Hethersgill survey report

**Background to why the survey was undertaken**

COVID -19 has effected everyone in one way or other and for some the impact has been life changing. The Parish Council represents the people who live in the area and as such it felt important to try and gain an understanding of the general impact of the pandemic.

A survey was used to engage with parishioners to understand how the limited powers of the parish council can be best utilised to help, be that as guidance and support or through financial contributions to activities and schemes. It was also an opportunity to understand how working together a better community spirit could be developed.

**Return rate and demographics**

160 surveys were sent out to Hethersgill residents and 38 were returned completed, this is a return rate of nearly 24%. Of the 38 responses the information provided in the survey reflected information of about 65 residents.

With nearly a quarter of surveys returned the information provided is extremely helpful to understand the effects of the pandemic locally and also how the residents themselves would like to develop their community.

The vast majority of respondents were over 50 years of age and most people were aged between 60 and 80. Very few people were aged between 15 and 40 and fewer under the age of 15. This suggests that those of working ages or with young families were less likely to have responded to the survey.

**Detailing the effects of the pandemic.**

In response to the questions asking about the effects of COVID 19 and the lockdown. Eight of the returned surveys did not have any affects ticked.

Of the negative effects listed the most ticked was loss of earnings followed by loneliness, then a decline in physical health. Not everyone who responded to say they were lonely lived alone.

The only negative options **not ticked by anyone** who returned the survey were redundancy, online gambling increased and increased alcohol dependency.

Although the negative responses could be seen as worrying there was a far greater response to the positive effects seen by the community.

Many respondents said that they had an increased appreciation of nature, had discovered local walks and that their physical health improved.

Of the people who said they had been given the realisation of the need to slow down two thirds were in the age bracket of 50-60.

Home schooling was ticked by three respondents but this cannot be termed positive or negative.

**Accessing for help.**

When asked about if you would ask for help if you needed it in the future two respondents did not give an answer. Of those who did 58% said they would ask for help, 42% said they would not. **More than a third of respondents would not ask for help even though they were aware they needed it.**

Answering about whether or not people knew where to go for help three people did not answer. Of those who did 57% said they did and 43% said they did not. **More than 40% of respondents would not know where to get help if they needed it.**

**Access to support:**

On the questions asking about the support that had been accessed 14 people did not give an answer.

Of those who did most people had benefitted from having their shopping delivered, their prescriptions picked up or financial help from the government. A small number of people had accessed mental wellbeing apps.

The even smaller numbers of people who accessed home schooling support is reflective of those who responded rather than how those in the community with school aged children accessed support.

**Appetite for events and activities:**

82% of respondents gave at least one answer to the question relating to the social events that they would be interested in if they were available in the village (seven people gave no answer). Most suggestions were very popular and the only suggestion that was not ticked by anyone was the fishing club.

Of those who answered, nearly two thirds (61%) of all respondents said they would like a bus route to Carlisle. More than half (52%) said they would be interested in a cinema night and more than a third were interested in exercise classes (42%) or a village fete (39%).

A regular coffee morning and a mobile shop were each a choice of nearly a third. A book club and an understanding local walks was each of interest to around a quarter of those who chose to answer, closely followed by a singing club (22.5%), bus trip 19%, introduction to local businesses 19%, regular church service 13%. A mobile library and a storytelling evening, village competitions and a play park was each a choice of around 10% of those who answered.

The question regarding exercise asked if there was anything specific that respondents would like to see and the overwhelming choice given was yoga although pilates, zumba and aerobics was also suggested as well as folk dancing and dance classes.

Other suggestions for what the community would like to see in Hethersgill were:

* An adult exercise park
* Walking groups
* For the Hall to be used for Theatres or plays
* A choral group or anything musical / jamming session
* Cycling club
* Art club
* The hall to be used for local exhibitions / craft / art.
* Community garden to share / exchange ideas and produce
* Lunch club
* Table tennis / badminton
* Village projects like scarecrow
* Garden trails in the summer – we met several friends that way when we first arrived in Hethersgill.
* Gardeners question time (with glass of wine)
* Quiz evenings.

