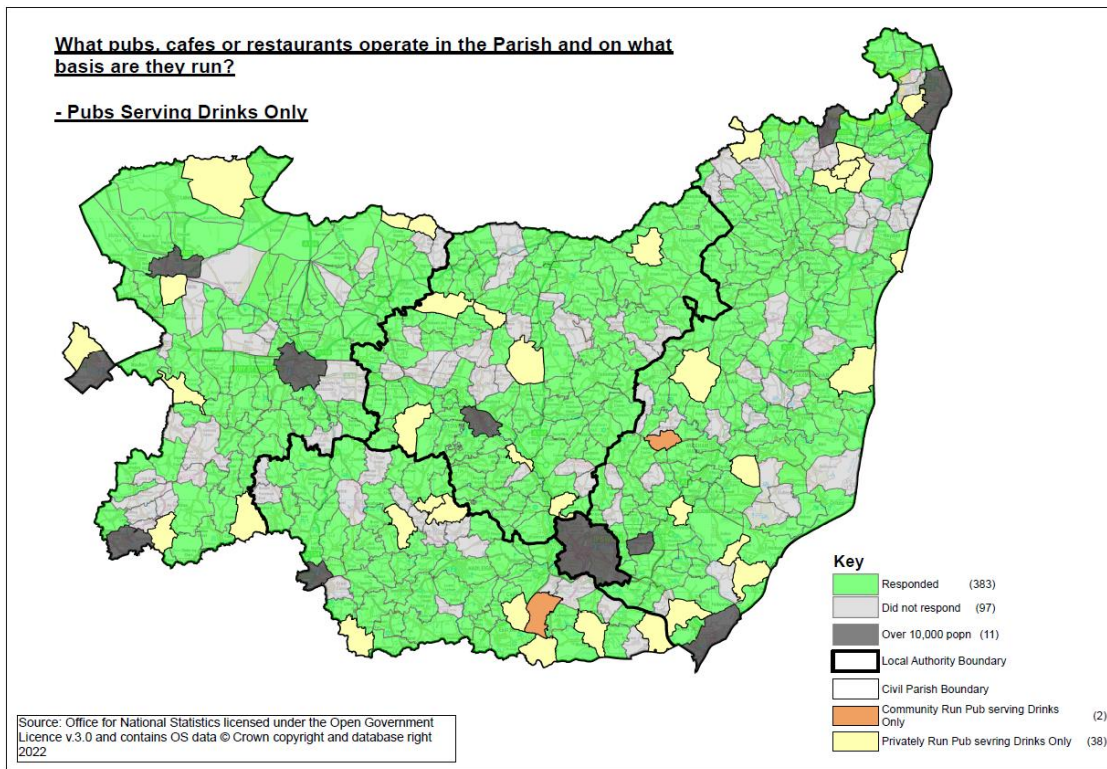
Figure 21: Location of Pubs Serving Drinks Only
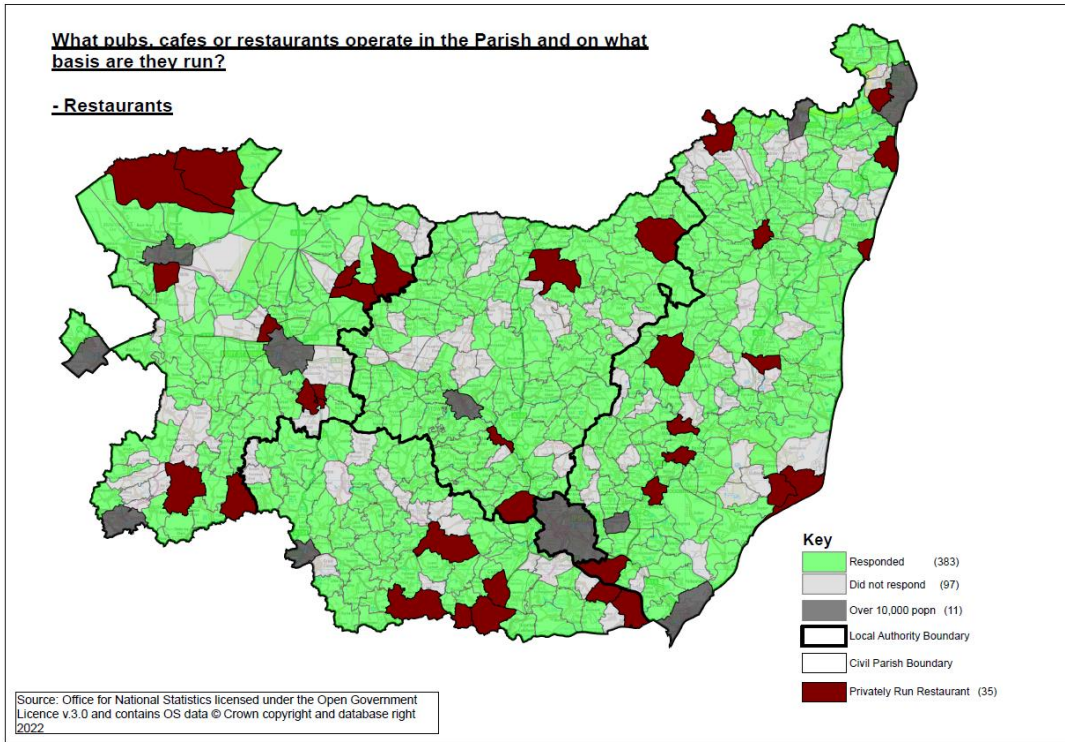
Figure 22: Location of Restaurants
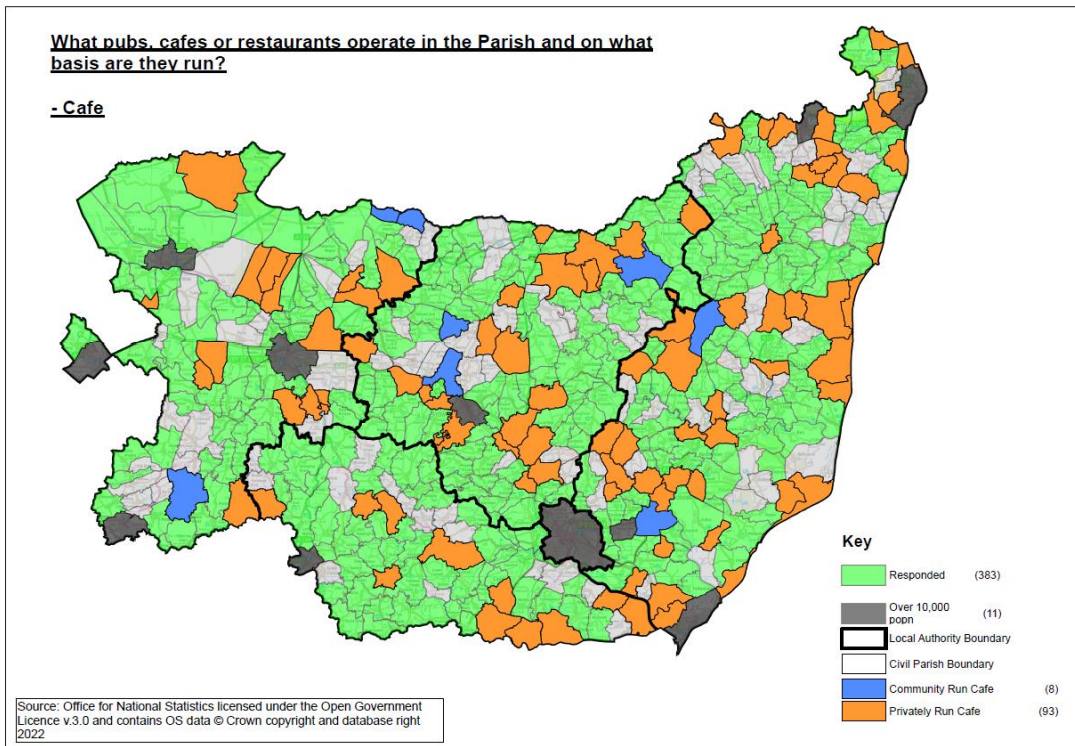
Figure 23: Location of Cafes
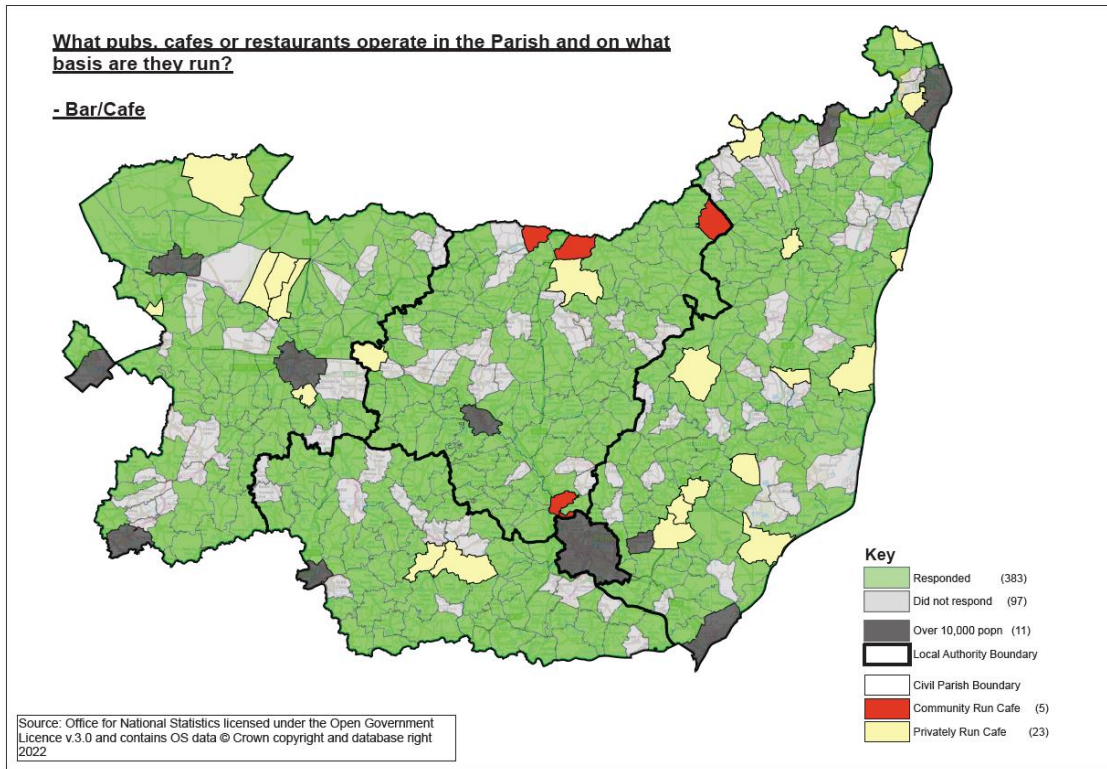
Figure 24: Location of Bar/Cafes
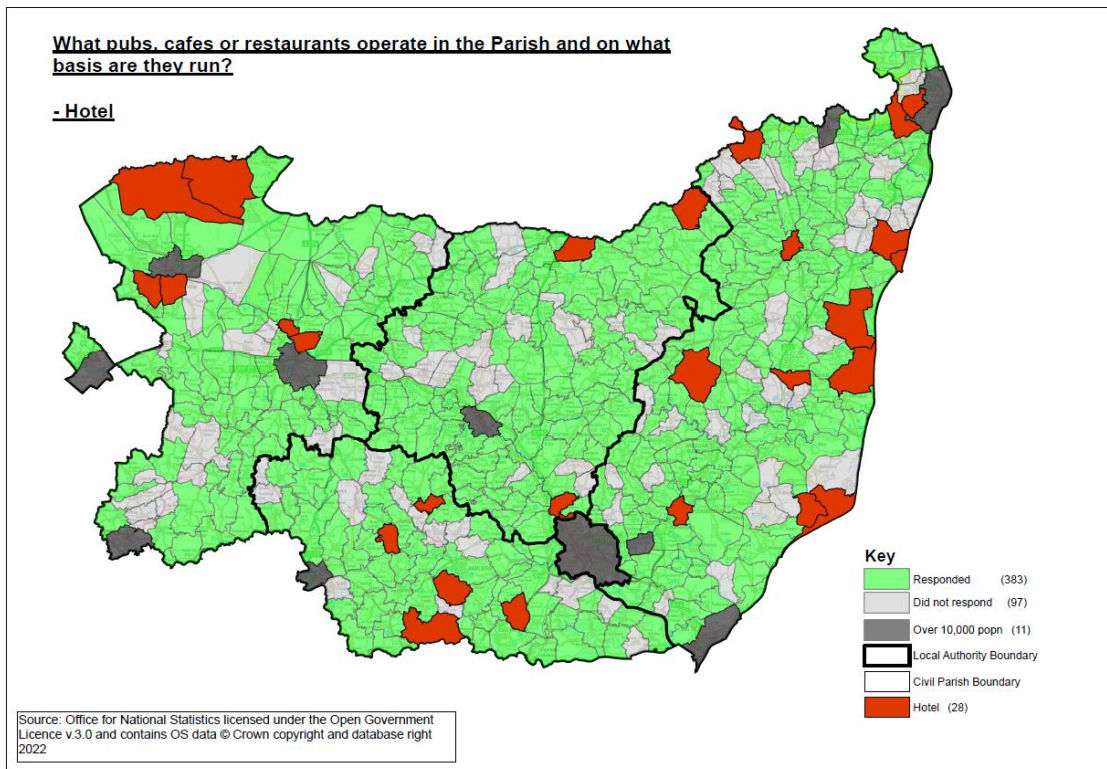
Figure 25: Location of Hotels (all run privately)
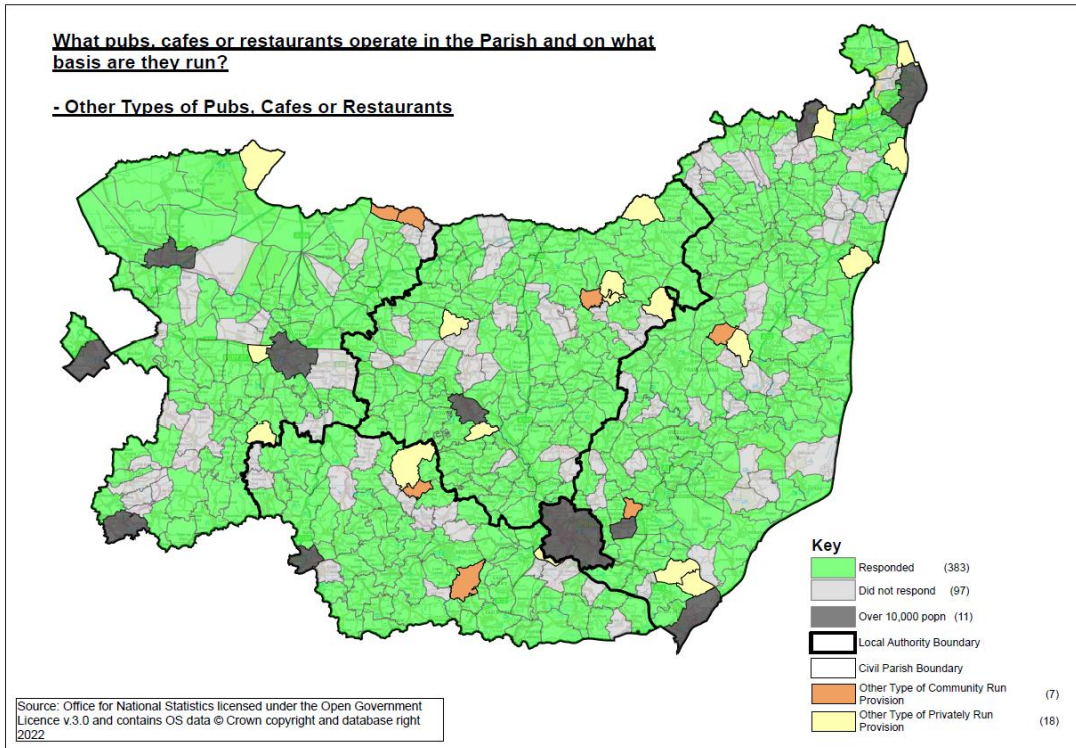
Figure 26: Location of other types of Pubs, Cafes, or Restaurants
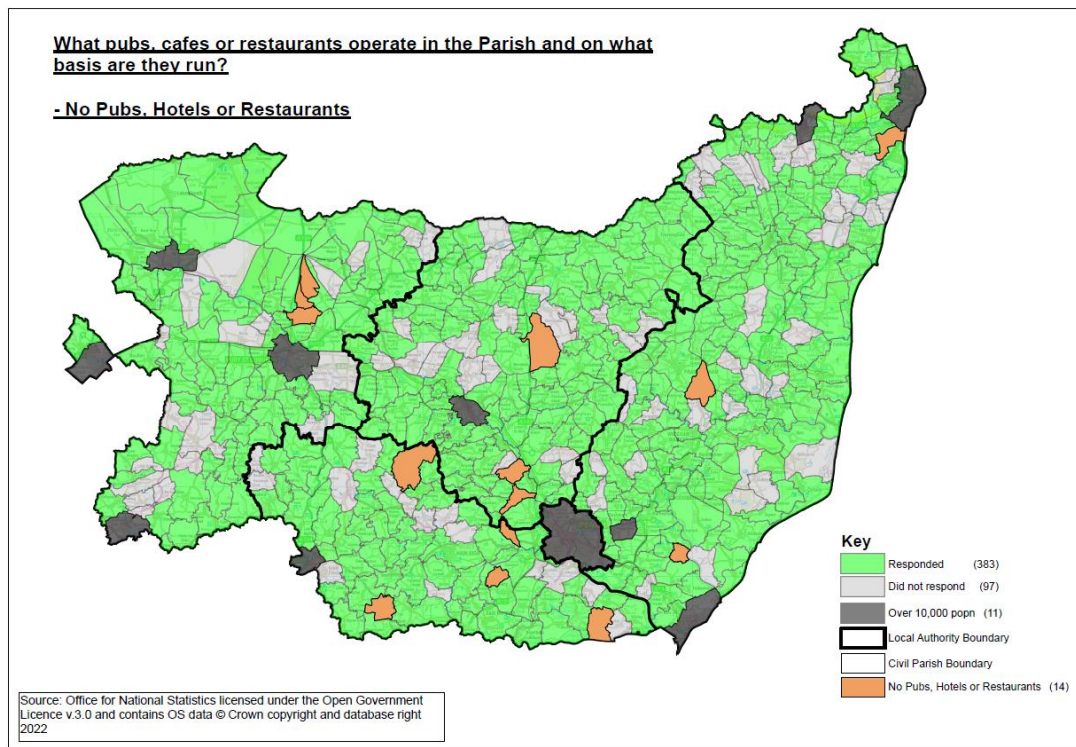
Figure 27: Location of Parishes with No Pubs, Hotels of Restaurants

What pubs, cafes or restaurants operate in the Parish and on what basis are they run?

