

## Contents

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<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
1. Introduction: The Vital Villages Initiative	5
2. The Place	6
3. The People	7
4. Housing	14
5. Medical Services within the Parish	17
6. Policing, Crime and Safety	19
7. Education and Learning	23
8. The Economy, Employment and Business	26
9. Community Facilities	30
10. Recycling	33
11. The Community	34
12. Transport	36
13. Neighbours	44
14. Retail and Leisure	45
15. The Environment and Urban Design	50
16. Governance	52
17. Summary of Planning Issues affecting the Parish	53
18. Summary of Main Issues Affecting the Parish	57

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## Executive Summary

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Parish Plans are part of the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' Scheme, and are designed to highlight important issues relating to the community and by doing so produce an action plan for the future. A wide variety of local people have been involved in the formulation of this plan.

A key element of the Parish Plan is a questionnaire survey of residents in the Parish, which was completed in 2004. The questionnaire was distributed to all households in the Parish, and 472 households responded. The survey helped to highlight the main problems affecting the Parish, and the results of the survey are reflected throughout the various sections of the Parish Plan.

The Parish of Borough Green is based around the village of Borough Green and it is located in the Tonbridge and Malling District of West Kent. Borough Green has a strong community spirit and is a very popular village as a result of the local amenities and proximity to transport links. In turn these have created significant pressure on open space and other facilities. To capitalise on its excellent attributes, this plan has been prepared to set out a vision for the future.

The population of Borough Green in mid-1998 was 3,400 people. At 216 hectares, the Parish is the smallest Parish not only in Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's area, but also in Kent. The density of population per hectare is 16.2, which also makes it the most densely populated Parish. In comparison, Wrotham has a density of 1.3 people per hectare.

Borough Green suffers from a high level of traffic congestion through the village. A planned by-pass is designed to eradicate this traffic from the village centre but funding is not a priority for Kent County Council. The by-pass is particularly important to Borough Green because of the nature of the heavy industry that takes place on its outskirts.

The bypass has been identified by many residents as the single biggest way in which the environment in the village can be improved, and was supported by a massive 83% of the respondents to the questionnaire survey. A plan by local manufacturer H+H Celcon who were interested in becoming a partner in the construction of the by-pass as the benefits for the operation of their business would be considerable. This would involve a second factory on their site, but a planning application was later withdrawn.

The overall level of crime in Tonbridge and Malling has reduced since 1998 by 4% according to the 'Tonbridge & Malling Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership: Strategy 2002-2005'. Whilst the borough is deemed a relatively low crime area, the Strategy identified some areas that are becoming of increasing public concern such as: anti-social behaviour, theft from motor vehicles, criminal damage, drugs/alcohol abuse and youth offending. Over three-quarters of respondents to the questionnaire survey believe that there is an insufficient police presence in Borough Green, and only 11% stated that police presence is sufficient. In addition to normal policing, Borough Green benefits from having a Rural Community Warden, who has become closely involved in many elements of village life.

Borough Green Primary School is situated in the heart of the village. Many of the children who attend live within the Parish of Borough Green, although significant numbers travel greater

distances. There are perennial traffic congestion problems associated with the 'school run'. This is exacerbated, as entry to the school is via two dead ends and this had led to complaints from nearby residents.

Wrotham School is the main source of secondary education for Borough Green, and is situated just over the Parish border in Wrotham. It draws pupils from other areas, including those from as far afield as Meopham, Ditton, New Ash Green and Otford. There is heavy traffic congestion as parents drop off and collect children by car, aggravated by the addition of the Grange Park School. It is believed that the proposed by-pass would ease this congestion.

Borough Green has a strong employment base that provides around 1,300 jobs. Businesses in the village generally see it as a good location due to the buoyant local economy and good transport links. There are several major employers, including H+H Celcon, and A-Z Geographers. Borough Green is also home and surrounded by several quarries, sandpits and landfill sites.

A number of community facilities can be found in and around Borough Green. These include a recreation ground, a Village Hall, and Potters Mede, which comprised a simple meeting hall and extensive grounds, but is undergoing a complete rebuild after fire damage. Potters Mede car park is used heavily by those collecting children from the secondary school across the road, an activity which is becoming a traffic hazard due to a lack of supervision. A youth drop-in centre called 'The Joint' operated 3 nights per week in what was once intended to be a caretaker flat in the Village Hall, but this has recently been reopened as a conventional youth club.

In addition, Basted Mill Public Open Space comprises less formal open space with a greater emphasis on wildlife and nature but is currently under-utilised, although raising local awareness of this facility would increase the number of people using it.

The village library is an important local amenity, as the next closest libraries are West Malling, Larkfield or Sevenoaks. The Head Librarian reports that the library is popular and well used particularly because of new computers.

The Village benefits from a Dental Practice which has around 8,000 patients registered. The practice has four dentists, three of whom are private and one of whom is still NHS. However, the NHS dentist has stopped taking on new patients due to a surge in demand. The medical centre on Quarry Hill Road has 13,000 patients registered and six GPs, and serves a wide area from Tonbridge to Kemsing and West Malling. The closest hospital is in Maidstone.

Overall, the residents' questionnaire highlighted several negative aspects to living in Borough Green. By far the biggest concern was the speed and volume of traffic through the village. Poor public transport on Sundays, bored teenagers and 'yob' culture were also key concerns. However, the questionnaire also highlighted the many positive aspects to living in the Village. Three aspects stood out as being particularly good; friendliness and community spirit; good overall public transport and access to the road network; and a good range of shops.

The major issue mentioned by the majority of people contacted is the rising volume of traffic through Borough Green's small streets. This is a particular problem given the nature of the traffic generated by local business. The proposed bypass is regarded as the best way of improving the quality of life in the village.

Linked to this is a similar growth in car parking problems, due principally to commuters parking their cars near to the station, which fills not only the station car park but also the car parks in the centre of the village. This prevents them from being used by shoppers and those travelling to use the many local services, who are also creating a large demand for car parking.

A Tonbridge & Malling Parking survey recently instituted a Residents Parking scheme in the centre of the village which has had a measure of success, and may be extended in the future. The Village Hall has introduced a 3 hour limit which has been extremely successful in freeing up short term parking for shoppers.

The rise in house prices in recent years is pushing first time buyers out of the market, with young people potentially not able to afford to buy a house in the village where they grew up. It is generally the older and more affluent people who are able to afford property in the village, creating an ageing population. This has knock-on affects for the types of services that will be demanded and even the viability of the primary school. There is a problem caused by social housing points policies allocating most new housing to families from outside the community, with young families being forced out of their community to find housing. This dislocation of families has a major impact on the stability of many rural communities. However, it must be ensured that affordable housing is suitable for families and have a large element of key sector worker housing or housing association properties.

Borough Green has often been criticised as an unattractive village. The proposed bypass would help to eradicate noise and pollution, as well as making walking around the village easier, safer and more pleasant. Other smaller measures, such as street furniture, lighting, planting and clear signage, would also contribute to the character of the village and increase the feeling of safety. **Any** new developments should be designed to ensure that they both 'fit into' and actively enhance the built environment.

## MAJOR ISSUES AFFECTING THE VILLAGE

### Isles Quarry West

In 2007 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's Local Development Framework identified Borough Green as a Rural Service Centre, removed Greenbelt Protection from Isles Quarry West, and allocated the land for 200+ houses. This caused major concerns to the public, who called a Parish Poll in May 2008, where 85% of 589 electors said no to the development. This sentiment has been repeated at Public Meetings and Developer Exhibitions. Efforts are still ongoing to have the policy revisited.

### Character Area Appraisal

The appraisal is also part of the Local Development Framework, and was carried out on behalf of TMBC and will be imposed after Public Consultation. There is a very interesting section in the CAA that bears repeating here:

#### “3.3 Managing Development and the Environment DPD – April 2010

The DPD states that the diverse character of Borough Green should be protected and enhanced for its own sake as it is important for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough. It is important that the unique characteristics of the area are identified and protected and where practicable enhanced in line with Core Policy CP24 having regard to the Character Area Appraisals SPD in order to strengthen this diversity rather than eroding its character and local distinctiveness.

Policy SQ1 requires proposals for development to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the local character areas as defined in the Character Area Appraisals SPD.

*All new development should protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance:*

*(a) the character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity;*

*(b) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views...”*

### ESSO SITE

The Esso site on the A25 has had an initial application by Tesco turned down on environmental grounds, but there is evidence that the site will generate significant traffic problems, and a high level of impact on the viability of our retail centre.

### RAILFREIGHT TERMINAL

Developers acting for Cemex and Borough Green Sandpits have recently proposed a 265 acre intermodal railfreight and aggregate terminal between Borough Green, Platt and the M26. The recent changes in Government Strategy, and the demise of the South East Plan have resulted in the proposal losing its justification for Greenbelt development, but developers insist the project is still live.

### BOROUGH GREEN & PLATT A25/A227 BYPASS.

Since the discovery at the H+H Celcon Factory Inquiry that the planning permission for the Bypass had been allowed to lapse in the mid 90s, KCC had pledged to fund a new application. However, it has been clear that neither KCC nor the Government have the funds to build the

Bypass, and private developers would require mass housing to pay the cost, currently at £18M, the consensus is that the price to be paid by Borough Green outweighs any benefit in traffic reduction, and could actually lead to an increase in local traffic from new housing.

## M25 JUNCTION 5 SLIPROADS

The only realistic alternative to the Bypass for traffic reduction is for the M26, M25 and A21 to be fully interconnected at Sevenoaks, and Borough Green has been leading a growing campaign to persuade the Highways Agency to include the sliproads in its current planned widening of the M25.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is constant pressure on local house prices and availability due to the attraction of Borough Green to commuters. This has meant that despite considerable housing development in recent years, there is a static queue of some 80 plus local families awaiting housing. As housing becomes available it is taken by commuters, or by housing association tenants from outside the community. The current thinking by authorities is to keep building, but without proper controls on housing allocation, the lack of housing for local people will not be resolved.

## SOCIAL HOUSING COMPARISON CHART BY VILLAGE

Parish	Electors	Russet Properties	Ratio
E Malling	3481	665	5.23
Mereworth	784	135	5.81
Wrotham	1357	218	6.22
W Malling	2038	178	11.45
Hadlow	2982	259	11.51
Ryarsh	508	42	12.10
Snodland	7392	590	12.53
Burham	1005	77	13.05
Borough Green	2764	210	13.16
Eccles	1276	94	13.57
E Peckham	2598	160	16.24
Ditton	3681	194	18.97
Larkfield	6722	316	21.27
Shipbourne	380	17	22.35
Offham	626	25	25.04
Leybourne	2429	88	27.60
Birling	328	11	29.82
Hildenborough	3773	114	33.10
Wateringbury	1565	45	34.78
Aylesford	3850	87	44.25
Plaxtol	846	15	56.40
Stansted	389	6	64.83
Ightham	1556	21	74.10
Addington	628	7	89.71
Trottscliffe	406	4	101.50
Platt	1278	12	106.50
W Peckham	264	2	132.00

Source Russet Homes/ T&MBC

This comparison is interesting in that it shows that Borough Green and our neighbours Wrotham are already in the top ten across the borough for the quantity of social housing compared to size. This comparison should be read in conjunction with the Village Population Densities (page 9) where Borough Green is the most densely populated village in Kent. NB These figures do not include the homes in Borough Green operated by Moat and West Kent Housing

## 1. Introduction

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### The Vital Villages Initiative

- 1.1 Parish Plans were part of the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' Scheme. Borough Green Parish Council has been awarded a grant in order to help it produce a Parish Plan setting out the main issues affecting the village, and the development of an appropriate vision in order to ensure the future of the village. The concept of the Parish Plan was launched in 2000 in the Government's Rural White Paper, 'Our Countryside - The Future'. The paper states Parish plans should:

*"...set out a vision of what is important, how new development can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet... map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard its future... identify key facilities and services, set out problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved."*

- 1.2 The Parish Plan is designed to highlight important issues relating to the community and by doing so produce an action plan for its future. This will form the next phase of the scheme. Issues covered can span social, environmental and economic considerations; anything important to the character and future of the Parish.
- 1.3 This report forms the Action Plan for Borough Green, drawing out the key issues currently affecting Borough Green. There are many issues that give a village its distinctive character. This can include things we cherish and want to protect but also things that make the village less desirable and will want to remedy. This Action Plan is aimed at identifying these issues to ensure that the best future for the village can be found.
- 1.4 A key element of the data collection was the Residents' Questionnaire, which was completed in 2004, the results of which are reflected throughout the various sections of the report.
- 1.5 The questionnaire was distributed to all households in the Parish via The Voice. The Parish Council wishes to record its thanks to the team of volunteers who publish and distribute The Voice for their assistance and to the services and retailers that agreed to become collection points. The response rate was excellent, as 472 households responded, incorporating 1,012 residents. Much of the background work, collecting information on the Parish was undertaken by Jodie Brooks of GVA Grimley, Chartered Surveyors, Stratton Street, London.

- 1.6 A Parish Plan is a vital tool for a community to ensure that any development meets the wishes and needs of the people of the Parish, and can be an essential piece of evidence for future Planning Hearings.

## 2. The Place

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- 2.1 The Parish of Borough Green is based around the village of Borough Green and is located in the Tonbridge and Malling District of West Kent. The Parish is relatively small, having been created in the 1930s from land released by the three surrounding parishes. Despite this it has become heavily populated and has a wealth of local services and businesses, and because it straddles the Greensand Ridge it is particularly notable for its sand quarries. It has now become established as the key service centre for nearby smaller villages, being designated as a Rural Local Centre.
- 2.2 The village is well-served by the three places of worship – Church of the Good Shepherd in Quarry Hill Road, Baptist Chapel in the High Street and St Joseph’s in Western Road.
- 2.3 The village suffers from a steady erosion of once adequate transport links as it is situated near the junctions of the M20, M26, A25 and A20 and on the junction of the A25 and A227, midway between Sevenoaks and Maidstone. The train station also provides a link to central London.
- 2.4.1 Borough Green has a strong community spirit and good local services. This has created significant pressure on open space and other facilities. This plan will attempt to address these deficiencies.
- 2.5 At 216 hectares, the Parish of Borough Green is the smallest Parish in not only Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council’s area, but also in Kent. The density of population per hectare is 16.2, which also makes it the most densely populated Parish in Kent. In comparison, Wrotham has a density of 1.3 people per hectare.

