

# Maresfield Parish – The Next 10 to 15 Years

## Report on Survey carried out Spring 2021

**This survey was carried out using Survey Monkey after all households in the Parish (addresses taken from latest Electoral Register) received a flyer inviting them to go on line and complete the survey. The survey was also publicised in the three village/parish magazines, on social media and on the Parish Council’s web site. The questions were based on those included in the previous survey carried out in 2013 and its purpose is to update the NDP Steering Group of changes in attitude towards local development.**

**The introduction to the survey was as follows: -**

*Wealden District Council is preparing a new Local Plan which may be ready in draft form in Spring 2022. In view of Wealden's latest housing targets and central government pressure the number of new homes allocated for development in Maresfield Parish is very likely to be considerably in excess of the 50 allocated in the 2013 Core Strategy. Because of the restrictions imposed by the Ashdown Forest new development is unlikely to be allowed in Fairwarp or in most of Nutley.*

*This Survey will be used to inform our new Neighbourhood Development Plan being prepared by the Parish Council. If approved this Plan will be the primary planning document for the Parish until at least 2032 so your views will carry real weight.*

**Responses:** There were 201 responses to this survey as follows: -

Fairwarp	21
Maresfield	103
Nutley	77

A higher response from Maresfield is not unexpected as this village is where any future new development is likely to be located.

**Q1 & 2 Length of Residence in the Parish:** Some 34% of responding households have lived in the Parish for over 20 years, 27% for between 10 and 19 years, 17% for between 5 and 9 years and 22% for between 0 and 4 years.

However, for Maresfield responses the spread is more even at 27% for all the groupings except for the 5 to 9 years at 19% suggesting that in Maresfield at least many new as well as old residents have views or concerns over future development.

**Q3 Age ranges of persons in responding households:** The responding households accounted for 472 residents of whom 216 were aged between 18 and 64 and 205 were 65 and over. This suggests that responding households were heavily weighted towards adults and elderly adults households rather than households with children. Maresfield responses

accounted for 228 residents of whom 94 were 18 to 64 and 108 were 65 or over – a similar pattern.

**Q4 Appetite for recommending sites in our NDP:** Overall 80% of responders agreed or strongly agreed that our NDP should include a combination of Affordable Housing, Free Market Housing and housing for older persons. At least a majority of responses supported agreed or strongly agreed each of those three categories of housing development.

**Q5 Self-build housing ambition:** Of the 202 responses 7 were very likely to design and build their own home over next 15 years – 11 likely, 35 unlikely and 149 very unlikely. This suggests that we should make some modest provision for self-build in our NDP.

**Q6 New development design features:** Scoring was as follows: -

	Essential or Important	Not Important
Traditional Design/Village Character	84%	9%
Sustainable/ECO friendly	91%	6%
Modern Design style	25%	64%
Site layout and Density	85%	1%
Provision of Garages	76%	20%
Size of Garden	74%	19%

(The balances of responders to 100% indicated that they did not have an opinion.)

**Q7 Other development potential policies:** There was over whelming support for policies requiring infrastructure to be in place before development commences (87%), for policies requiring creation or enhancement of community facilities (81%), for policies requiring adequate parking in addition to garages (85%) and for policies not permitting access to new developments of more than 30 homes through existing residential developments (77%).

**Q8 The importance of various criteria when identifying (assessing) sites was as follows: -**

	Strongly Agreed Or Agreed
Delivery of new public access open spaces	76%
Delivery of new or enhanced community facilities	77%
The proximity of the new development to Existing local facilities	68%

The ease of access to main utilities

81%

Maresfield responders strongly agreeing or agreeing to the first two items above were 83% and 81%.

**Q9 There were 137 responses giving additional comments on housing development of which 74 came from Maresfield responders. These comments covered principally the following subjects/issues: -**

Road Safety and traffic calming measures. Road noise, speeding

Construction nuisances

Maresfield lacks critical mass to sustain local shops which expansion of village would address

“Supress it at all costs” and “keep it to a minimum” over development

Provide for local community housing needs

Village character paramount

Plans for future medical, schooling to cover development?

Try t o put Affordable Housing in all three villages, not just Maresfield

Dual A22 and Nutley by-pass needed

Keep properties affordable but not cheap and nasty

Too many houses being built in Wealden without necessary infrastructure

Not enough infrastructure in Maresfield to support major development

Preserve open space between MRG and the A22

Trendy designs should be strongly discouraged

Development should be surrounded by areas that support wildlife and trees

Speed up development after approval

No green field development use more brownfield sites

Maintain Maresfield Park low density

Inadequate parking and parking provision on developments

Small developments and infills, vacant properties?

Crammed densities and narrow estate roads

Maresfield is a village – not a suburb of Uckfield

Housing should provide for current community

Keep sports facilities

Small affordable houses have been extended to become “unaffordable”

Nutley needs smaller houses

Developers should fund public transport

Nutley needs more housing to increase numbers in village school

Design developments to be a part of existing community

Danger of large new development breaking down village life

**Q10 Responders were also asked where additional green spaces and leisure facilities could be created and responses included: -**

Enhance cycling paths by upgrading existing footpaths

Clear existing disused sites

Brownfield sites

West of Nutley

Behind the Shell Station

Not in Fairwarp

Area between MRG and the A22

Unused agricultural land

Not required!

