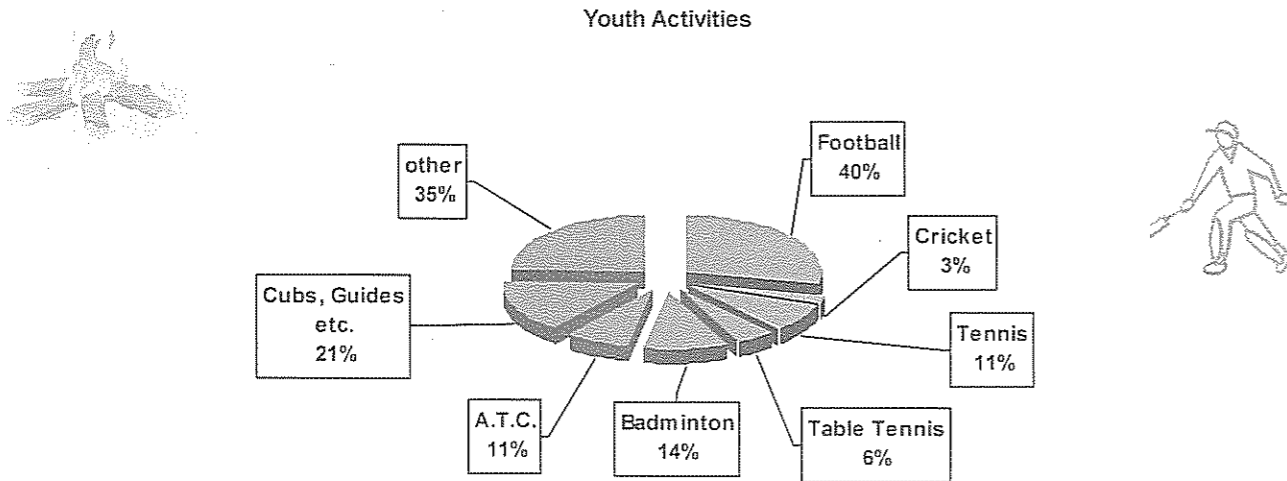


Facilities for young people

Young persons were fairly equally divided on the question of whether there were enough facilities currently available 55% (53) "No", 44% (47) "Yes".

There were a large variety of additional activities requested. Apart from the youth club, a basketball court and a swimming pool being the most popular desired attractions. It is noted that some of these facilities already exist at the Community College, but are not available outside school hours.

The breakdown of current activities enjoyed by young persons is:



The Post Office

As in the 2000 survey it is good to know that the Post Office/shop is used by 49% (47) of the village at least weekly and some 28% (21) use it daily. The other facilities are not used to the same extent, demonstrating the importance of a Post Office to the village. However, the Post Office also features in danger areas in village, see pages 14 & 15

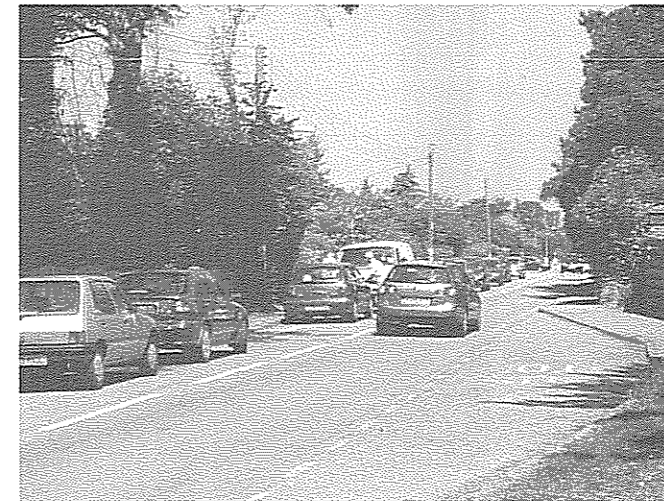
Library Facilities

Since the publication of the previous survey the Thurston library has opened in the Community College grounds. 41% of those responding to the questionnaire stated they used this facility and 75% rated the facility excellent or good, 12% reasonable, with 10% not stating an opinion and only 2% thought facility poor.

Other Facilities

Although there was not a great response, it would seem that some extra community facilities would be welcomed by some. For example, after-school clubs attracted responses of 14% (45), holiday play schemes 17% (37) and adult education evening classes 13% (47) respectively.

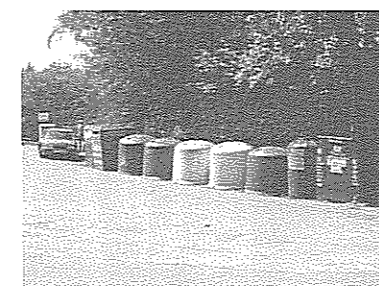
Traffic, parking and speeding are worrying residents who thought areas like Barton Road were dangerous



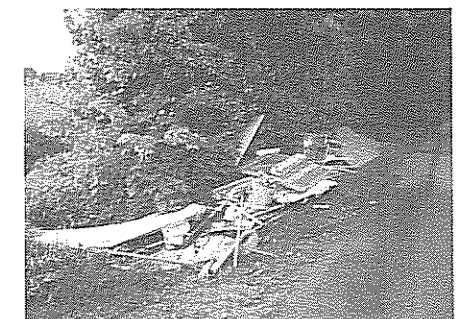
New cycle ways (pictured left) and pedestrian crossing (right) are some of the improvements already carried out but some residents believe more are needed



Environment



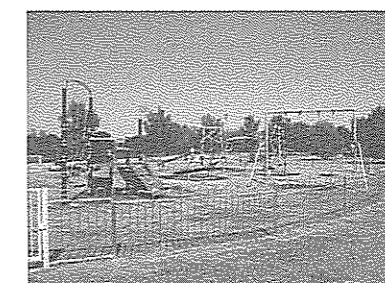
Left
Thurston Charities Recycling facility near the Station