### POPULATION DENSITY per HECTARE

<b>Borough Green</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>Wrotham</b>	<b>1.32</b>
<b>Leybourne</b>	<b>11.81</b>	<b>Birling</b>	<b>0.62</b>
<b>E Malling Larkfield</b>	<b>11.23</b>	<b>Shipbourne</b>	<b>0.51</b>
<b>Ditton</b>	<b>10.80</b>	<b>W.Peckham</b>	<b>0.51</b>
<b>Snodland</b>	<b>10.60</b>	<b>Ton &amp; Malling average</b>	<b>4.48</b>

Source KCC 2001 Census

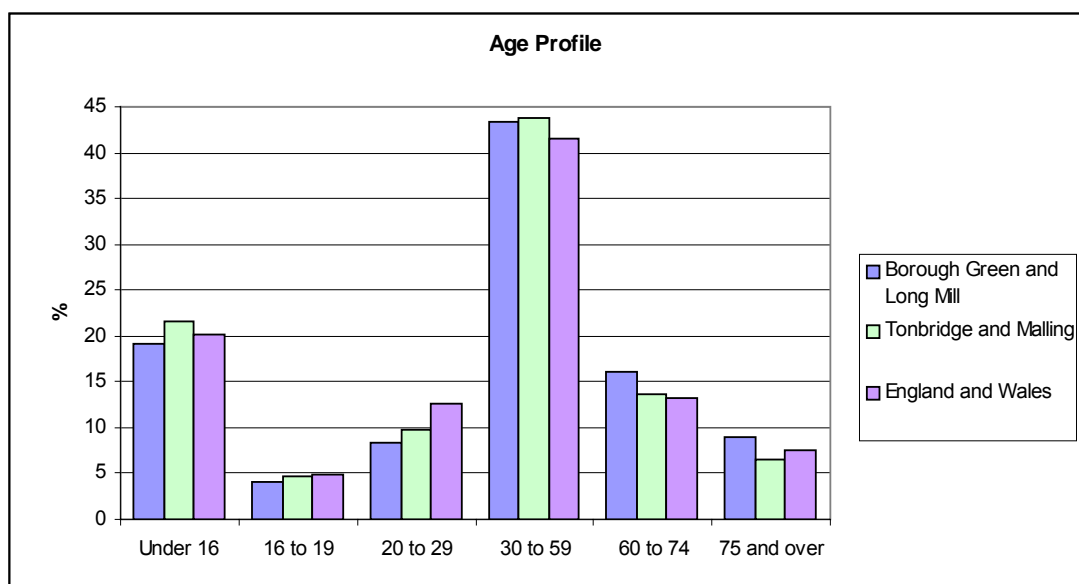
### 3. The People

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3.1 The following information is based upon the 2001 census (unless stated otherwise) for the TN15 postcode area and the Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire completed in 2004.

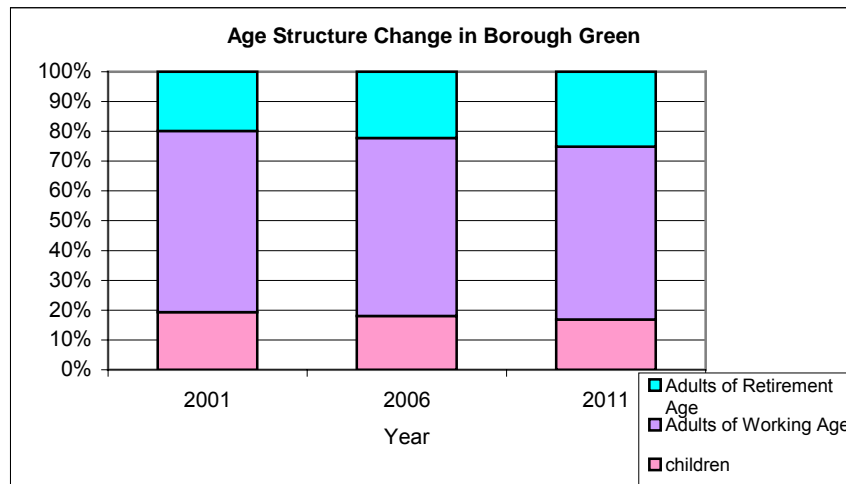
#### Age Profile

3.2 The population of Borough Green in mid-1998 was 3,400 people, which accounts for 3% of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Authority.



Source: 2001 Census, ONS

3.3 The above graph demonstrates that the Parish has a relatively mature local population with 25% of the local inhabitants aged over 60 years compared to the Tonbridge and Malling average of 20%. Compared to statistics for the whole country, the Parish has a much lower percentage of people under the age of 30, especially in the 20-29 year age bracket. There is a much greater than average proportion of 60-74 year olds compared to the national average. This trend is predicted to increase as shown in the following graph:

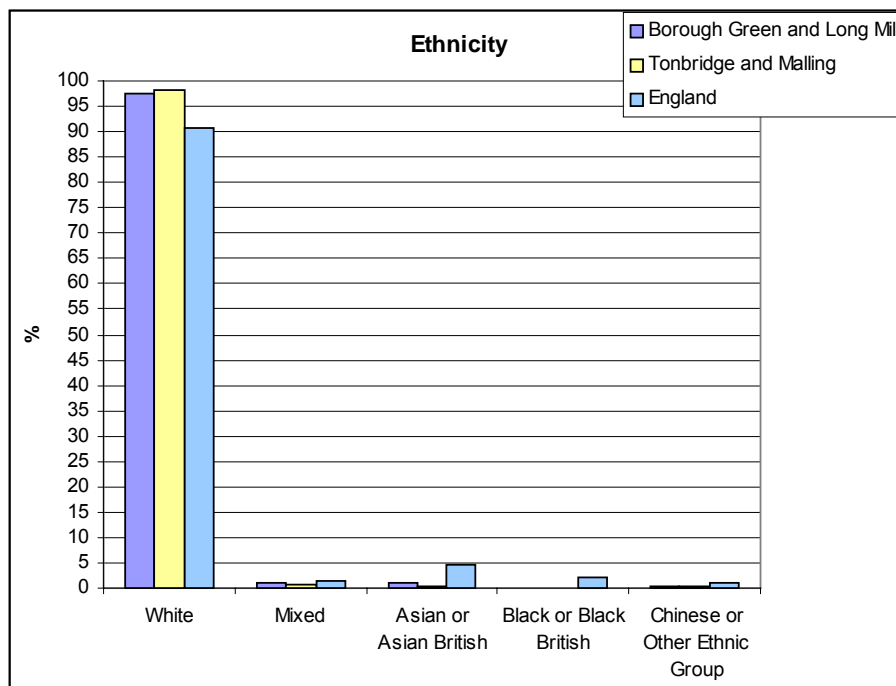


Source: Experian

3.4 Despite the fact that in the period between 2001 and 2011 the population is forecast by Experian to stay relatively constant, the number of children in the area is predicted to decrease, while the number of adults at retirement age is set to see an increase. This will have an impact on the types of services demanded, and the character of the village. It may also have a knock-on effect on the types of properties demanded and will either be the cause of, or compound the fact that younger people will continue to be priced out of the housing market by more affluent, older people.

**Gender and Ethnicity**

3.5 The local population is home to fractionally more males than females, and has a low proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds as shown in the graph below:

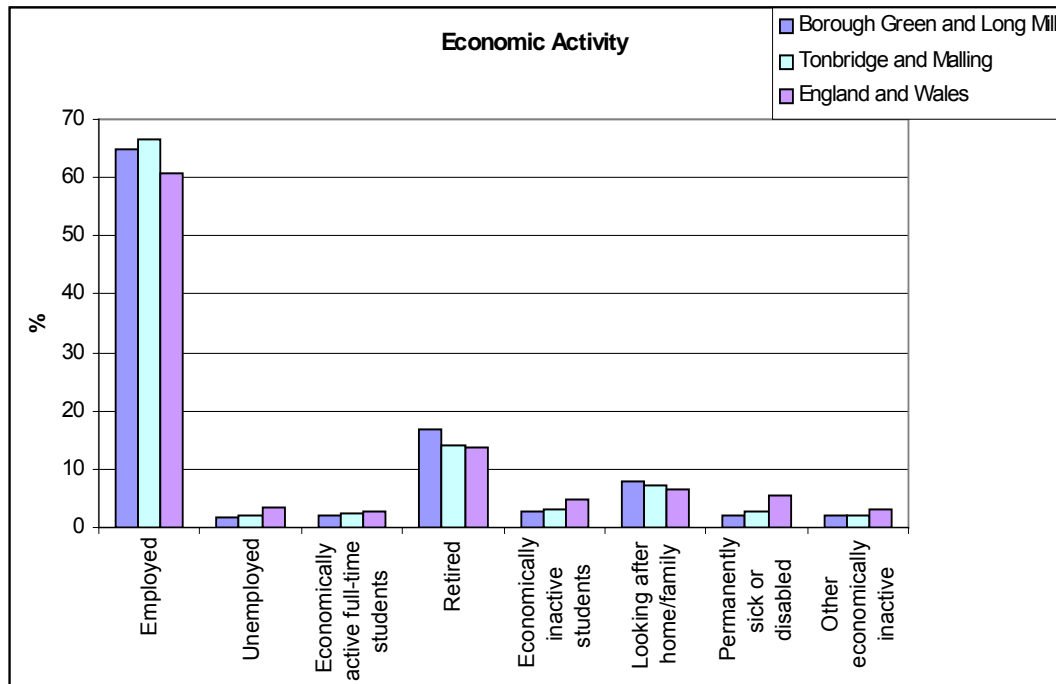


Source: Census 2001, ONS

**Employment**

3.6 There is a strong employment base in the Village that provides around 1,300 jobs. This is reflected in the high level of economic activity, especially amongst males in the village compared to the national average. This is coupled with a very low unemployment rate as noted below and a high level of part time workers who live in the village.

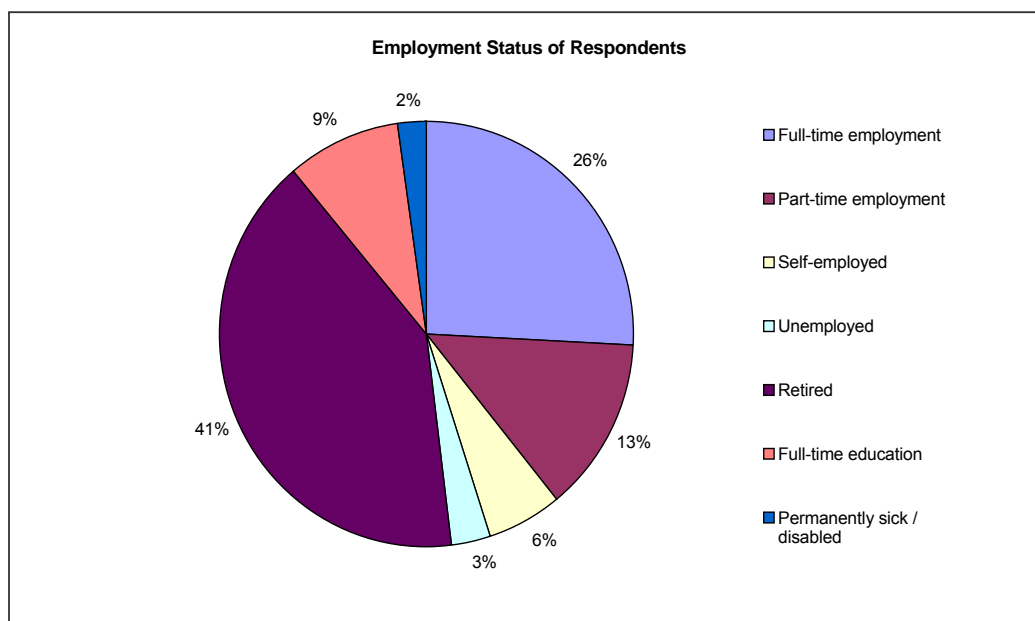
3.7 The economic activity of those in the village is shown in the graph below:



Source: Census 2001, ONS

3.8 According to the ONS, 65% of the village is in employment, which is below the average for Tonbridge & Malling but considerably higher than the average for England and Wales. Unemployment in the Village is just 1.6%, which compares favourably to the national average of 3.4%.

3.9 This information is supplemented by the data received from the Residents' Questionnaire, the results of which are shown below.

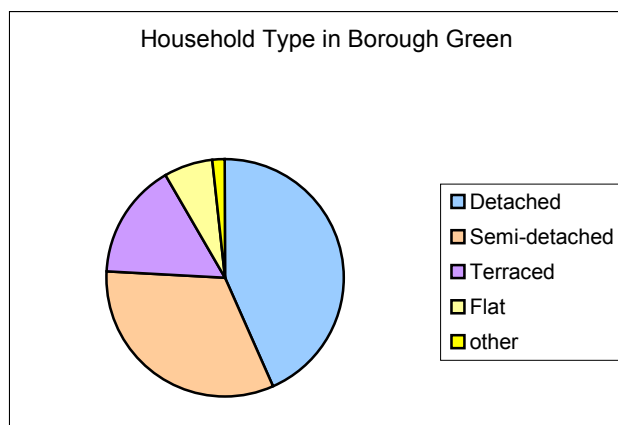


Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire 2004

- 3.10 41% of the respondents stated that they were retired. Again, this does not reflect the 2001 Census data for the local area, as only 17% of the residents of Borough Green and Long Mill ward are retired according to 2001 census figures. Combined with this, a lower proportion of the respondents are currently employed (either full time or part time) compared with the proportion of the local ward area, at 39% and 65% respectively.
- 3.11 The differences between the questionnaire results and the 2001 Census data is likely to be explained by the partial return of the former, but these apparent differences might be worthy of further work.

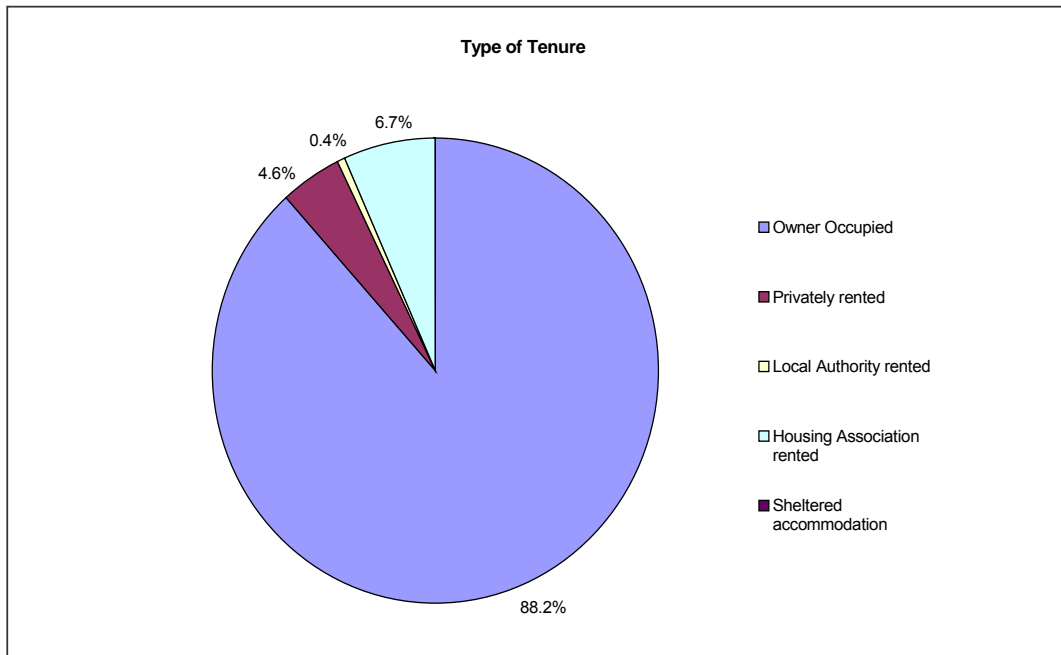
### **Affluence**

- 3.12 The affluence of the Parish is clear when we look at indicators such as car ownership. Very few households in the Parish do not own a car, with the number of households with 3 or more cars at nearly 3 times the national average. This again points towards the fact that the village is home to a large proportion of mature families who may purchase a car for their older children. Also when we consider owner occupation levels this is higher than the national average with the number of those renting accordingly much lower than average.
- 3.13 The types of houses in the Parish are also an interesting indicator of local wealth.