- Takeaways

Key

Responded	(383)
Did not respond	(97)
Over 10,000 popn	(11)
Local Authority Boundary	
Civil Parish Boundary	
Community Run Takeaway	(1)
Privately Run Takeaway	(61)

Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022

Figure 28: Locations of Parishes with Takeaways

Throughout surveyed parishes, there are 191 parishes with public houses (some parishes have more than one pub in them), of which 8 (2%) are run by the community.

In the 2015 survey, 65% of responding parishes indicated they have a pub in their parish which served food but no overnight accommodation. In this 2022 survey, this figure has reduced to 54% of responding parishes having a pub within their parish that serves food but does not provide accommodation.

Public Houses have been and still are an important asset for the community. There is increasing interest from communities in taking on community ownership of Public Houses, a number of which are starting to develop around Suffolk. The Battisford Punchbowl and The Case is Altered in Bentley are two such examples of communities getting together to realise their local need and following this through to fruition. The registration of pubs as community assets is something that is increasingly being undertaken by communities in order to try to preserve them in the future, to give the community a "right to bid" should the need arise. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has created an interactive map of community rights which shows assets of community value: DCLG Interactive Map.

3.9 Business closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Parishes were then asked about business closures that had been seen in recent times due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The table below shows the responses; however, it can clearly be seen that 81% of parishes had seen no closures or were unaware of any closures due to Covid. 3% of parishes confirmed that they had seen closures, plus an additional 2% said that they had seen their village pub close.

Has your Village / Parish seen any business closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic of which you are aware?	Number Answered	%
A Waffle and Pancake Shack Restaurant on the A11 has closed recently but for lease reasons and not due to the COVID-19 pandemic	1	0%
Changes but no closures	1	0%
Community run bar did open Fridays and Saturdays but now significantly reduced hours due to lack of volunteers	1	0%
Farm Cafe closed during lockdown.	1	0%
Local residents actively supported the local pub to prevent closure	1	0%
No	257	87%
No though The Dove just across A143 is now closed till further notice	1	0%
Not sure if pub was for sale before pandemic	1	0%
Only temporary, now all businesses open fully again	1	0%
Our butcher's shop has closed after 70 years of service, but I cannot confirm this was linked to Covid	1	0%
Probably 1 or 2 but not sure whether it was solely due to Covid	1	0%
Pub closed but reopened recently	1	0%
Volunteer run Social club	1	0%
Yes	10	3%
Yes - A limited number of one man businesses have closed but in the man this is due to a rethink of matters given age and Covid-19 pandemic	1	0%
Yes - An office-based business closed.	1	0%
Yes - Butchers, eco shop,	1	0%
Yes - Cafe	1	0%
Yes - Card Shop & small independent business have been mainly replaced by take aways	1	0%
Yes - computer IT shop	1	0%
Yes - Newsagents in Nacton Village	1	0%
Yes - Tea rooms	1	0%
Yes - The 2nd pub in the village	1	0%
Yes - The Post Office	1	0%
Yes - The Pub	6	2%
Total Answering this question	**295**	**100%**

Table 9: Have any Business closures been seen due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

3.10 Childcare & Education

348 Parishes answered the next question on Childcare and Education.

Types of School	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Primary School	128	31%
Secondary or High School	21	5%

Table 10: Types of Schools
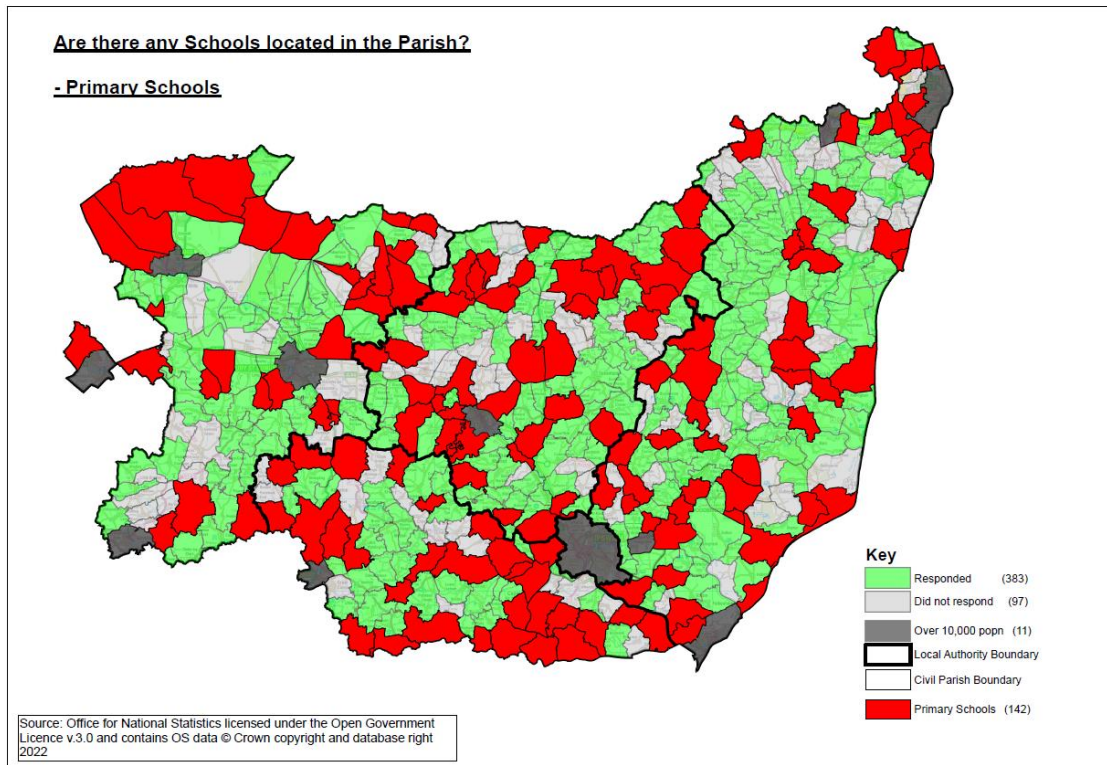
Figure 29: Location of Primary Schools
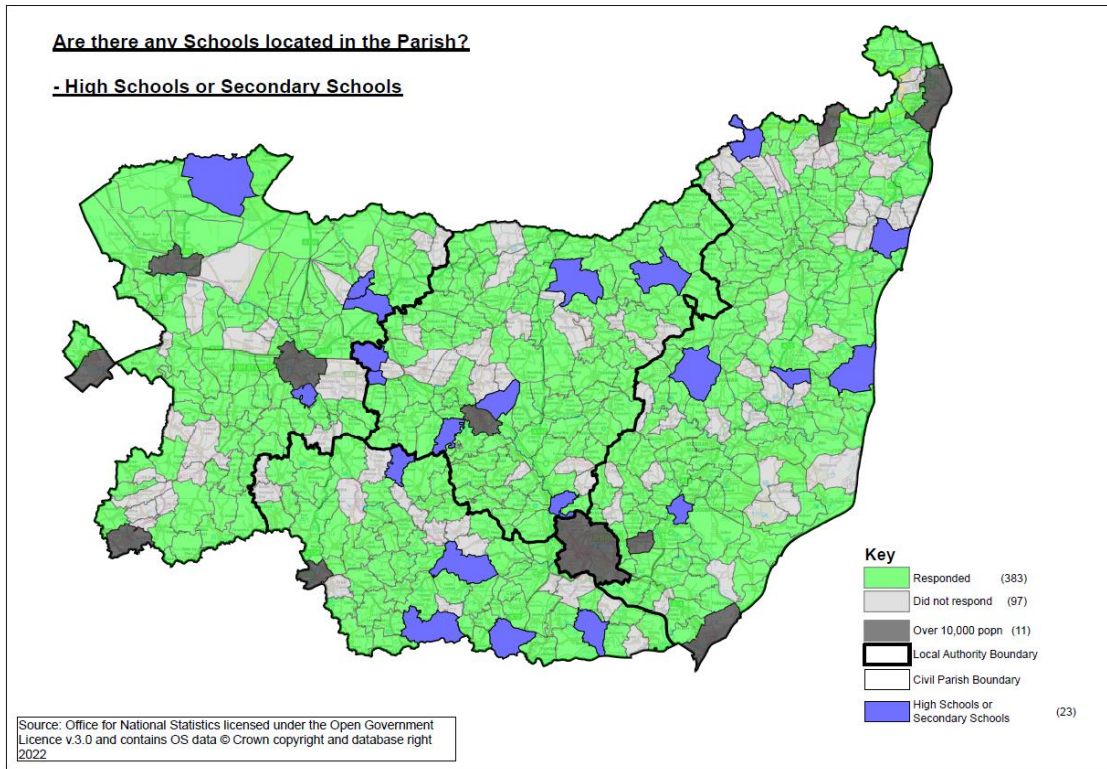
Figure 30: Location of High Schools or Secondary Schools

3.11 School uses in the wider Community

130 (31%) of parishes that responded to say they had at least one school within them, (of the 419 eligible parishes). When questioned further, 89 (21%) said that the school was not available for community use, whereas 42 (10%) said the School is made available as a venue for use by other services to the community. These are included in Table 11 and some Schools offer more than one use for the community:

Use of School by the Community	Number of Parishes stating purpose of use	Percentage of Parishes stating purpose of use
Cafe	1	2%
Did not specify	2	5%
Gym	2	5%
Hire of School Hall	11	26%
Holiday club / Pre-School	5	12%
Library	1	2%
Meeting room/s	3	7%
Private secondary school has a theatre	1	2%
School premises available to community groups	4	10%
Sports facilities for hire	7	17%
Swimming club	1	2%
Swimming pool	2	5%
Venue for Parish Council meetings	1	2%
Village Hall / Community Hall	6	14%

Table 11: Use of Schools by the Community

3.12 Early Years and Out of School Childcare Facilities

21 Parishes (of the 158 parishes that answered this question), that is 13% of respondents, said they didn't have any Early Years or Childcare facilities available in their Parish. In 2015 when this question was asked, 40 Parishes (of the 194 that answered this question), that is 20% of respondents, said they didn't have Early Years of Childcare facilities in their parish.

This suggests that the availability of Early Years and Childcare facilities in parishes has increased over this period.

Early Years Childcare Facilities				
	Run Privately	Run by the Community	Run by the School	Total
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)			
Nursery	44 (11%)	3 (1%)	12 (3%)	59 (14%)
Parent and Toddler Group	43 (10%)	23 (6%)	4 (1%)	70 (17%)
Pre School Playgroup	62 (15%)	10 (2%)	12 (3%)	84 (20%)
Other (Please specify)	11 (3%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	15 (4%)

Table 12: Early Years Childcare Facilities
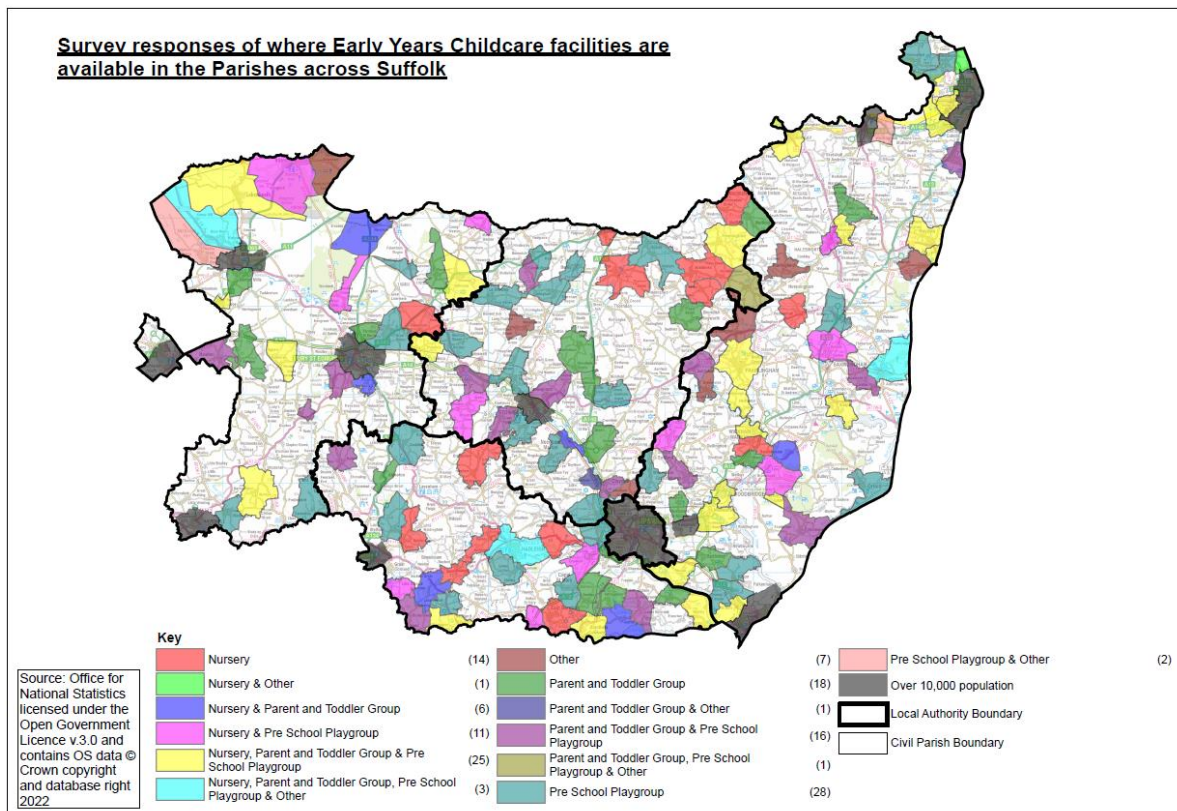
Figure 31: Early Years Childcare facilities

Breakfast Clubs, After School Clubs and Holiday Clubs and how they were run were also queried. Most Breakfast and After School Clubs seem to be run by the schools themselves, whilst most Holiday Clubs seem to be run privately, as can be seen in Table 13 and Figure 32 shows the geographical spread of them.