Right
Fly tipping

Facilities for Young People

New play area



at New Green

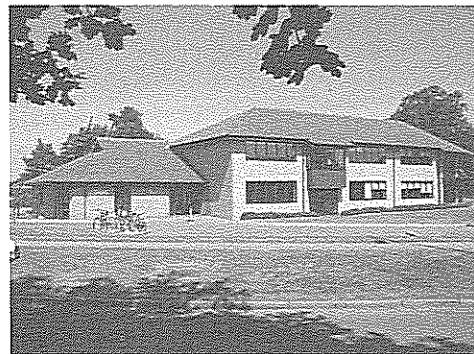
Housing



Development of brown field sites like the granary, above left was considered to be a good idea, but as was said in the 2000 survey a large number of residents surveyed have said "no" to more housing



Train and bus service was considered to be good by most people



A new library (pictured left) has been incorporated in the new 6th form building at the Community College but overall residents would like to see the college's facilities, particularly swimming and tennis, made available for residents use

Adult Education

Reasons for not attending courses at the local college were "not interested" which topped the league at 41% (32.5), cost and type of classes being 6% (20) and 31% (27) respectively with "other" a high 25% (47). 20% (62) of respondents indicated an interest in computer classes, with languages below this at 9% (32), and crafts at 13% (37).

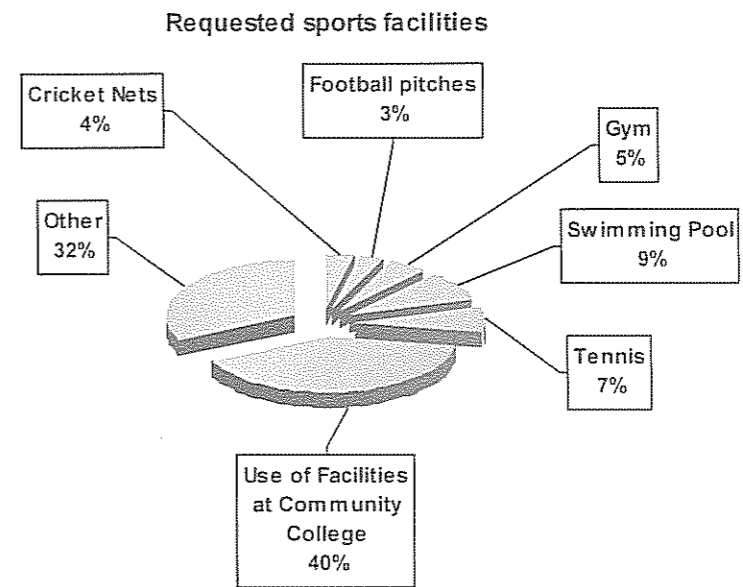
Timing of the classes on offer attracted a good response, showing evenings being the most popular at 77% (77), followed by weekends at 37% (29), with daytime availability being 37%(17). Keep fit and associated activities being more available attracted 13% (31), with Pottery and Yoga around 8% (9).

73% of those completing the questionnaires state that they do not use the community college, but 77% would be interested in using the college for evening classes. There were a number of comments from residents who thought the facilities at the community college could be used more by village residents, including sports facilities at weekends and during the evenings.

Sport

A whole range of facilities were suggested by adults for improved sports facilities, from a snooker club to a cycle track, but a common theme was the need for the college swimming pool to be made more readily available. (It should be noted that the swimming pool was filled in two years ago and judging from the responses received this fact was not generally known to those taking part in the survey).

A high number (25%) of those completing the questionnaire raised the issue of the Community College facilities being used during the evenings and weekends with Badminton and Tennis the most popular facilities requested



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

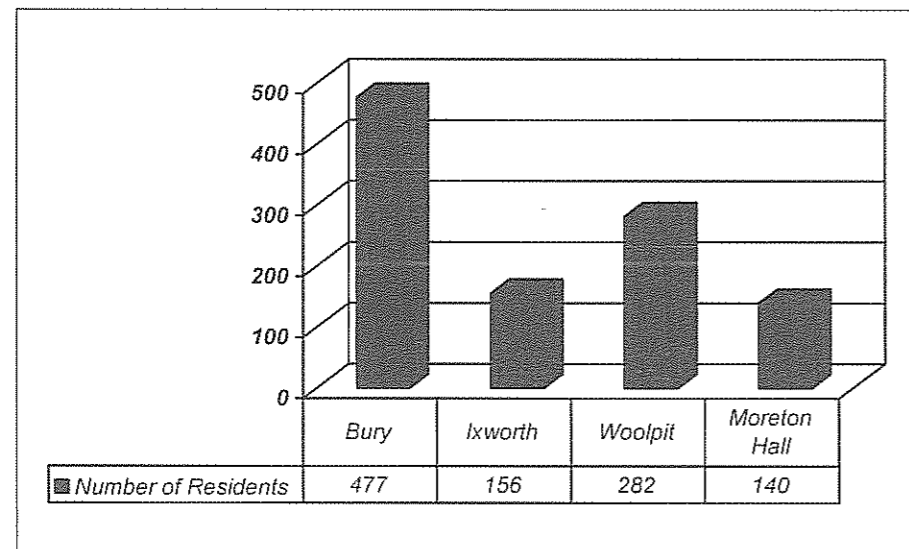
Retail Services

A significant number of respondents (52%) thought that the range of shopping facilities in the village were good to excellent, a further 39% consider them to be reasonable and only about 6% thought they were poor. It was noticeable from the comments that the retail facilities most requested were a bigger shop (15%) and a bakery (15%), although other facilities such as a chemist (8%) and a Chinese takeaway (3%) were also popular

Health

The questions on health prompted a high response of 1,038 (1,607). Some 11% (10.5) of these have health problems or a disability that affects their day to day living, and from the table below it would appear that 58% (56) of respondents have to travel to Bury St Edmunds for medical consultations.

62% (63) of respondents stated that they would be willing to change their doctor in order to register with a Thurston doctor's surgery and 73% (67) would be prepared to register with a Thurston based NHS dentist.



This is a clear message to medical practitioners considering setting up a satellite surgery in Thurston that they could expect approximately two thirds of the inhabitants to transfer to a local surgery if one were provided. However, those surveyed did not want a surgery if the only way it could be provided was to allow a new large housing development to be built in the village, see question 62 on page 6

Policing

The opinion on policing in the village was such that 43% (24) think it to be 'reasonable to good' 55% (60) commented on it being 'poor'.