Source: Experian

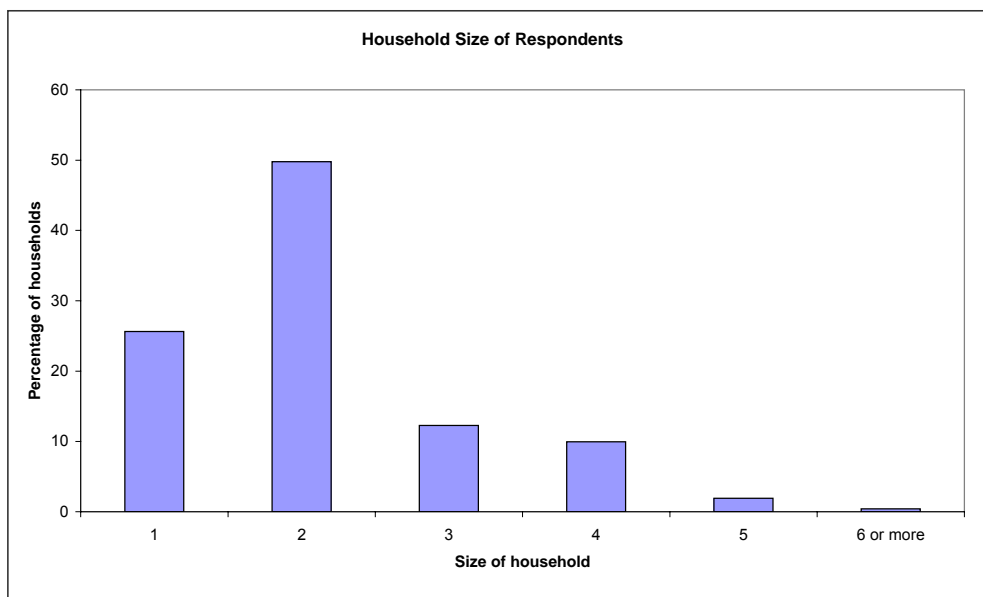
- 3.14 There are twice as many detached houses compared with the national average, which generally denotes local affluence. Accordingly there are far fewer terraced houses and very few flats, which again may contribute to the fact that there are few young people in the area who generally cannot afford to or do not wish to live in larger dwellings. See the section of the report on Housing for an assessment of average house prices.
- 3.14 This data is confirmed by the results of the residents' questionnaire. Close to half of the households that responded to the residents' questionnaire (47%) live in semi-detached dwellings. The next most frequently occurring type of dwelling among respondents are detached dwellings, accounting for 19% of households.
- 3.15 The data indicates that Borough Green is host to a variety of dwelling types. Terraced housing, bungalows and flats / maisonettes account for a significant proportion of dwelling types amongst the household respondents.
- 3.16 The results for tenure type clearly indicate that the vast majority of Borough Green's households are owner-occupied, accounting for 88% of household responses. This level of owner-occupation is characteristic of wealthier or more rural locations. The remaining 11.8% of the household respondents live in rented property. Of these households, slightly over half are in social rented accommodation (housing association and local authority) and slightly under half are in the private rented accommodation.



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire

### Household Size

3.17 The results of the Residents' Questionnaire show that three-quarters (75%) of the 472 households that responded to the questionnaire consist of either one (25.6%) or two people (50%). The remaining 25% of households had three or more people living in them.



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire (2004)

- 3.18 The 472 households that responded account for 1,012 Borough Green residents', giving an average household size of 2.14, which is some way below the census recorded household size of 2.4 for the ward of Borough Green and Long Mill (the average household size in the UK being 2.36).
- 3.19 As will be identified later (4.11), the dominant planning pressure, other than traffic, is the continuous developer attempts to build additional housing in a Parish almost entirely already built on, quarried or used for road and rail infrastructure.

## 4. Housing

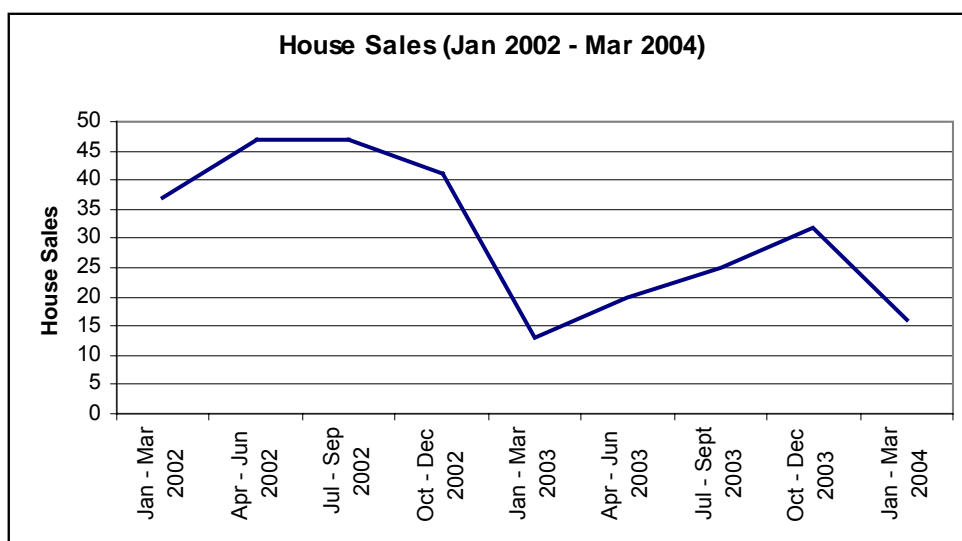
### The Borough Green Housing Market

- 4.1 In order to assess the housing market in Borough Green it is useful to consider recent house price fluctuation and activity. The information below has been gained from the Land Registry ([www.landreg.gov.uk](http://www.landreg.gov.uk)).
- 4.2 The table below shows average house prices in the TN15 8\*\* post code area, over the period 2000-2002. It is based on housing transactions as shown in the 'sales' column.

	Detached		Semi-Detached		Terraced		Flat/Maisonette		Overall	
	Av Price	Sales	Av Price	Sales	Av Price	Sales	Av Price	Sales	Av Price	Sales
Jan - Mar 2002	£ 250,699	17	£ 165,818	11	£ 147,888	9	£ -	0	£ 200,456	37
Apr - Jun 2002	£ 355,297	23	£ 233,993	9	£ 135,970	12	£ 90,333	3	£ 259,157	47
Jul - Sep 2002	£ 306,730	23	£ 216,873	8	£ 162,726	13	£ 86,000	3	£ 237,515	47
Oct - Dec 2002	£ 428,095	21	£ 206,249	12	£ 148,400	5	£105,333	3	£ 305,438	41
Jan - Mar 2003	£ 278,000	4	£ 258,250	4	£ 173,000	5	£ -	0	£ 231,538	13
Apr - Jun 2003	£ 919,874	5	£ 249,750	4	£ 199,450	8	£ 97,666	3	£ 374,348	20
Jul - Sept 2003	£ 359,931	8	£ 239,642	7	£ 231,450	10	£ -	0	£ 274,857	25
Oct - Dec 2003	£ 381,200	10	£ 230,021	11	£ 133,250	4	£353,142	7	£ 292,100	32
Jan - Mar 2004	£ 556,125	4	£ 183,857	7	£ 172,589	5	£ -	0	£ 273,402	16

Source : Land Registry.

- 4.3 The general trend in housing transactions (sales) is shown in the graph below:

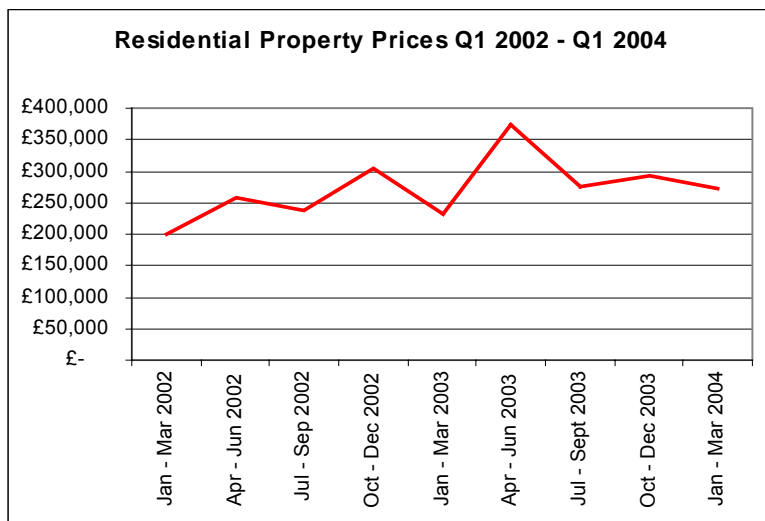


Source: Land Registry.

- 4.4 The number of housing transactions is useful in assessing activity in the market. It can be seen from the graph above that transactions hit a peak in mid-2002 with a dip in the

early part of 2003, before rising again towards the end of 2003. Seasonal fluctuations may account for this in part. The market now appears to be tailing off in line with national trends.

4.5 The graph below depicts average house price fluctuations over this period.



Source: Land Registry

4.6 As the graph covers a relatively short period and a small geographical area it will be greatly affected by, for example, one particularly expensive property transaction. However, the above graph shows recent buoyancy in the market, following a peak in mid-2003. While the market appears to be levelling out slightly, the market still appears strong.

4.7 These figures can be compared to the Tonbridge and Malling District averages as shown below.

Tonbridge and Malling: Jan-Mar 2004

	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flat/Maisonette	Overall
<b>Borough Green</b>	£ 556,125	£ 183,857	£ 172,589	£ -	£ 273,402
<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	£ 372,628	£ 203,401	£ 156,668	£ 157,617	£ 230,701
<b>Kent</b>	£ 301,257	£ 177,413	£ 140,676	£ 116,697	£ 183,231

Source: Land Registry

4.8 When we compare Borough Green with the Tonbridge and Malling average house prices, we see that Borough Green is relatively more expensive for detached and terrace properties..

4.9 Property in the Village is considerably more expensive than Kent-wide averages, this reiterates the point that Borough Green is a relatively affluent area in terms of house prices and by a significant margin in respect of detached houses.

4.10 An exception is the lack of flats and maisonettes that have been sold. These statistics illustrate the problem of a lack of different size properties in the village, which may be acting to push first time buyers out of the market.

- 4.11 Information has also been gained from consulting Estate Agents located in the Village, they stated that Borough Green is a popular village owing to the schools and transport links, which often means that there are not enough houses coming onto the market. This has pushed up property prices, effectively pricing young people and first time buyers out of the market.
- 4.12 With house prices surging, estate agents have begun to advertise further a field to try to draw in wealthier purchasers. These have tended to be commuters, which affects the local community and amenities in the Village.

#### **The Housing Association.**

- 4.13 Russet Homes (TMHA) controls all housing association property in Borough Green. It was formed in 1990, when it took over the Borough Council's housing stock.
- 4.14 Russet Homes, as TMHA, underwent a voluntary inspection in February 2002 that provides the following key information:
- The association has 6,000 properties across the West Kent area, which includes some sheltered housing.
  - As well as holding former council housing stock the association also has a development programme to build an estimated 50 properties per year. This, however, has led to no net increase in stock available to rent, as about the same number per year are lost through right-to-buy.
  - 55% of tenants are aged over 60, 23% of residents' are families, including 11% who are single-parent families. 17% are single or couples under 60.
  - 64% of properties are houses, 22% are flats (the highest of which are 4 storeys), 9% bungalows and 5% sheltered units.
  - 44% of households have one member with a long-term disability.
- 4.15 The Borough Green Office is one of three regional offices, the other two being at Tonbridge and Larkfield. The Borough Green office oversees 1,293 properties, which cover a relatively dispersed and mostly rural area. The office also performs headquarters functions, support service, personnel, computer support services etc. In the recent inspection, it was found that 86% of tenants were satisfied with the service they receive, the highest level of satisfaction out of all Housing associations surveyed.

#### **ACTION PLAN**

**There is a perceived need for affordable housing within Borough Green of all types from one bedroom starter homes up to 3 or 4 bedroom homes.**

- (a) Infilling on small sites will only gain a small amount of affordable homes.**  
**(b) The only large site proposed by developers is Isles Quarry West where a few affordable homes could be built. This site will only become a realistic possibility after completion of the bypass and the KCC adoption of the Haul Road.**  
**(c) Representations should be made to Housing Associations to ensure that all available affordable housing is offered first to residents of the Parish.**

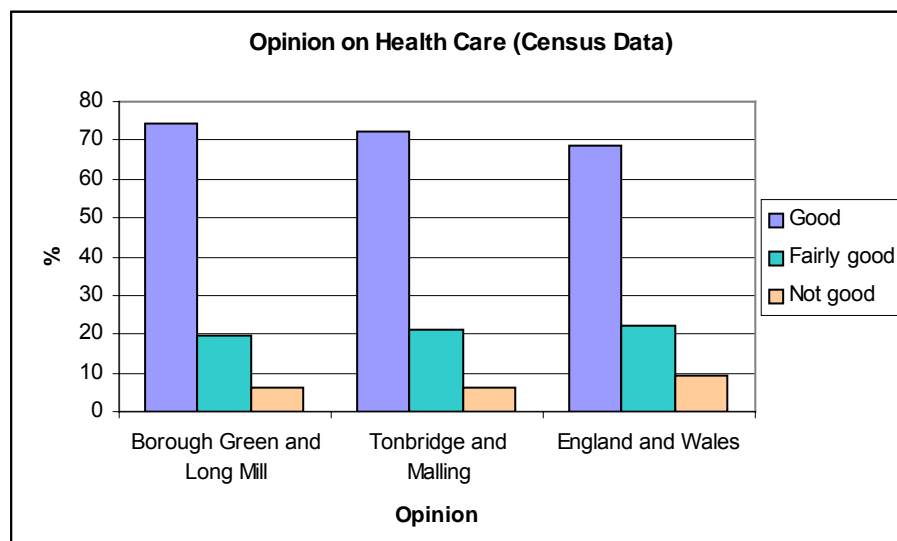
## 5. Medical Services within the Parish

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- 5.1 Borough Green is fortunate to have good quality medical services. They are important as they serve a much wider community than just the village in its role as a rural local centre. These are outlined below.