Out of School Childcare Facilities				
	Run Privately	Run by the Community	Run by the School	Total
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)			
After School Club	23 (6%)	4 (1%)	30 (7%)	57 (14%)
Breakfast Club	18 (4%)	3 (1%)	27 (7%)	48 (12%)
Holiday Club	19 (5%)	4 (1%)	6 (1%)	29 (7%)

Table 13: Out of School Childcare Facilities
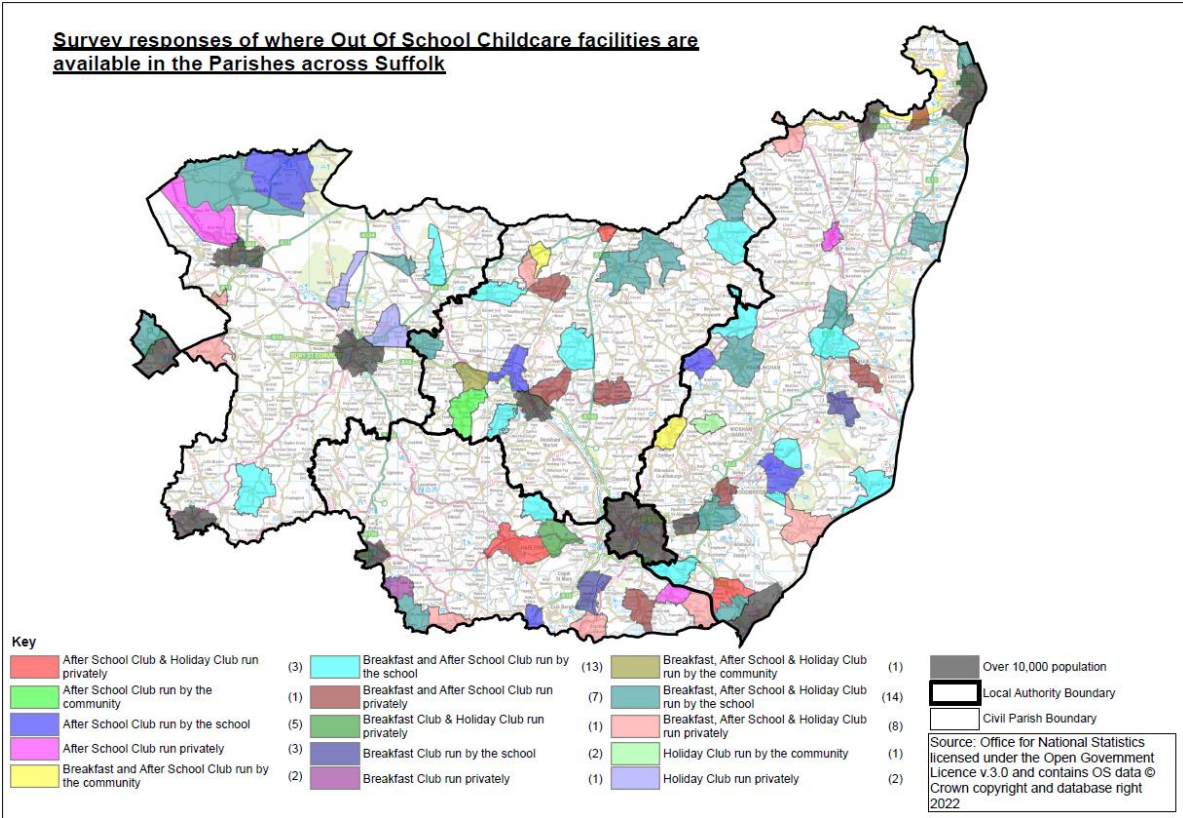
Figure 32: Location of Out of School Childcare Facilities

3.13 Adult Classes

The provision of Adult Classes physically taking place within rural parishes has shown a decline since the previous survey. The comparison of classes that exist in parishes in 2022 and previously when surveyed in 2015 show a consistent decrease in numbers. These figures do not though account for online adult classes, which do not require a physical presence within the parish but can be held remotely / virtually using applications like MS Teams and Zoom, or specific educational platforms designed for remote learning to take place.

Types of Adult Classes	Number of Parishes 2022	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Number of Parishes 2015	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes 2015
IT / Computer Skills	14	3%	19	5%
Literacy / Numeracy	3	0.7%	7	2%
Other Adult Education (e.g., Languages, Local History, Art, Yoga, Pilates, etc.)	44	11%	64	15%
No	274	66%	266	63%

Table 14: Types of Adult Classes

3.14   Doctors Surgeries

Parishes were asked about whether there was a doctor's surgery within their parish.

Doctor's Surgery In Parish	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Parishes which do not have a Doctor's Surgery within them	285	69%
Parishes which have a permanent Doctor's Surgery within them	43	10%
Parishes which have a visiting Doctor's Surgery within them	4	1%

Table 15: Parishes with Doctors Surgeries
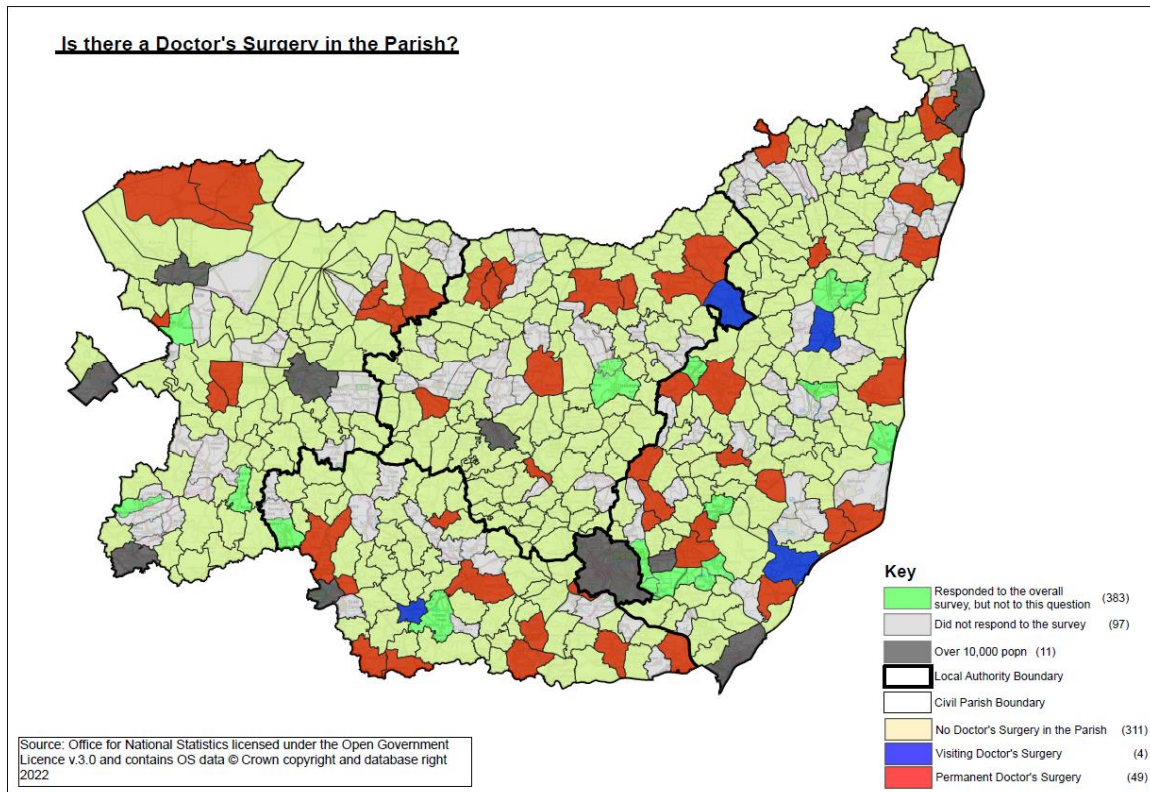
Figure 33: Locations of Doctor's Surgeries

Survey participants were asked how far their Parish was to the nearest Doctor's Surgery. The results are in Table 16. In some cases though, those that look as if they are within a 3-mile radius of a doctors, may be as the crow flies, however, this may not be the case by road.

Accessibility for those that are less than 3 miles away is also an issue for all sectors of society, as, in rural areas, the availability of pavements and footpaths varies on a parish-by-parish basis. Although in theory a distance may be manageable for an able-bodied person to walk, in reality, it may be too dangerous to attempt due to the lack of a safe or practical pavement or footpath, even if the patient were feeling well enough to make the journey on foot.

Respondents were also asked whether their nearest Doctor's surgery was accessible by Public Transport. Only 37 parishes (9%) indicated that it was possible, but various caveats to this were added by some.

Distance from Parish to nearest Doctor's Surgery	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Within 1 mile	43	10%
Within 2 miles	48	12%
Within 3 miles	90	22%
Within 4 miles	63	15%
Within 5 miles	55	13%
More than 5 miles	35	8%

Table 16: Distance from Parish to nearest Doctor's Surgery
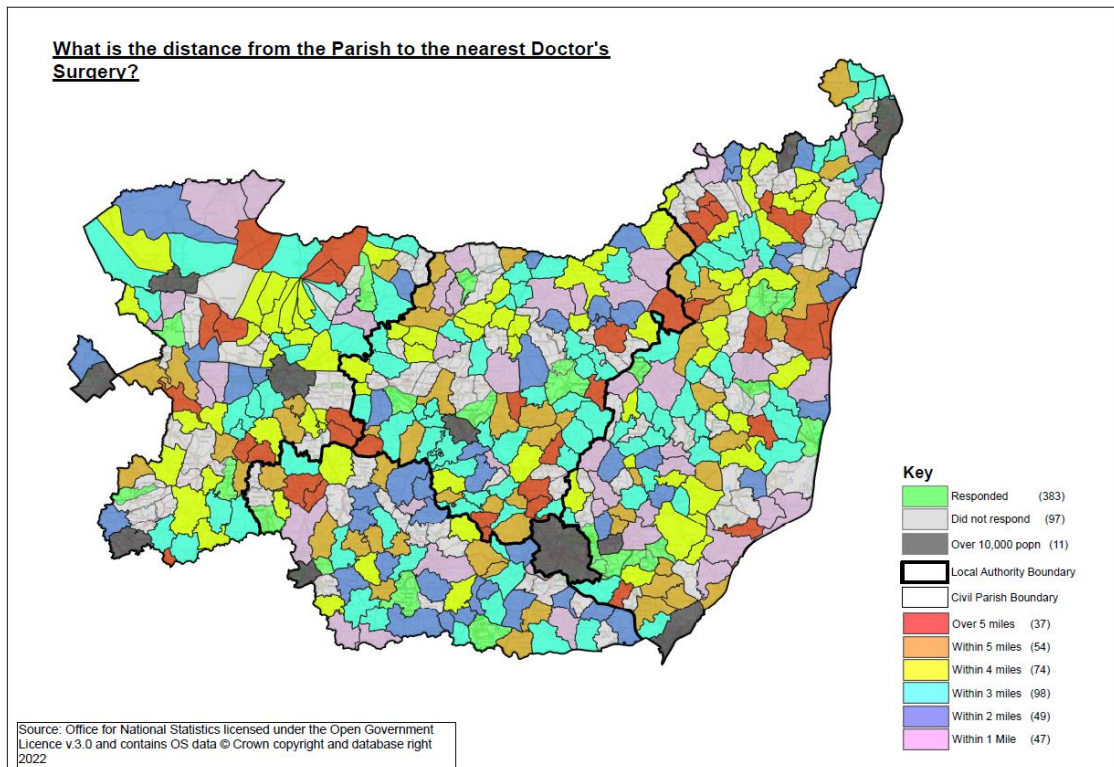
Figure 34: Distance from Doctors Surgeries

3.15 Dental Surgeries

Dental Surgeries	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Parishes which said they don't have a Dental Surgery within them	306	74%
Parishes which have a Private Dental Surgery within them	18	4%
Parishes which have an NHS Dental Surgery within them	7	2%
Parishes which have both an NHS and Private Dental Surgery within them	8	2%

Table 17: Dental Surgeries
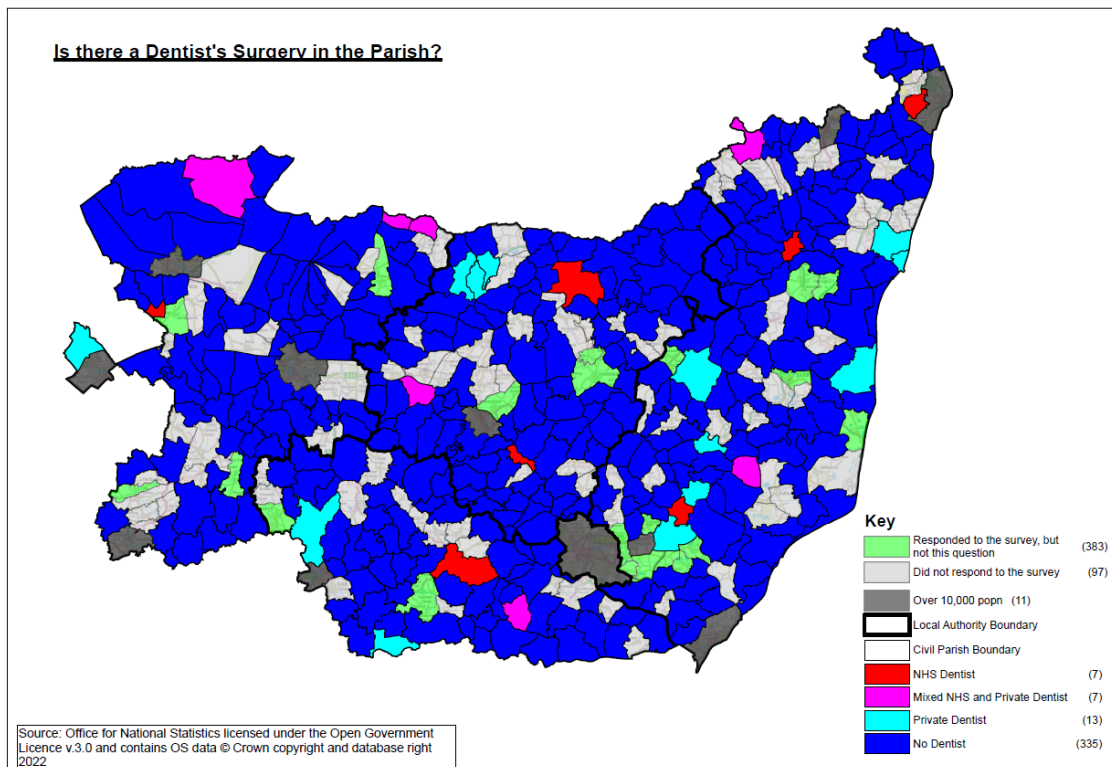
Figure 35: Location of Dentists

Survey participants were then asked about the distance required to travel to the nearest NHS dentist. The results are in Table 18. When asked if the Dental Surgery was accessible by Public Transport, 39 parishes (9%) indicated that were possible, but various caveats to this were added by some.

Distance from Parish to nearest NHS Dental Surgery	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Within 1 mile	24	6%
Within 2 miles	21	5%
Within 3 miles	46	11%
Within 4 miles	36	9%
Within 5 miles	49	12%
More than 5 miles	145	35%

Table 18: Distance from nearest NHS Dental Surgery
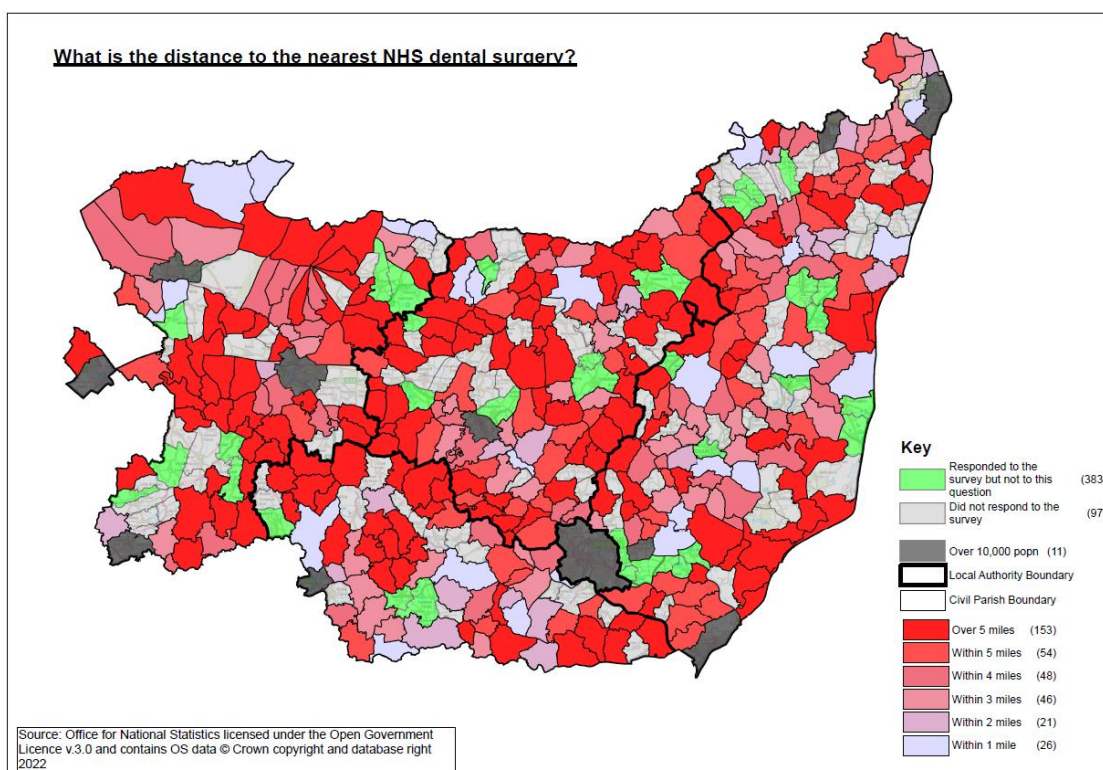
Figure 36: Distance to nearest NHS Dental Surgery

3.16 Health Services

The other health services available within the Parish can be found in Table 19:

Type of Health Service	Number of Parishes with a Health Service Visiting or Permanent (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)
Pharmacy	39 (9%)
Prescription collection point	45 (11%)
Prescription Delivery Services	70 (17%)
Parish Nurse	21 (5%)
Chiropody	32 (8%)
Physiotherapy/ Osteopathy	17 (4%)
Counselling Services	14 (3%)
Mental Health & Wellbeing Services	18 (4%)
Dementia Café / Dementia Support Services	11 (3%)
Alternative Therapies	14 (3%)
Volunteer Car Scheme to doctor's / hospital appointments	44 (11%)
Other	6 (1%)
None	32 (8%)

Table 19: Types of Health Service

Figure 37 shows the locations of parishes who stated that they had a pharmacy.
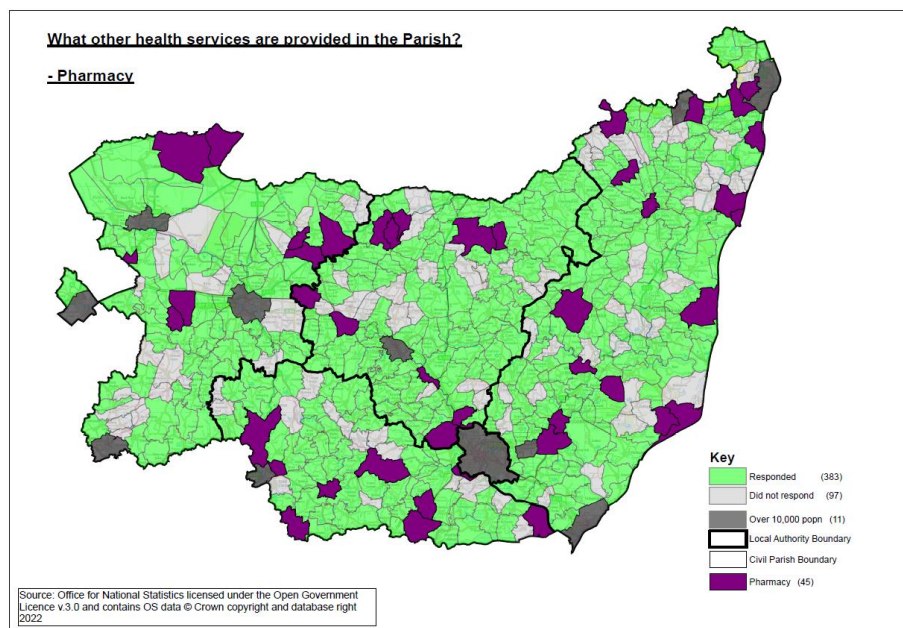
Figure 37: Location of Pharmacies

3.17 Facilities for the Older People

Parishes were asked about Residential Homes or Care Facilities. 125 parishes (30%) indicated that they had some form of facility or service available for older people, whilst 31 (8%) responded to say they did not.

	Run Privately	Run by a Housing Association	Run by a Community or Voluntary Organisation	Run by Other	Total
Facilities	**Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)**				
Residential Home	52 (13%)	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	56 (13%)
Retirement Housing	17 (4%)	5 (1%)	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.7%)	26 (6%)
Sheltered Housing	19 (5%)	8 (2%)	2 (0.5%)	2 (0.5%)	31 (7%)
Day Care Centre	6 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	8 (2%)
Lunch Club	12 (3%)	0 (0%)	24 (5%)	0 (0%)	36 (9%)
Meals on Wheels	17 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.5%)	19 (5%)
Good Neighbour Scheme	13 (3%)	0 (0%)	29 (7%)	1 (0.2%)	43 (10%)
Befriending Schemes	2 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	7 (2%)	1 (0.2%)	10 (2%)
Dementia Care Services	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.7%)	2 (0.5%)	9 (2%)
Informal / Formal Carers Groups	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)	12 (3%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)	8 (2%)

Table 20: Facilities for Older People

3.18 Faith and Religion

Churches of differing faiths continue to be a large network throughout the county with 311 (74%) parishes indicating that they did have at least one church or other faith building. 6 parishes (1%) indicated that they didn't have any religious buildings within them. In many cases, even for people that do not hold strong religious beliefs of any kind, Churches continue to play an important part of the rural community.
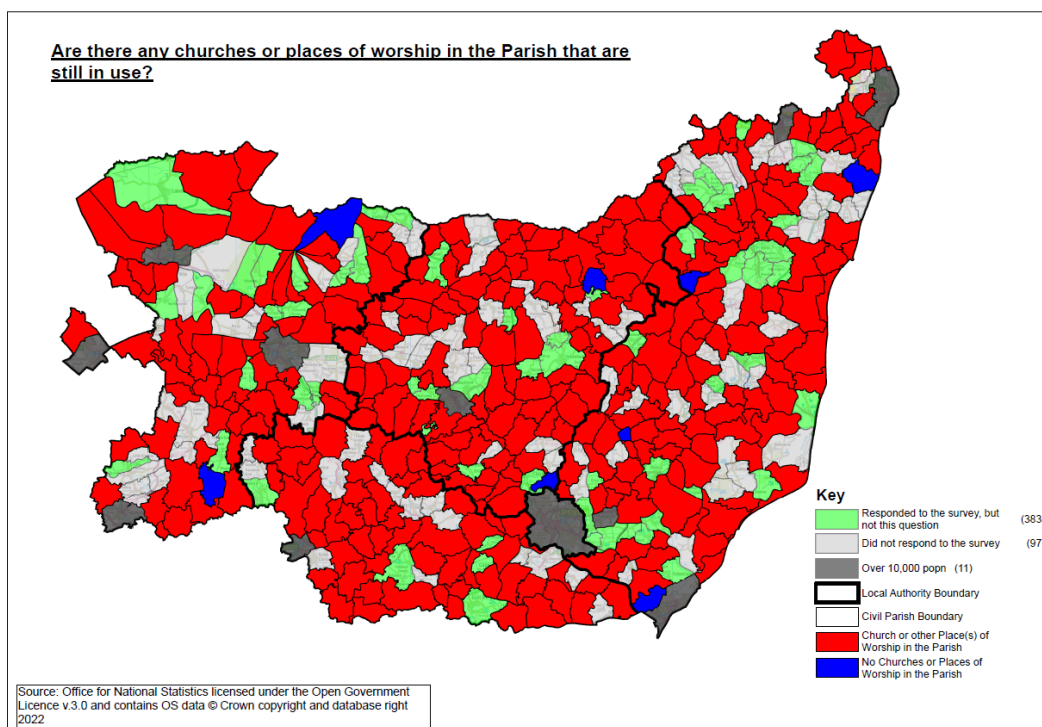
Figure 38: Churches or Places of Worship Still in Use

When asked whether there was any Church or other Faith buildings in the Parish that were available for community use, Table 21 shows the responses received:

Church or other Faith Buildings available for Community Use	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Yes, Church Room / Hall available for Community Use	85	20%
Yes, Church Room / Hall available for Private Hire	65	16%
Yes, as an Information Point	20	5%
Yes, Other (please specify)	42	10%
No	164	39%

Table 21: Faith Buildings available for Community Use

When asked to expand on the types of other use, Table 22 lists the examples put forward:

Are there any church or other faith buildings in the Parish that are available for community use?	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Available for events, community events and meetings	6	1.43%
Available for Meetings (e.g., Parish Council, PCC, etc.)	4	0.95%
Baptist Church and Hall	1	0.24%
Bus shelter is only place for non-Parish Council information	1	0.24%
Church is available for suitable use	1	0.24%
Church available for community use	1	0.24%
Church building only	2	0.48%
Church can be used, but has very limited facilities (no running water etc)	3	0.72%
Church is open most days and offers tea and coffee on Thursdays	1	0.24%
Church Open daily	1	0.24%
Community Centre / Village Hall	6	1.43%
Foodbank drop off point	1	0.24%
Historic Church	1	0.24%
Lightwave Community Church/organisation use the Parish Hub at the discretion of the Parish Council to offer a breakfast club and children's youth club throughout the year. The building is used FOC	1	0.24%
Needs updating on heritage at risk register	1	0.24%
Occasional events	1	0.24%
Reading Room	1	0.24%
Recreation Ground Pavilion	1	0.24%
Royal Hospital School Chapel	1	0.24%
The Church is used for entertainment events such as music	2	0.48%
Use of the Nave	2	0.48%
Yes	3	0.72%

Table 22: Other Church or Faith Buildings available for community use

3.19 Libraries

Library Type	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Permanent Library	19	5%
Mobile Library Van	147	35%
Informal book-sharing point (e.g., phone box)	41	10%
No library within the parish	134	32%

Table 23: Type of Library

Figure 39 shows the survey respondents who indicated that they had a permanent or mobile library service in their parish, as well as the many informal book-sharing points.
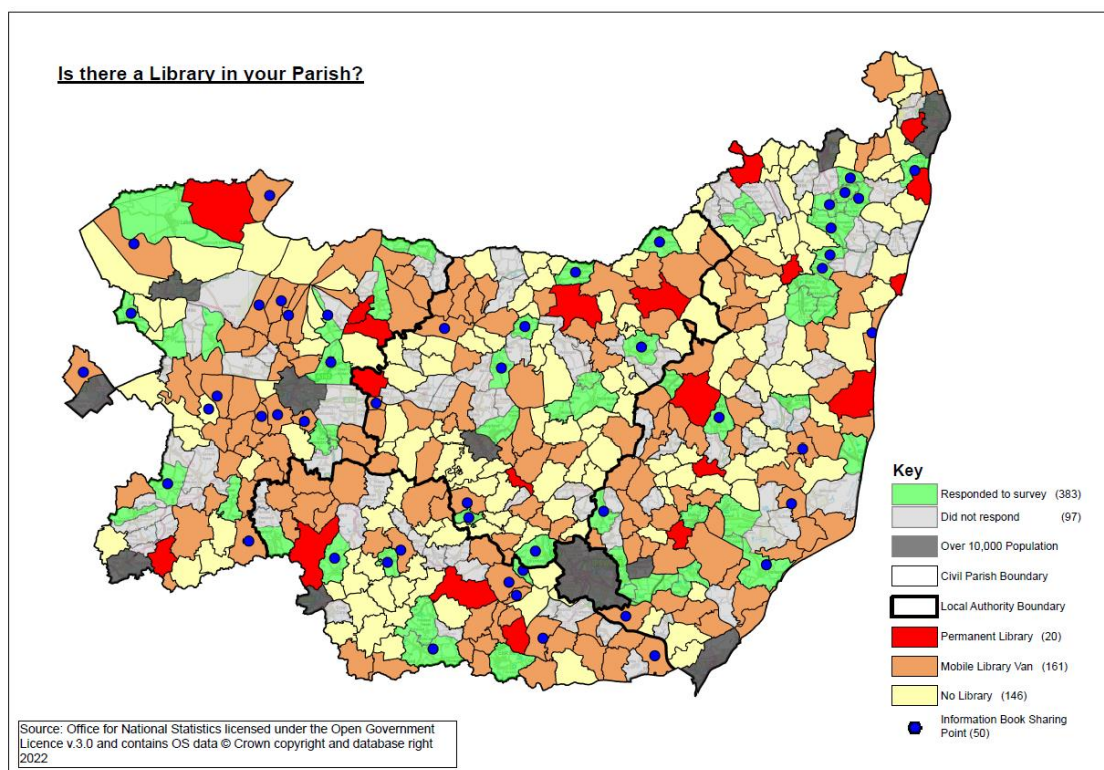
Figure 39: Locations of Libraries and Book Sharing Points

3.20 Information Services

When asked about other information services in the Parish, Table 24 shows which information services were available in responding parishes:

Information Service	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Parish / Village / Town Newsletter	258	62%
Parish / Village / Town Website	263	63%
Public Notice Board	292	70%
Email contact address for the Parish Clerk	283	68%
Parish / Village / Town Email	112	27%
Parish / Village / Town Twitter Account	15	4%
Parish / Village / Town Facebook Account	143	34%
Parish / Village / Town Instagram Account	7	2%
Parish / Village / Town WhatsApp Group	37	9%
Parish / Village / Town Radio Station	4	1%
Other Information Services	19	5%

Table 24: Information Services

3.21 Village Halls, Community Centres and Community Buildings

Respondents were asked whether their parish had a Village Hall, Community Centre, Parish Hall, Sports Pavilion, any Community Buildings, Scout Huts, etc. and then asked if they did, if they could list them. 276 (66%) of the responding parishes indicated that they have a Village Hall, Community Centre or some

other form of community building. 28 of responding parishes indicated that they didn't have any community buildings available within them, however, two of these pointed out that they were currently working on plans to develop community meeting spaces within them.
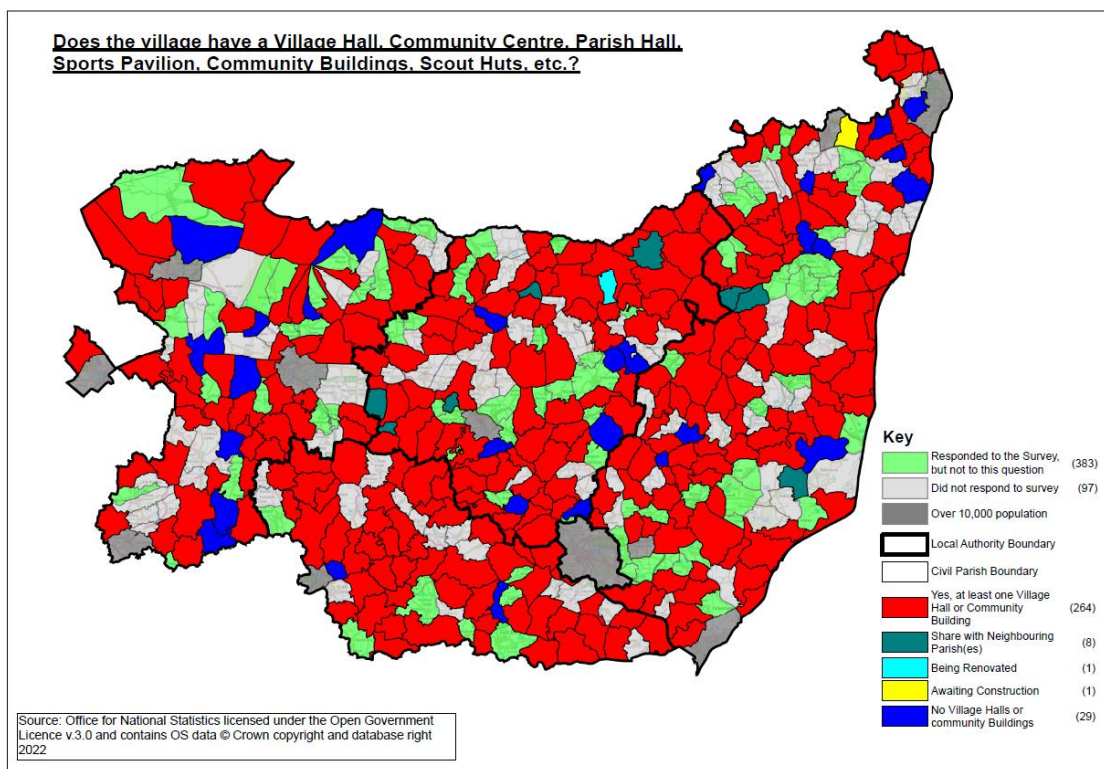
Figure 40: Map of Parishes with Village Halls or Community Buildings

3.22 Have Village Halls and Community Centres Re-opened since Covid-19?

When asked whether the parishes village halls, community centres and community buildings had reopened since the Covid-19 previous lockdowns, 271 responded to this question, to confirmed that they had. 1 Hall is still closed as it is being renovated, one more parish stated that their hall has not re-opened.

The facilities available in Village Halls and Community Centres in Parishes can be seen in Table 25.

Facility	Number of Parishes	Percentage of surveyed parishes
Bar	73	17%
Cafe	17	4%
Cinema (e.g., Moviola / Flicks in the Sticks etc.)	40	10%
IT / Broadband	87	21%
Kitchen / Self Catering Facilities	224	54%
Library	8	2%
Local Information Point	98	23%
Meeting Rooms	205	49%
Post Office	10	2%
Presentation Equipment e.g., PA, Projectors, Screens, etc.	116	28%
Shop	6	1%

Facility	Number of Parishes	Percentage of surveyed parishes
Other	49	12%

Table 25: Facilities in Village Halls and Community Buildings

3.23 Parish Sports or Leisure Activities and/or Facilities

Parishes were then asked whether they have any sports or leisure activities and/or facilities that take place in their parish. When comparing responses to those of the previous survey, it implies that the number of parishes with sports fields has reduced by 13% since 2015.