61% (66) of villagers believe that the village requires a greater police presence, with 45% (53) asking for more activities for young people. Consultation between villagers and police, more neighbourhood watch schemes requested by 31%, and improved street lighting suggested by over 48% of respondents. Following these requests was 23% (30) who wanted more education aimed at the problems facing young people regarding drink and drugs.

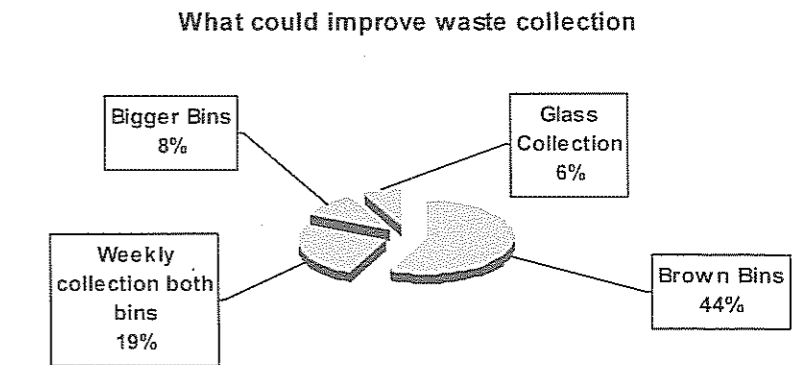
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Changes in Thurston Village

91% (98) of respondents had adverse comments to make about the changes that have taken place in Thurston. Of these, the overwhelming majority stated their biggest concerns were the increase in houses and traffic that has taken place without regard for the environment and failure to upgrade the infrastructure to cope, i.e. roads and facilities.

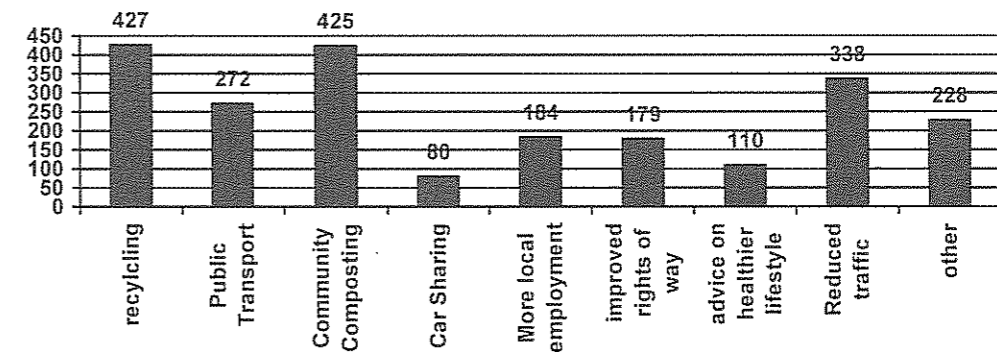
The maintenance of lanes and paths, and the tidying of road verges and prevention of damage by road vehicles were considered to be very important to residents who took part in the survey. Also, 79% (80) believed that hedges need protection. Groups of trees and open spaces were also mentioned.

In the 2000 survey the greatest call (68%) was for recycling facilities, in particular the provision of wheelie bins, these have now been introduced by Mid Suffolk District Council. When questioned regarding household rubbish and recycling collection 65% were satisfied with current arrangements, however 30% were not and it should be noted that 79% felt that it could be improved, the most specified improvements being shown by the graph:



Protection and enhancement of the Thurston environment

When asked what could be done to protect and enhance the environment of Thurston, 47% stated that more recycling should be available with 46% stating that they would like to see community composting facilities, a further 30% thought that improvements to public transport would help.



Countryside improvements

When asked to rate the importance of certain items to make the countryside more attractive the following results were obtained:

	No Opinion	Not important	Important
Less litter / more bins	415	32	720
Stop vehicle damage – verges	367	80	720
More signs, paths & bridleways	406	95	666
Open more footpath / verges	567	102	498
Reduce Traffic	593	93	481
Remove unnecessary signs	590	204	373
Make paths more accessible for disabled	584	233	350
Repair gates, stiles & Bridges	604	258	305
Let roadside verges grow for wildlife	628	27	269
Close some footpaths and bridleways	748	387	32

Thurston Twinning

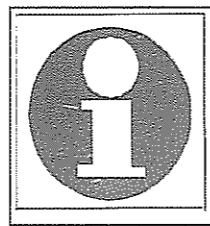
When asked a specific question concerning twinning of Thurston with a village in an overseas country 75% (67) of respondents were not in favour of twinning.

The Village Sign

In the previous survey, of the eligible respondents, 60% thought the sign is in the wrong place and most suggested alternative sites. A new sign is shortly to be erected adjacent to the Fox & Hounds PH and the old sign in Church Road will shortly be refurbished.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS

In response to the question about information services, 50% (36) feel the need for travel information, and 34% (27) of respondents would like to see a **Citizens' Advice Bureau**. It was encouraging to find that over 85% (79) of those responding read every issue of the **Thurston Advertiser Newsletter** with only 5% (7) never reading it. However from comments made, more information on leisure events need to be included. Some suggestions for other items that people would like to see in the newsletter were, club directory, more travel information letters from residents, more sports news and more local news. The readership of the Advertiser is in marked contrast to the **Parish Web Site** where only a third of those surveyed new of its existence, and only 8% found it useful



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

76% (74) of respondents are aware that Parish Council meetings are open to the public, although it is known that very few people attend. The question about the way Council Tax is spent resulted in 30% (30) of respondents saying they are satisfied, although 42% (45) had no idea how the money was spent. A resounding "no" 84% (70) was the answer to the question asking how many people would be prepared to pay a higher Council Tax to improve facilities.