### Medical Practice

- 5.2 The Medical Centre is located on Quarry Hill Road. 13,000 patients are registered at the practice, which covers a wide area of Kent stretching from Tonbridge to Kemsing and West Malling. It therefore provides a vital service to the wider population. The practice has six GPs and provides other services including physiotherapy, counselling, midwifery and minor surgery.
- 5.3 The 2001 Census asked residents to give their opinion on local health services, the results for Borough Green and Long Mill when compared to Tonbridge & Malling and the rest of the country are as follows:



Source: Census 2001, ONS

- 5.4 A slightly higher proportion than the District or national average believe that health care provision is 'good'. Correspondingly, fewer than average people think it is 'not good'. This would indicate that local provision is generally satisfactory.
- 5.5 This was reflected in the results of the Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire. There were 28 comments relating to a good provision of dental and medical services. However, four respondents thought that the medical practice was over-subscribed, and five respondents called for the provision of another (or larger) medical practice.

### **Veterinary Practice Update requested**

- 5.6 Pennard Veterinary Group is located on Western Road, and has approximately 1,500 active clients, these are classed as clients who have visited in the last 12 months. The practice is multi-sited with close links to its sister practices in Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. Therefore the practice at Borough Green forms a strategic location between the two. The practice has seen steady growth in the last 10 years and caters for the veterinary needs of the Parish and the surrounding area. 90% of custom comes from within a 5-mile radius. The practice has recently extended opening hours over lunchtime to cater for growth and help improve access.

### **Dental Practice**

- 5.7 The Village benefits from a Dental Practice situated in the heart of Borough Green on Sevenoaks Road. The practice has around 8,000 patients registered. However, this is an estimate as the number has recently dropped as the practice has partially moved over to private dental care provision. The practice has four dentists, three of whom are private (including the two principal dentists and one associate) and one of whom (an associate) is still NHS. The NHS dentist stopped taking on new patients last year due to the surge in demand.
- 5.8 A large proportion of patients are from Borough Green and the immediate area, although a number of people who have moved away still travel back to the practice.
- 5.9 In the results of the Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire 1% of respondents called for the provision of an NHS dental practice. This is supported by the anecdotal comments made in the survey.

### **Chemist**

- 5.10 Lloyds the Chemist, 42 The High Street, Borough Green:
- Monday - Friday 8:30am - 7:00pm
  - Saturday 8:30am - 5:30pm

### **Nearest Hospital**

- 5.11 The closest hospital to Borough Green is Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone. It is a 15-30 minute drive away. The hospital *does have an considering closing its* Accident and Emergency Department. The hospital is managed by the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS trust. Sevenoaks Hospital has a minor injuries department open to the public 8a.m. – 8 p.m seven days a week.

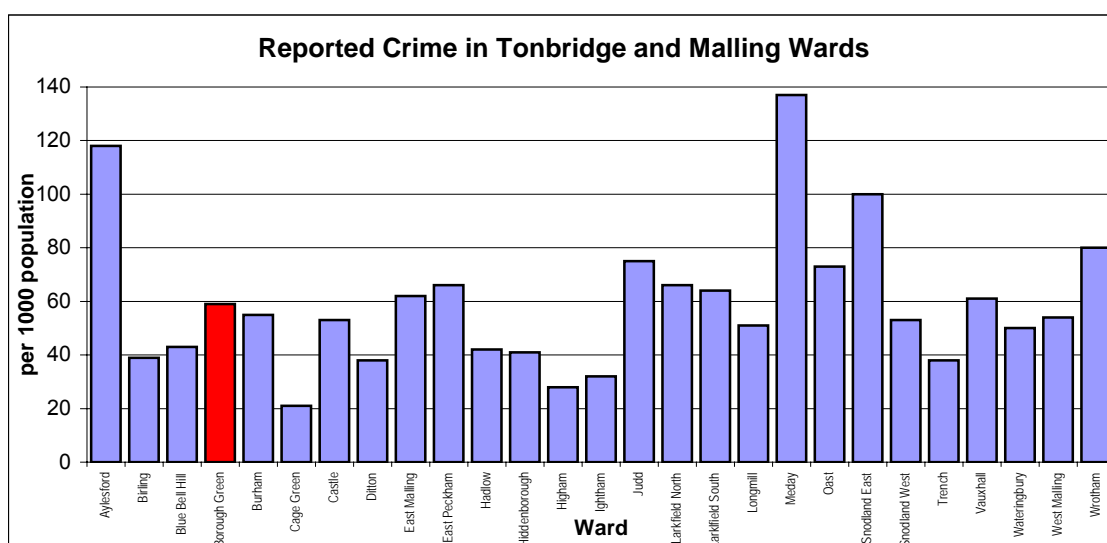
**ACTION (a) The Medical Practice is being enlarged simply to cope with present demand**

**(b)The Dental Practice is unable to accommodate all patients who require NHS treatment, Thus, there is a requirement for a dedicated NHS dental practice, not necessarily in Borough Green, but within the general Malling area.**

## 6. Policing, Crime and Safety

### Crime Statistics Overview in Tonbridge and Malling and Borough Green:

- 6.1 The overall level of crime in Tonbridge and Malling has reduced since 1998 by 4% according to the 'Tonbridge & Malling Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership: Strategy 2002-2005'. This includes a 31% decrease in robbery and a decrease in violent crime by 15%. When compared with other areas both in Kent and nationwide, the Borough is deemed a relatively low crime area. However the Strategy identified some areas that are becoming of increasing public concern such as: anti-social behaviour, theft from motor vehicles, criminal damage, drugs/alcohol abuse and youth offending.
- 6.2 As with national trends the highest offending group is the 16-20 year old age group, followed by 21-25 year olds and 26-30 year olds. These three age brackets make up 63% of offenders. This is coupled with the fact that 70% of victims are also under 26 years old, with just 2% being over 60. (Tonbridge & Malling Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership: Strategy 2002-2005).
- 6.3 A wealth of crime statistics relating to Tonbridge and Malling are available as it is part of the Home Office's 'Family' of 27 areas which are recorded to compare crime statistics across the country. Tonbridge and Malling is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 27 when considering the total of those offences considered by the Home Office to be 'headline offences' (1<sup>st</sup> being the area with the highest incidence of crime per 1000 head of population). This puts the district on a similar footing to areas such as St Albans in Hertfordshire and Basingstoke and Deane in Hampshire. The other Kent districts used in the study were deemed to have higher incidences of crime with Maidstone at 8<sup>th</sup>, Shepway at 10<sup>th</sup> and Sevenoaks at 16<sup>th</sup>.
- 6.4 The Strategy shows crime statistics by the 27 Borough Wards in Tonbridge and Malling, shown in the graph below.



Source: Tonbridge & Malling Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership 2002-2005

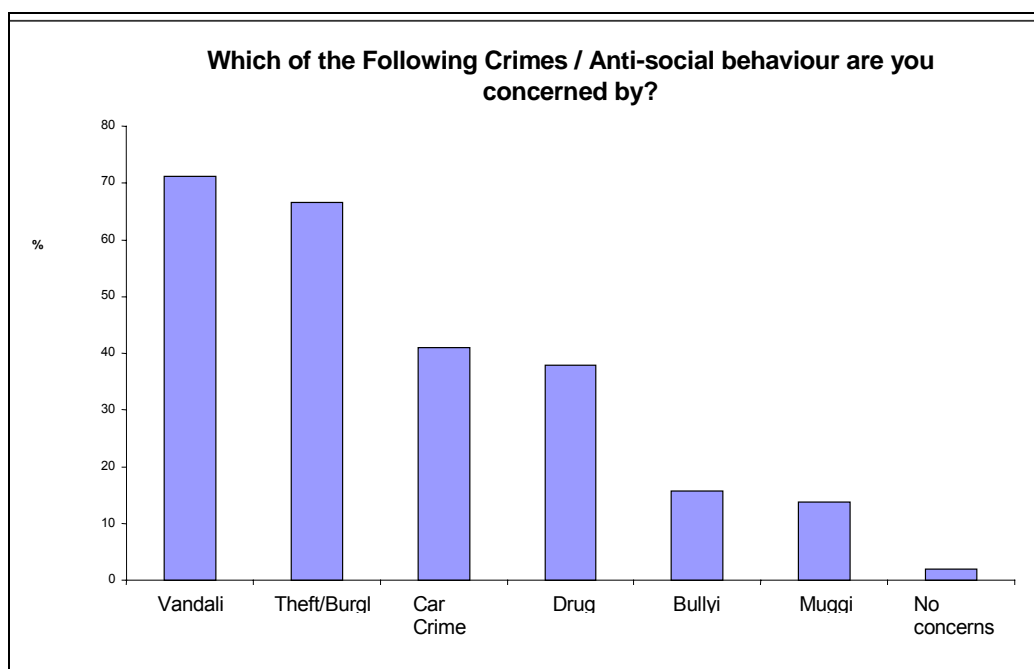
- 6.5 As can be seen in the above graph, Borough Green (depicted in red) is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of the 27 Tonbridge and Malling wards with 59 crimes per 1000 population. In comparison, the highest level in the County occurs in Medway at 137 crimes per 1000 population and the lowest occurs in Cage Green at 21. Compared to neighbouring areas, Borough Green is about average, with Ightham at a very low level of just 32 crimes per 1000 population and Wrotham at the comparatively higher level of 80.
- 6.6 Tonbridge and Malling had relatively higher incidences in violence against the person and burglary from a dwelling. There are several Actions that the Strategy has formulated to try to combat crime in the Borough; these include the following:
- Drug, alcohol and substance abuse awareness and education through various projects.
  - Provision of positive activities for young people through permanent facilities and specifically targeted projects.
  - Youth offender projects
  - Measures to address anti-social behaviour.

#### **Local Opinion on Police Presence in the Village**

- 6.7 Over three-quarters of respondents believe that there is an insufficient police presence in Borough Green, and only 11% stated that police presence is sufficient. This concern was also evident in the comments section, where 43 households stated the need for a more visible police presence in the village. In addition, 43 households specifically commented that there should be more police foot patrols.
- 6.8 This feeling may be associated with concerns about local crime levels. However, the Kent Police all-crime statistics show that recorded crimes in Borough Green have gone down year on year for the last three years. Furthermore, Borough Green is one of only of three wards in the Borough of Tonbridge and Malling (with 27 wards) to have experienced two consecutive crime reductions. The desire for a stronger police presence may therefore be more attributable to a fear of crime rather than crime itself.
- 6.9 In this question, respondents were asked to state which type of crime they are most concerned about in the village. The following chart shows clearly that vandalism (71%) and burglary (67%) are the key areas of concern among the respondents, with over two thirds of respondents expressing concern in each case. Car crime and the prevalence of drugs are also viewed with considerable concern and were mentioned by 41% and 38% of respondents respectively. Bullying and mugging had lower levels of concern, at 16% and 14% respectively. It is noteworthy that just 2% of households stated that they had no concerns at all.
- 6.10 In looking at the more general comments made in the survey, it is also clear that many residents in Borough Green are concerned by the general presence of 'yob' culture and bored teenagers loitering in the area, particularly at night. This is probably in part a reflection of the lack of activities and entertainment available locally to teenagers and

younger adults, as identified earlier. Furthermore, 43 households commented that making local activities available for young teenagers was a key social priority for Borough Green.

- 6.11 Due to the significant built up area at the centre of Borough Green, it does act as a magnet for young residents of several Parishes and the low level of crime generally across the Borough does not reflect the perception of residents in the village, particularly with regard to young people.



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire

### Rural Community Warden

- 6.12 Borough Green also benefits from having a Rural Community Warden. Generally crime figures have dropped in areas where Wardens have been introduced.
- 6.13 The warden is closely involved in many elements of village life. This includes the youth drop-in centre to help forge links with the younger people in the community, the primary schools, where they conduct talks on road safety and possible training as a lollypop lady. The police are strongly in favour of the scheme as the Warden can feed back information and provide a link to the youth in particular, and community in general.

### Fire Brigade

- 6.14 The Parish also contains the Fire Station for the area, which is located on Western Road. It is one of 66 covering Kent. It does, however, rely on volunteers and because of age and availability restrictions, volunteers are increasingly hard to attract and retain compared with earlier years where larger numbers of able-bodied people live and worked in the village.

**ACTION**

**PLAN**

- (a) There is a very strong view in the village that we must maintain or enhance the existing Police presence.
- (b) The Parish Council is actively supporting Kent Police in the Rural Community Warden Scheme and would want to be involved in any further schemes of a like nature. Alongside this scheme, we continue to work with our Neighbourhood Police Officer and Rural Partnership Constable and PCSOs.
- (c) Speeding through the village is of great concern and the Parish Council would welcome any scheme that would reduce this.
- (d) There is an ongoing campaign to introduce calming on the A25/A227, and to convert some existing Zebra Crossings to Pelican.
- (e) The Parish Council would actively support any measures to keep the Fire Station viable.

## 7. Education and Learning

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- 7.1 Within the actual Parish of Borough Green there is only one school; Borough Green Primary School. However Wrotham Secondary School is the main destination for pupils entering secondary school.

### **Borough Green Primary School**

- 7.2 Borough Green Primary School is located in the heart of the village on School Approach and has 380 children aged between 4 and 11 years old. The Ofsted Inspector's Report (2000) states;

“Borough Green Primary School continues to be a very good school and has been most successful in recent years in building upon the high standards of pupil's achievement and quality provision. In particular, in response to excellent leadership and management and very good provision in many areas, but especially in teaching, most pupils now achieve very well as they move through the school and standards continue to rise. This school provides very good value for money”

- 7.3 It is clear that Borough Green Primary School continues to be successful, and the excellent schooling is a major draw for people moving into the area. This was highlighted by Estate Agents and local people. The school's success is also borne out by the results, with pupils' average Key Stage 2 score in summer 1998 of 4.03, higher than the government target of 4.0. Extra-curricular activities are also encouraged, with a range of schools clubs including cricket, tag rugby, gymnastics, football, athletics and a choir.
- 7.4 The Headmaster, Steve Gorst, cites the school's lack of space as the one main problem. This means that growth in areas such as music or increased computer facilities is problematic due to a lack of spare rooms. One way of addressing this issue could be to clear the current derelict outbuildings to allow space for expansion.
- 7.5 However, any expansion projects will rely on the school's ability to ensure a sufficient intake each year. Ideally the school aims to attract around 60 children each year, however the current intake stands around 54-58 pupils per year. This trend will continue under the current circumstances, given the ageing demographic profile of the village and new school developments such as the one at Kings Hill.
- 7.6 Most of the pupils who attend the school live within the Parish of Borough Green, although some travel greater distances. Despite the close proximity of most of its pupils there are still perennial traffic congestion problems associated with the 'school run'. This is exacerbated as entry to the school is via two dead-ends, and has led to complaints from nearby residents.