Parish Sports or Leisure Activities and/or Facilities	Number of Parishes 2015	% of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	% of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference between 2015 and 2022
Ball Sports e.g., football, rugby, netball, basketball, etc.	78	19%	112	27%	+8%
Carpet / Indoor Bowls / Outdoor Bowls	150	36%	125	30%	-6%
Cricket Pitch			42	10%	
Indoor gym (e.g., in a sports centre)			16	4%	
Keep Fit / Exercise Classes e.g., pilates, yoga, zumba etc.	149	35%	159	38%	+3%
Martial Arts e.g., Judo, Karate etc.	27	7%	34	8%	+1%
Multi Use Games Area	65	16%	46	11%	-5%
Outdoor Activity clubs e.g., Cycling, walking, running	37	9%	51	12%	+3%
Outdoor Gym	22	5%	43	10%	+5%
Racket sports e.g., tennis, badminton, etc.	67	16%	57	14%	-2%
Sports Field	184	44%	128	31%	-13%
Swimming Pool			7	2%	
Tennis Courts			53	13%	

Table 26: Parish Sports or Leisure Activities and / or facilities

3.24 Amenities or organised activities for Young People and / or Older People

Parishes were then asked whether they have any amenities or organised activities for Young People and / or Older People that take place in their parish. When compared with the responses in the 2015 survey, the number of parishes with children's play areas seems to have reduced by 20%

Amenities or organised activities for Young People and/or Older People	Number of Parishes 2015	% of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	% of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference Between 2015 and 2022
Children's Faith Groups	45	11%	31	7%	-4%
Children's Play Area	219	52%	165	39%	-20%
Older people's exercise e.g., Seated exercise classes	21	5%	32	8%	+3%
Over 50s Club / Over 60s Club / OAP Groups / Darby and Joan Club etc.	78	19%	84	20%	+1%

Amenities or organised activities for Young People and/or Older People	Number of Parishes 2015	% of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	% of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference Between 2015 and 2022
Royal British Legion, Lions, Rotary, Masons etc.	41	10%	27	6%	-4%
Skate Park / Pump Track			21	5%	
U3A (University of the Third Age)	6	2%	15	4%	+2%
Uniformed Groups for children e.g. Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs etc	70	17%	46	11%	-6%
Uniformed Groups for Young People e.g. Scouts, Guides, Rangers, Girls and Boys Brigades, Sea Cadets, etc.	49	12%	38	9%	-3%
Youth Club	45	11%	27	6%	-5%
Youth Faith Groups	18	4%	11	3%	-1%

Table 27: Parish Amenities or organised activities for Young People and/or Older People

3.25 Parish Social Groups or Social events

Parishes were then asked whether they have any Social Groups or Social events that take place in their parish. When compared to the numbers of parishes with social groups or social events in 2015, the number of parishes with coffee mornings, afternoon tea and social groups has increased by 20% however, this is balanced out by the number of social groups such as knit and natter and friendship clubs, plus the number of specialist interest clubs both reducing in numbers in parishes by 12% and 15% respectively.

Any Social Groups or Social events	Number of Parishes 2015	% of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	% of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference between 2015 and 2022
Allotment Society	71	17%	74	18%	+1%
Amateur Dramatics, Choir, Singing Groups, Pantomime, Music Groups	78	19%	78	19%	0%
Art and Craft Groups e.g. painting	103	25%	105	25%	0%
Cards and Games Clubs e.g. Bridge, scrabble etc.	56	13%	42	10%	-3%
Coffee mornings, afternoon tea, social groups etc.	111	26%	194	46%	+20%
Dancing Classes e.g. line dancing, country dancing, jive, salsa, ballroom, disco, etc.	70	17%	76	18%	+1%
Gardening Club	75	18%	65	16%	-2%
Lunch Clubs	78	19%	50	12%	-7%
Social Events e.g. Bingo, barn dance, quiz nights, village treasure hunt, village cinema/film nights etc.	206	49%	174	42%	-7%
Social Groups e.g. knit and natter, friendship clubs etc.	139	33%	88	21%	-12%
Specialist interest clubs e.g. Horticultural society, history group, cheese and wine club, photography club, wood turning club, book club, dog training classes etc.	147	35%	85	20%	-15%

Any Social Groups or Social events	Number of Parishes 2015	% of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	% of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference between 2015 and 2022
Residents Association	174	41%	10	2%	Unable to compare
Women's Institute			87	21%	

Table 28: Parish Social Groups or Social events

3.26 Parish Health and Support Groups or Facilities

Parishes were then asked whether they have any Health and Support Groups or Facilities in their parish.

Does the Parish have any Health and Support Groups or Facilities	Number of Parishes 2015	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes 2015	Number of Parishes 2022	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes 2022	Difference between 2015 and 2022
A Men's Shed			15	4%	
Carers Support Group	11	3%	9	2%	-1%
Community Cafe	29	7%	39	9%	+2%
Dementia Support Group	13	3%	10	2%	-1%
Meet Up Mondays, Rural Coffee Caravan village visits, community c-a-f-e (coffee and friends events) and More Than A Shop stores			60	14%	
Slimming Clubs e.g., Slimming World, Weight Watchers etc.	34	8%	30	7%	-1%
Social Services Day Care	5	1%	4	1%	0%
Village Green/Open Space	190	45%	175	42%	-3%
Wildlife Area			102	24%	

Table 29: Parish Health and Support Groups or Facilities

3.27 Rural Communications and Digital Technology

Parishes were asked to rate the quality of Broadband availability, Mobile Phone coverage, and Digital TV receptions. 293 (70%) of parishes answered this question and gave their views of the coverage of these different technologies. Firstly, the broadband coverage shows very low levels where broadband is unavailable (1% general coverage and 2% fibre to the cabinet).

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unavailable
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)				
WiFi public access points	14 (3%)	26 (6%)	32 (8%)	29 (7%)	59 (14%)
Broadband coverage generally	21 (5%)	78 (19%)	109 (26%)	58 (14%)	4 (1%)
Fibre to the Cabinet	26 (6%)	73 (17%)	86 (21%)	31 (7%)	8 (2%)
Fibre to the Home	23 (6%)	49 (12%)	59 (14%)	28 (7%)	38 (9%)
Wireless Broadband	12 (3%)	49 (12%)	68 (16%)	33 (8%)	19 (5%)
Satellite Broadband	5 (1%)	21 (5%)	19 (5%)	14 (3%)	28 (7%)
Community Broadband Scheme	3 (1%)	11 (3%)	5 (1%)	2 (0.5%)	51 (12%)

Table 30: Broadband availability
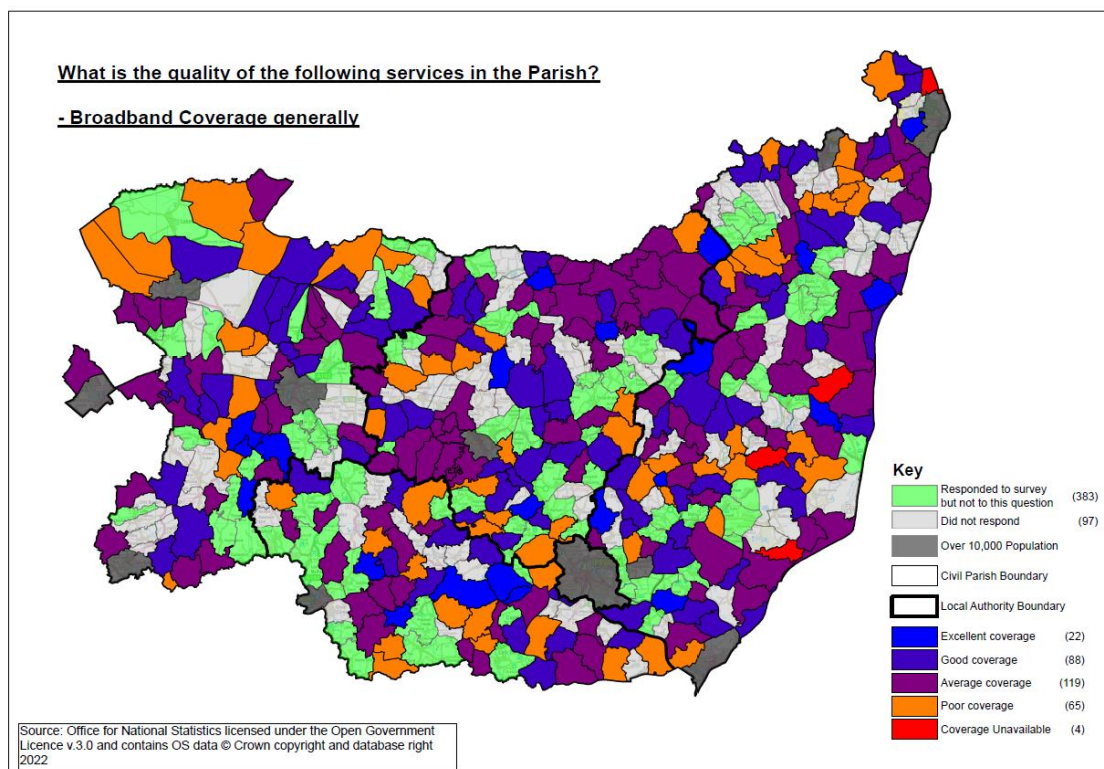
Figure 41: Opinions of Quality of Broadband Coverage

Mobile phone signals have also improved on previous years' service levels, though 4% of surveyed parishes said mobile phone coverage in general was unavailable.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unavailable
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)				
Mobile Phone coverage in general	19 (5%)	60 (14%)	82 (20%)	85 (20%)	15 (4%)
4G availability	21 (5%)	52 (12%)	78 (19%)	66 (16%)	10 (2%)
5G availability	6 (1%)	14 (3%)	12 (3%)	35 (8%)	74 (18%)

Table 31: Mobile Phone Coverage
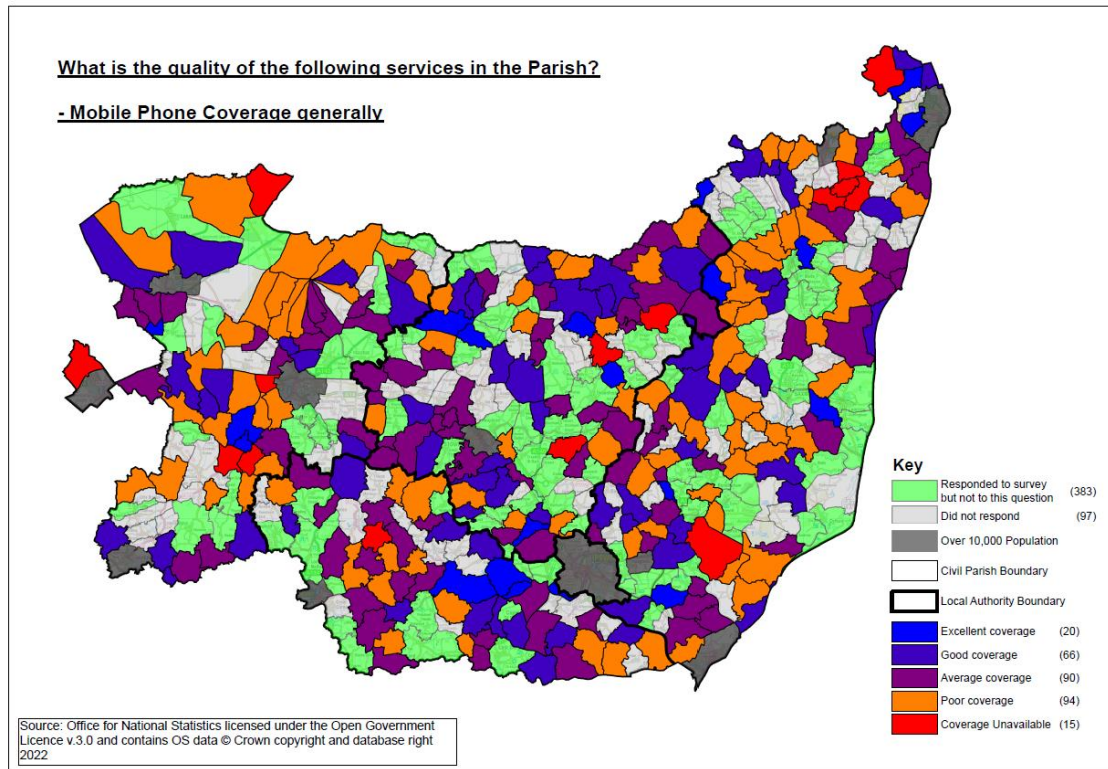
Figure 42: Opinions of Quality of Mobile Phone Coverage

With regards to Digital television, following the switchover from analogue television signal in 2011, signal strengths.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unavailable
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)				
Digital TV (Freeview coverage - channels 1-5)	39 (9%)	70 (17%)	62 (15%)	26 (6%)	8 (2%)
Digital TV (Freeview coverage with additional channels)	31 (7%)	65 (16%)	60 (14%)	26 (6%)	6 (1%)
Other Comments	3 (1%)	0 (0%)	4 (1%)	3 (1%)	4 (1%)

Table 32: Freeview Coverage
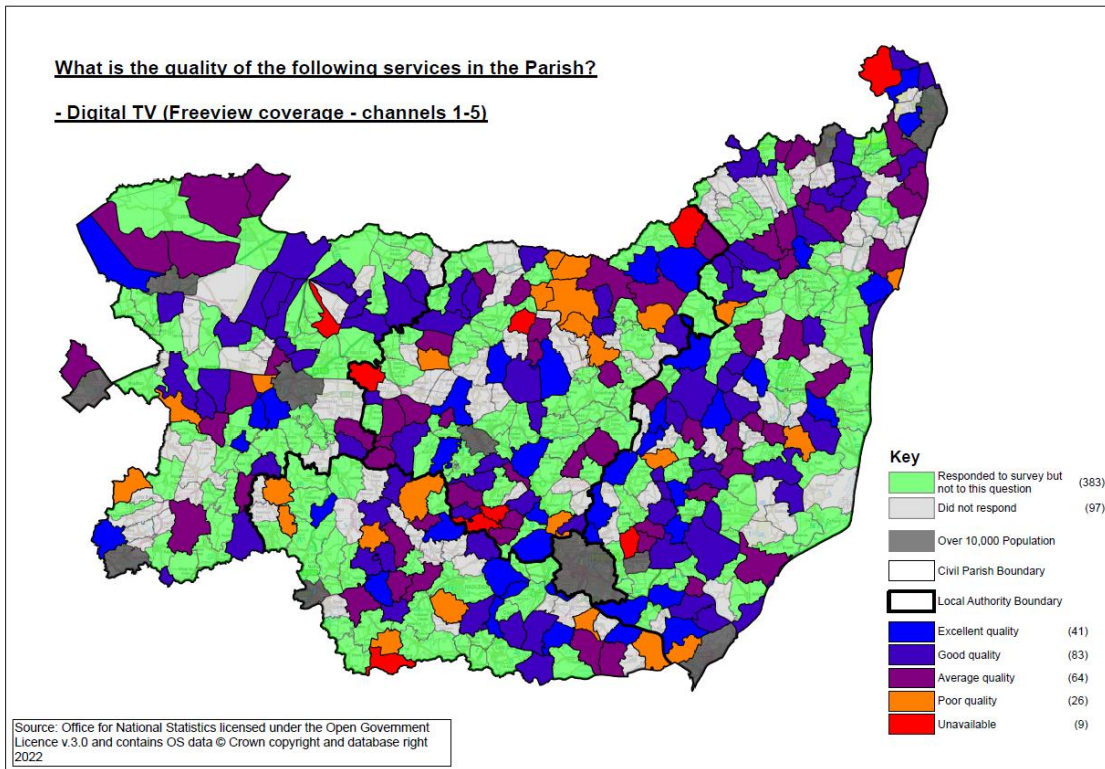
Figure 43: Opinions on Quality of Digital TV (Freeview Coverage Channels 1-5)
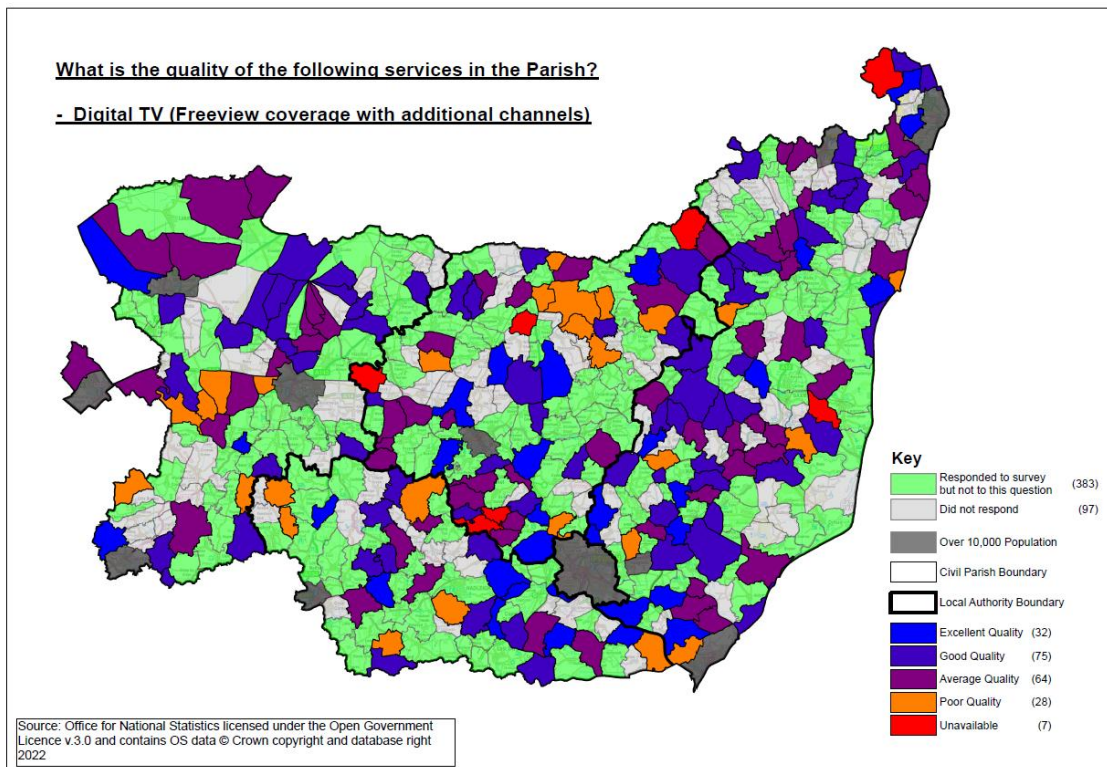
Figure 44: Opinions on Quality of Digital TV (Freeview Coverage with Additional Channels)

3.28 Impact of Poor Broadband Coverage

With technology moving on rapidly, the next question was to clarify the impact that lack of broadband access or mobile phone reception has had on rural

communities. Has poor communications provision affected the parish in any of the way?