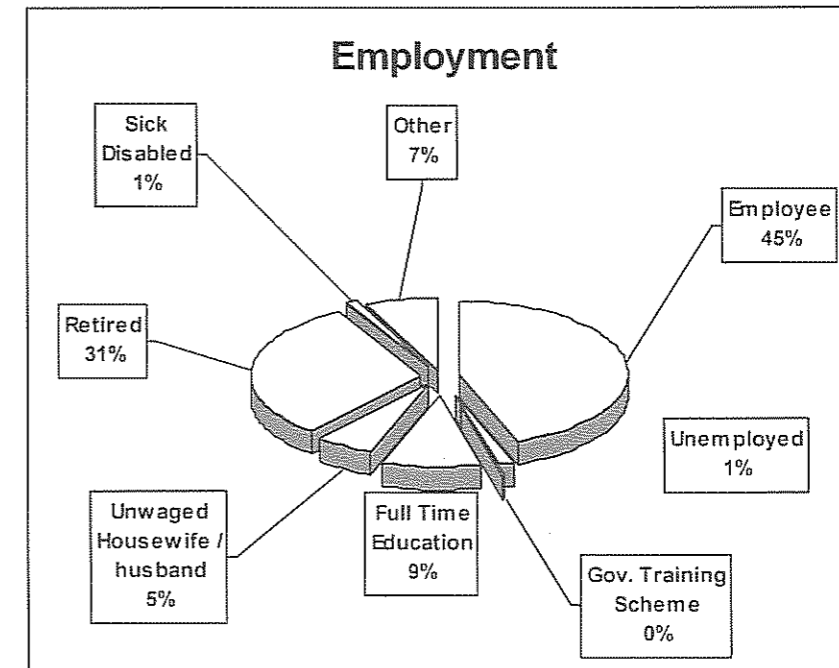
Employment

At 1%, unemployment in Thurston is unchanged from the 2000 survey. At the same time, the percentage of retired in the latest sample is 30% up from 25% in the 2000 survey. Of course, this could just be that retired people were more likely to have the time to complete the survey.

Considering the village's commuter location and relatively limited job opportunities, it is not surprising that 81% (85) of employees work outside Thurston with 69% (44) journeying to Bury St Edmunds. 73% (72) of the respondents in paid employment work full time, with only 7% (9) working less than 15 hours per week. The employment sectors conform to a normal pattern and are shown below, but Thurston also has a highly skilled workforce, with 52% (45) possessing advanced qualifications or above.

Most employees 85% (78) travel to work by car, with only 5% (6) currently using public transport, clearly illustrating the dependence of the rural population on private vehicles. Even with such a high employment rate, some 70% (80) of respondents were in favour of a 'job vacancy board' to inform them about local opportunities.

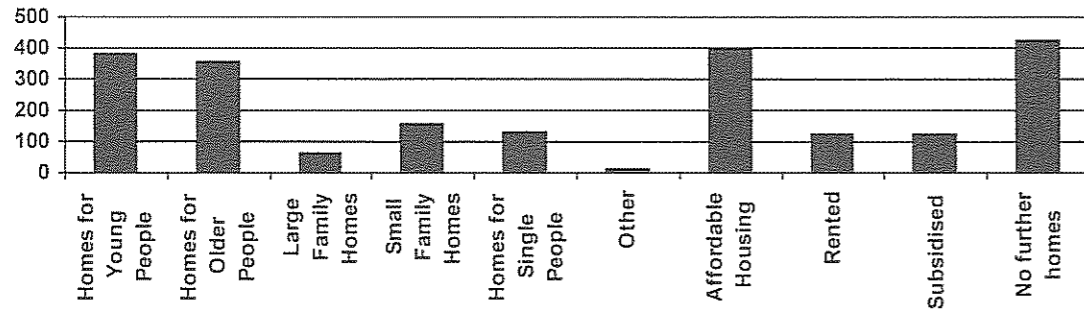
However, 50% (38) of nearly 1167 (2000) respondents only supported further introductions of small business units in the village, with 20% (31) having serious reservations concerning commercial or retail developments.



Housing Needs

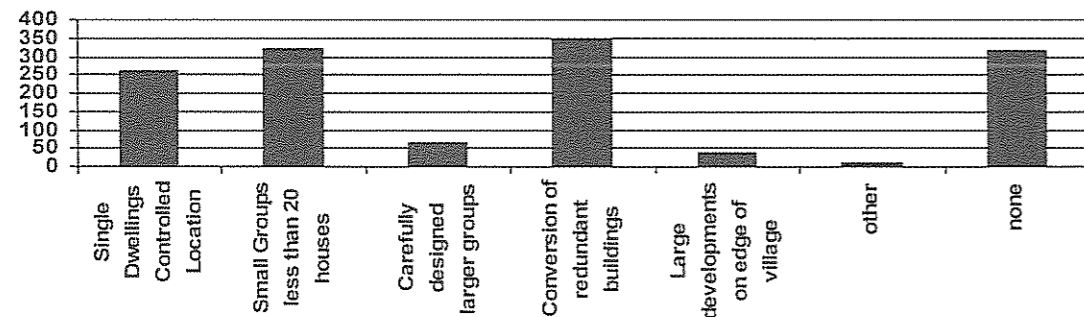
Question 59 What type of accommodation do you think Thurston Needs?

968 (1,487) people responded to the question about the type of accommodation they think Thurston needs: 43% (67) of them felt that the village needs no further homes; 39% (18) felt the need for homes for young people and 13% (13) felt the need for homes for single people.



Question 61 What types of housing development would be acceptable in Thurston?

1,167 (1,422) people responded to what type of housing development would be acceptable in Thurston and the results are shown in the following table:



Six years ago the majority of residents who took part in the previous survey said they did not want any more houses to be built in Thurston. For this latest survey we asked those residents who said they did not want any further houses to be built the additional question below:

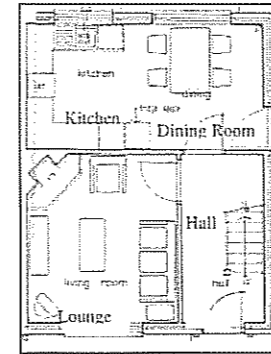
Question 62 If you ticked "no houses should be built" for Q60 or "none" for Q61 would you change your mind if a developer were to provide a doctor's surgery in return for being allowed to build a large housing development?

82% said this would not make them change their view.

Question 60 Should these homes be built by?

