

EYNESHAM AND BARNARD GATE VILLAGE APPRAISAL



Village Appraisal Committee

Chairman: N Hines

Secretary: J Thompson

Members: C Burden, K Cleal, S Cleal, R Elliot, C Greasley, R Green, S Hines, E Hollis, S Lord, M Oakeley, D Rossiter

The Chairman of the Village Appraisal writes:

"The Parish Council have called a meeting tonight to discuss a village appraisal. Do you fancy going?", my wife, Sue, asked me in March 1992. "Why not?", I thought. I had always been keen on getting involved in village affairs so off we went. Little did I know what I was getting myself and the rest of the committee into. Before I knew it I was voted in as chairman, Jane Thompson as Secretary, and a further 11 willing helpers formed the core of the committee. It should be ample I thought. In the end, we needed every available body and a few more.

I would like to apologise personally for the delay in producing the final report and I hope you will find it worthwhile. I would also like to apologise to the residents of Barnard Gate for not being able to show their results separately. It has just not been possible.

There are many people I would like to thank—the committee for their time and effort, all those who helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires, and Eynsham Arts Group who produced the many delightful drawings in the report.

I hope you find the following pages both interesting and informative.

Nick Hines

The Chairman of Eynsham Parish Council writes:

I am pleased to welcome this Report which gives a "snapshot" of our Parish and is both interesting and informative. It is enlivened by the cameo line-drawings, provided by members of the Eynsham Arts Group and snippets of history, some well-known and some not.

The Parish is greatly indebted both to the Committee and all others who have been involved in its production, from the compilation, delivery and collection of the questionnaire, through the many hours of collation of information on the computer, to the final composition and editing. A great deal of work (probably much more than the brave volunteers ever envisaged!) was involved, but the result has been worth the effort.

The Parish Council will carefully study the Report and will consider whether any future courses of action should be followed based on the information revealed. The Report is being delivered to every household in Eynsham Parish, and the Parish Council will welcome any father comments on the matters contained in it.

Please read on—this is your Parish!

Janet C Holland

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Background to Eynsham's Village Appraisal

On Tuesday 24 March 1992 the Parish Council called a meeting of all those who had expressed an interest in helping with the production of a village appraisal for Eynsham and Barnard Gate. Sixteen attended. At that meeting a subcommittee of 12 (see inside cover) was formed; later to become 13. At the first subcommittee meeting Sarah Hall, the Field Officer of the Oxford Rural Community Council, talked to us all on "How to set up a village appraisal"; our thanks go to her for her invaluable advice.

The aims of the appraisal were agreed:

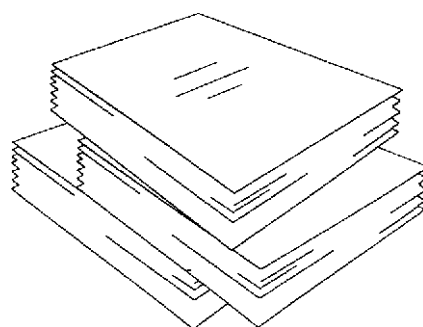
- to produce a report which would be credible and useful to local and central government;
- to review or follow up the report to make sure that all issues raised had been actioned and, if not, to lobby for action;
- to seek out the advantages and deficiencies of the village; further to find out about access to existing facilities not currently available to all;
- to seek out the perceptions of Eynsham's inhabitants to the village, both currently and in the future;
- to assess the needs and the facilities necessary to meet the needs of minority groups;
- to find out specific answers to specific questions.

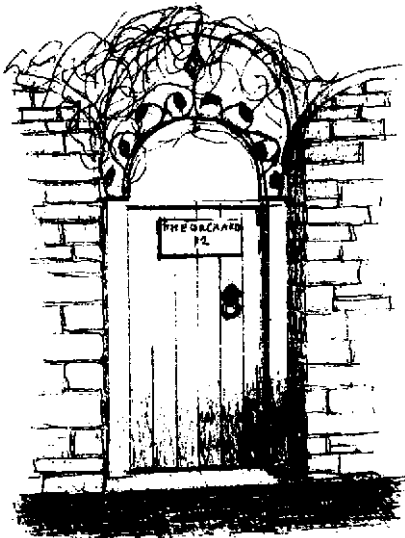
A timetable was set up: assembling a questionnaire for printing by August 1992; circulating and collecting a questionnaire by the end of October 1992; entering data by November 1992; analysing and writing the report by the end of February 1993, ready for the Parish Meeting in April 1993. As you can see, we didn't quite make it.

Assembling the questionnaire, a huge task, was enjoyed by all. We decided to avail ourselves of a computer program produced by the Countryside and Community Research Unit, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, especially designed for village appraisals. It contained a bank of 400 questions and allowed us to have 10 self-written questions. Now our problems began: we had to reconcile our questions with those provided. We finished up with 67 questions after much discussion. The questionnaire was printed, delivered and collected by our deadline of the end of October 1992.

Data entry is always a tedious and time-consuming job; so it proved in our case. Each questionnaire took up to 15mins to enter on the computer, which in total gave us some 180hrs of labour. Five people contributed both computers and time. Steve Lord entered no fewer than 400 questionnaires—an enormous achievement. Others analysed the written comments, which proved to be a valuable source of information.

By comparison with data entry, analysing the results was a comparatively easy task. At first we were all a little disappointed with the results, but now it is all laid out in the report, together with a sheet showing the areas for action, it looks a solid achievement. Our thanks go to all those who have helped us with the various stages of this report.





The Orchard, Queen Street

Rumour has it that the monks at Eynsham Abbey used to frequent Godstow Nunnery, where Henry H sometimes used to date "Fair Rosamund" who is buried there, possibly having been poisoned by Queen Eleanor.

Abbot Godfrey (died 1388) was also known as the "mad monk" because of his obsessive calculations in a survey of Newlands in 1366.



Footbridge in Barnard Gate

Introduction

Eynsham parish lies in the Thames Valley west of Oxford (see map on inside back cover). It consists of Eynsham village, the hamlet of Barnard Gate two miles to the west and the outlying farms. Eynsham village is large by any standards. The parish has a population of 4,769 (1991 Census). Consequently, Eynsham has a wide range of services in comparison with smaller communities. It not only serves the village itself, Barnard Gate and the parish, but the neighbouring communities of Stanton Harcourt, Standlake, Cassington, Freeland and Long and Church Hanborough for education, medical facilities, banking (Barclays Bank unfortunately closed in 1993), post office, shopping and emergency services.

A Brief History of Eynsham

Eynsham is one of the oldest villages in the country. Palaeolithic, Bronze and Iron Age settlements have all been found in the areas around Foxley and City Farms, where there was quite a large Roman settlement. Early settlers chose the site for its firm, well-drained gravel soil, plentiful water supply, and the strategic position of the village which controlled the "Swine Ford" over the Thames. Later the main route from Oxford to the Cotswolds, crossed the Thames at this point. There was also a road via Bladon to the Royal Palace at Woodstock.