Potential Impact of Poor Broadband Coverage	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Impacted on the service made available in village halls i.e., remote working; internet/ I.T. classes etc.	44	11%
Poor Broadband Speeds have prevented businesses starting up	22	5%
Poor Broadband Speeds have caused businesses to leave the village	7	2%
Poor Broadband Speeds have reduced the sustainability of existing businesses	32	8%
Poor Broadband Speeds have prevented people moving into the village	24	6%
Poor Broadband Speeds have affected children and young people's access to education / resources	55	13%
Poor Broadband Speeds have reduced availability of access to doctors and hospital appointments	16	4%
Other Broadband Comments	50	12%

Table 33: Potential Impact of Poor Broadband Coverage

3.29 Impact of Poor Mobile Phone Reception

With technology moving on rapidly, the next question was to clarify the impact that lack of broadband access or mobile phone reception has had on rural communities? Has poor communications provision affected the parish in any of the way?

Potential Impact of Poor Mobile Phone Coverage	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have prevented businesses starting up	15	4%
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have caused businesses to leave the village	7	2%
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have reduced the sustainability of existing businesses	24	6%
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have prevented people moving into the village	22	5%
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have affected children and young people's access to education / resources	40	10%
Poor Mobile Phone Signals have reduced availability of access to doctors and hospital appointments	29	7%
Other Mobile Phone Signal Comments	69	17%

Table 34: Potential Impact of Poor Communications

3.30 Availability of community or communal electric vehicle charging points

When asked about communal or community electric vehicle charging points, 337 parishes answered this question. The responses can be seen below in Table 35.

Does your parish or town have community or communal electric vehicle charging points available?	Number of Parishes that responded	Percentage of responding parishes
Yes	31	10%
Planned (i.e., if you are aware that they are planned for in the future)	18	5%
No	288	85%
Total	337	100%

Table 35: Community or Communal Electric Vehicle Charging Points
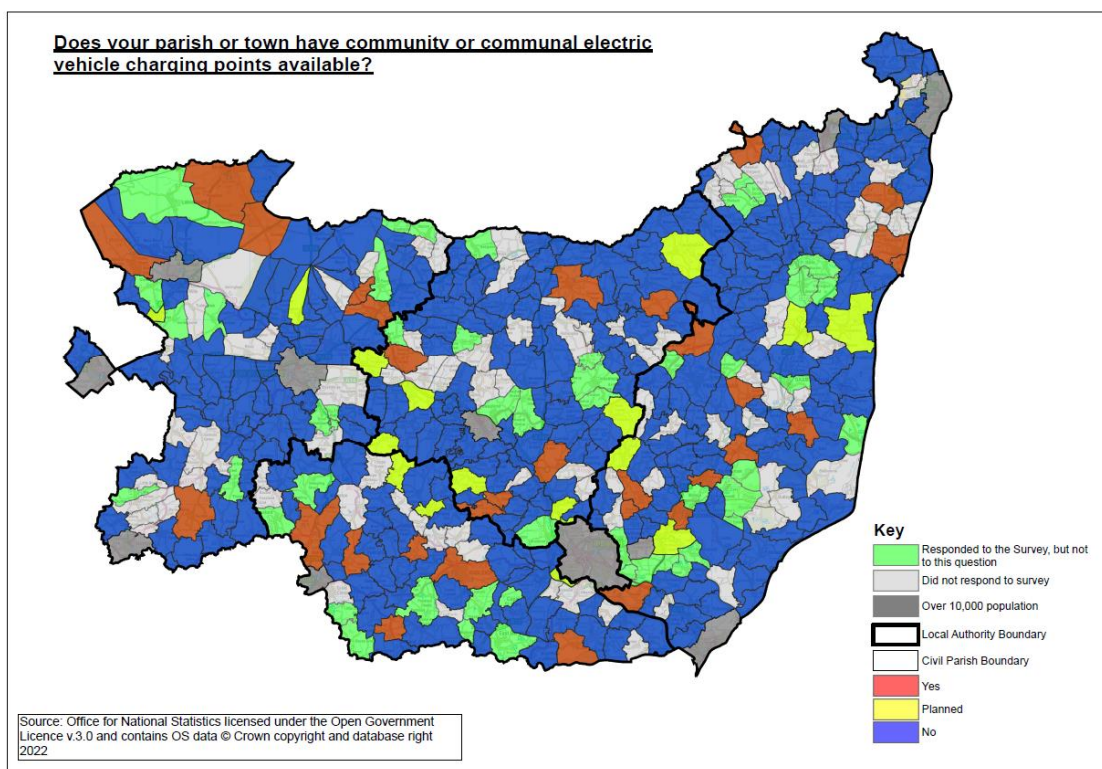
Figure 45: Community or Communal Electric Vehicle Charging Points

3.31 Availability / Distance to Transport Provision

Transport Type	In Parish / Within 1 mile	Within 5 miles	Over 5 miles away	Unavailable in Parish	Total
	Number of Parishes (Percentage of Surveyed Parishes)				
Railway Station	14 (3%)	77 (18%)	125 (30%)	60 (14%)	276 (66%)
Taxi Service	36 (9%)	92 (22%)	89 (21%)	39 (9%)	256 (61%)
Scheduled Bus Service	174 (42%)	40 (10%)	13 (3%)	44 (11%)	271 (65%)
Dial a Ride (door to door accessible service)	27 (6%)	21 (5%)	25 (6%)	55 (13%)	128 (31%)
Demand Responsive Service (e.g. Connecting Communities)	44 (11%)	26 (6%)	25 (6%)	29 (7%)	124 (30%)
Community / Volunteer Car Service	52 (12%)	14 (3%)	9 (2%)	33 (8%)	108 (26%)
Other (please specify)	3 (1%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	11 (3%)	15 (4%)
Safe access (via a safe path for example) to reach the access point for the transport service	68 (16%)	7 (2%)	4 (1%)	61 (15%)	140 (33%)

Table 36: Availability and Distance to Transport Provision

The questionnaire went on to ask respondents to specify whether there was a scheduled bus or Demand Responsive Transport (e.g. Connecting Communities) service that operates in the Parish, and if so, when does it operate. 289 parishes responded to this question, with 119 (28%) saying they did not have this service, and 168 (40%) confirming that they did have this type of service.

99 of these parishes (24%) went on to give a frequency of the public transport serving their villages or to make another comment. The apparent high availability of scheduled bus services should be treated with caution as many parishes only have a scheduled service that operates on one day per week.

Voluntary and Community Transport Schemes serving Parishes.
Parishes were asked what Voluntary and Community Transport Schemes serve their parish. 272 parishes (65%) responded to this question.

Voluntary and Community Transport Scheme	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Community Minibus	42	10%
Dial A Ride (door to door accessible service)	50	12%
Community Car Scheme	15	4%
Good Neighbour Car Scheme	36	9%
Other	21	5%
None	141	34%

Table 37: Voluntary and Community Transport Schemes

3.32 Community Safety

Respondents were then asked whether their parish had access to any of the following Community Safety services or resources.

Community Safety	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Access to the Safer Neighbourhood Team	69	17%
Police Community Support Officer	67	16%
Neighbourhood/Home Watch Scheme	79	19%
Police Direct text service	11	3%
Permanent Police Station	7	2%
Farm Watch Scheme	12	3%
Speedwatch	79	19%
Shop Watch Scheme	1	0.2%
No	93	22%

Table 38: Community Safety

3.33 Affordable Local Housing for local people or Community Led Housing

When asked about affordable local housing for local people, or Community Led Housing, 283 Parishes responded. 117 Parishes (28%) indicated that they have affordable housing in their Parish, whilst 166 (40%) do not. Parishes that had affordable housing were asked how many units were available and what the accommodation type was. The responses varied quite considerably from unknown as to how many were in the parish up to one parish that reported 98 houses, flats, bungalows. Council Housing, Alms Houses, Tied Housing and Housing Associations were also mentioned.

Parishes were asked whether there were plans for further local affordable housing or community led housing in the Parish. They were asked to respond to one or more of the stages in the process, see Table 39.

Are there Plans for further affordable housing in the Parish?	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Yes, we are considering	37	9%
Yes, we are planning/undertaking a Housing Needs Survey	7	2%
No, we have completed Housing Needs Survey and shows no need	8	2%
Yes, we have completed Housing Needs Survey and shows need	19	5%
Yes, currently researching potential sites	15	4%
No plans	209	50%

Table 39: Plans for affordable housing.

3.34 Recycling Facilities

Parishes were asked about the recycling collection services from the doorstep that are provided by the District and Borough Councils.

Recycling Collection Services	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Paper / Card collection services	282	67%
Plastic collection services	268	64%
Can collection services	261	62%
Food Waste collection services	73	17%
Garden Waste collection services	284	68%
Other collection service	28	7%

Table 40: Recycling Collection Services

When asked whether there were any recycling facilities in the Parish, the responses were as follows, as shown in Table 41.

Recycling Facilities in the Parish	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Paper Bank	55	13%
Bottle Bank	186	44%
Clothes and Textiles Banks	99	24%
Can Bank	12	3%
Batteries	11	3%
Printer Cartridges	5	1%
Tetrapaks	6	1%
Other recycling facility	4	1%
No	102	24%

Table 41: Recycling Facilities

3.35   Allotments

Parishes were asked how many allotment plots there are. Of those parishes that indicated they did have allotments, the number of plots and whether they are undersubscribed or oversubscribed was queried, and if oversubscribed, what the size of the waiting list was.

Number of Allotment Plots	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
1-10 allotment plots within their parish	42	10%
11-20 allotment plots within the parish	53	13%
21-30 allotment plots within the parish	15	4%
Over 30 allotment plots in the parish	17	4%

Table 42: Number of Allotment Plots

29 parishes (7%) indicated that the allotments were currently undersubscribed, with roughly 35 vacant plots across the 12 parishes that specified. A further 28

parishes (7%) though indicated that they were currently oversubscribed, with approximately 90 people on waiting lists across the 17 responding parishes.
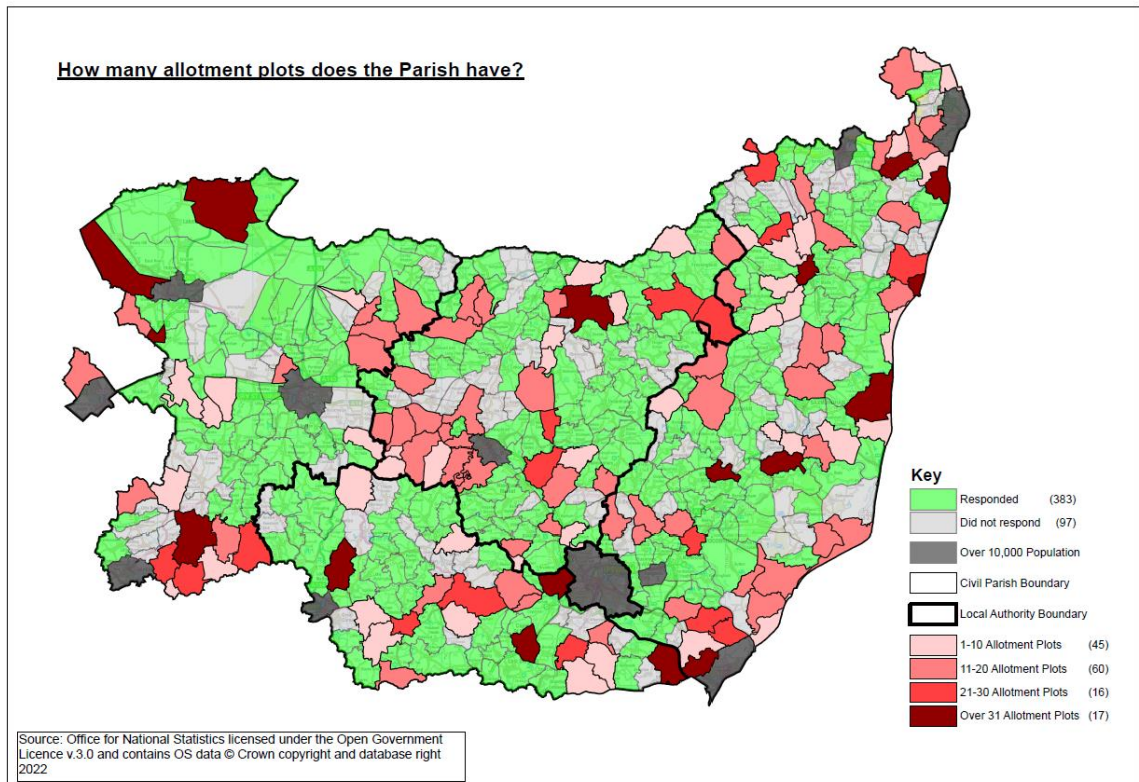
Figure 46: Parishes with Allotment Plots

3.36 Community Renewable Energy Generation Projects

Parishes were asked about Community Renewable Energy Generation projects both in the planning stages and existing within parishes. 79 parishes responded to this question. 8 parishes (2%) indicated that they had both planned and existing community renewable energy generation projects. 14 (3%) of the Parishes indicated that they have existing projects and 13 (3%) of Parishes confirmed they had planned projects. 32 Parishes said they had no existing or planned schemes in the pipeline. Comments were added by some respondents about the plans in their area.

Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	Existing Schemes
14	3%	Existing Schemes
of which		
9	2%	Solar
3	1%	Wind
2	0.5%	Other

Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	Planned Schemes
13	3%	Planned Schemes
of which		

10	2%	Solar
3	1%	Other

Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	Both Existing and Planned Schemes
8	2%	Both Existing and Planned Schemes
of which		
4	1%	Solar
2	0.5%	Wind
2	0.5%	Water

Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes	No Planned or Existing Schemes
32	8%	No Planned or Existing Schemes

Table 43: Community Renewable Energy Generation Projects

4.   Community Consultation and Development

Parishes were asked about community consultations that had taken place in the village. 158 (38%) of parishes indicated that they had undertaken some form of consultation. Table 44 is a breakdown of the different types of consultations that have taken place.

Type of Consultation	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Village Review	18	4%
Parish Plan or Village Appraisal	67	16%
Village Design Statement	9	2%
Housing Needs Survey	52	12%
Action Plan	10	2%
Neighbourhood Plan	88	21%
Other consultation	20	5%
None	97	23%

Table 44: Type of Community Consultation

The Other consultations that were reported included references to surveys around Quiet Lanes, Biodiversity, Village Eco Survey, Recreation Ground Regeneration, Community Emergency Plan, Local Plan, Conservation Area Review, Village Hall User Surveys, Recycling, Accessibility, Connectivity and Wayfinding, plus Traffic and Road Safety consultations.

4.1   Community Development Plans

Parishes were asked if they were aware of any other plans for community developments. Table 45 shows the responses:

Theme	Number of Parishes	Percentage of Surveyed Parishes
Allotments	13	3%
Broadband	24	6%
Community Building / Sports Pavilion	29	7%
Community Shop	10	2%
Early Years	4	1%
Good Neighbour Scheme	3	1%
Men's Shed	7	2%
New community groups or activities	12	3%
Pub	18	4%
Recreation Facilities / Playground	32	8%
Youth Provision	7	2%
Other	9	2%
No	160	38%

Table 45: Community Development Plans

5. Parish Concerns

Parishes were asked what the most important areas of concern in their community at present were under a number of themes and were then asked to rate them in order of concern, from very mild concern (1) to very serious concern (5). 266 parishes (63%) took this opportunity to raise the concerns that were most important to their community.