- 7.7 The main secondary school destination for Borough Green Primary School pupils is Wrotham Secondary School (see below). However for those pupils going on to Grammar School, a difficult decision must be made between either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells, both of which involve significant commuting journeys.
- 7.8 The School benefits from a strong support network that is demonstrative of the community spirit in the village. This includes around 95 local volunteers who help in the school, a strong PTA and dedicated governors who have a good knowledge and active interest in the school.

**Wrotham School** (*Update received from David Day 26/4/09*)

- 7.9 Whilst not located in the Parish of Borough Green itself, Wrotham School is situated just over the border in the Parish of Wrotham. It provides the main source of secondary education for young people in Borough Green. The school has around 709 pupils, and has doubled in size over the last 15 years. Around 150-200 of the pupils are from Borough Green. The Ofsted Inspector's Report of 2006 states;

“Wrotham is a vibrant learning community, in which students are valued as individuals, feel safe and achieve. It is a good and improving school”

- 7.10 As well as children from Borough Green, the school also draws pupils from other areas including those from as far as Meopham, West Kingsdown, Ditton, New Ash Green, Leybourne, Kemsing and Otford. Although some students travel by bus the increased popularity of this oversubscribed school has led to a large increase in traffic congestion as many parents drop off and collect children by car. It is believed that the by-pass would ease this congestion
- 7.11 Wrotham School received national recognition for its GCSE results in 2006 and 2007 with an award from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Three teachers have been finalists in the National Teacher of the Year Award in 2006, 2008 and 2009.
- 7.12 Wrotham has a Sixth Form offering A levels, BTEC and the Creative and Media Diploma.
- 7.13 Strategically Wrotham School has signed a land transfer agreement to allow Kent County Council to site Grange Park School at the northern end of the site in return from promising to use the local authorities 'best endeavours' to start a phased rebuilding of Wrotham School from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. It is anticipated Grange Park School will open on the Wrotham Site in April 2010.
- 7.14 Wrotham School in partnership with Borough Green Parish council, Wrotham Parish Council, Borough Green Junior Football Club, Wrotham parish Council has submitted a planning permission application for a floodlight Astro turf on Whitegates Field to the south of the School for Community use.

- 7.15 Wrotham School is a part of a Department for Children Schools and Families project to create a state of the art Food Technology Room and plans are being discussed with Kent County Council to bring this to fruition

### **The Library**

- 7.16 The village library is a well-used important local amenity, as the next closest libraries are West Malling, Larkfield or Sevenoaks. It also runs an invaluable housebound service to help the less able in the village. Six computers with Internet access, a scanner and a printer were installed in February 2002, and this has added to the popularity of the library. Internet taster courses are also available to local people to help them get 'on-line'.
- 7.17 The Head Librarian reports that the library is popular and well used especially since the arrival of the new computers, although she would like to see their own systems computerised to aid efficiency and allow them to conduct searches. There are no after schools clubs or anything similar run from the library.

- ACTION PLAN**
- (a) We will continue to support the Secondary School and the Grange Park Annexe, and its hoped for new build main school.**
  - (b) Whitegate Field, has a floodlit Astruturf pitch for the community under construction which will need; the ultimate co-operation of County, Borough and Parish.**

## 8. The Economy, Employment and Business

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### District and County Overview

- 8.1 The Kent Economic Report of April 2002 produced by the Economic Development Unit of Kent County Council considers several dimensions of the Kent local economy - these are outlined below.
- 8.2 Tonbridge and Malling is ranked one the best districts in Kent in terms of Economic performance, being ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 13 areas, behind Medway, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells. Tonbridge and Malling has a net outflow of employment skills, mainly due to its close proximity to London. This is particularly relevant in Borough Green due to its transport links to the capital. The Kings Hill Business Park in West Malling is also a major employer and is a draw on local skills.
- 8.3 The Tonbridge and Malling local economy is considered relatively thriving and dynamic compared to both the Kent and Great Britain averages, although along with the rest of Kent, it lags behind averages for the South East. Employment growth in most of the county is especially low.
- 8.4 Tonbridge and Malling has a relatively high concentration of employment in the engineering, manufacturing, and distribution industries, with a relatively weak service sector (1998 figures). When compared to national and Kent averages, the Tonbridge and Malling workforce is relatively well trained. However the borough lags behind the rest of the South East and certain areas of Kent such as Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.
- 8.5 In terms of unemployment, the Kent average stands at 2.3%, however unemployment in Tonbridge and Malling stands at just 1.1%, which is the same rate as Tunbridge Wells (November 2002 figures).
- 8.6 The area shows a lower than average level of knowledge workers in industries such as IT and professional services at just 33.0% of the workforce compared to the Kent average of 36.6%. The level of unskilled/semi-skilled workers is slightly higher than the Kent average at 17.5% compared to 17.1% for Kent (1997/98 figures). This may reflect the type of jobs available in the area that as already discussed, is slightly skewed towards manufacturing and engineering and requires more manual labour.
- 8.7 Tonbridge and Malling is ranked joint second best behind Sevenoaks in the County for factors such as average household income, residential house prices and deprivation levels. In fact the degree of deprivation in Tonbridge and Malling is deemed to be 0 (2000 figures), whereas the Kent average is a relatively affluent 4.4 but reaches 21.5 in one area of the County.

### Businesses and Industry in Borough Green

- 8.8 Borough Green has a strong employment base that provides around 1,300 jobs. This is reflected in the high levels of economic activity especially in males in the Village compared to national averages. There are also a high number of part time workers who live in the Village. (Experian Data 2002)
- 8.9 Businesses in Borough Green generally see the Village as a good location due to the buoyant local economy, good transport links with the nearby motorways and the central Kent location. There has been a continuous erosion of business premises both within the Parish, and within its employment footprint, caused by change of use from commercial to housing development. Within recent years we have lost Tillmans Antiques, the Bus Depot, Fox and Hounds PH, Sevenoaks Valeting, Nimbus Sports, Magnet, P&H Coaches Lilloco's Mill, and many more. This has driven an expansion in car use to reach jobs outside the local area.
- 8.10 In terms of what could be improved in the Parish, businesses would like to see the traffic problems eradicated, improvements in short term parking, and believe the by-pass and possible traffic-reduction methods could be the answer to make the Village more pleasant and attractive to clients and shoppers, but there is a strongly held minority view that the Bypass would "kill the Village" by stopping through traffic.
- 8.11 There are several major employers in Borough Green, including H+H Celcon, and A-Z Geographers (the makers of A-Z Maps) who have their Headquarters in Borough Green. Below are views from these two major employers:

#### **H+H Celcon**

- 8.12 H+H Celcon manufactures aerated concrete blocks. The company see Borough Green as an advantageous location given the rich deposits of silica sand in the area, which is one of the primary materials in their **Ra** manufacturing process. A further advantage is its location in the heart of the south east, which is the company's major market.
- 8.13 The location does have drawbacks such as the restrictive road network. The Bypass would be a major benefit to H+H Celcon, allowing them to route their vehicles around the village.
- 8.14 In a recent study undertaken by the company it was found that 75% of H+H Celcon's employees are from within a 10-mile radius of the factory. This included a large proportion from Borough Green. The extension to the manufacturing facility will also create over 70 semi-skilled jobs.

#### **A-Z Maps**

- 8.15 A-Z Maps is located on Fairfield Road close to the centre of the village. The company moved Headquarters to this site in 1992, from its previous premises in Sevenoaks. 12 of

the workers at A-Z Maps are from Borough Green or nearby Ightham and Platt. This demonstrates that the company is a notable local employer.



*Photograph: A-Z Geographers Headquarters*

- 8.16 Activities on the site include the headquarters functions of the company, the drawing office where the maps are created, administration, the orders office with 24 reps covering the whole of the UK and the warehouse and distribution functions.
- 8.17 The site and premises in particular have been tailored to meet their needs after the company took over the derelict site formerly occupied by Novellos Publishers. The buildings therefore incorporate parts that were already on site, together with new purpose-built accommodation (see picture above).
- 8.18 The company considers Borough Green a good location for its business operations given its close proximity to major motorways and railways. This allows it to distribute goods easily across the country.
- 8.19 The major problem associated with the location in Borough Green is the increasing volume of traffic through the Village. This has been a particular local problem for the company as the increasing size of lorries delivering paper etc has led to problems of access into Fairfield Road. The Company believes that the proposed by-pass would have significant advantages for its business operations as well as the quality of life in the Village. To help ease the volume of traffic entering the site at peak times, the company has put in place a scheme to stagger the leaving times of employees to reduce congestion in the car park and on local roads.
- 8.20 The A-Z site is exposed to the operations of the nearby landfill site, so there have been problems of sand and dust entering the site. However A-Z and the *site operators* have a good working relationship where problems of this nature can be dealt with.
- 8.21 The company has no current plans for expansion due to lack of space on the existing site. Any extension to the buildings would lead to a loss in car parking, which is not regarded as a viable option.

- 8.22 The company does not currently provide any childcare facilities as it is felt there is not sufficient demand. However, workers who have recently had children have been able to accommodate family life in their working hours through arrangements such as flexi-time.

### **Local Shops**

- 8.23 Local shops and services also provide considerable employment. This is important as a source of part time employment enabling an increase in economic participation for those who may be unable to work full time.

### **Minerals Extraction and Landfill**

- 8.24 Borough Green is home to several quarries due to its natural deposits of stone, sand and particularly silica sand. These include the following;

- **Borough Green Quarry:** This is a landfill site operated by Cemex. Since its inception there have been problems caused by the large number of tippers visiting the site, and subsequent mud and debris on the Highway. The company has introduced wash facilities which should address the problem for the 17 years of the site's operation.
- **Ightham Sand Pit:** Run by H+H Celcon. This site has only a few areas of sand still to be extracted.
- **Isle Quarry East** Under the 1997 Restoration Planning Permission, the site should have been planted with indigenous species, and handed over to the Local Authority as a local public amenity area. This would also prove an ideal location for allotments and other similar community uses.
- **Isles Quarry West.** Now that Greenbelt protection has been removed from the site, TMBC have deemed the land suitable for housing development in its LDF, despite serious contamination and infrastructure failings. There is some existing commercial use/premises on the site, and Lawful Development Certificates allowing much more. The site is within walking distance of the village, but isolated by landscaping, and would provide an ideal replacement for all the commercial activity lost in the village to housing in recent years. This view was supported by the public in a strong response in a Parish Poll in 2008.

Because of the nature and value of the site, the Parish Council would strongly support commercial use, provided the required infrastructure improvements such as KCC adoption of the Haul Rd and the Bypass were in place first.

### **ACTION PLAN**

- (a) The Parish Council appreciates the mix of employment possibilities in the village and would support commercial development at Isles Quarry West**
- (b) The Parish Council would support any local initiative for new industries, provided infrastructure failings are addressed.**

- (c) **The Parish Council welcomes the industrial units being set up on the Hornet site.**
- (d) **The Parish Council would welcome a covered, pedestrianised High Street from the Village Hall Car Park to its junction with Western Road. ? *relevant?***

## 9. Community Facilities

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- 9.1 The following facilities can be found in and around Borough Green.

### **Recreation Ground**

- 9.2 The Recreation Ground is located to the south of the village off the Maidstone Rd, A25. It provides a range of sporting facilities including football pitches, tennis courts, basketball courts and an equipped play area. It also contains the Memorial Pavilion, built in 1955 as the War Memorial, and offering toilets and changing facilities. This benefited from a major refurbishment in 2009

### **Potters Mede**

- 9.3 This facility is located on the A227 Wrotham Rd, just 5-10 minutes walk from Borough Green and Wrotham. It comprises a simple meeting hall that is used for purposes such as Parish Council meetings. There are also extensive grounds containing trees, fields, a woodland walk, and football pitches. The playing field was farmland and is prone to being waterlogged, Potters Mede car park is used heavily by those collecting children from the secondary school across the road, an activity which is becoming a traffic hazard due to a lack of supervision.

The existing building comprising a public hall and changing rooms was destroyed by fire in 2007, and a purpose built facility will shortly replace it.

### **Basted Mill Public Open Space**

- 9.4 This amenity comprises less formal open space with a greater emphasis on wildlife and nature. Basted Mill Public Open Space is an extension area of mostly wooded land on either bank of the River Bourne ceded to the District Council as a planning gain flowing from the development of Basted Mill. The land is administered and work funded jointly by the Parishes of Borough Green, Platt and Plaxtol as well and the Borough Council. It is a perfect spot for informal recreation such as walking or picnicking. However it is currently under-utilised although raising local awareness of this facility would increase the number of people using it. There has been considerable discussion over recent years about the silting of the millpond from its original 30ft depth to a few inches today. Whilst it does not detract significantly from the views, there is concern that the edges are continually being overgrown, and diminishing the area of the pond. The cost and logistics of removing some 10,000 cubic metres of silt have prevented remediation to date.

### **Village Hall**

- 9.5 The Village Hall (built in the 1960's) is a two-storey facility run by a Management Committee, located just off the High Street and can be booked for meetings and events. It is currently used for a range of events and meetings such as the WI, Country Market,

keep-fit, dance and sports classes, and the meetings of local clubs. The Parish Council has a room for use as a Parish Office.

- 9.6 The Village Hall Committee is responsible for managing the bookings for the Hall and making sure the facilities are suitable for all users such as the elderly. The hall is well used and is in the advantageous position of making a profit which helps with on-going maintenance and potential improvements such as soundproofing. However it is grant aided by the Parish Council and has difficulty funding major works.



*Photograph: The Village Hall and car park.*

- 9.7 Recent improvements have included resurfacing the car park. New parking restrictions have virtually eliminated commuter parking and freed up spaces for shoppers.

#### **Youth Drop-in Centre: The Joint**

- 9.8 To further enhance the use of the Hall and provide a much-needed facility for young people in the village, a drop-in centre called 'The Joint' was opened in 2003. in what was once intended to be a caretaker flat, with support from many organisations and individuals. It has been fitted out with equipment that includes; a pool table, games, chairs and tables and two computers with Internet access. This has been made possible with the help of grants from various sources and strong support from the Police and County Council.
- 9.9 The positive benefits of the scheme are already being seen, as many young people in the village have already been involved in its implementation. At the weekends and in the evening an average of around 34-37 youngsters use the drop-in centre for its facilities and as a meeting place. This includes those from Wrotham, Plaxtol and Ightham, who are equally welcome. With peak attendances over 60, The Joint was extended in 2004. In 2010 numbers fell, and the centre has been reopened as a conventional youth club..
- 9.10 It is hoped that the day to day running of the drop-in centre will be the responsibility of a young persons committee, to provide them with full ownership. The drop-in centre is

also keen to get as many volunteers as possible, who are only being asked to devote one evening of their time per month. The scheme is addressing a local need and has been highly commended by the local police who are currently putting it forward as an example of best practice.