The first document which mentions Eynsham was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which reported that in 571 AD there was a battle at Aegonsham (i.e. Aegon's town), in which the Mercian King, Cutha was involved.

Eynsham Abbey

There was probably a chapel or minster on the Abbey site in very early days, and we know there was one in 864. In 1005, a local Lord, Aethelmar gave land for the building of a Benedictine Abbey, south of the village. The Abbey covered a large area of ground and was complete with fish ponds, farms and its own mill. The first Abbot was Aelfric, a famous scholar, and the Abbey became one of the most renowned in southern England. Soon after the Norman Conquest, the monks moved to Stow in Lincolnshire for a time, but returned to Eynsham until the Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538. The remains stood until the 17th century when they were used as a quarry; nearly all the stone was used to help build houses in the village, and the floor tiles for road mending. Many houses in Eynsham are either built of abbey stones or have them embedded in their walls.

Nothing now remains of the abbey above ground level, but the Oxford Archaeological Unit has recently excavated parts of the site, finding the foundations etc of various buildings (see village map for site).

Newlands

In medieval times, it was decided to extend the village and the Abbot drew up a plan for a whole new community to the north of the original area, covering what is now Newland Street and Queen Street (as far as the Queen's Head public house). This was called Newlands. The building where the present White Hart Inn now stands was the Court House, and is probably the oldest building in the village. The eastern boundary of Newlands was the large plot on which the Gables was later built (see also below under "Houses and gardens").

Tilgarsley, Barnard Gate and Freeland

These three hamlets were all originally part of Eynsham. Tilgarsley lay to the north-west of Eynsham; its remains have disappeared and no one is quite sure where it was. It is recorded that 28 people used to live there, but its population was wiped out by the Black Death in 1346, and it was abandoned in 1350.

Barnard Gate (to the west on the A40 and close to where Tilgarsley probably was) remains part of Eynsham. Freeland (containing Eynsham Heath) was originally in Eynsham Parish, but became separated in 1932. Eynsham Hall is now in North Leigh Parish.

Eynsham's Churches

The Parish Church of St Leonard is in the centre of Eynsham. Its oldest part, the south aisle was built in the 13th century and the rest of the church was finished by the end of the 15th century. The church contains many interesting memorials; the oldest is a brass dedicated to one of the earliest vicars, William Emmot, and others show the connection to the village of the Stanley, Bartholomew and Druce families. The Ann Bedwell monument has recently been restored.

The Baptist Chapel was built in 1818; the Wesleyan Chapel (now the Church Hall) in 1884; the Roman Catholic Church (St Peter's) begun in the 1930s was finished in 1967; and the Catholic Apostolic Church, built in the late 19th century, closed in 1982.

Swinford Toll Bridge (or Gate)

Fording the River Thames (or Isis) at Swinford by the old causeway, or by ferry, was extremely dangerous and several people were drowned in the attempt. In 1636 some Welsh sheriffs (taking their ship money to Charles I) were drowned there, others escaping by swimming; and in 1764 John Wesley nearly lost his life there when riding from Oxford to visit friends at Witney. In 1766 the Earl of Abingdon bought the land and ferry, and the Swynford Bridge Act 1767 authorised the Earl to build the bridge, which was opened in 1769.

In modern times efforts have been made to abolish the tolls on the bridge (the road tolls being abolished in 1877), but it would require an Act of Parliament to do so or for the County Council to acquire the bridge. The 1767 Act also provided that "no person or persons shall for gain or reward convey any person or persons, or any carriage or cattle" over the river within two miles of the bridge. A public inquiry into increased tolls for bridge repairs is being held in April 1994.

Markets, Fairs and Inns

There was a weekly Sunday market in medieval times; later the day was moved to Thursday; and in modern times there are still a few stalls on Thursdays, as well as the Women's Institute Market.

There were also "great fairs", often following the St Giles Fair in Oxford, and it was mostly at the markets and fairs that rioting took place. The worst were the Pentecost Riots of 1296, when several Oxford students were killed. In 1344 a conflict between rival abbots brought 1,500 armed men to the Abbey gates. Attempted enclosure of common land led to riots and fence breaking at Twelve Acre Farm in 1615, and there were riots on Eynsham Heath (in Freeland) over enclosure in 1696.

The village still has eight inns or pubs and another at Barnard Gate; the two oldest are the White Hart in Newland Street and the Red Lion in the Square. The latter was originally called the Angel and was a centre for the Vestry Meeting and for cockfighting; it had stabling for 36 horses.

Fires

Twice the village was nearly wiped out by fires, and this accounts for the absence of many thatched cottages. The most recent severe fires occurred at the new Primary School in 1969, and in 1976 at the corner of Station Road and Acre End Street, when a burning hay wagon set fire to adjacent buildings. The old Railway Inn at the same corner caught fire during conversion into flats.



St Leonard's Church



Swinford Tollbridge

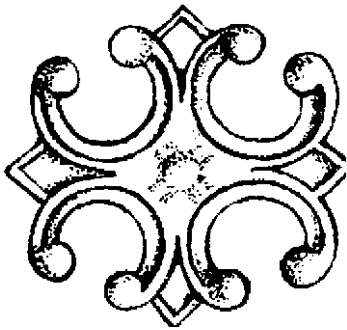
It is possible that there was an earlier wooden toll bridge at Swinford (built in 1752 by Thomas Keen of Hanborough)—the Goodenough Bridge—which according to old records "did not last". Lady de Villiers in her book *Swinford Toll Bridge 1769-1969*, however, describes this wooden bridge as crossing the Chil and Limb brooks, close to the Talbot Inn.



Thatching in Mill Street



The gateway to the Gables



The pectoral cross presented to Stuart Blanch by the villagers in 1966 on his appointment as Bishop of Liverpool. It was designed by Norman Buchanan AWA of Eynsham, from the cross on the gravestone of a medieval abbot of Eynsham, which at one time stood in the Vicarage garden (Blanch was vicar from 1952 to 1957).



Off to school

Eynsham boys used to walk to Witney and get a free ride back by jumping off the train just before it entered Eynsham Station.

Houses, Gardens and Farms

Once a year (in June or July) many gardens in Eynsham are open to the public. Visitors to these are surprised at the number of large and beautiful houses sheltered behind high walls. One of the earliest is the Gables, of which the first part was probably started in 1572 (see above under "Newlands"). The Shrubbery (High Street) also dates from the 16th century. Other old houses include the Old Vicarage (Mill Street), the Grange (Acre End Street), Newland House (Newland Street) and the Elms (Oxford Road). Eynsham Mill (north of the A40 off Hanborough Road) has been beautifully restored. Several farms remain within the outskirts of the village.

Eynsham Schools

In early times children were taught by the monks. Following John Bartholomew's benefaction in 1700 to pay a schoolmaster, the Bartholomew Room in the Square was built with money raised by public subscription) and used as a school. The old National School (now a house in Station Road, and on the site of an old cockfighting pit) was founded in 1847 and catered for 70 boys and 40 girls. In 1878 the older children went to the Board School (now the site of the Bartholomew School). The new Primary School (in Beech Road) opened in 1967. Private schools included boarding schools for boys in the old vicarage, girls boarding in Newland House and a small Primary school, started about 1900, on the corner of Newland Street and Mill Street (run by Miss Gertrude Swann, who was also a long serving Head of the Church Sunday school).