Nutley School field (share)

Bell Lane and Nutlin Fruit Farm Nutley

Improve areas beside the MRG children's playground

Open Ashdown Forest to cyclists

Green areas within developments

**Q11 Responders were asked questions regarding the provision of allotments: -** The majority view was for developers to contribute to an allotment scheme run by the Parish Council. However there was some support for the suggestion that new developments should provide allotments and support to a lesser extent that the Parish Council should acquire land (probably through borrowing) for allotments.

**Q12 Asked about the importance of some other planning issues there was overwhelming support for: -**

Preserving the Ashdown Forest

Preserving and maintaining our public footpaths

Restricting development in the AONB

Preserving and enhancing the Maresfield Conservation Area

And slightly less support for providing cycle paths

**Q13&14 When asked about the Leisure Facilities in the Parish: -**

A majority considered that they were satisfactory but significant minorities of respondents considered that those in Nutley (37%) and Maresfield (30%) were in need of extension and/or refurbishment. More notably some 70% of responders indicated that they require improvement for 12 to 17 year olds and 73% said that leisure facilities for the disabled require improvement.

**Q15 When asked for suggestions for what other community facilities could be provided the responses included: -**

Public toilets in Nutley and Maresfield

Maresfield Village Hall needs rebuilding with better parking

Youth Clubs in Nutley and Maresfield

More and varied shops

More dog bins

Maresfield – lunch club for over 60's, Pilates class, history society, volunteer car scheme

Better bus services

Basketball court, tennis court, skateboard rink

Outdoor adult gym equipment

No through roads in Maresfield

More bridleways

Tree planting

Mobile library service

Cycle path through Maresfield

Farmers market in Nutley

Café in Maresfield

Electric car charging points

Bridge Club

Allotments in Nutley

Nutley – Post Office and GP Surgery

Maintained nature reserve

Fairwarp – shop, speed restrictions

Foot bridges across A22 where public footpaths cross this road

Parking in Maresfield

Reduce rat run in Maresfield

Private craft classes

Outreach adult education

Speeding traffic on Straight Half Mile

More seating benches in Maresfield

Upgrade Wellington Gate play area

Maresfield – GP surgery

Buy back Chequers Pub

Improved/replacement sports pavilion – Maresfield

**Q16 Usage of the village shopping facilities:-** In both Maresfield and Nutley usage was remarkably similar with 20% Maresfield and 23% Nutley using these facilities daily or a few times a week. In both villages 30% of responders never used these facilities with the remainder using them just a few times a month.

**Q17 Suggestions for new shops responders would support included: -** Post Office, pub, farm shop, GP surgery, Spa, baker, proper pub in Nutley, tea room, Co-op shop in Nutley (like Forest Row, Greengrocers, chiropody, farm shop and café (in Fairwarp), butcher, hairdresser in Maresfield, Mobile shops, taxi service, small hardware shop, supermarket in Ashdown Business Park,

**Q18 & 19 Questioned about their internet connection and use: -** 81% said their connection was adequate for their needs and a further 5% said they could upgrade. Surprisingly 14% said that their connection was not adequate nor could it be up graded. 45% frequently shop online including their main supermarket food shopping and 38% also regularly shop on line but not for their main supermarket shop.

**Q20 & 21 Running a business from home:-** 16% said they did but the vast majority had no employees.

Of those running a business in the Parish 48% would like better mobile phone reception and 40% better broadband service. Other desirables included better availability of suitable accommodation and IT support.

**Q 22 Asked for any comments on local shops/services: -** Most comments related to inadequate and dangerous parking when accessing local shops in both Nutley and Maresfield. Lack of police visibility and parking/speeding enforcement a recurring issue.

**Q23 – 26 Parish Council subsidy for public and community transport:** - This issue divided responders with 55% in favour (and 45% against) subsidising. And 61% of responders never used a local bus service. Daily usage was 7% and less frequent 5% with infrequent usage at 27%. Bus service usage was predominantly for shopping and visiting friends and family etc.

Other lesser usage was for medical journeys, and educational reasons. The lack of frequency (especially the Nutley service) was cited as the major barrier to using bus services as was their inconvenience over using a car.

**Q27 - 29 Train services were only occasionally used by 85% of responders:** - With a significant minority using the service from East Grinstead (rather than Uckfield or Buxted). Usage was primarily for visiting friends, family or leisure activities but 24% of responders said they used the train for travelling to work. (However, this answer is not really consistent with an answer given to the frequency of use question.) Interestingly two thirds of responders said that they would use the Uckfield line more frequently if it was upgraded but 68% of those were occasional users only.

**Q30** Asked responders for their email addresses which the Parish Council could use to send updates regarding the preparation of the NDP and occasional communications from Maresfield Parish Council. 168 responders gave their email addresses.