#### **Skateboard Park:**

- 9.11 The Skateboard Park has strong support from local young people in the area, who helped plan and build the park. This scheme, like the youth drop-in centre, has provided local young people with engaging activities and helped prevent the problems associated with graffiti and youth crime. The skateboard park was funded by way of grants from three Parish Councils and TMBC. It is an important (and first) example of Parish Councils jointly co-operating to provide facilities that none could provide on their own, and a three parish committee oversees the day to day operation, maintenance and inspection.
- 9.12 The Residents' Questionnaire asked if the Parish Council should help fund the Skateboard Park, just over half either 'strongly support' (21%) or 'support' (30%) funding for a skateboard park. However, opinion on the issue was divided, with close to a quarter (23%) of respondents opposed to funding the park.

#### **Burial Ground**

- 9.13 A matter of concern to residents and the Parish Council for a number of years has been the absence of a community burial ground. The only church with a burial ground, the Baptist Church, has no space left.

**ACTION (a) Recreational facilities for the older generation are virtually non-existent and the Parish would wish to engage with this generation to assess needs.**

**(b) The council will continue to investigate the possibility of providing a Burial Ground.**

**(c) The Parish Council is supporting and contributing to a floodlit Astro turf Pitch at Whitegate Field in conjunction with Wrotham Secondary School and other PCs.**

**(d) Investigate the source of Basted Millpond contamination, and seek a means to restore the pond.**

## 10. Recycling

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- 10.1 Last year residents within the Tonbridge and Malling District recycled 15% of their waste, the highest rate in Kent.
- 10.2 The introduction of the Green Box Recycling Service has significantly improved the level of recycling in the area, in particular the amount of paper, white directories, magazines, catalogues, and junk mail. Tins and cans have now been added to the fortnightly collections that are made on the same day as the usual waste collection.
- 10.3 The Green Waste Pilot Scheme in 2000 in the areas of Ditton and Larkfield has now been rolled out across the Borough. This scheme gives homes a second, wheeled bin with a green lid to collect waste such as garden cuttings, vegetables and cardboard. As a result residents in the pilot area have increased their recycling rate to 45%.
- 10.4 A further way Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has aided recycling is through subsidising compost bins enabling the price to be cut to a third. The Council also donates £1 to Kent Air Ambulance for every tonne of paper and cans collected.
- 10.5 The nearest recycling centre for the Parish is at Hanson's carpark on Isles Quarry East where food and drinks cans, newspapers and magazines, cardboard and textiles can be disposed of. There are also two further centres in Wrotham. A bulky refuse vehicle visits Borough Green locations several times a month.

## 11. The Community

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### Community Information

- 11.1 Community access to information is a key way of drawing local people together and making everyone aware of local events. In Borough Green this is achieved in two ways. Firstly there is a Parish newsletter named '**The Voice**' which is published once a month and contains articles about and by local people as well as an events diary and contacts list. This is distributed to every household in the Parish.
- 11.2 The second form of communication is through two recently launched websites. The first, **www.boroughgreen.org**, is aimed at the local community and provides useful information and contacts. The other is **www.boroughgreen.gov.uk** and is about the Parish Council. This performs an important link between the Parish Council and the people of the village and prevents the Council from becoming too remote.
- 11.3 When asked how well the Parish Council publicises its activities and decisions the residents' questionnaire found that the majority of respondents to this question (69%) were positive about the Parish Council with 53% stating that the parish does this reasonably well and a further 16% stating that the parish does this very well. However, just under a fifth (19%) believed the Parish Council is poor at informing local residents.

### Parish Office

- 11.4 During 2004, the Parish Council has been considering ways in which it might improve the service it provides to the public. With the growth of population in recent years, the scale of activities covered by the Parish Council has increased with traffic issues, planning applications and recreation at the forefront of public awareness. As the free flow of information between the public and the Parish Council is important in improving communication, the Parish Council decided to fund the renovation of a disused kitchen in the Village Hall as a Parish Office. It is a central location, easily accessible to all and with the Clerk in attendance on occasions. The public will be able to access plans etc and generally seek information.

### Community Groups/Organisations

- 11.5 Residents in Borough Green are spoilt for choice in terms of Community groups they could join. They include the following;

#### General:

- Borough Green Active Retirement Fund (Borodara)
- Borough Green Dramatic Society (Borograds)
- Quarry Hill WI
- Women's Fellowship
- Woodvale Folk (Dancing) Group

- Ightham & District Horticultural Society
- Borough Green Rock 'n' Roll Club
- Amnesty International
- Christmas Lights Committee (see below)
- "Help the Aged" Pop-in
- Church of the Good Shepherd Youth Group
- Baptist Church Youth Group
- Combined Cadet Force - based at Wrotham School
- 2 Brownie Packs
- Rainbow Guides
- Cubs/Scouts/Explorers
- Toddler/Play/Nursery Groups
- Nursery School
- National Childbirth Trust
- Several dance classes

**Sport:**

- Borough Green Football Club
- Borough Green United
- Potters FC
- Ightham Badminton Club
- Borough Green Bowls Club
- Borough Green Junior Football Club (currently 300 boys, 20 teams)

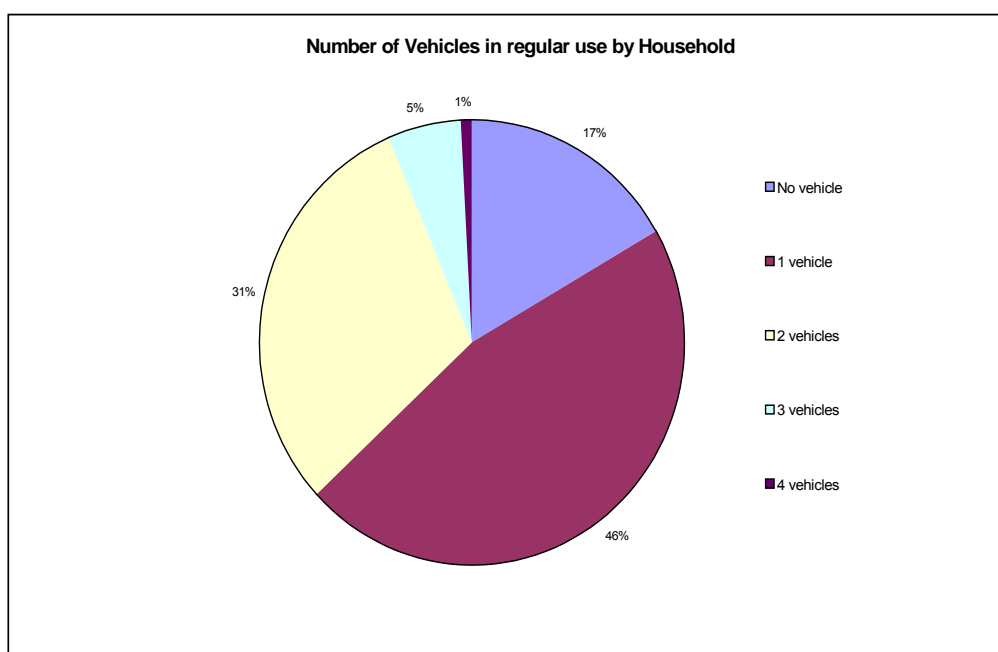
**Christmas Lights Committee**

- 11.6 Part of Borough Green's distinctive character can be attributed to the strong community spirit, and no day in the year demonstrates this better than the Christmas Lights Festival event held at the end of November each year. The High Street is closed and attractions include a fairground, a musical event held on a stage, a band and Father Christmas in the village Hall. Not only does the actual event help to galvanise the people of Borough Green, but the organisation is undertaken entirely by a voluntary committee that raises money (largely through donations from local people and businesses). Borough Green Parish Council and Tonbridge and Malling District Council grant aid the celebration, helping to draw people together and foster a community spirit.

## 12. Transport

### Transport Use in the Village

- 12.1 In the residents' questionnaire, household respondents were asked to provide details on the level of vehicle ownership. The results show that 396 (83%) households possess a motor vehicle in regular use. From this, we can infer that only 17% of the households in the survey do not possess a vehicle. 46% of households possess one vehicle, 31% possess two vehicles, 5% possess three vehicles and the remaining 1% possess four vehicles. No households in the survey had more vehicles than this. Given Borough Green's rural location, it is not surprising that vehicle ownership is so high.



*Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire*

- 12.2 The 396 households in the survey that possess some form of motor vehicle were subsequently asked to estimate how many journeys that they make each week. As the following chart shows, there is a broad range in the number of journeys, with the bulk of households making between 5 and 14 journeys per week.
- 12.3 Of those 396 households that do possess a vehicle, 43% of households make 0 to 8 journeys a week, and therefore appear to use their vehicle infrequently, (i.e. a maximum of around one journey per day). The remaining 57% of households with vehicles make more than one journey per day on average, and these may be considered regular users.

**Roads**

- 12.4 Borough Green has good transport links, which is one reason why it is a popular place to live. The map below shows Borough Green's close proximity to major transport routes



Source: *locateinkent.com*

- 12.5 However, the road network can be a mixed blessing. Currently Borough Green suffers from a high level of congestion through the village. The planned by-pass is designed to eradicate this traffic from the village centre but funding is not a priority for Kent County Council. The by-pass is particularly important to Borough Green because of the nature of the heavy industry that takes place on its outskirts. This activity generates an excessive level of HGV traffic from local industry through the village's small roads, which is exacerbated by the A25 and the A227 trunk roads carrying large volumes of other traffic that has increased since the opening of the Channel Tunnel.

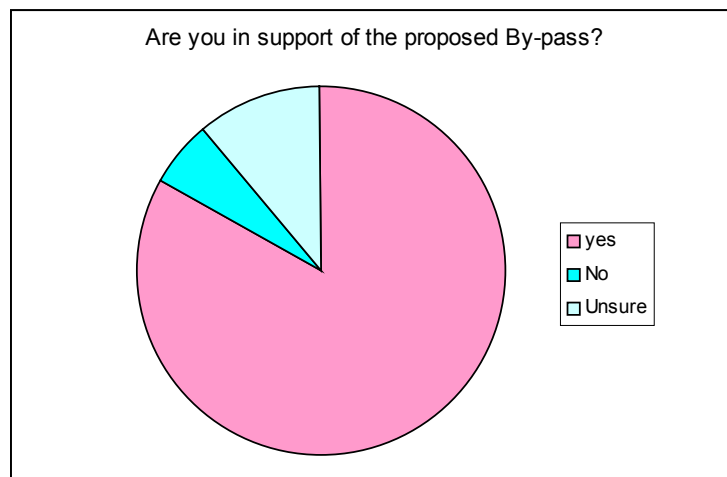


*Photograph:  
Truck typical  
of those that  
travel  
through  
Borough  
Green*

12.6 Since the Bypass Planning Permission was found to have lapsed during the H+H Celcon Factory planning inquiry, KCC have promised to fund a new application. However, as KCC and the Government refuse to fund the project, the only option would be developer funding from mass housing schemes, and there is a growing consensus against that option, and our village is strongly supported by its neighbours in calling for a Publicly Funded Scheme.

12.7 The scheme has been identified by the vast majority of residents as the single biggest way in which the environment in the village can be improved.

12.8 The residents' opinion can be seen in the graph below:



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire

12.9 When asked if they were in favour of the proposed by-pass (even if this might mean a larger Celcon factory) respondents to the Residents' Questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive. Indeed, a massive 83% of the respondents stated they would support the proposed by-pass. This result is not surprising given that a bypass would ease problems of congestion caused by through traffic, and also given the high car dependency of the survey respondents.

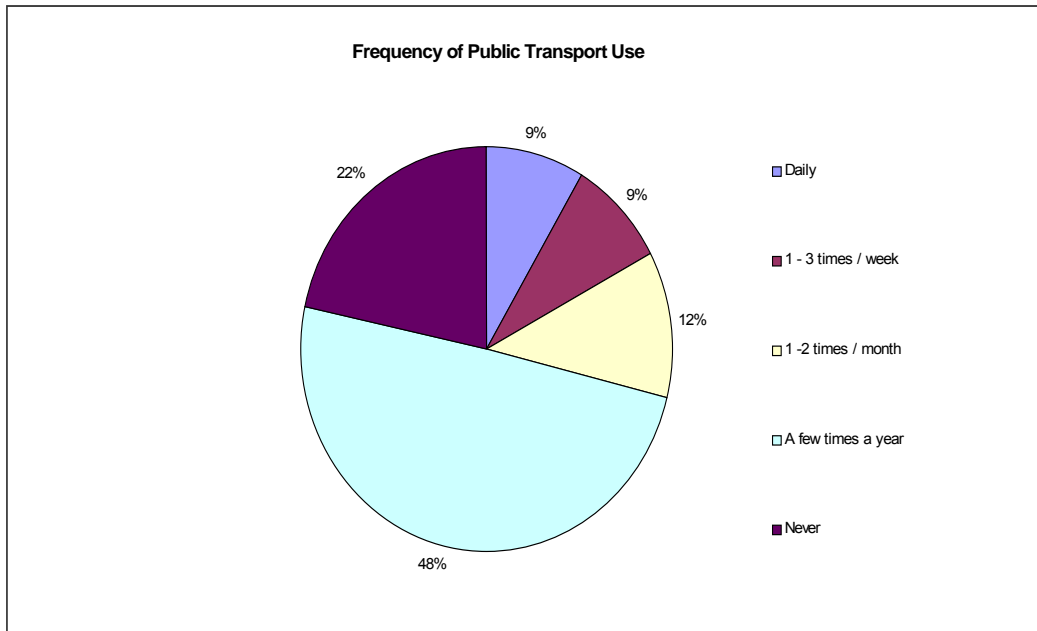
12.10 The proposed by-pass around Borough Green is undoubtedly the key traffic and transport issue among residents. In the comments section of the survey, a total of 191 respondents referred directly to the need for a bypass, and another 112 inferred the need for one by commenting on the necessity to reduce the volume and / or slow down through-traffic.

### **Parking**

- 12.11 One major issue of contention for residents of Borough Green is the level of parking provision, which many consider insufficient. From anecdotal evidence it appears that many commuters using the station use the village car parks (such as the Village Hall car park), with the result that they are full throughout the day. This forces cars to park on the road, often at dangerous junctions, causing bottlenecks on the main roads through the Village. This in turn adds to the congestion of the village and the poor local environment. The Women's Institute in particular has found this a problem as it meant they could not park near the Village Hall on the day of their market.
- 12.12 Recent initiatives, such as a 3hour limit in the Village Hall carpark and a Residents only parking scheme, have made major improvements in the centre of the village, but have served to move the commuter parking problems to outlying streets. TMBC are monitoring and will revisit regularly.
- 12.13 Respondents of the Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire were asked whether they thought that parking provision in Borough Green is adequate (yes, no or not sure). Just over half (52%) of the respondents indicated that parking provision is adequate, although 40% indicated that it is not adequate, and a further 8% were unsure.
- 12.14 35 respondents commented that parking in the village is often poor and inconsiderate. This is clearly a matter of concern, possibly increasing the likelihood of accidents, and certainly adding to the congestion problems of the village. Furthermore, 32 people suggested that taking measures to deal with poor or illegal parking, perhaps through the use of wardens, should be made a priority in the village.