Some Important People

John Bartholomew—after whom the school, charities and Parish Council room are named.

Henry of Eynsham (1301-1343)—a famous mason who carved the medieval heads in the south aisle of the Church and other neighbouring churches.

The Stanley family—bought the Abbey Lands at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The Druce family—introduced Oxford Down sheep.

The Swanns—James Swann lived first at the Mill and then at the Gables. He founded Wolvercote Paper Mills, where the paper for Cobbett's books was made. Cobbett brought back some acacia seeds from South America and gave them to James Swann, and from them the famous acacia tree in the Gables garden was grown. It is now the oldest such tree in England.

Vicars—Eynsham has had a long line—two were of the Bricknell family, and were noted for their eccentricities, and one (WSB) for controversies with his parishioners mainly about his extreme evangelical views. The most famous Eynsham vicar was Stuart Blanch, Archbishop of York (1975-83).

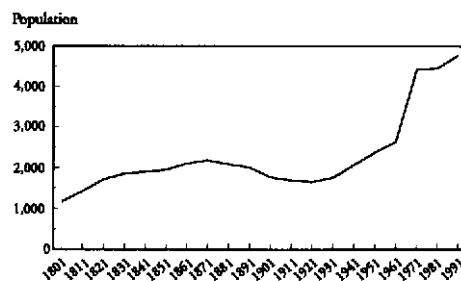
Later Developments

Little changed in Eynsham until after World War I. Of the young men who went overseas, 50 did not return. Eighteen were also killed in World War II. After 1945 the village began to expand as new housing estates were built around it, to the north, west and east. The population rose from about 1,600 in the 1920s (see graph page 5). Eynsham lost its railway line in 1962 (having been opened in 1860). The present A40 was built in the late 1930s, and the southern and eastern bypasses in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with Cassington Lane being closed to through vehicular traffic.

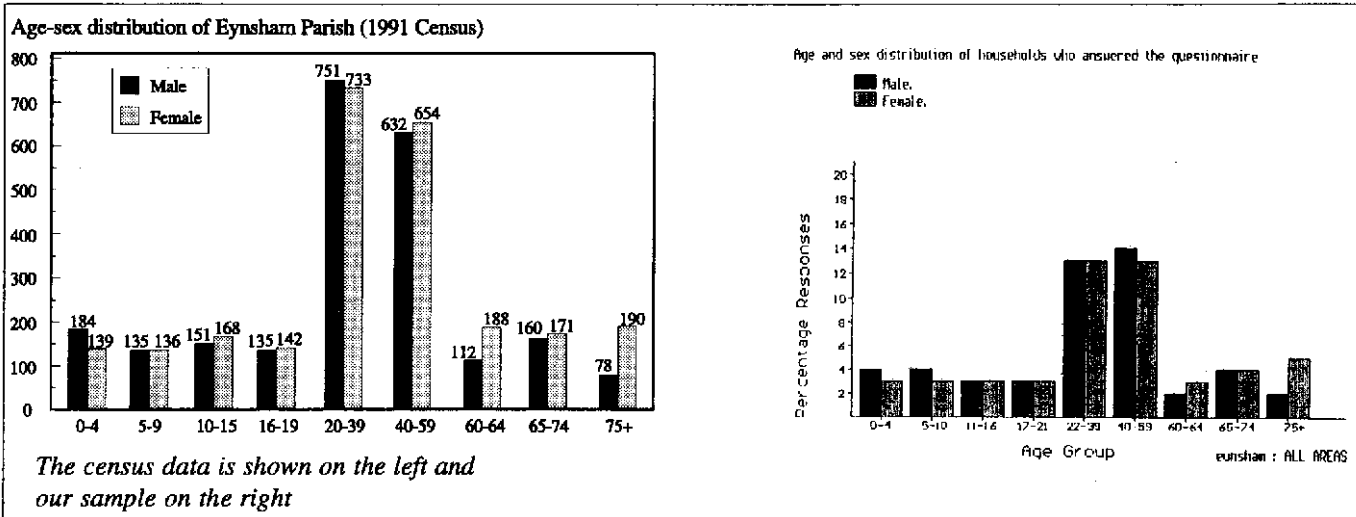
Several small industrial units have in recent years moved into the Station Road/Stanton Harcourt Road areas; and Oxford Magnet Technology have occupied the area, close to the Talbot Inn, formerly used by Austin Rover for parts storage. It is hoped that the village will not be subjected to damage by minerals extraction; previous quarries at City Farm only yielded poor quality gravel.

Population

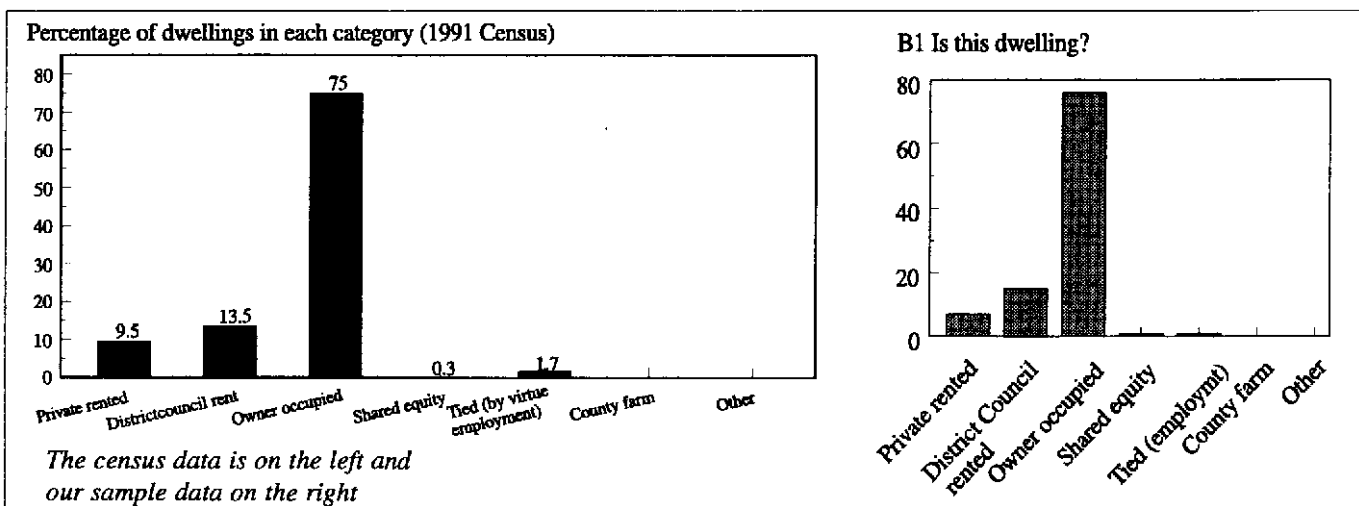
The decennial census was last taken in 1991 and at that time the parish's total population was 4,769 in 1,806 households (2.65 people on average per household, marginally greater than the national average of 2.48). Our questionnaire was delivered to all households in the parish about two years later and we had a response from 845. In order to show that this self-selecting sample has the same characteristics as the full enumeration of the census, the percentages of males and females in each age group were plotted. Unfortunately the age groups used in the Census and those used in the village appraisal software are not exactly the same, but are sufficiently so to be useful. The two breakdowns are shown below. They match very well.