Figure 47 illustrates those concerns that were mentioned by parishes. Of all of the responses, by far the greatest area of concern to parishes is Roads with 230 (55%) raising this, followed by 188 parishes (45%) raising Transport; then third highest area of concern was Technology with 155 parishes (37%) raising this as an area of concern, yet once the severity of the concern ratings were accounted for, Land concerns, and then Environmental Concerns overtook Technology.

Key Concern	No. of Parishes (% Parishes)	Very Mild Concern	Mild Concern	Moderate Concern	Serious Concern	Very Serious Concern	Overall Rating of Severity of Concern
Community Cohesion, Local Welfare Support and Cost of Living	132 (32%)	16	20	42	31	23	421
Community Facilities	152 (36%)	21	33	50	24	24	453
Community Services	128 (31%)	11	28	43	26	20	400
Crime	136 (33%)	36	26	46	18	10	348
Economy	119 (28%)	16	22	38	28	15	361
Environment (including concerns around climate change)	149 (36%)	15	27	35	40	32	494
Health & Wellbeing	125 (30%)	19	23	45	29	9	361
Land (concerns around development for new housing or land availability for affordable housing)	153 (37%)	21	22	32	35	43	516
Roads (repairs and maintenance)	230 (55%)	10	21	65	77	57	840
Technology (access to superfast broadband >25mpbs and good mobile signal)	155 (37%)	20	21	52	38	24	490
Transport	188 (45%)	12	20	57	53	46	665

Table 46: Key Concerns

A Chart to Show the Combined Ratings of the Key Areas of Concern to Responding Parishes
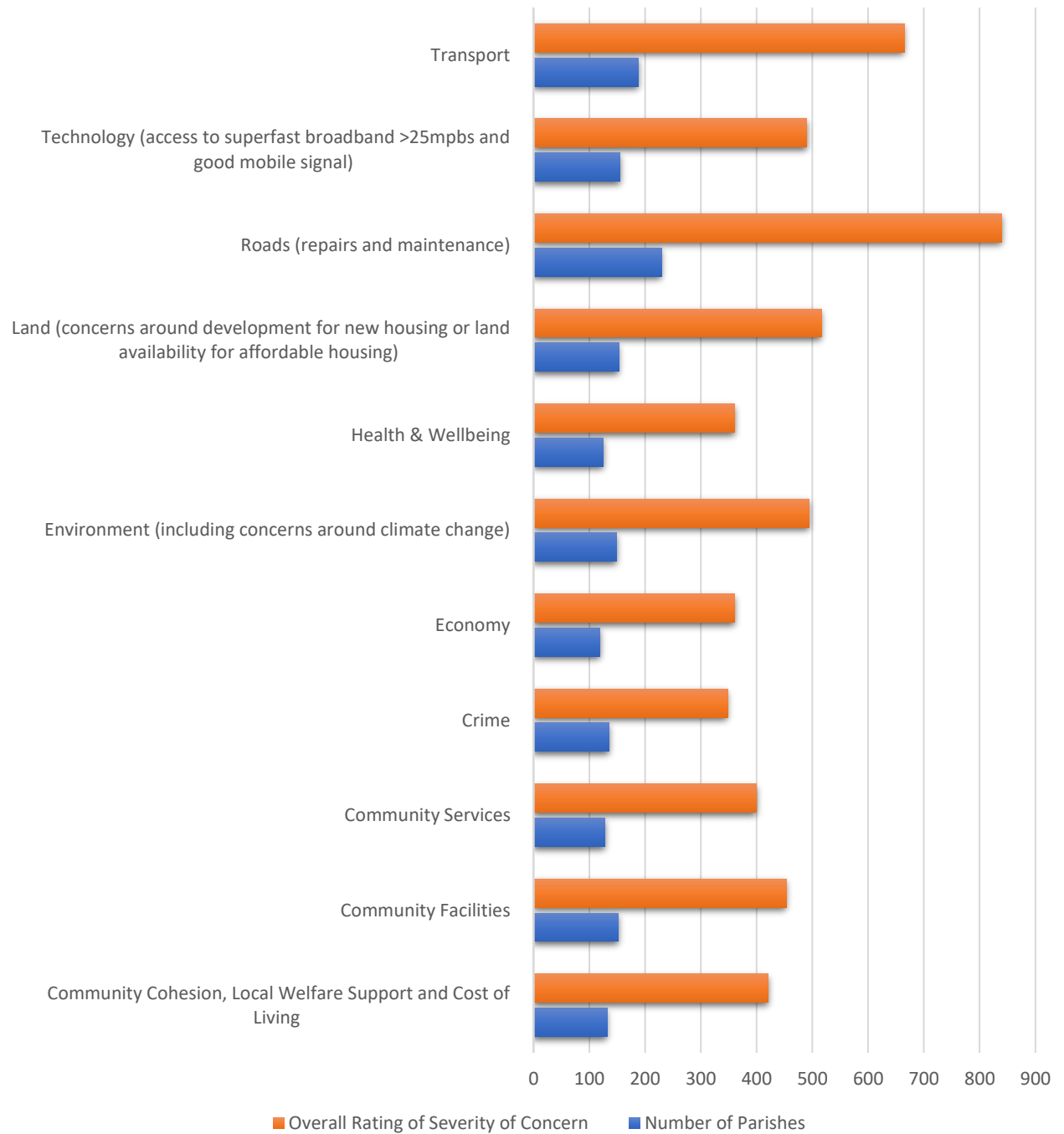
Figure 47: Areas of Concern and Severity of Concern
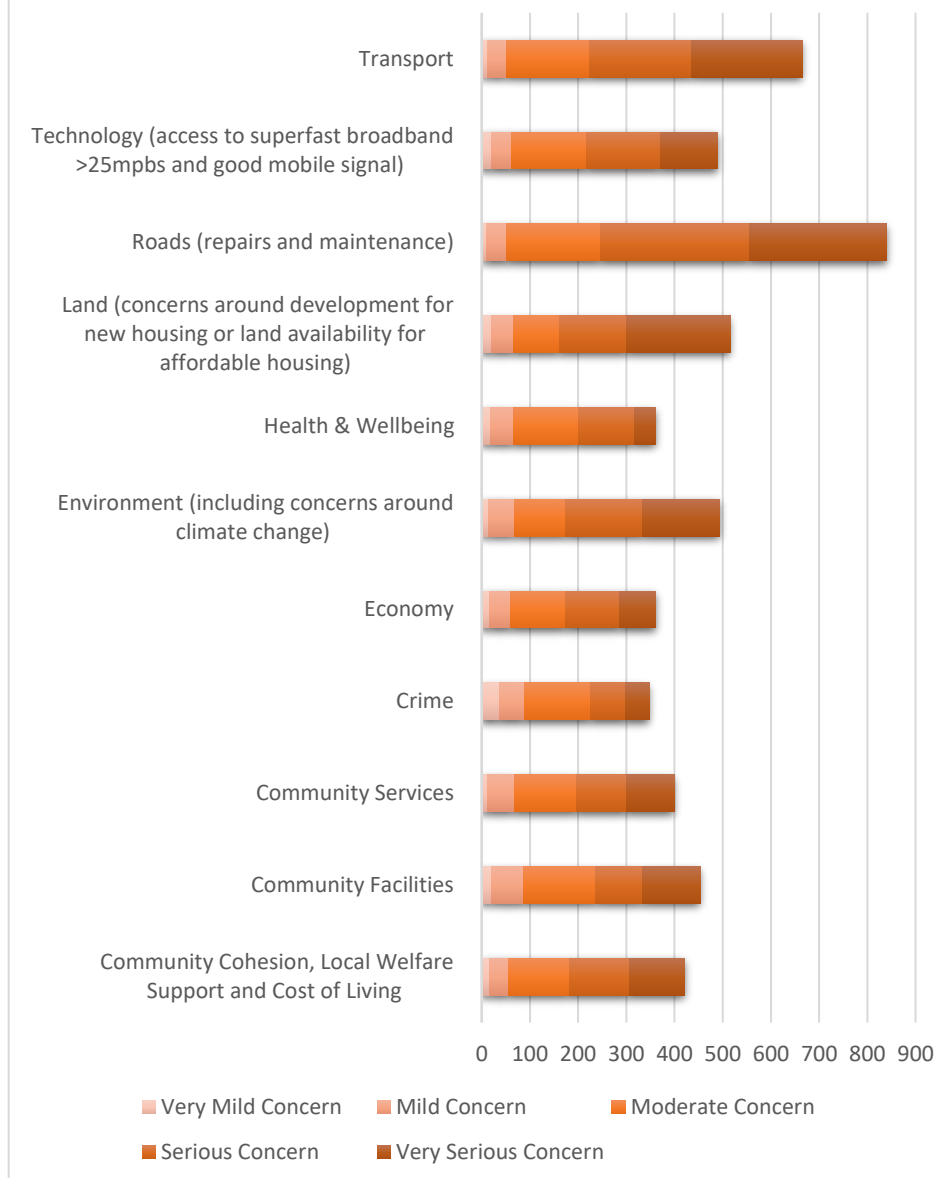
Figure 48: Ratings of Key Areas of Concern and their Severity

Of the 230 parishes (55%) that raised Roads (repairs and maintenance) as one of their areas of concern, 51 Parishes (12%) went on to specify their key concerns, and a chart summarising their responses can be seen below.

A Chart of the Comments respondents who specified their Key Areas of Concern around Roads (repairs and maintenance) made
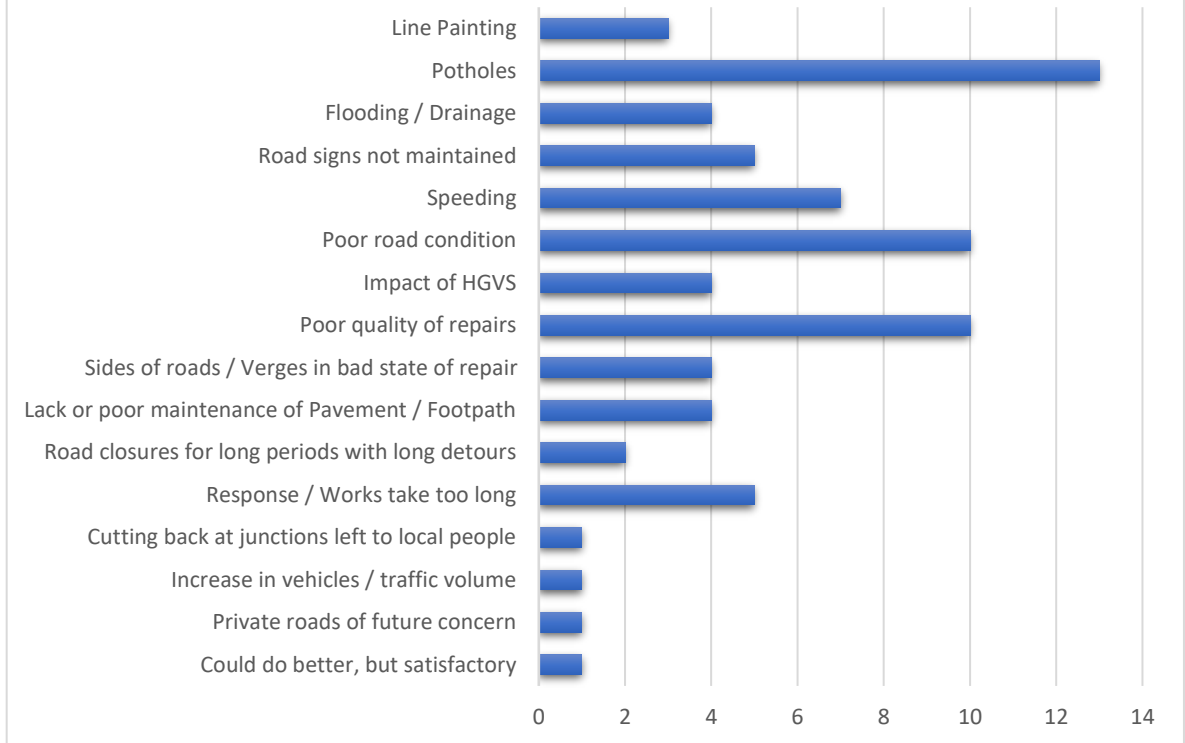
Figure 49: Comments around Roads (repairs and maintenance)

Of the 132 of parishes (32%) that raised Community Cohesion, Local Welfare Support and Cost of Living as one of their key areas of concern, 15 Parishes (4%) went on to specify their particular key concerns, which are listed below:

What are the most important issues in your community at present? Please write your Top Issues against each Key Concern comment box and then rate your answer to show how serious the concern is to the community:

Community Cohesion, Local Welfare Support and Cost of Living
- Current ongoing situation for many residents
- Cost of living
- Electricity prices and heating bills
- Ageing community on fixed income.
- Crippling taxes on the middle-class, out-of-control public spending, lunatic policies like Net Zero, constant government micro-management (and inevitable disaster) plus 'wokery' are destroying our great country.
- Cost of living is a concern to everyone, especially the elderly and families with young children.
- Church and PCC do some work in this area
- COST OF LIVING
- making community aware of what is available
- Community cohesion/engagement has fallen over the years and more so since Covid lockdowns and enforced isolation.
- A number of households are in dire need
- Issues for everyone?
- Cost of living and its effects on the most vulnerable. Parish Council investigating ways to assist
- Difficulty in sourcing volunteers
- Cost of living has to be of concern

Of the 152 of parishes (36%) that raised Community Facilities as one of their areas of concern, 36 Parishes (9%) specified their key concerns, which are displayed in Figure 50. As can be seen, the top-rated concerns were the village hall and other community facilities and the maintenance cost of their upkeep, renovation, and replacement. The second highest rated area of concern was around attracting volunteers, trustees, and general community involvement in supporting the community facilities, to keep them going.
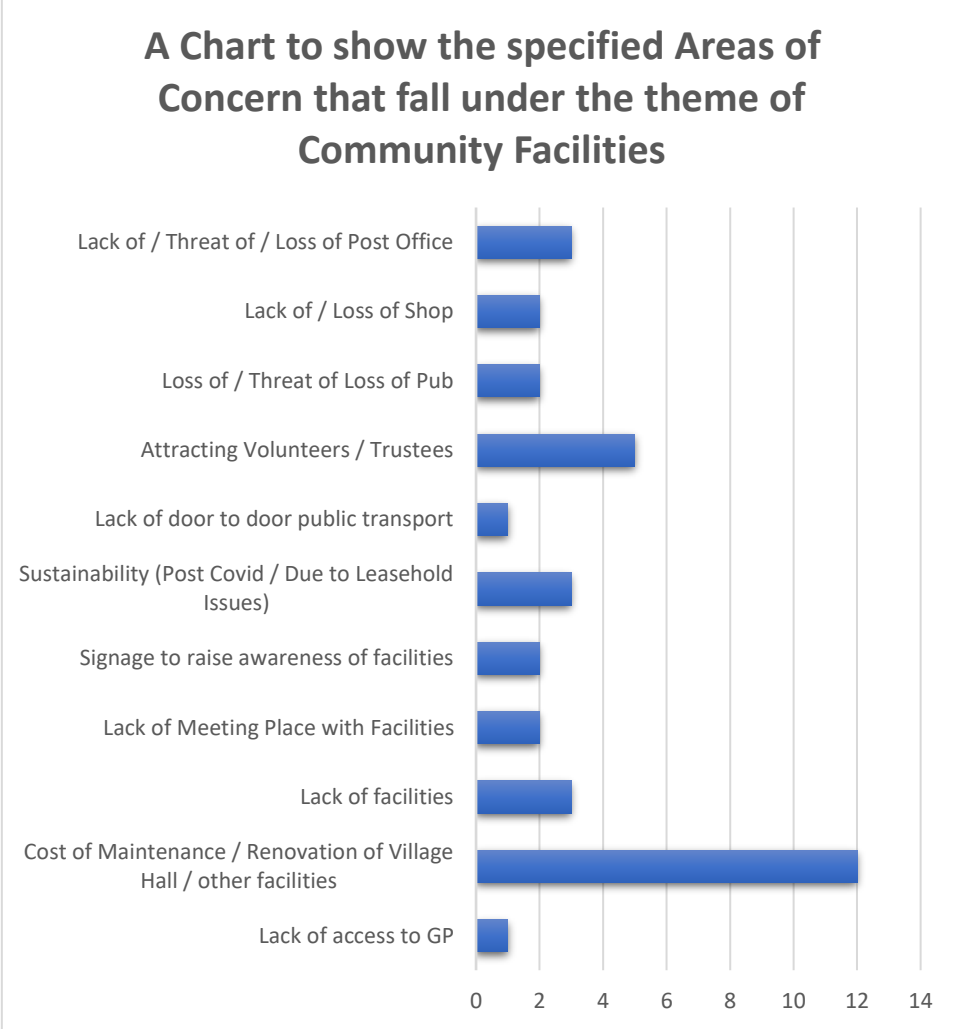
Figure 50: Areas of Concern: Community Facilities

128 parishes (31%) raised Community Services as one of their areas of concern, 16 Parishes (4%) specified their key concerns as listed below.