### **Public Transport**

- 12.15 Respondents to the Residents' Questionnaire were asked how often they make use of local public transport. As the pie chart below shows, the majority of respondents use public transport rarely, if at all. This finding underlines the apparent dependence of the households in the village on private transport.
- 12.16 Furthermore, 22% of respondents never use public transport, and a further half of all respondents only use public transport a few times a year. Only 18% of respondents might be considered 'regular' users of public transport, stating that they use it daily (9%) or weekly (9%).



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire

### Buses

12.17 The village benefits from several bus services run by Arriva connecting the village to the surrounding towns and villages. These include; West Malling (No. 70), Lunsford Park (No. 70,) Ditton (No. 70), Tonbridge (No. 222) and Bluewater (no. 308). These services are vital for various groups of people in the community such as the elderly and school children. However none of the services run with a frequency of more than one per hour with some two-hourly or only run at school times. Arriva have recently severely curtailed the 70 bus, such that it is now virtually impossible for residents to access our County Town or Maidstone Hospital. Ongoing discussions are hoped to remedy this.

### Trains

12.18 Borough Green is fortunate enough to have a train station, providing links to the South East rail network. The rail operator provides a service to London Victoria, and the journey takes 45 minutes and runs every half an hour. This makes Borough Green popular with commuters from an increasingly wide area, with the consequence that the service suffers badly from lack of passenger capacity. The station car park is used to capacity during the week. The junction of the approach to the station (shown overleaf) and the A227 is viewed by users as dangerous, particularly given recent changes to the right of way at a nearby bend.

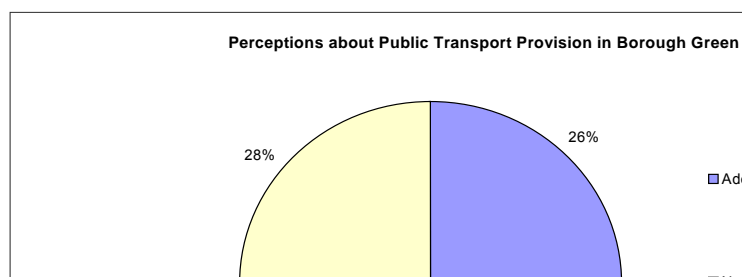


*Photograph: Borough Green and Wrotham Station*

12.19 The above photograph shows Borough Green and Wrotham Station. The Co-op has a shop adjacent to the station, which exacerbates traffic problems, especially around school-run times on this busy junction.

**Views about Public Transport Provision**

12.20 Respondents were asked whether they thought that public transport provision in Borough Green is sufficient (yes, no or not sure). Close to half (48%) of respondents believe public transport provision in Borough Green is insufficient. Just over a quarter, on the other hand, believe it is adequate, with the remaining 28% unsure. This is supported by over 40 comments, which made reference to the paucity of public transport at weekends.



*Source: Borough Green Residents Questionnaire*

### **Air**

- 12.22 The closest airport to Borough Green is Gatwick in West Sussex, which can be reached by car in 40 minutes to an hour. Heathrow can also be reached in an hour to an hour and a half, both largely dependent on the M25 traffic.

### **Channel Tunnel and Eurostar**

- 12.23 Borough Green's location gives it access to the Eurostar routes and the Channel Tunnel via Ashford International Station is just 35 minutes, and it is an easy journey to Ashford International by train. Ashford International was recently removed from the Eurostar timetable, but reinstated after fierce public protests. Frequent interruptions to cross-channel services trigger Operation Stack, which closes the M20, and makes much of that part of Kent inaccessible.

### **Summary**

- 12.19 The residents' questionnaire provides a useful summary of the key issues that are of concern to residents in terms of transport. These can be ranked as follows:

#### **Transport Priorities:**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
1	Construct the bypass	191
2	Slow down or reduce through traffic	112
3	Road safety issues	60
4	Enforcement of speed restrictions	36
5	Deal with poor and illegal parking	32
6	Repair and maintenance of roads and footpaths	12
7	Better public transport on Sundays and in the evenings	11
8	Revert the junction of High St and Western Road to the old layout	11

**ACTION PLAN**      **The overarching concern of the village is the need for the Borough Green and St Mary's Platt A25 Bypass. Some 10 years ago this bypass was considered by KCC to be the most environmentally-desirable bypass in the whole of Kent.**

- (a) The Parish Council will support any Public initiative for the construction of this bypass but not to any perceived detriment to the village. The bypass should accommodate access to the CEMEX pit (formerly RMC).**
- (b) The Haul Road should be adopted by the KCC in order to complete access to the southwest of the village.**
- (c) The Station should be refurbished to bring it at least into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**
- (d) .We urge TMBC to revisit the parking plan at its earliest opportunity to alleviate the problems caused by displaced commuter parking.**

## 13. Neighbours

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13.1 Borough Green does not stand in isolation and is greatly impacted by and impacts upon its neighbouring Parishes. The links between Borough Green and its neighbouring Parishes are particularly important for two reasons. Firstly, following the re-warding of Tonbridge and Malling, the ward of Borough Green has been enlarged to include the Parishes of Platt, Plaxtol and Shipbourne is known as Borough Green and Longmill. Secondly, outlying Villages are reliant on the services provided in Borough Green. People travel to the Village for its shops, doctors, schools etc, and the future of the Village will therefore impact on those from a far wider area.

An example of the impact people from other parishes have is when they visit Borough Green to shop or use facilities such as the banks. They almost always travel by private car and thus exacerbate traffic and parking problems. Yet, in some cases, the same people object to the bypass proposals, in part because the road will be constructed in their parishes due to the small size of Borough Green parish.

It is heartening to note that Wrotham Parish Council has now publicised support in its minutes for "a publicly funded bypass"

### Ightham

13.2 Ightham Parish has a population of 1700 people, an area of 924 hectares and provides 400 jobs (1998). It is a relatively affluent Parish, as is demonstrated in the Indices of Deprivation 2000 (with rank 1 being the most deprived ward in England), Ightham was ranked 7950 out of 8414 English wards, compared to Borough Green that was ranked at 7904.

### Wrotham

13.3 Wrotham Parish is home to 1900 people, has an area of 1382 hectares and provides 400 local jobs. In the Indices of Deprivation Wrotham is placed at 6147 in the country.

**ACTION** The Parish Council proposes strengthening the Parish Alliance to enable closer  
**PLAN** co-operation between all the local parishes

## 14. Retail / Leisure

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### Shops

14.1 As a rural local centre Borough Green has a good supply of shops. These include the following;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two banks,</li> <li>• Three hairdressers,</li> <li>• Gift shop,</li> <li>• Newsagent,</li> <li>• Optician,</li> <li>• Charity shop,</li> <li>• Two Funeral directors,</li> <li>• Dry cleaners,</li> <li>• Chemist,</li> <li>• Solicitors,</li> <li>• Post Office,</li> <li>• Household Goods,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antique/video shop,</li> <li>• Three estate agents,</li> <li>• Beauty salon,</li> <li>• Nail beautician,</li> <li>• Jewellers,</li> <li>• DIY shop,</li> <li>• Photographic shop,</li> <li>• Lawnmower shop,</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Car dealership,</li> <li>• Florist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off licence,</li> <li>• Bakery,</li> <li>• Two grocers,</li> <li>• Greengrocer,</li> <li>• Butcher,</li> <li>• 2 Indian restaurants</li> <li>• Five fast food outlets:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Fish &amp; Chips</li> <li>2 Chinese</li> <li>1 Kebab</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A visiting fishmonger</li> </ul>
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14.2 Borough Green has several fast food outlets, which include two fish and chip shops. Some local retailers are anxious about the trend for vacant shop outlets to be converted to this use as they predominantly serve the night-time economy and so limit passing trade during the day and create traffic and parking problems. In general retailers view trade in the Village as steady, but would like greater diversity to attract more people. The survey identified that a haberdashery was needed.

14.3 An issue of sadness for many in the village is the loss of Clokes (“the Harrods of Kent”), a shop that catered for a wide-variety of needs. This means that certain goods now need to be purchased from outside the village.



*Photograph: Borough Green High Street.*

- 14.4 The above photograph shows the main shopping High street in Borough Green, with the former Clokes store in the foreground to the right of the photograph which is now Pimmy's Pizza and Italian Restaurant. The other main shopping street is Western Road shown below. This road has a mix of uses, including the Catholic Church (the former Village Hall), car show room, hardware store, the fire station and residential.



*Photograph: Western Road*

#### **Local Views on Shopping and Leisure in the village**

- 14.5 In the Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate the current provision of amenities in the village. The results show that just over two-thirds (68%) of the respondents believe that the village's shops and services meet their needs. However, over a quarter (28%) of the respondents believe they do not, with only 4% uncertain about the issue.
- 14.6 Respondents were asked to identify any additional shops, services and facilities that they would wish to see introduced to Borough Green. It is evident that there are a wide variety of amenities that respondents wished to see introduced in the village, including a clothes shop, takeaways and fishmongers. However, the only amenity mentioned by more than 10% of respondents was a clothes or shoe shop, with 17% of all respondents wishing to see one of either in the village.
- 14.7 Behind these, a broadly similar demand among the respondents was apparent for food retailers (7%), a haberdashery (6%), entertainment such as a video shop or cinema (5%), and some form of food outlet such as a takeaway or pub (5%). 8 respondents specifically mentioned the lack of a good public house to act as a meeting place or somewhere to eat. None of the existing public houses seem to satisfy this need.

- 14.8 14 respondents mentioned the poor balance and variety of shops. The main complaint appears to be that there are too many takeaways and estate agents in the village. In addition, 17 respondents mentioned the level of litter created by fast food outlets.

#### **Shopping Further Afield**

- 14.9 For those in Borough Green wishing to make a bigger shopping trip, the main shopping destinations are Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Bluewater, Tunbridge Wells and Bromley.

#### **Pubs**

- 14.10 Borough Green has a two pubs:

- Henry Simmonds, Wrotham Road
- The Black Horse, Maidstone Road

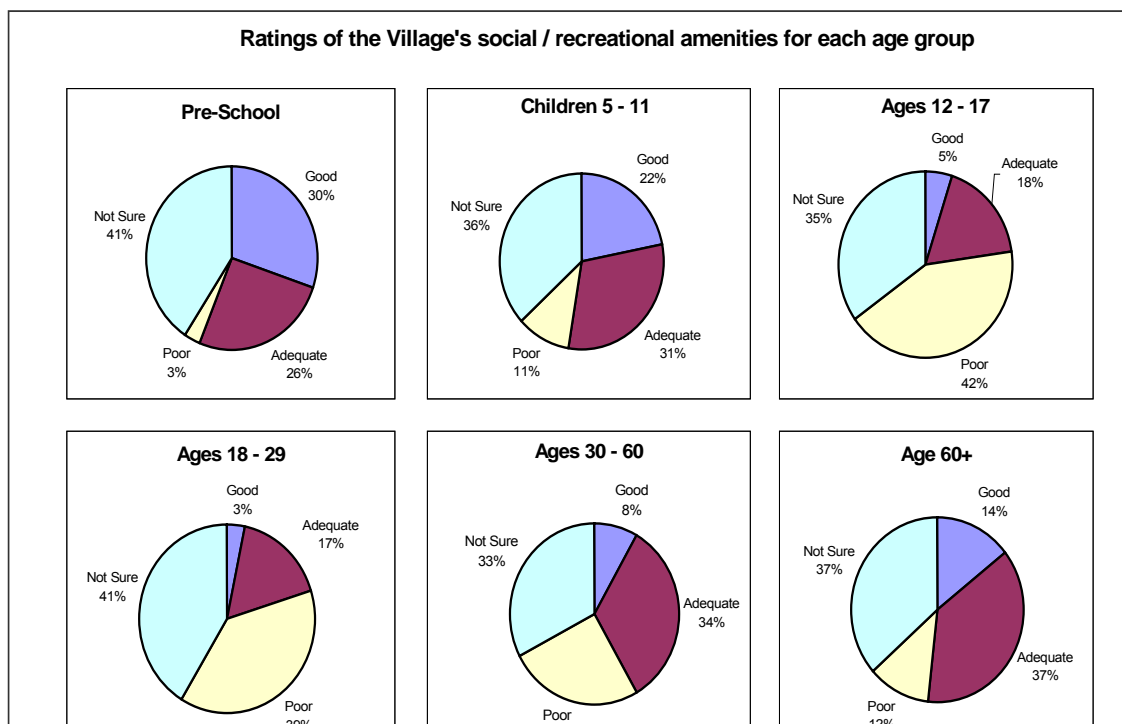
#### **Leisure Facilities**

- 14.11 There is currently a lack of leisure activities for local people available within the Village. Local Headmasters of the schools have flagged this up as a particular problem for the young people of the village. As discussed in the Community Facilities Section, this is being addressed through the youth drop-in centre and the Skate Park. However, if residents in the village wish to take part in activities such as swimming, bowling, cinema etc they have to travel to Maidstone or Sevenoaks. Tonbridge is mainly inaccessible.

#### **Opinion according to age**

- 14.12 The residents' questionnaire provided information on the ability of the current leisure facilities on offer in the village to cater for different age groups. Respondents were asked to rate the local amenities available for six particular age groups (pre-school, 5-11, 12-17, 18-29, 30-60 and 60+). The results are shown in the following charts.

**Ratings of the Village's social/recreational amenities for each age group**



Source: Borough Green Residents' Questionnaire

- 14.13 Respondents rate the village's social and recreational amenities very differently according to the age group in question. Broadly speaking, respondents rated the village's amenities most favourably for younger children, with only 3% and 11% of respondents stating that facilities were 'poor' for the pre-school and 5-11 age group respectively.
  
- 14.14 Facilities in the village for those of 60+ were rated fairly well, with over 50% of respondents indicating that they are either good (14%) or adequate (37%). Only 12% rated the Parish's facilities as poor.
  
- 14.15 Social and recreational facilities are rated as the poorest for the teenage and young adult residents of Borough Green. For both the 12-17 and 18-29 age groups, a tiny minority rated amenities as good, with respectively 42% and 41% of respondents rating facilities as 'poor' for these age groups

- ACTION PLAN**
- (a) Whilst the spread of types of retail facilities in the present is quite comprehensive, there is a need to maintain variety and the Parish Council would look to the Planning Authority to assist in maintaining or perhaps extending it.
  - (b) The Parish Council would not wish to see retail activity eroded in the central core of the village with change of use permissions.
  - (c) The Parish Council will seek to ensure that retail development is centred solely in the existing retail centre, and would discourage development that could upset the delicate retail balance we currently enjoy
  - (d) It is very clear that the lack of leisure facilities in the village is felt by all age groups, some of these concerns are being addressed, see 9, but there is only so much that a local authority can do – apart from providing them. Given the opportunities, we could give support to any group wishing to get things moving. Witness the support that we are giving to the initiatives brought forward by the youth in the community.