Population growth 1801-1991



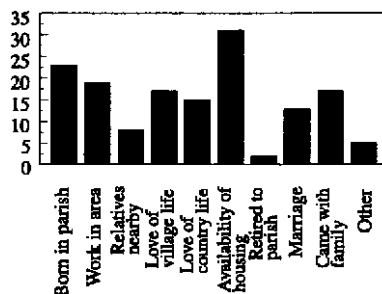
The other basic statistic collected in the village appraisal as well as the census was whether homes were owner occupied, rented, etc. The two distributions are shown below and are remarkably similar. At least in these two basic characteristics our sample is representative.



According to the census the population groups with special needs include people of pensionable age (14.9 per cent) and people suffering from a limiting long-term illness (8 per cent). In our sample, 3 per cent were registered disabled.

As a thriving and bustling community, it was interesting to find out how long people had lived in the village and how they came to live here. 65 per cent of those responding had been in residence for at least 11 years. Nearly a quarter had been born in the parish.

How did you come to live in the village/parish? Percentage of respondents

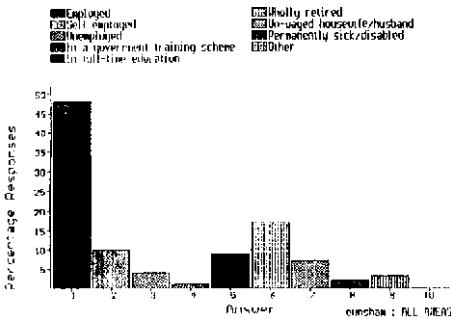




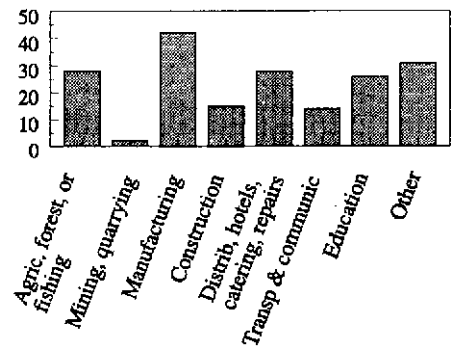
Cottages in Queen Street

It caused bad luck if you did not run around "Jack Tarr's grave" (mound on top of Acre Hill) 100 times—legend still remembered by Eynsham people.

Q1. Are you at present:



What type of additional employment in the village/parish would be acceptable to you? Percentage



George III was en route from Oxford to Cheltenham in 1765 in his coach when it got stuck at Swyneford Causeway, the Royal coach went into the river and the King got very wet (Neil Marten MP, Adjournment Debate, 18 March 1962).

Housing

Medieval Eynsham centred on the square by the church and former Abbey. Later it expanded along Mill Street, Acre End Street, Queen Street and Newland Street. This area of mainly Cotswold stone cottages and its rural setting gives the village its special character. This has been designated a conservation area (see map of village on the back page of the cover). Little development took place between the medieval period and the 20th century, when the village doubled in area and more than doubled in population since much of the new development was denser. (Population growth from 1801 to 1991 is shown on page 5.) In our sample 96 per cent of the population live in houses or bungalows and only 3 per cent in flats.

Respondents were asked, "What kind of housing do you think the village/parish needs?", and could suggest more than one type.

No housing needed	274
Housing for young people	634
Large family housing	99
Housing for the elderly	342
Housing for local people	511
Housing for low income families	359

With the huge rise in house prices during the 1980s some people, such as the young, the elderly and low income families, found it difficult to purchase homes. It therefore should perhaps be no surprise to find that these were the categories of housing needed, but with an emphasis on "for local people".

Employment

Much of Eynsham's growth took place during the 1960s. During that period the Parish Council and the Eynsham Society were concerned that provision for employment was made within the parish. The industrial estate, covering about 35 acres, on the Stanton Harcourt road was the result. In spite of recession at the beginning of the 90s many firms remain in business.

At the time of the survey, 58 per cent of the sample was employed or self-employed (see left). 5 per cent were unemployed or in a government training scheme. It should be mentioned that the survey took place at a time of high unemployment nationally.

When asked whether they would like to see more jobs becoming available in the parish, 84 per cent answered yes. Whether this is a plea for jobs at a time of high unemployment or whether it is a genuine desire for more jobs locally cannot be ascertained.

Of those who answered yes to the above question, it is notable that 42 per cent wished to see more manufacturing employment in the parish and that only 2 per cent wished for employment in mining or quarrying, especially with the village's current "battle" to prevent large-scale gravel working to the east of Eynsham. Some 28 per cent wanted jobs in agriculture, forestry or fishing, perhaps a reflection of the rural nature of the parish outside the main village of Eynsham. The full distribution is shown left.

Transport

Cars etc



The 781 households responding owned 1143 motorised vehicles, an average of 1.46 per household; an indication of the prosperity of the village since this is well above the national average.

About 50% of parishioners travelled to their place of work or study by car, van or other motorised vehicle. Only 12% used public transport and 11% walked. Whether more people would use public transport if it were improved in terms of regularity, cost, routing and comfort or whether with

the advent of road pricing they will be driven to using public transport are moot questions at the moment.

In our survey 61% of car drivers used their vehicles for transport to work and 73% for shopping. 14% took children to school by car.

Buses

Eynsham is served by three local bus companies—Oxford Bus Company, Thames Transit and SP Coaches—as well as by some long distance coaches. During the day, Eynsham has an average of eight buses an hour to Oxford and six to Witney. Barnard Gate is not as well served.

Of the 61% of residents who work outside the parish, 20% use the bus for their journey to work. Most of those who used the bus were happy with the routing, timetables and reliability but not so with the cost. Senior citizens in the village felt the number of free bus tokens they received per year was inadequate. Many complained of the reduced service in the evenings and on Sundays. A small percentage of residents complained of the routing of buses along Spareacre Lane, others of overcrowding on minibuses and of the lack of services around Oxford city boundaries. About 60% **never** use the bus service at all.

Parking

Two questions were asked with regard to street parking in the village. One asked if drivers experienced problems parking, the other whether people felt street parking was a hazard in the village. The results were startling. 26% often had problems, 45% occasionally and 29% never. 89% thought parking was a hazard: does this mean that the majority of drivers have no idea that when they are parking, they are causing a hazard? The centre of the village (Mill Street, Acre End Street, High Street) and Spareacre Lane were thought to be the most hazardous areas.