As shown by the 2000 survey the consensus is that no further houses should be built but if development should take place it was shown the residents preferred local builders and local authority to be the one to undertake it.

Planning applications



63% (54) of respondents think that not enough publicity is given to planning applications received by the Parish Council and 36% (19) think it is adequate.

Parish Web Site

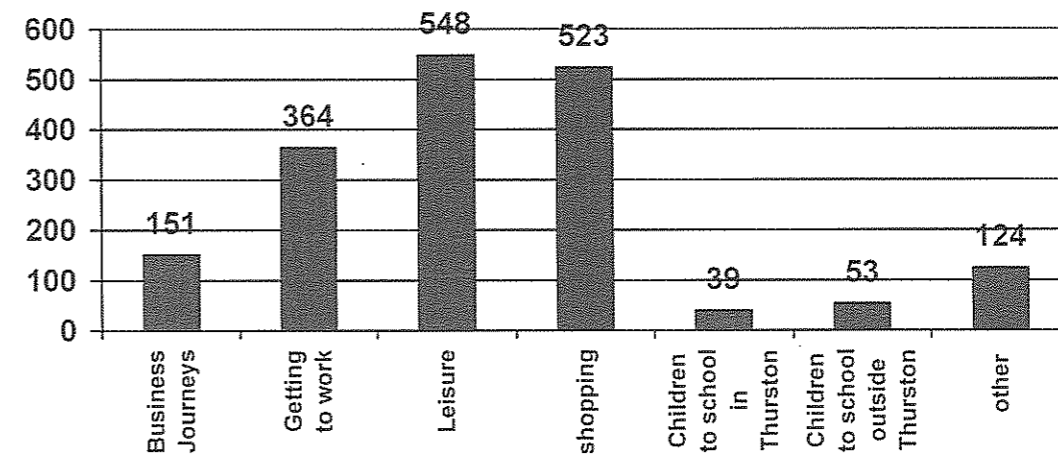
When questioned about the usefulness of the Parish Web Site 31% of people completing the questionnaire were not aware there was a Parish Web Site. 32% were aware but don't use it, and only 8% found it useful.

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Car Reliance

The results of the appraisal show that 61% of drivers had daytime access to a vehicle. These vehicles are used for the following:

Daytime use of vehicle



Public Transport:

When it came to public transport within the village, firstly when asked specifically about the bus service, 45% of respondents stated they used the service with 57% thinking the route was good to reasonable with only 13% rating it poor. The timetable was judged to be good to reasonable by 49% of respondents, reliability was rated good to reasonable by 46% with only 14% rating it as poor. When cost was judged, it was rated reasonable or above by 51% with only 6% thinking it was poor value.

35% of those completing the questionnaire use the train service from Thurston. The service was rated as good to reasonable by 56%, timetable 45%, reliability 47%, cost 35% and disabled access 12%. The biggest negative comments was on cost, with 18% considering it to be poor.

Cycling & Walking:

13% (47) of people stated that the present facilities for cyclists are poor, and 38% (51) requested more cycle paths which is possibly a reflection of the improvements made to cycle facilities in the last few years. These comments relate to both types of cyclists: those wanting to use them for pleasure and those wanting them for journeys to work or school.



The pavements are considered to be reasonable or good by 89% (84) of those responding, and 54% (51) said they are user friendly for those people with disabilities, pushchairs and wheelchairs. Certain areas of the village were highlighted as not being to the same standard.

Traffic Related Problems:

Those who answered yes to question 41 "Do you think there are any major danger spots on roads in Thurston?" were asked to specify where. The replies are summarised below

Dangerous Area	Responses
Traffic Related – Post Office	307
Visibility, Speeding, Too Busy, Accidents – Fishwick Corner	68
Narrow Path, Narrow Road, Parking, Speeding, Junctions – School Rd	38
Traffic Related – Barton Road	32
Lighting, Visibility, Speeding – Pockerage Corner	29
Buses, Parked Cars, Speeding – Upper School	26
Buses, Parked Cars, Speeding, Bad Junctions – Norton Road	20
Speeding, No Footpath, Lighting, Parked Cars – Church Road	14
Narrow Road, Congestion, Poor Junction – Primary School	13
Parked Cars, Icy In Bad Weather – School Lane	13
Visibility, Speeding – Fox and Hounds Roundabout	12
Speeding, Junction, Railway Bridge – Thedwastre Road	12
Traffic related – Beyton Road	9
Bends, Speeding – Station Hill	9
Traffic Related – All roads in village	6
Bends, Unsuitable For buses – Ixworth Road	4

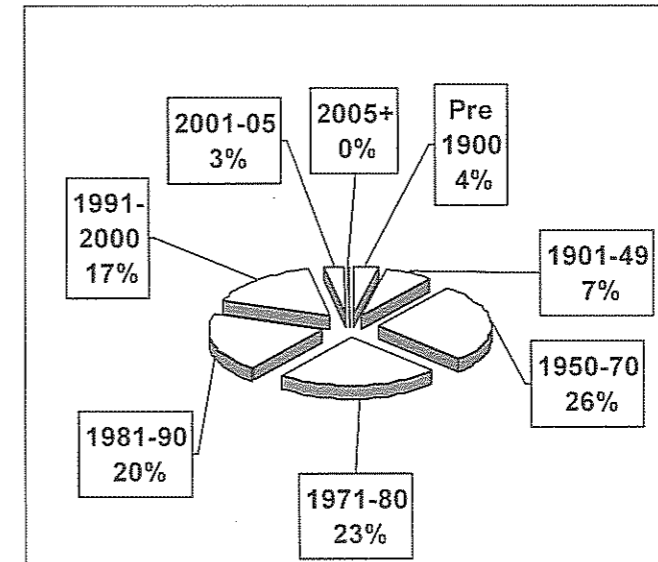
Housing

Range of Dwellings

89% (90) of the dwellings are owner occupied, 4% (5) are privately rented and the other 7% (5) equally divided between shared ownership, housing association, local authority tenure and provided as part of employment.

As the chart below demonstrates, over 50% of houses in this survey were built after 1981 meaning the village has more than doubled in size in the last 25 years.