## 15. Environment and Urban Design.

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- 15.1 Borough Green is generally considered to be one of the less attractive villages in Kent. This is due to the level of industry and quarries on its outskirts and the level of traffic congestion through its streets. The village faces comparison from the neighbouring villages of Platt and Ightham that are considered to be much prettier. Indeed, the character of Borough Green has been affected by the fact that it provides the bulk of services to neighbouring villages, and as a result has a higher volume of traffic while surrounding villages remain quieter and more protected.

### **Village Character**

- 15.2 The village has a mix of different buildings of varying ages. They include listed buildings (see below) and a large amount of post war properties when the Village was designated for expansion due to the railway line and growing local business. The Parish is built-up compared with its neighbours, and the large amount of quarry land further acts to detrimentally affect the overall appearance of the village. The village does, however, have a number of buildings of note including the Old Manor House and the railway station. There is only limited open space accessible to the public within the Parish Boundary with portions of only two public footpaths.

### **Listed Buildings**

- 15.3 Borough Green contains a number of listed buildings, including the following;
- 77 Maidstone Road –Grade II listed. 18<sup>th</sup> century house.
  - Whiffens Farmhouse – Grade II listed. 16<sup>th</sup> century Farmhouse (much altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century)
  - Fourways House, Maidstone Road – Grade II listed house dated 1751.
  - Red Lion Public House, Sevenoaks Road – Grade II listed. Public House part dated from 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - 33-41 (odd) Sevenoaks Road – Grade II listed. 18<sup>th</sup> century row of Cottages
  - 89 Station Road – Grade II listed cottage. Fragment of 16<sup>th</sup> century Hall House.
  - The Old Manor House, Wrotham Road – Grade II listed. 16<sup>th</sup> century Farmhouse
  - 53-59 (odd) Wrotham Road – Grade II listed. Row of cottages dated from 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.

- Two Barns with attached outbuildings at Borough Green House – Grade II listed. One barn dated 17<sup>th</sup> century one dated 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3 Rock Road – Grade II listed. Former outbuilding and cottage, later cottage and apple store, dated early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Buildings and Areas of Historic or Character Importance**
- Quarry Hill, including the Parish Church Hall (1875) Mafeking Oak, terraced cottages and extending into Rock Road, again with terraced cottages.
- High St with its mix of early dwellings converted to retail, and its Victorian purpose built shops on the west side. The street is also enhanced by early cottages , the Baptist Chapel and the small terrace in the centre.
- The Black Horse PH with its original 16<sup>th</sup> century section remaining since its post war rebuilding.
- Western Rd terraces,, including Orchard Cottage, the sole remaining building from the original farm.
- Station Rd and Spencers cottages, early terraced cottages built for quarry labour.
- Sunnyside Cottages on Sevenoaks Rd.
- Memorial Pavilion and Gateposts, Maidstone Rd Recreation Ground.
- Sevenoaks Rd, Mews cottage adjacent Red Lion, and West Bank Lodge.

### **Village Initiatives**

- 15.4 There have been initiatives in the past to try and improve the appearance of the village. For example hanging baskets are used each year to help to soften the appearance of the village. Other measures that could be considered are parking restrictions, pavement improvements, increased signage, traffic calming, seating, ensuring the upkeep of buildings and enhancing the consistency of road furniture.
- 15.5 A particular success has been the negotiation and construction of the footpath from Fairfield to the Station Carpark, allowing residents access to the Station and Coop without the hazards of the main Wrotham Rd.
- 15.6 The Parish Council has funded a project using its own staff and volunteers to provide extra saltbins and salt supplies for areas in the village that are vulnerable during icy weather

### **County Design Guidance**

- 15.7 To aid Villages and local Councils with matters of urban design, Kent County Council has produced design guidance for the types of new development it would like to see created.
- 15.8 The main themes that can be drawn from this guidance include the use of the following:
- Compactness of the village centre
  - Mix of dwelling types found
  - Range of employment, leisure and community facilities available
  - High standards of urban design needed
  - Access to open space and green places required
  - Ready access to public transport to reduce pressure on land for highway and parking requirements needs to be protected
- 15.9 It is clear that the County Council wishes to see “density and diversity” as the main axiom of new development. However it stresses that it is sensitive to the need for respecting local character and the requirement to draw visual “clues” from surrounding development. (Information taken from *www.rudi.net* relating to Design Guidance in Kent).

## 16. Governance

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- 16.1 The overall governance of Borough Green Parish is made up of several tiers. At the County level Kent County Council has jurisdiction, with Borough Green coming under the West Kent Area of the County. This includes Kent County Council's jurisdiction as the Minerals Authority.
- 16.2 At the District level, Borough Green is within the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council area.
- 16.3 The most local and immediate form of representation is the local Parish Council. Traditionally, the Parish Council has limited powers to make any real change for the Community. However, under the Rural White Paper, it is now envisaged that a new and expanded role for Parish Councils will be forged, which would allow rural communities to "play a much bigger part in the running of their own affairs". The production of this Parish Plan is the first step towards realising this new role.

As well as this hierarchy of governance the parish is also subject to influence from other government agencies. These include; SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency (who have already had a hand in improving the Village by funding this report) and the CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England).

## 17. Summary of Planning Issues Affecting the Parish

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### Planning Policy

- 17.1 As detailed above, the district of Tonbridge and Malling covers Borough Green. Consequently, planning decisions made in the Parish will be subject to the Tonbridge and Malling Local Development Framework. The Tonbridge and Malling Local Development Framework was 'adopted' in September 2008.
- 17.2 Local Development Frameworks (LDF)s are the Government's new approach to local plan preparation.
- 17.3 Below is a list of the planning issues in the adopted Local Development Framework (2008) that directly relate to the Parish.

### Retail

- 17.4 Borough Green is designated as a Rural Local Centre in Policy 6/20 (a), therefore retail uses are permitted in this area. Changes of use to non-retail on the ground floor in established retail areas will not be permitted. This is designed to preserve the critical mass and shopping character of the centre of the Village.

### Landscape

- 17.5 Policy 3/7 highlights that the village is close to an area of Local Landscape Importance, the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Development that would harm the character of this area will not be permitted.

### Damaged Land

- 17.6 The Parish contains several quarries and sandpits. Therefore certain areas of land will require restoration to enhance the amenity and aesthetic quality of the area. Three such areas are stated in the old Local Plan Policy 3/10 as requiring attention within the plan period.
- a) Joco Pit: requires restoration in association with neighbouring quarries. This is to ensure the protection of amenities at Wrotham School and residential areas. This pit has recently been disturbed by the owners, destroying a natural process of re-growth of trees etc, and diverting the course of the River Bourne tributary.
  - b) Isles Quarry: Restoration almost complete. Under the new LDF Core Strategy Isles Quarry West is to be removed from Greenbelt protection and allocated by TMBC for construction of 200 houses, including 80 affordable homes. All commercial Lawful development Certificates and potential for employment will be lost.
  - c) Borough Green Sandpit: restoration to a use that is appropriate within the Green Belt, which will include uses such as land to be used for agriculture, open space or

countryside recreation activities – a process that will start shortly and continue for many years.

### **Areas of Historic Character**

- 17.7 Policy 4/7 classes Quarry Hill in Borough Green as an area of historic interest. This is the historic core of the village and has many listed buildings in a close knit built form around a triangular road pattern. Therefore, any development proposals will need to take account of its special character and any development that fails to do so will not be granted planning permission. This Policy is designed to preserve the areas and prevent any new development that may be detrimental to the historic nature of the area.

### **Employment Areas**

- 17.8 The Parish contains some areas that are considered appropriate for employment development. However this is only subject to there being no adverse impact upon local residential areas. Potential areas in Borough Green include:

- Isles Quarry West, now re allocated for housing in the LDF, but with a loss of several established businesses.
- Hornet Site

- 17.9 These areas may provide new employment opportunities and add to the diversity of the village. However, it should be ensured that any new development is both sympathetic to its surroundings and does not have any adverse impacts.

### **Rural Affordable Housing**

- 17.10 The Borough Council is attempting to increase the rate of affordable housing in rural areas with Policy 9/7. This could be applicable to Borough Green because, as discussed in the Housing section of this report, house prices have increased recently and there are an insufficient number of houses for sale for local workers and young people. . The Parish Council is very aware that the land-take for “affordable housing” has not made any contribution towards housing local people.

### **Sites within the Green Belt suitable for infilling**

- 17.11 Long Pond Works in Borough Green has been identified by the local plan as being appropriate for infilling as stated in Policy 6/7. However, this is on the condition that “development does not, individually or cumulatively with other development, result in a major increase in the developed proportion of the site, exceed the height of existing buildings, or lead to any greater impact on the Green Belt than existing development”.

## Transport

- 17.12 The contentious issue of the Borough Green and Platt Bypass is discussed in the Local Plan. Policy 7/7 acts to safeguard land from development that may prejudice implementation of proposed road schemes. This suggests the bypass is still on the agenda and that, at least at the Borough level, there is commitment to it should funding become available.

## Villagers Oppose Further Development

- 17.13 Nearly half of all respondents (52%) and the largest majority, called for a halt to any more development, saying that the capacity of services is already stretched, and residential development is slowly taking over all the available space. The healthiest level of support is for retail and leisure developments, with the backing of 83% of respondents. Small groups of new housing (40%) and small businesses development (55%) also received a moderate level of support.
- 17.14 It is important to note that “Affordable Housing” in this context means “houses that we can afford to buy”, not the Planners euphemism for social housing or assisted purchase.

	Votes	Percentage of 472
<b>No New Development</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Retail/Leisure</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Small Businesses</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Small Housing Development</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Industrial Premises</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Offices</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sand/Gravel Extraction</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>Large Housing Development</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.7</b>

*Source Borough Green Village Questionnaire*

- 17.15 Other developments, such as office development (14%), sand extraction (7.6%), and, importantly, large housing estates (1.7)% received very low levels of support. Furthermore, it is notable that over a half (52%) of respondents stated that they would rather preserve the status quo in the Parish with no development of any type occurring. No new development received the backing of over 52 % of respondents.
- 17.16 The level of residential development was an issue for a number of respondents. 21 respondents thought that the village is overdeveloped for the capacity of services, and the same number felt that residential development was taking over previously available open spaces. Four respondents were also concerned at the poor ambience on the approach to and within the village, and six respondents were concerned at preserving the ‘green’ areas of the village. A total of 18 respondents commented that there should

be no further residential or commercial development in the village. However, the need for more affordable housing was highlighted as a priority in comments made by 12 respondents.

- 17.17 The desire for retail and leisure developments (83%) in Borough Green may be hard to reconcile with the strong support for traffic reduction, highlighted in the previous section, as the provision of additional services in the village may serve to heighten the congestion problems so many respondents want to reduce. Careful siting of any facilities would be needed to ensure easy access to the road network.

## Summary of the Main Problems affecting the Parish

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### **Bypass and Traffic**

- 18.1 The major issue mentioned by the majority of people contacted regardless of their interest in the village, is the rising volume of traffic through the village's small streets. This is a particular problem given the nature of the traffic generated by local business such as the quarries and H+H Celcon.
- 18.2 The proposed bypass is the greatest single way of improving the quality of life in Borough Green, but proper connectivity to the M26/M25 at Sevenoaks could help.

### **Car Parking**

- 18.3 Linked to the above point on the growth of traffic in the village is the similar growth in car parking problems. This problem stems from two causes. Firstly, Borough Green Station attracts commuters from a wide area; therefore many people will park their cars near to the station before commuting to work. This not only fills the Station car park but also the village centre car parks and many surrounding side roads, preventing them from being used by residents, shoppers and those travelling in to use the many local services. Recent Changes in parking strategy are beginning to solve these problems
- 18.4 Borough Green's many services and their popularity is the second issue. As the village caters for many of the basic services of a much wider area, it has a great number of people travelling to the village by private car, all of whom will be looking for places to park.
- 18.5 Bus routes between nearby villages and Borough Green could also be publicised more actively to give people a viable transport option other than their car, but is hampered by transport companies failing to obtain subsidy for these services .It is significant that our main town of Tonbridge is virtually inaccessible from Borough Green except by car.

### **Young People and Leisure Facilities**

- 18.6 . A lack of youth activities in the village had caused serious problems in the past with youth crime. The youth drop-in centre served a local need to combat problems associated with youth disaffection, but that impetus needs to be maintained. The scheme, along with partnership working between the Police and Wardens, Parish, TMBC, and Russet Homes, assisted no doubt by demographics, has resulted in a noticeable lessening of the problems in the 6 years the Drop-in Centre has been open.
- 18.7 The skateboard park would also address the current lack of activities for young people in the village. This should be promoted as a constructive leisure activity for young people to get involved in..

- 18.8 There is a severe lack of access to green space within the Parish. This could be addressed at both IQW & E

#### **House Prices and Demographics**

- 18.9 Borough Green, as with much of the South East and indeed the rest of the country, has seen a rise in house prices in recent years. This is pushing out first time buyers in the market who can no longer afford to get on the first rung of the property ladder, potentially in the village they grew up in. This changes the demographic profile of the village with generally only older and more affluent people being able to afford property in the village, creating on average an ageing population. This has knock-on affects for the types of services that will be demanded and even the viability of the primary school.
- 18.10 To combat this problem, new housing schemes in the area with an element of affordable homes should be reserved for local needs, and extreme pressure bought to bear on Housing Associations to follow a "locals first" policy

#### **Village Design and Environment**

- 18.11 Borough Green has often been criticised as an unattractive village. The major way of enhancing the attractiveness of the village would be for the bypass to be built and so take congestion off the roads. This would then eradicate noise and pollution issues as well as making walking around the village easier, safer and more pleasant.
- 18.12 Borough Green should also consider other smaller measures such as street furniture, lighting, planting and clear signage to improve legibility of the area. This would contribute to the character of the village and the feeling of safety for locals and visitors alike.
- 18.13 New developments should be designed to ensure they not only 'fit into' their surrounding area, but that they actively enhance the built environment to create areas of character and distinction. Borough Green has a number of listed buildings and areas of real character - these should be protected **against** future development.

### Local Opinion

18.14 The residents' questionnaire found the following issues were highlighted as negative aspects to living in the Village.

Rank	Priority	Number of Respondents
1	Volume and speed of traffic	273
2	Poor public transport on Sundays and weekends	45
3	Bored teenagers and 'yob' culture	43
4	Poor and inconsiderate parking	35
5	Need for safe road crossings	27
6	Pedestrian safety in Western Road and High Street	25
7	Noise and dirt pollution	25
8	Village is overdeveloped for the capacity of services	21
9	Poor footpaths	21
10	Available open spaces taken by too many new houses	21

18.15 However, this was tempered by the questionnaire drawing out the many positive aspects to living in the Village, these were found to be the following:

Rank	Priority	Number of Respondents
1	Friendliness and community spirit	249
2	Good public transport and access to the road network	184
3	Range of shops and amenities	128
4	Proximity to attractive countryside	75
5	Easy access to larger centres	30
6	Schools and churches	28
7	Medical and dental services	28
8	Range of activities available	21