Parishioners were questioned about the standard of street lighting in the village. Only 7% thought this poor, but unfortunately no indication was given of the area.

Education

Educational facilities in Eynsham cater for four distinct age groups and our survey asked questions about each.

Preschool

Eynsham has two toddler groups, two playgroups for 3-5 year olds, a private nursery for preschool children and a "Rising Fives" group attached to the primary school. All of these facilities require payments from parents. Although there were no critical comments about the quality of the pre-school education, about 10% complained about the absence of free nursery provision. The County Council has allocated funds for a new nursery class at the primary school, opening in 1994, which will provide about 50 half-time places.

Primary

Eynsham Primary School in Beech Road was opened in 1967 to replace the old primary school in Witney Road. It has 15 full-time and 2 part-time teachers and 320 pupils. On the basis of the survey, approximately 80% of the village's primary aged children attend Beech Road. Satisfaction with the school is widespread-75% of parents rated it either A or B on a five-point scale, with only 6% dissatisfied (D or E). There were a few comments about large class sizes but it was noticeable that very few parents of children currently at the school had any other unfavourable comments.

Henry II commanded that all the food and clothing of the monks at Eynsham, and whatever pertains to their necessities, shall be free of toll and ferry-charge throughout the land (Bishop Eric Gordon, *Eynsham Abbey*, 1990).



The Holt

Mill Street in the early 20th century often used to smell as a result of the rotting bones being carted from Eynsham Station to Eynsham Mill to make glue. Maggots also fell off the carts! (Mollie Harris, *From Acre End - Portrait of a Village*, 1982).



Off to playgroup



4 rainy day!

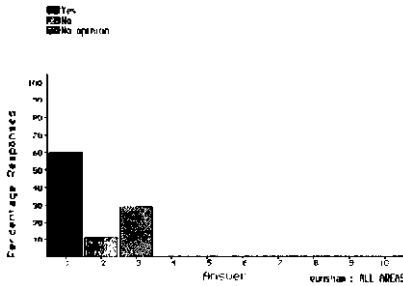


Off to a music lesson



On their way to school

Would like the facilities of the school to be more available to the community outside school hours?



Eynsham used to contain breweries, a lemonade factory and a gas works, and had its own water supply—the last fed from an artesian well in Cassington Lane.



Telephone kiosk and post box next to the Bartholomew Room

Secondary

A school was established in Witney Road in 1878. The present Bartholomew School is on this site and has expanded considerably in recent years. It now has 700 pupils and 48 teaching staff. Just over one-third of its pupils live in Eynsham, the remainder coming from the surrounding villages. Again 80% of those of secondary school age from the parish go to Bartholomew School, with a similar level of satisfaction amongst pupils and parents—75% rating it A or B and with just 7% rating it D or E.

Adult

A range of adult education and evening classes is available in Eynsham. Slightly over 1 in 10 of our respondents go to one or more of these classes, although if teenagers are excluded this figure rises to 14%. The classes are significantly more popular amongst the 40-59 age group and over 70% of those attending are women; indeed, over a quarter of women in the forties and fifties attend at least one class. Amongst those who do not take advantage of the classes, the commonest reason was lack of interest (38%)—this was especially notable amongst pensioners. Next on the list of reasons was inconvenient times (21%), especially for those in the twenties and thirties, with the range of subjects (14%) and cost (12%) the other factors being most frequently mentioned.

School Premises

The facilities at Bartholomew and Eynsham Primary Schools are already used by the parishioners, but about 60% of respondents would like to see more use made of them outside school hours.

Services in the Village

Eynsham is very fortunate in the quality of these, although some have outgrown their premises as the village has become larger.

Shopping

There are many shops offering a wide range of goods, including two supermarkets. A market in the Square on Thursdays includes a visiting fish stall and a local charity stall. 85% of those who responded did their main shopping in Oxford, Witney or Kidlington because of greater choice. 50% like to support the local shops and more use them for last minute purchases.

The Postal Services

The Sub-Post Office is located in Mill Street and provides a full range of services. Most respondents approved of these but commented on the small size of the shop which also sells small goods and sweets. It has been reorganised by the new owners since the survey was taken. Those living in housing estates would like more postal collecting boxes.

Telephones

96% of the dwellings in the parish had their own telephones. Some thought that more kiosks should be provided especially on the new housing estates. The service in existing kiosks was regarded as good or reasonable by 50%.

The Library

Eynsham's library is in Mill Street. It opens for various hours from Tuesday to Saturday. 15% felt that the opening hours were inconvenient and 67% thought that the service was good or reasonable.

Public Houses and Restaurants

The village has 8 public houses and several restaurants. Most of the pubs offer food as bar snacks or full restaurant facilities.

Medical and Emergency Services/Disabled People

The Medical Centre is in Conduit Lane (off Mill Street). There was general approval of the work of the doctors; the question on "fund-holding" was

found to be premature from the answers given. Two per cent found difficulty in getting to the surgery.

Most complaints concerned the attitude of the receptionists and the length of notice required to see a named doctor.

District Nurses

Those who use the service were happy with the arrangements.

Social Services

People were also happy with the home helps who are provided by the Social Services Department.

Ambulance Service and Fire Service

Overall these services were satisfactory but 217 felt it was difficult to get to hospitals for appointments except by private transport.

Disabled

There were 51 responses from registered disabled people. Some noted that the area outside the Medical Centre was difficult for wheel chairs and that sporting, leisure and educational facilities for the disabled were poor.

Dental Services

A dental practice is in Cassington Road. Some felt that it was difficult to get appointments but the survey was taken at a time when the senior dentist was ill.

Other services include chiropractors, a physiotherapist and visiting chiropodists.

Police

The police house is unoccupied and there is no resident policeman in the village; calls have to be made to Witney or Kidlington. The survey showed a general wish for an increased police presence in the village (and in 1994 the Parish Council is glad that a sergeant and two constables are trying to achieve this). Asked if the village/parish should have a neighbourhood watch scheme, more than 70% answered yes, but it should be noted that some areas of Eynsham already have such schemes in operation.

Sport, Social and Entertainment

Sports fields are available for football and cricket. Three play areas are specifically furnished for young children. Angling can be enjoyed on or from the banks of the River Thames.

Tennis courts were available at Bartholomew School but the public times have been found to be inconvenient and the courts are therefore little used.

Both primary and secondary schools have open-air swimming pools, which may be used by outsiders by means of club arrangements.

Squash, bowls and golf are not available in the parish. Clubs for keep-fit, judo and yoga are held in the schools and the sports pavilion and Swan Street club etc. Some of the public houses cater for snooker or pool. Badminton may be played in Bartholomew School.

It was felt that sports facilities for young people could be improved. A bowling green was the most popular new facility needed, followed by tennis and golf clubs. Numbers wanting bowls (220), tennis (213), and golf (198).

Regarding indoor sports, the most popular are darts, pool, snooker, keep-fit and squash. The first three are well catered for in the village. Keep-fit is also well organised, but 125 have to go outside the parish to play squash.