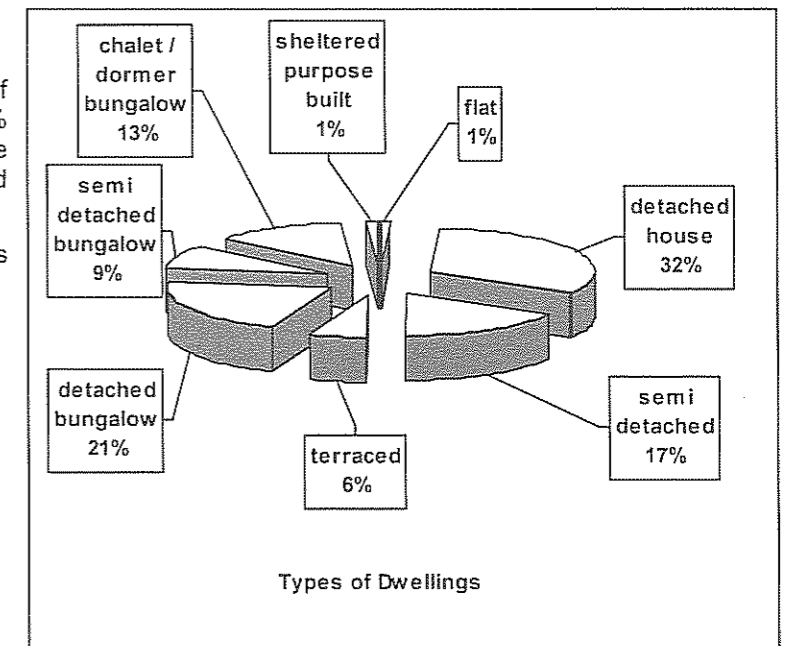
Note where figures in brackets are given after % this is the corresponding figure in the 2000 survey.



Types of Dwelling

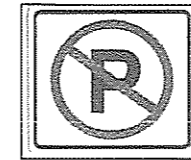
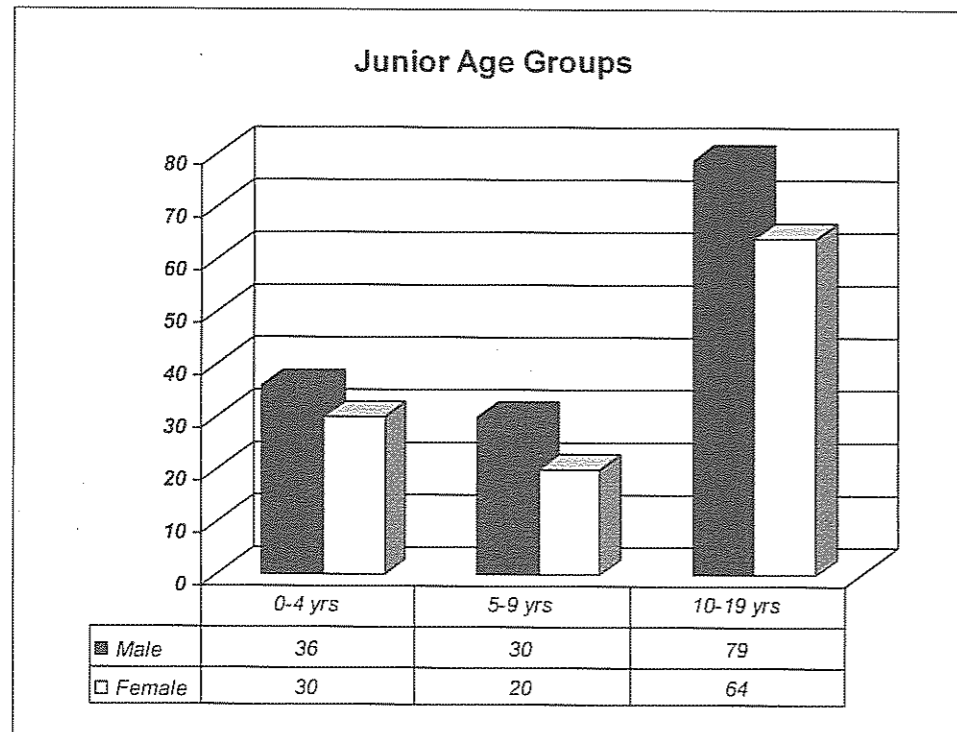
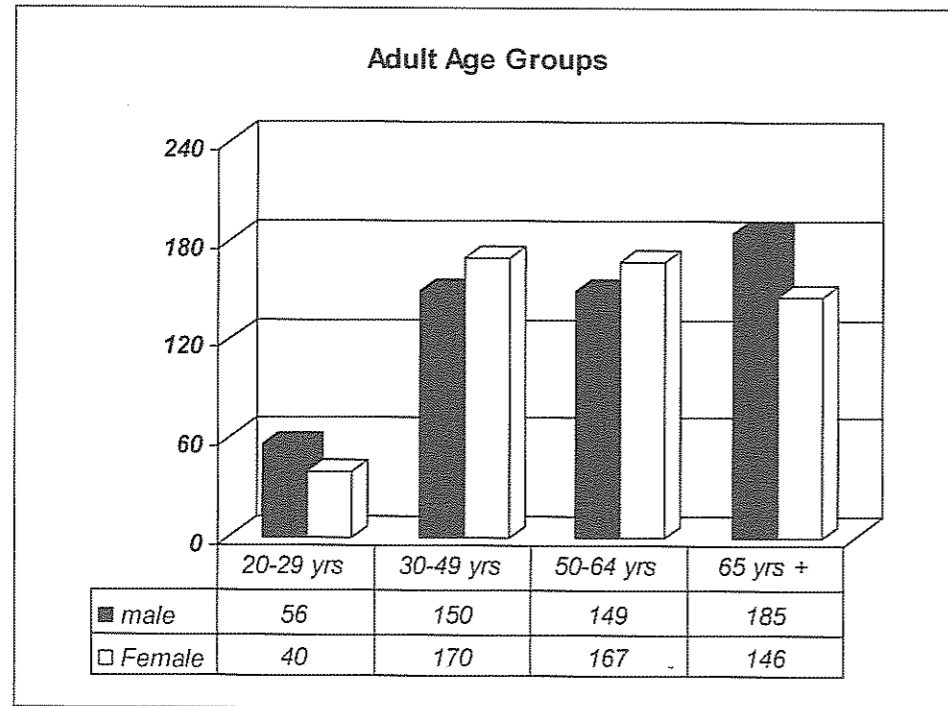
It may be worth noting that 88% (85) of dwellings have lagged hot water tanks, 93% (90) have loft insulation, 85% (73) double glazing, 66% (56) cavity wall insulation and 59% (28) use low-energy light bulbs.