- No public transport
- Dog waste bins
- Bus service
- Public Transport Provision
- Lack of services to the village, e.g., curtailment of bus service to Thetford
- We can use facilities in neighbouring parish
- Core village limited facilities
- There are none that I am aware
- Making community aware of what is available
- General nationwide decline in standards of service.

- Maintenance Doctors Surgery
- Funding pressures for councils
- Shop closed some years ago. Community investigating staring one.
- Very used to not having any!
- More would be good!
- Difficulty of access to services for elderly

136 parishes (33%) raised Crime as one of their areas of concern, 19 Parishes (5%) specified their key concern:

- In a low crime area; when offences do occur, they are usually isolated
- Poor police response
- Lack of rural policing
- Anti-Social Behaviour and speeding concerns
- Local burglary
- Rural crime is a real issue.
- There has been recent vandalism in the village. The police are aware.
- Recent anti-social behaviour
- Increase in local crimes
- Reduction in Policing has led to increase in rural crime
- Rural crime including theft from outbuildings and oil tanks
- Police presence almost non-existent
- Many isolated elderly residents
- We are noticing small issues more
- Rare
- Lack of police
- Village policing does not happen
- Reduction of anti-social behaviour
- Low level anti-social behaviour. Lack of visible police presence

119 parishes (28%) raised the Economy as one of their areas of concern, 13 Parishes (3%) specified their key concerns:

- It goes without saying that the economy is in dire straits.
- Cost of living
- Impact of High Cost of Living
- Net zero and rampant socialism will bankrupt the country.
- Don't know how we can influence this.
- Current climate
- Rising cost of fuel in a rural community with minimal public transport facilities
- Poverty
- Shops closing
- fears that rising fuel prices may affect local transport business
- Will affect all of the above
- Big unknown
- Older generation will not ask for help

149 parishes (36%) that raised the Environment as one of their areas of concern, only 19 Parishes (5%) specified their key concerns:

- Flooding
- Lack of action by Environment Agency regarding silting of River Blyth
- The environment has never been cleaner or better looked after.
- Coastal erosion
- A concern for us all
- Pollution on A12
- Drainage
- Footpath erosion from illegal cycling
- Flooding issues
- River defences
- Flood history, now may be exacerbated by new build development
- Net Zero Leiston project
- Intensive farming
- Serious roadside litter problem (as with most roads anywhere in the region)
- More could be done
- We are in middle of forest of course we have concerns
- Dry conditions dangerous. Also, low lying land vulnerable to rising sea level
- Fly tipping
- Concerns over the effect of climate change and what can be done

125 parishes (30%) that raised Health and Wellbeing as one of their areas of concern, 15 Parishes (4%) specified their key concerns:

- An increase in social housing with a lack of facilities and services in a rural area with poor public transport links will be a challenge for people
- Services are reducing - elderly population - isolated
- No provision in village
- Hard to find a NHS Dentist or Doctor
- Loneliness
- Life expectancy is 80-83 years - What more could we ask for?
- Once again a concern for us all.
- Loneliness
- Making community aware of what is available
- Because of the cost-of-living crisis
- We intend setting up exercise classes
- Cost of living and its effects on the most vulnerable. Parish Council investigating ways to assist
- Concerns re potential longer waits for ambulances in such a rural location
- Travel for health services is a problem
- We are usually aware of villagers needing help

153 parishes (37%) that raised Land as one of their areas of concern, 29 Parishes (7%) specified their key concerns. The top-rated concerns were around new developments being built.

- No more new housing
- There is land but already too many houses built without the facilities to support a community in a rural setting
- hopefully neighbourhood plan will clarify this
- Chilton Woods is a huge development, and the properties are being constructed prior to planning approval being finalised
- New housing is exceeding the facilities available and there is no room to build extensions to facilities.
- This village is being totally over developed and residents' views ignored Where is the infrastructure? There appears to be little cohesion
- Less immigration = less housing demand
- Excessive development (housing)
- As Euston is an estate village no general concerns.
- Very limited scope but need homes to attract new people and use resultant CIL money. Classed as a hamlet with no development at present which means a dying hamlet
- Constant battle with Highways
- This is why Neighbourhood Plan going ahead
- Concerns about further developments
- River defences promised have been badly delayed
- We are not in favour of any developments
- very concerned to protect the community from further development following a very difficult planning application which resulted in the approval of an urban development in the middle of a rural village with flooding issues.
- take into consideration Laxfield is a village and do not want to end up with urban sprawl
- Some villagers are concerned about proposed new houses in Powney St. Flooding issues
- Too much new build housing stretched almost exclusively along the roadsides
- we would like "real" affordable housing not the pretend 80% of market value housing
- Not for housing, more concerns around Industrial/Intensive livestock production and anaerobic waste digesters
- Developing land for housing needs causes discord in the village.
- Proposed development of 2 sites thought by most to be excessive for the size of village
- Over-development and whether sites in the village will be selected for housing
- Some local individuals appear to have too much sway over which planning applications are supported or not with the district planners
- Over development of existing housing stock
- Only small number of new houses to find within the local policy
- Protecting small village status from large housing developments
- Waveney Local plan will increase the size of the Parish by 50% approx.

155 parishes (37%) that raised Technology as one of their areas of concern, 28 Parishes (7%) specified their key concerns.

- Some areas are good and others are poor
- Technology is patchy - broadband and mobile
- Generally good
- Very poor mobile coverage
- Mobile reception is poor in many areas
- Poor mobile signal in some places
- Fibre broadband
- Good mobile signal needed
- Mobile signals
- Already have fast broadband
- Excellent connectivity will be essential in the future and a great many of the older generation are not being catered for,
- For properties on outskirts
- Some areas poor mobile signal not all properties have 25mpbs
- Not available to the whole village
- The Parish is widely spread and speeds vary throughout
- Variable speeds in different aras of village
- To meet increasing demands for WFH
- Need to improve mobile phone coverage across whole parish
- Needing to install internet into the village Hall to upgrade PC meetings and general services
- Ageing infrastructure
- Mobile signal is poor
- Hopefully improving
- Very poor mobile phone signal
- Technology poor but low priority at this time
- Links between the green boxes and houses inadequate
- Possibly just adequate but could be much better
- Mobile signal is poor in some parts
- No optic fibre

188 parishes (45%) that raised Transport as one of their areas of concern, 50 Parishes (12%) specify their key concerns, which are displayed in Figure 51. As can be seen, the top-rated concerns were lack and inadequacy of current public transport and the need to increase the frequency of public transport services.
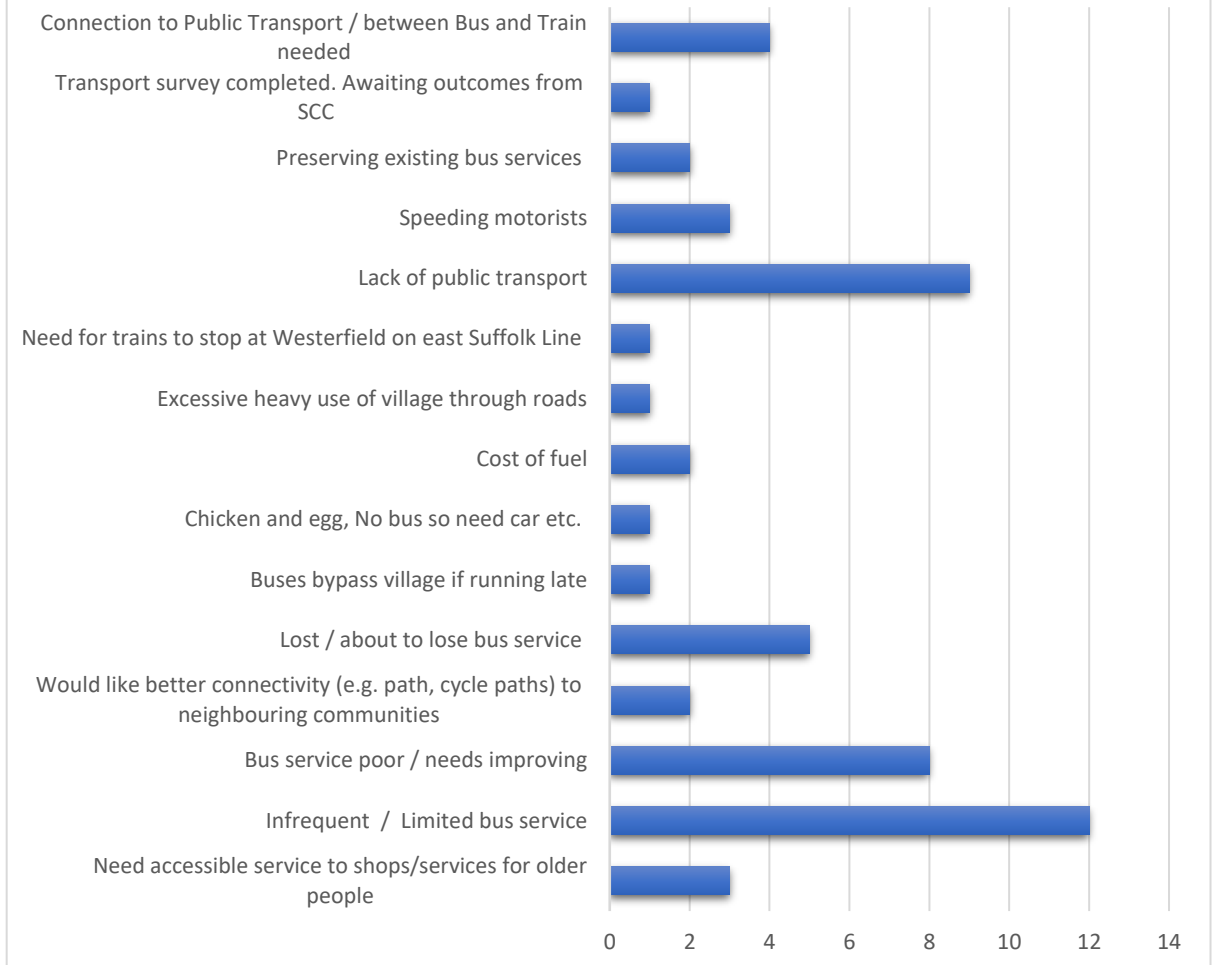
Figure 51: Areas of Concern: Transport

6. Comparisons

The main findings from respondents during this survey (2022) compared with the picture of services in 2008, 2012 and 2016 are in Table 47.

6.1 Changes in Services or Facilities

Service of Facility	2022	2015-16	2011-12	2008	Analysis
	No. of Parishes (%)[9]				
Parishes with Adult Classes in Literacy/ Numeracy and/or IT	3 (1%)	19 (5%)	103 (25%)	196 (48%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with Youth Organisations	31 (7%)	107 (25%)	95 (23%)	179 (44%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with Banking Facilities	97 (23%)	105 (25%)	127 (31%)	159 (39%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with a Public House	191 (46%)	209 (50%)	227 (55%)	247 (60%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with a scheduled bus service	168 (40%)	258 (61%)	282 (68%)	298 (73%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes undertaking community consultation	158 (38%)	198 (47%)	265 (64%)	257 (63%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with a Church or other faith building that is still in use	311 (74%)	339 (81%)	331 (80%)	332 (81%)	Decreased ⬇
Parishes with a Post Office or Mobile Post Office Service	110 (26%)	117 (28%)	100 (24%)	108 (26%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a General Store	106 (25%)	110 (26%)	110 (27%)	105 (26%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a Primary School	128 (31%)	137 (33%)	141 (34%)	128 (31%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a Secondary or High School	21 (5%)	21 (5%)	20 (5%)	13 (3%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a Doctor's Surgery	47 (11%)	56 (13%)	69 (17%)	50 (12%)	No Change ➡
Residential care homes /care facilities for older people	75 (18%)	85 (20%)	69 (17%)	74 (18%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a permanent Library	19 (5%)	25 (6%)	24 (6%)	23 (6%)	No Change ➡
Parishes which have a village hall or community building	276 (66%)	282 (67%)	269 (65%)	240 (58%)	No Change ➡
Parishes with a Police Station	7 (2%)	27 (6%)	34 (8%)	23 (6%)	Decreased ⬇
Broadband Quality Rating of Good or Excellent	99 (24%)	54 (13%)	58 (14%)	N/A	Increased ⬆
Parishes with affordable housing within them	117 (28%)	167 (40%)	183 (44%)	98 (24%)	Decreased ⬇

Table 47: Changes in Services or Facilities

---

[9] % of all rural parishes (population of less than 10,000) in Suffolk:- 2022-419 parishes, 2015-421 parishes, 2012-413 parishes, 2008-411 parishes

6.2 Parishes Top Rated Areas of Concern over Survey Periods

The 2015-16 and the 2022 Surveys asked questions in a slightly different way to the earlier years, giving Key Areas of Concern and asked Parishes to rate them in order of severity. Though the question has been asked differently, the top responses to the 2008, 2012 and 2016 survey are included in Table 48, and the key areas of concern remain as Roads and Transport, however, third top rated concern is now Land, followed by the Environment, moving Technology into fifth place in terms of severity of concern.

Area of Concern	2008	2012	Area of Concern	2016	2022	Details
Road Issues	21%	37%	Roads	82%	**24%**	The top Roads concern rated were the **Potholes**, **Condition of Roads, and Poor quality of repairs**
Community Facilities	37%	20%	Technology	56%	**21%**	**Broadband** and **Mobile Phone Coverage** remain key areas of concern
			Transport	66%	**24%**	**Transport** was the second highest rated area of concern for respondents, with the highest rated concerns being around **Bus Services** and their inadequacies.
			Community Facilities	53%	**20%**	The top area of concern was around the cost of maintenance, refurbishment or replacement of the **Village Hall, Community Centre, or Community Building**
Planning Concerns	17%	18%	Land	34%	**22%**	**Development** and **loss of open space and greenfield sites** was the top concern in the Land Section
Environme-ntal Issues	11%	10%	Environment	41%	**22%**	**Environmental** concerns varied from each of the responses
Crime	5%	9%	Crime	51%	**17%**	The greatest area of concern under the heading of Crime was **around anti-social behaviour and lack of police presence**
Community Issues	9%	6%	Community Cohesion and Welfare	37%	**21%**	The impact of **new developments**, ensuring "**community**" remains and the parish becoming a **dormitory village** were all raised as area of concern
			Health and Wellbeing	41%	**19%**	The greatest areas of concerns under this heading were the **ageing population** and the **pressure on GP services**
			Economy	32%	**20%**	**Economic** concerns varied across each of the responses
			Community Services	43%	**21%**	**Community Service** concerns varied across each of the responses

Table 48: Top Rated Areas of Concern over Survey Periods

7. Conclusions

Suffolk is a rural county and whilst much of the population live in its urban areas, there is still a large population that live, work, and play in the rural areas of Suffolk. This survey aimed to provide a snapshot in time of the services and facilities available within the rural parishes and smaller market towns throughout the county. Where possible, comparisons have also been made with previous surveys undertaken, to see if there are any trends in changes occurring over time in rural Suffolk.

This snapshot could not be provided without the dedicated help and support of Parish Councils and Town Councils, Parish Meetings and the many Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Organisations across the county who have answered the survey questions on behalf of their parish.

The period between the previous survey (2015) and the latest survey (2022) have shown several changes that have occurred but following a landscape of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Cost of Living crises, the approaching Climate Emergency and the need for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to be embraced and embedded into everyday lives of people, these changes should not be seen as a negative thing. Rural Suffolk is alive and a living its best life. Rural proofing of local government and statutory bodies efforts to spread depleting finances should also be embraced and embedded into their everyday considerations to ensure that rural Suffolk is treated in an equitable manner to urban Suffolk.

Overall, there remains a good spread of services and facilities across rural Suffolk. There are facilities that are showing a declining trend in rural Suffolk, such as Banking Facilities and Pubs, Adult Education Classes, plus a smaller decline has been seen in Youth Provision and Early Years and Childcare facilities in rural Suffolk parishes and towns.

Village Halls and Community Buildings continue to be an important central hub of activity for communities across the county, and these along with other community assets are essential in creating and maintaining resilient and sustainable communities in the future, serving as a base for activities such as lunch clubs, parent and toddlers, sports clubs, dance and fitness classes, brownies, cubs, guides and scouts, dog training, faith groups, photography classes, knit and natter groups and carpet bowls.

Rural areas have seen an increase in the availability of mobile shops and delivery services helping those that don't have access or ability to travel, and mobile library services offer the opportunity to access library services.

With most parishes (62%) having a parish newsletter or village magazine, there are mechanisms in place to communicate local news and what is going, which all helps to nurture community wellbeing. Technology has also improved with both Broadband and Mobile Phone coverage improving over time. This has been embraced by parishes who have taken on websites to promote their parish and activities within it, acting as a virtual social meeting place.

Despite closures and decline of some rural facilities and services, others seem to be developing and adapting to the changes and new demands being placed upon them to start up and survive. With the communities that live and work in

them, supported by the strong local communities and local volunteers breathing life into them, rural life continues to thrive in Suffolk throughout the county.