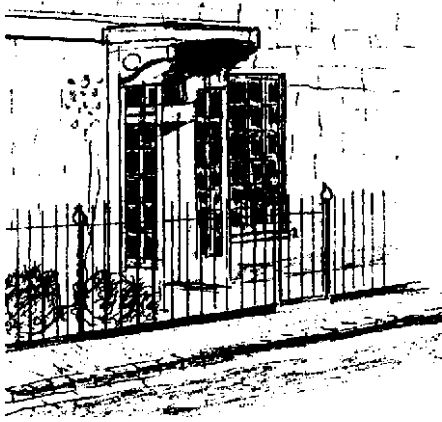
A "two-seater" privy was found in Eynsham (Mollie Harris and Sue Chapman, *Cotswold Privies*, 1984).

With the old fire engine, Eynsham firemen could sometimes be delayed as they first had to catch the horse to pull it. However, even with hand power, their water could reach the top of the church tower, as was again demonstrated in the 1970s, when the then vicar, Peter Ridley, had to use his umbrella on the top of the tower to avoid being drenched.

In 1927 two murderers on the run (Browne and Kennedy, who had shot dead a constable 10 weeks previously in Essex) carried out a robbery at Eynsham Station but could not take the safe as it was too well bolted to the floor (unlike the Post Office robbery three years ago when they made off with it!) Browne had previously lived in the village and was a cycle agent. It was reported that "He was an extraordinarily good mechanic" and "always seemed to be out at nights..." Both were convicted and executed.



Eynsham Morris Men



Urray House, Acre End Street

In 1800 Hercules Humphries, then aged 101, walked from Eynsham to Oxford to give evidence at the Assizes—his second wife had eloped from him in 1761! (*Eynsham Record*, 1994).



Eynsham Morris Men

If Eynsham had a patron saint it would probably be St Hugh who was elected Bishop of Lincoln in Eynsham Abbey in 1168.

In 1854 a pamphlet 'Brickbat' offered a reward of £100 to a person who could produce a vicar free from vices! This was after Bishop Wilberforce ('Soapy Sam')—Bishop of Oxford tried in vain to bring the Vicar of Eynsham, Rev W S Bricknell to 'terms of Christian Concord'.

Although not mentioned in our questionnaire, various road races are organised by the Eynsham Road Runners.

Social

There are a large number of well-supported societies and clubs, including art, music, history, horticulture and photography and more general village interests e.g. Eynsham Society, as well as the Women's Institute and British Legion. The Youth Club is based at Bartholomew School. Scouts, Guides, Army Cadets and church organisations also cater for the young. (127 people thought the current youth facilities were inadequate.)

A question was asked as to which of the following would you wish to see established in the village.

A community centre	693
Citizens Advice Bureau	451
Village hall for social events	839
Day centre for elderly, disabled, etc	555
A volunteer bureau	223

The answers should give encouragement to the Parish Council who are promoting the building of a new community centre in Back Lane.

Other Activities

The Bartholomew Players produce two plays each year. The Bartholomew Community Theatre produces a musical show and a review each year. Choral and other musical events are held in the church or other halls.

The most popular outdoor event of the year is Eynsham Carnival held on the first Saturday in July, which is preceded by a pram race around the village and a procession. The St Leonard's Church flower festival is held on the same day and an open-gardens weekend is held in June or July.

The Eynsham Morris Men dance in the Square and elsewhere on various occasions.

Religion and the Churches

Eynsham Parish has Anglican, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches, all of which are conveniently situated in the centre of the village. Of the 1,684 people who answered the question asking about religious affiliation only 185 or 11% regarded themselves as either atheist or agnostic. The vast majority (1,209 people or 72%) thought of themselves as belonging in some way to the Church of England. The remaining 17% of respondents were spread amongst other denominations and religions with the Catholic Church accounting for about half.

On examining the questions and statistics a little more closely it soon becomes apparent that people have widely differing views as to the place and function of the Church both in their own lives and in that of the community. 12% of those who answered the questionnaire made no response at all to the question which asked about religious affiliation.

A further question allowed the respondent to choose one or more reasons why the village church was important. 20% did not answer this question and of the ones who did only 30% or 452 people thought the church important for Sunday worship. A much greater number, some 60%, thought the church important for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Whether this indicates a solid religious background in the community or simply an interest in continuing social niceties is beyond the scope of the questionnaire but the numbers provide food for thought. It is interesting that many more people (752) thought the church more important as an historic building than for Sunday worship. 688 people thought the church impor-

tant as "every village should have one". Whilst 1,209 people professed to be Church of England only 330 (27%) thought the church important for Sunday worship compared with 130 Roman Catholics of whom 53% (almost twice the number) ticked the "For Sunday worship" box.

Another question asked for much more general information regarding the contribution churches make to community life. Despite the fact that 38% of those answering had no opinion, the largest number of responses (48%) indicated that the churches do make a worthwhile contribution to the community.

It seems that religious worship is more important to older people in the parish. Only 23% of those under 40 years old think the churches important for religious worship, with a low of just 12% amongst 17-21 year olds. The figure rises to 34% of those over 40 and to 47% of those over 60.

35% of those females answering consider the churches important for Sunday worship, the figure dropping considerably to 23% for males. When asked if the churches are important for weddings etc the numbers are much closer together at 62% for females and 58% for males.

Environment within the Village and the Surrounding Countryside

What measures could be taken sensibly to make the village/parish a better place to live? The Committee decided on seven aspects. Respondents were asked to tick three. By "tackling the 'dog mess' problem" and "maintaining the pavements more regularly" were the overwhelming answers.

Do you think the village/parish would be a better place in which to live, if we? (please tick up to 3 boxes)

Paid for additional street cleaners	355
Had a 'clean up village' day	271
Provided more litter bins	469
Supported the 'Eynsham in Bloom' campaign	230
Maintained the grass verges more regularly	579
Tackled the 'dog mess' problem	1078
Maintained the pavements more regularly	912

Refuse is another problem area. We are being asked by government to reduce our household waste by a quarter. 95 per cent of people when asked if they would be prepared to keep certain items separate for recycling claimed they would be prepared to. 87 per cent responded "yes" as to whether they thought more refuse skips were needed.

As a rural community, many use the network of public footpaths and bridleways around the village at least weekly. Paths immediately adjacent to the village pass through the water meadows near the Thames and are subject to flooding in winter and making them difficult to follow. In the summer, some paths are hard to follow because of bushes or nettles.

Local Government

The Parish Council is the level of government closest to the people and is the sponsor and financial backer of the Appraisal. The Committee therefore thought it appropriate to ask: how well does the Parish Council publicise its decisions and activities? Nearly 60 per cent responded "good" or "reasonable"

The Local Government Commission for England is currently reviewing local government particularly at county and district levels. We therefore

Robert Barton was cruelly and illegally fined by Rev W S Bricknell (vicar 1845-1888) for selling a halfpenny worth of lollypops to a little child on a Sunday afternoon, and another man was charged by the same vicar with selling 1d worth of walnuts on a Sunday.