It is interesting that one third of all property is of the affordable housing range.



Age & Sex of Population

The household section was completed by 40% (66) of households in the village accounting for 1167 of residents. The number of males and females in the survey population are 566 male and 601 female. 2% of residents were aged between 0-9 years, 10% 11-20 years, 8% 21-30, 13% 31-40, 16% 41-50, 19% 51-60, 6% 61-65 and the greatest number, 26%, were aged 65+



Parking

The village appears to still have major parking problems according to over 78% (59) of the respondents. See the "areas of concern" table below.

Speeding again was another of the concerns. It was stated by over 60% (56) of respondents that they thought it was a problem, with over 48% (48) saying that the existing limits should either be extended or there should be the introduction of lower limits.

Areas for Concern: Question 33 If you consider that there are areas in Thurston which are unsafe to use for any reason please detail these areas

Unsafe Areas Of Thurston	Responses
Speeding, Lighting, Crossing, Parked Cars -Post Office	133
Speeding, Lighting, Crossing, Congestion – Barton Road	16
Narrow Road, Narrow Paths, Parking, Speeding – School Road	16
Parked Cars, No Traffic Control, Children – Upper School	11
Speeding, No Footpath, Lighting, Parked Cars – Church Road	9
Buses, Parked Cars, Speeding, Bad Junction – Norton Road	6
Junction, Crossing To School Road – Sandpit Lane	6
Dangerous Crossing, Unsafe Access at Granary – Station	6
Narrow Road, Congestion- Primary School	5
Hedges, Unsafe For Cyclists, Speeding And Badly Parked Vehicles	4
Speeding, Too Busy – Fishwick Corner	4
Too Remote – Heath Road Play Area	4
Broken Glass, Youth, Motorbikes – New Green	4
Lighting, Visibility – Pockerage Corner	4
Narrow Roads, Buses, Lorries – The Planche	4
No Footpath And Lighting – Beyton Road	3
Cars on Path, Visibility At Junction – Heath Road	3
No Footpath And Lighting – Ixworth Road	3
Dangerous Bends – Bus Route	2
Drugs And No Fencing – Chalk Pit	2
Lighting – Furze Close	2
Gates – Heath Road Rail Crossing	2
Narrow Paths, Lighting – Station Hill	2
Crossing Railway And Road – Cycle Path	1
Lighting – School Lane	1

The table above show that certain roads in the village are considered dangerous, and these are major problems for the village. It was noted that the same roads were mentioned time and time again in the comments section. Over 41% (41) of respondents thought that traffic calming would have to be introduced, together with warning signs about childrens play areas.

The **road signs** are considered by over 81% (74) of the respondents to be adequate at present.

Lighting standards are considered good or reasonable by over 60% (70) of the respondents, but 54%(30) said more lighting was needed. Some commented that we already have too much lighting.

YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE

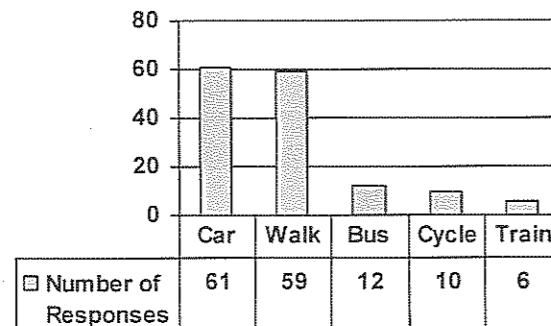
160 youth questionnaires were returned. Of these 70% of respondents were at school, 17% being 16+ and 11% were in current employment. When questioned concerning the **activities that they had participated in out of school**, hours the biggest percentage, 40%, had played football, 21% cubs, scouts, guides etc, 11% tennis and 35% in other activities, these included dancing, Sunday school, netball, majorettes and karate.

Question 6 on the youth questionnaire asked "**Do you think there are enough activities in Thurston for your age group**" the majority 55% stated no with 44% stating yes, those responding in the negative stated that some of the activities they would like to see in the village included **a youth club 11%, skate park 6%, swimming pool 6%, more play areas 3% and astro turf and cricket nets 3%**.

A further question asked "**would you use any of the following youth facilities if they were provided within the village?**" Skate-park, meeting shelter, youth club, multi games court: 6% stated they thought they would use them on a weekly basis, 22% monthly and 14% daily.

Concerning the **use of transport to get to school or work**, the largest percentage, 41%, stated they travelled by car, 39% walk, 8% use a bus, 6% cycled and 4% used the train.

Transport to School - Young Persons



The chart above shows a very different story to the "children to school" figure on page 15 of this appraisal.

The final question asked on the youth questionnaire was concerning the formation of a **youth forum** within Thurston to promote youth activities within the village, it was sad to note that the majority 54% replied that they would not be interested in becoming a member.

Objectives

- to update the information obtained in the 2000 survey
- to encourage as many people as possible to contribute to the appraisal by completing and returning the questionnaires.
- to stimulate ideas and constructive debate about potential developments in housing, health, transport, youth activities, educational cultural and leisure facilities, shopping, business and employment opportunities in Thurston
- to identify key social, economic and environmental issues regarding Thurston's future development and to present these for wider discussion and debate
- to prepare and publish a final appraisal report for all households in the village and for this report to be sent to all relevant public bodies
- to assist the Parish Council in developing a local action plan based on the survey results

The appraisal was sub-divided into three sections:

- A short questionnaire relating to each household
- 101 question survey for every individual aged 10 and over
- A young persons questionnaire for all those between 6 and 20 years

For this second survey the distribution was by post in December 2005 and collections were carried out during January and February 2006. Collecting the forms was undertaken by the Steering Group plus parish councilors Jannette Service, Tony Sadler, Brian Monk, Christopher Pattle and one volunteer making a total of 8 people. Quite an undertaking as there were 1400 houses to be visited, some more than once, during the coldest months of the year.