On the question asking about interest in educational classes 15 people did not answer the question. Of those who did the most popular class people were interested in was art (57%). Following this was ad hoc classes (the example given was making Christmas decorations) and craft classes (both 48%). Cookery and computing were the choice of 39% of respondents, flower arranging, languages, wine tasting, and cookery were all ticked by around a third of respondents.

Other suggestions of educational classes were:

* Financial planning,
* Setting up websites and Instagram,
* Awareness training.
* Gardening
* Music

Interest in educational talks were not as popular with half of the respondents not answering the question. Of those that did local history was of interest to just over 84% of people, foods from the hedgerows interested nearly 60%. Educational talks from the emergency services and healthy eating were of interest to nearly a third of those who provided an answer. An educational talk regarding mental wellbeing was a choice of nearly a quarter of people and how to improve your sleep just over 20%. Financial planning was a suggestion of a topic for an educational talk.

Only one person did not answer the final questions about knowing any of the parish councillors, following us on Facebook or visiting the website.

67% of people knew at least one parish councillor, 67% did not follow the parish Facebook page and 62% had never visited the parish website.

**The free comments provided were:**

**More details about the effect of COVID / lockdown:**

* We have both been working from home and have been working longer hours – this has affected our mental wellbeing particularly now that the evenings are drawing in.
* Miss the Thursday bus trip
* Discovered the pleasure of bike rides again. Gave me the opportunity to reappraise what I want from life and do some planning accordingly
* As key workers we received no benefits or support financially, yet our savings and investments have taken a sever bashing, but the government isn’t interested in us. Pension fund fell 30%! Same old same old, you get penalised for saving and the actions of people who don’t’ care about anyone but themselves.
* Been a total disaster from day one and handled badly from the government.
* Walking locally it was good to see people you had only previously seen driving past in their car.

**What would have helped you and / or your household during lockdown?**

* We are fortunate not to have needed additional support during lockdown as we are both fit and healthy.
* Access to internet and mobile signal
* More interaction with the outside world and my local community
* Easier access to online shopping - we were eventually provided a priority slot. Simpler instructions from central government
* For the government to have got their finger out and have got it sorted.
* Being able to have family visits
* Better internet connection. Easier access to online supermarket delivery – only option Asda. Tesco and Sainsbury’s don’t come into our postcode.
* I don’t feel we needed any help other than the local schools staying open. Difficult looking after the kids and school work with living on a farm while one parent also working as a nurse.
* Everything was ok. Could get out for shopping etc.
* A bus service
* Food deliveries during a period of self-isolation with suspected COVID-19. Supermarket deliveries were booked up months in advance.

**What kind of thing would help you now?**

* We feel very fortunate as we really don’t need any support.
* Access to internet and mobile signal
* Community events
* No help needed at the moment
* I am comfortable with things right now. I am conscious that living remotely and on my on has potential repercussions but I am easy with that. The crunch would come should I need help but I believe I have a network of friends who can ese the situation.
* Offence under the highways act – Cattle manure and foul smelling grey matter on our roads. (Details shared regarding concerns about the behaviours of a specific farm).
* To get back to normal as quickly as possible
* Don’t know
* Helping others through prescription collection, shopping helped us feel we were contributing in a positive way within the community and as a result kept our mental wellbeing high. We also became aware how many people in the parish wudl appreciate more contact – an informed friend.
* Sorry a major problem we had was our internet is very poor. A lot of the school work was done online. We really struggled as the connection is so poor and we kept getting cut off when speaking to the teachers. We have spoken to internet provider who say our strength is good so down to our line. They say our line is poor and it is down to the parish council to look at this.
* As single householder if track and trace isolation was necessary would have to rely on friends / family for shopping etc.
* A bus service
* The pub staying open
* A holiday