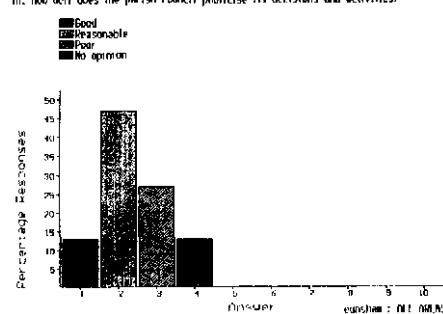


Beacon Hill

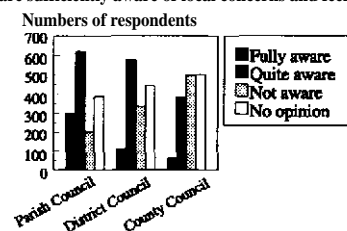
The County Council in its Minerals Plan considers Eynsham to be part of "Cassington-Yarnton"—hope we all object!

It is often said, "Don't argue with Eynsham people—they can be difficult!"

11. How well does the parish council publicise its decisions and activities?

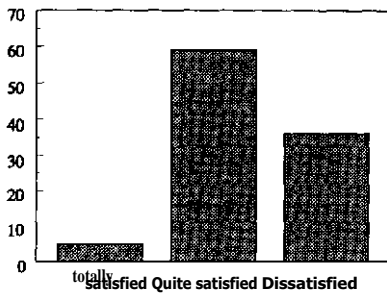


Do you feel your elected representatives in local government are sufficiently aware of local concerns and feelings?



Are you satisfied with the way the planning system is implemented in the parish?

Percentage of respondents



One County Councillor stated that Cassington Lane should be preserved from gravel digging problems as local dogs need it for toilet purposes!



The Bartholomew Room was bought for the people of EYNSHAM with money raised to mark the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty QUEEN ELIZABETH II in June 1977

asked whether elected representatives in local government were sufficiently aware of local concerns and feelings? The results are shown in the accompanying graph. It is clear that the larger the local authority area the less it is viewed as being aware of local concerns and feelings.

Since the planning system is administered at local government level, the Appraisal also questioned how satisfied people were with the way it was implemented. What was most interesting about the responses was that 42 per cent had no opinion. Of those who had an opinion 36 per cent were dissatisfied.

Quality of Life in Eynsham

Quality of life is a difficult concept and of course is affected by economic cycles and other national phenomena. To establish a benchmark of how people felt, we asked how the quality of life in the village/parish compared with 10 years ago. Some were ineligible to answer since they had not lived in Eynsham for sufficient time. Of the others only 24 per cent thought the quality of life better, 42 per cent the same. Of the third who thought the quality of life worse, more than half had lived in the parish longer than 21 years.

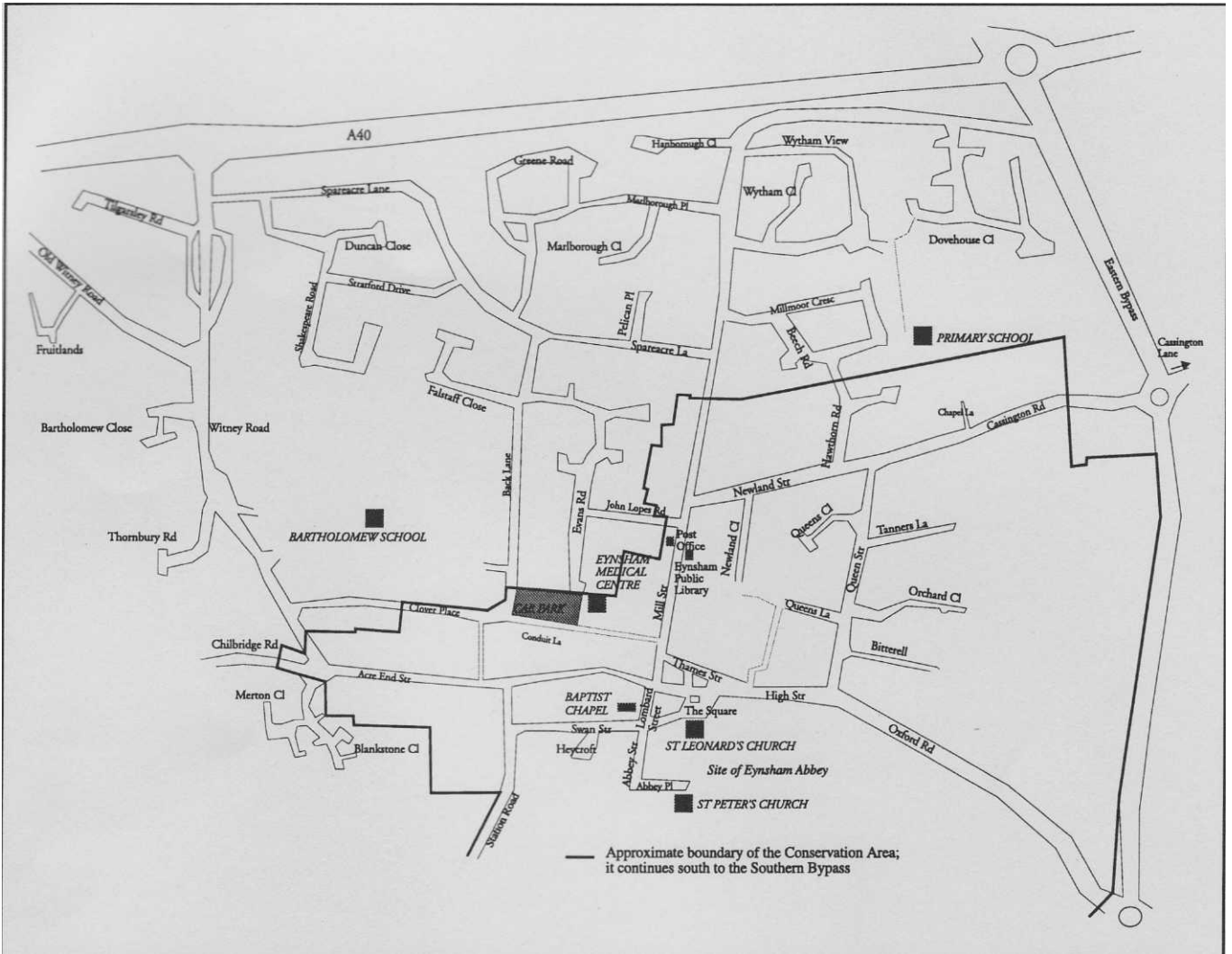
Linked with quality of life is how people would like to see the village/parish develop. Overwhelmingly, "to stay as it is" with 1,035 replies or "as a working community" 567.

Did you expect not to be living in Eynsham in the next five years? Few responded to this question, but those who did cited lack of suitable housing and the location of their job as the reason for a possible move.