The Steering Group would like to thank all of them for their help.

The number of forms collected this time was disappointing as of the 1400 questionnaires which were distributed, 40% (70.5) were returned making a total input of 564 questionnaires, a total of 1167 people took part in the adult survey and 160 in the youth. The timing, around Christmas, may have influenced the numbers collected or possibly some residents felt they had already made their views known via the previous survey.

It is estimated that by the conclusion of the initial phase of the appraisal exercise (the presentation of this report) but prior to the completion of any action plan, some 125 hours of volunteer time will have been given freely.

This report is a summary of the appraisal's main findings. The data obtained via the questionnaire is a valuable source of information for the development of action plans. As with the original survey, for historical reasons, copies of the database and this report will be lodged with the County Archivist for posterity. It will also be available on the Internet at www.thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk, or from the Parish Council in printed form.

The Steering Group has not attempted to make any recommendations for action. The Parish Council, under whose jurisdiction the appraisal was initiated, will continue to undertake that role.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Thurston was mentioned in the great Domesday survey of 1086. At that time Thurston was in the Thedwastre Hundreds district, an area covering 24 parishes in west Suffolk. A "hundred" was an administrative division of a shire county, and for a long time was an important element of local government.

In medieval times, the Hundred Court would meet once a month, usually at a central point within the hundred, to deal with local matters such as taxation and crime. The meeting place would be at a well known location such as a hill, or by a lake or ford, and it has been suggested that the Thedwastre Hundred Court may have met in Thurston on Thedwastre Hill.

The hundreds lasted into the 19th Century, although they had by then ceased to have any significant function. The Local Government Act of 1884 created the new county, district and parish council system, and many of the new districts bore the names of the old hundreds (hence Thedwastre Rural District Council, now absorbed into Mid Suffolk District Council).

For many centuries, Thurston must have existed as a small, scattered parish supporting a population of about 300. Most of the inhabitants lived in the eastern half of the parish in the Great Green and Stockhold Green areas. The western half was more sparsely populated and was partly covered by an expanse of heath land.

The railway from Ipswich to Bury was constructed in 1846 and it was decided that Thurston would have a station (now a listed building). This made travelling to and from the village much easier and brought new people to Thurston. Until then almost everyone would have worked in agriculture or a traditional village occupation, such as blacksmith, wheelwright, shoemaker or baker. The station created new jobs by employing porters and clerks. Although the building of a railway station did not itself lead to any sudden changes, it did provide a new focal point in the west of the village. It is interesting that most of the new buildings, which have gone up over the last hundred years, have been built north of the railway within easy reach of the station.

Partly because of its situation in the 'A14 corridor' and proximity to Bury St Edmunds, the planners have allowed developers to build a large number of new houses in Thurston, especially since the 1970s. To give an idea of how Thurston has expanded in recent decades one only has to look at some statistics: in 1931 there were approximately 200 houses and a population of 584. By 1991 there were about 900 houses and a population of 2612 and today we have approx. 1400 houses and a population of about 3500, or about a tenth of the population of the nearby town of Bury St Edmunds. Thurston now comes within the Mid Suffolk District Council area whose offices are located at Needham Market just to the west of Ipswich.

The Original Appraisal and the new update

The original concept of undertaking an appraisal came from the Parish Council at their meetings in the latter part of 1999. A small group was formed to look at the possibilities and, after discussions with officers from Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk ACRE, there was a recommendation at the November meeting for an appraisal to be undertaken. The results from the questionnaire were published in 2000. Some areas highlighted by the 2000 survey have now been implemented, examples are the new library, improved play facilities for children, crossings, wheelie bins etc. However, as there were still outstanding items giving concern to residents, notably housing, in 2005 the Parish Council decided that an action plan should be produced detailing the problems and how the Parish Council would attempt to solve the problems or provide the requested facility.

Initially it was felt this action plan could be based on the 2000 survey. However the Parish Council felt that as five years had elapsed since the original survey it needed to update the information gathered in 1999/2000. To this end a group consisting of Cllrs. Mike Shave, Andy Sprake and Emma Bendall was formed to carry out the task of producing a new Village Appraisal Questionnaire and publish the results.

THE FUTURE

This is the second survey on behalf of Thurston Parish Council to ensure that the Council is kept up to date on Thurston residents' views about their village, and as importantly, show how your Parish Council is endeavoring to meet the needs and deal with concerns expressed in the survey.

We hope that as many of you as possible will find time to get involved with follow-up activities that are of interest to you. The information contained in the original survey has meant that the Parish Council in its dealings with third parties, such as county and district councils, has been able to demonstrate that it is acting in accordance with the known wishes of residents and this second survey will reinforce this message. Some of the requirements shown in the previous survey are now in being, e.g. Library and Play Area improvements but there are still areas highlighted by this report which your Parish Council will take note of and do all that it can to ensure residents wishes are implemented. We believe we will have been successful with our task if this happens. The Village Appraisal Steering Group May 2006

Invitation

An exhibition and presentation of the results and observations on the replies to and comments made on the questionnaire will be held at the **New Green Community Centre on Friday 29th September 2006 at 7.30pm**. Residents are invited to come along and have an opportunity to meet and question Parish Councillors on matters of concern.

Parish Council Office

The Parish Council office is currently located at The Granary by the Railway Station. This could change if the site is redeveloped in the next year or so. It is hoped that where ever the office is relocated the telephone number will remain the same but please check Parish Notice Boards located outside the Post Office and near the Butchers in school road, or the parish council web site address which is: www.thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk or contact any councillor.

Council office address: 24 The Granary, Station Hill, Thurston IP31 3QU
Tel: 01359 232854 e-mail: info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

2ND VILLAGE APPRAISAL



Thurston, Suffolk
2006