**If lockdown returns what would help you the most?**

* knowing what help / facilities are available for older people
* Internet connection, phones, social media.
* Access to outdoor spaces is really beneficial – we have enjoyed walks about the parish during lockdown.
* Home shopping delivered
* Things to occupy my mind
* Continues access to online shopping. Access to dental services
* List of contacts for services
* People obeying the lockdown rules
* Dry weather so we can get out and about / gardening
* Shopping delivered
* School staying open. Better internet connection I have spoken to a lot of people in the area who have the same problem.
* Being able to help others within the parish and local area. Eg Meal drop offs, prescription collections. Being able to get out on walks, see people.
* A bus service
* Humans are social animals. We need to find a way to remain connected such as socially distances gatherings at the village hall.

**What were you most worried about during lockdown?**

* Fearful of going out
* Health – contracting the virus
* The alone ness and loneliness
* Not being able to see family
* Business
* Catching the virus and the mental wellbeing of others.
* Not getting medical help required
* Catching COVID, financial worries
* Catching the virus. Isolation from family (live in the south). Contact from people who were not adhering to the regulations.
* More prolonger uncertainties
* Loneliness
* The washing machine breaking down, its 20 years old, apart from that I was very happy.
* My parents in their 80s
* Financial situation – possible job losses
* The extent to which ignorant selfish people disregarded the COVID safety requirements with no regard for the consequences, which we are now seeing in the second wave. These same people – mainly the under 35s – now expect the government to give them continually financial support, even though they have largely caused the second wave, because they cannot go to the pub and people’s houses etc.
* If we were going to get it
* Getting ill with it as I live on my own
* Becoming socially isolated
* Missing contact with friends and family
* Family friends and staying well
* Keeping my family safe
* Missed out on visiting people
* Catching it or giving it to someone
* Ignorance
* Not being able to spend time with family and friends. Not being able to walk in the forests.
* Not being able to support other family members
* Health

**Other comments you would like to share**

* No fibre broadband we have problems with BB from time to time.
* If walking your dog around blocks or past houses please either pick up or flick your dog’s business under the hedge off the verge as if you have to stand out the way of passing cars it isn’t very pleasant!! With autumn leaves it is difficult to see. Many thanks.
* We need to encourage a greater village spirit and more interaction between parishes. With a population that is small and spread out, combining parishes is necessary to prevent them disappearing. Encouraging young families so that the parish doesn’t die along with the schools. Local councils need to be made to understand that this is important for the life of the area.
* We do have friends of our age who have struggled because they cant use the internet, nor do they have transport. The community drivers had to stop because of COVID. So shopping and transport were their main problems. So far we have been able to manage as we’re both able to drive and use the internet.
* 19th century history of the area. Ancient woodland and the hedgerow – the original divisions of the fields, the farming community of that time. Mushrooms- edible? The wildlife and flowers. Understanding domestic animals. (The assumptions is that these are ideas of educational talks).
* I appreciate for some that COVID has been frightening and indeed being locked down has fed that fear of things like going shopping etc. I am privileged to be living in the countryside where I can be outside unlike many who are confined in small houses flats etc. Kirklinton being a diverse area may mean some are lonely etc. I would be happy to help anybody should it be required.
* Our council tax bill is extortionate for the level of services we get. No police presence, no street lights, no bus service, no local amenities (nearest is 9 miles – Brampton / Carlisle), roads full of pot holes. All we get are our bins emptied. We are subsidising the people in Carlisle who also get all the benefits.
* Could a review of the parish notice boards be made? Information regarding who you need to contact if you need to post a notice eg SHINE. What seems to happen is that random notices are pinned on, on top of council meeting minutes.
* I may be able to run some basic bicycle maintenance classes next spring. There must be lots of people with skills and experiences that could be shared through educational talks , practical classes etc.