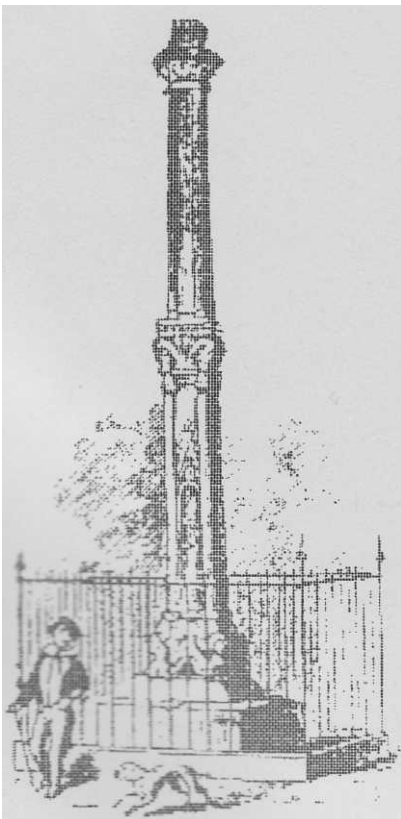
We were pleased to find that a majority wished for a **public meeting** to discuss the results of this Village Appraisal.

Recommendations for Action

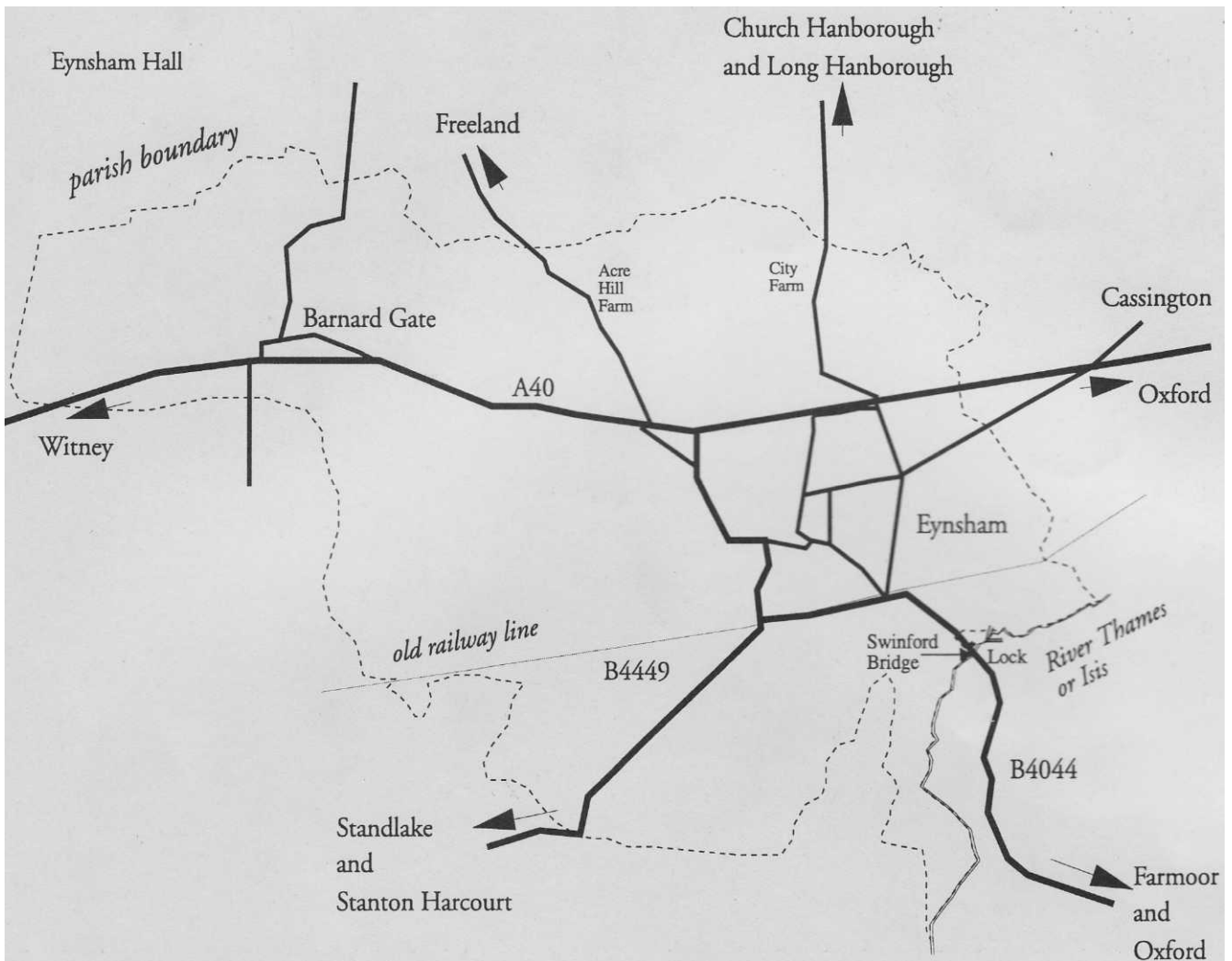
- Would like the village "to stay as it is" & "as a working community"
- More housing for young and local people
- More jobs in the village
- Community centre or village hall
- Parking—hazardous in the centre of the village
- Police—more visible presence and more neighbourhood watch schemes
- Environment—do something about the 'dog mess' problem and maintain the pavements better
- Improvement in the awareness of local government representatives, in particular the administration of the planning system
- More postal collecting boxes and telephone kiosks in the newer housing estates
- More containers for recycling waste materials and more refuse skips
- Doctors—attitude of receptionists and length of time to see a named doctor
- Buses—overcrowding in peak hours, routing through village and lack of buses around Oxford City boundary, as well as inadequate number of bus tokens for senior citizens
- Sports facilities—a bowling green, tennis courts and golf course
- School premises—more use to be made of them outside school hours



Map of Eynsham village



Eynsham Cross in 1859. Eynsham Cross stood in the Square for over 600 years and was replaced in 1991 by the present modern cross carved by Wm Brown of Kidlington (Reproduced by permission of the Editor from Bainbridge, W (1987) 'Some Thoughts on Eynsham Cross', Eynsham Record, Number 4.)



Map of Eynsham Parish (Note: Swinford Bridge (the view of the bridge on the front cover is from the west) and Eynsham Lock are officially in Cumnor, but have more connections with Eynsham)

Further information about Eynsham may be found in the *Eynsham Record* published annually by the Eynsham History Group (copies are in Eynsham Library, further copies may be obtained from Mrs P Richards, 6 Abbey Street, Eynsham and current copies from several Eynsham shops), the *Eynsham Roundabout* (published by the Eynsham Churches) and the *Eynsham Echo* (published by the Parish Council).

The EynshamArts Group holds several exhibitions in the lower floor of the Bartholomew Room each year. (Secretary, Mrs W Goody, 52 Mill Street, Eynsham)

The Eynsham Society is always open to new members. (Chairman, Enid L Sharpe, 27 Acre End Street, Eynsham)

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