

Barton Parish Survey 2025 – Final Report

Prepared by the Communications Working Group, Barton Parish Council

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1. Methodology and Data Sufficiency

The Barton Parish Survey 2025 was conducted digitally using a Typeform questionnaire, based on the South Cambridgeshire District Council model. The survey link was shared with all households in Barton (approximately 400 households, representing ~800 residents). We received 54 responses in total, giving a household response rate of 13.5% and population coverage of around 7%.

While this is not a statistically representative random sample, the responses cover a broad cross-section of households across Barton. Recurring themes and majority positions can therefore be regarded as indicative of village sentiment, though subgroup analysis should be treated cautiously. For a base size of 54, the indicative 95% margin of error is ± 13 percentage points. The data are sufficient to highlight clear priorities and areas of consensus.

2. Executive Summary

Residents continue to rate Barton as a highly desirable place to live: 94.3% are satisfied or very satisfied with the village (n=53). They prize its rural setting, proximity to Cambridge, community spirit, and core amenities (shop, post office, pubs, Conkers, Burwash, recreation ground, and school).

Transport is the standout concern. 57.4% are not satisfied with current road safety (n=54). The most supported measure is a pedestrian crossing (55.6%), followed by traffic calming (38.9%) and safer cycleways (27.8%). Residents describe the A603 as cutting the village in two, with unsafe crossings and narrow pavements. Street lighting is viewed as sufficient by 71.7% (n=53), though 20.8% find it inadequate after LED changes.

Public transport is weak. Only 38.5% use the local bus service (n=52). Usage is mostly infrequent; satisfaction is neutral to negative. Non-users cite infrequency (63.3%), unreliability (40%), unsuitable routes (40%), and lack of evening/Sunday service (30%). If improved, 40.6% of non-users said they would use it (n=32).

On housing, the full dataset shows 51.9% oppose more homes (n=52). Half say Barton cannot support more housing (50.0%; n=52). If any growth occurs, residents prioritise

preserving village character (78.8%), improving public transport (50.0%), expanding greenspaces (46.2%), and improving traffic movement (46.2%). Strong support exists for protecting the Green Belt (84.3%; n=51). Development type preferences are for brownfield (46.9%; n=49), infill/single plots (38.8%), and small schemes of under 11 homes (32.7%). There is cautious support for affordable housing for younger families and key workers, provided it is small scale and sensitively designed.

Families want safer routes to school, updated play equipment, and more activities for teenagers. Environmental themes highlight a preference for wilder verges and biodiversity, balanced against concerns about overgrown pavements. Leisure and facilities feedback centres on the need to redevelop the Village Hall and Pavilion, add varied social spaces, and improve broadband and mobile coverage. Residents strongly support local businesses, opposing large commercial expansion but open to small-scale workspace or services.

General Questions

Residents of Barton expressed very strong satisfaction with the village as a place to live. Out of 53 respondents, 43.4% said they were very satisfied and 50.9% satisfied, meaning more than nine in ten gave positive ratings. Only one individual reported dissatisfaction. These figures confirm a high baseline of quality of life, which is rooted in Barton's character as a rural yet connected community.

When asked what they liked most, residents repeatedly cited the countryside setting and proximity to Cambridge. The presence of core amenities – including the village shop, post office, pubs, recreation ground, school, and nearby facilities like Burwash Manor and Conkers – featured often. The sense of community was another recurring theme, with descriptions of friendliness, neighbours who greet each other, and the shared upkeep of village assets like the church and recreation ground. The data suggest that the mix of convenience, heritage, and rural landscape provides Barton with a unique appeal that residents value.

Less positive responses focus on traffic, public transport, and affordability. Some noted the poor bus service, noise from the A603 or M11, and safety concerns linked to narrow pavements. Others highlighted high house prices as a barrier. These concerns, while not undermining the overall satisfaction levels, frame the agenda for improvements.

Quotes illustrate the balance between pride and concern:

- “Barton is a lovely, picturesque village with a real sense of community ... great amenities.”
- “The proximity to both Cambridge and the countryside.”
- “The poor bus service.”

Traffic, Roads & Transport

Transport issues dominate Barton residents' concerns. Asked about satisfaction with current road safety measures, 57.4% (31 of 54) reported dissatisfaction, while only 35.2% were satisfied. When presented with possible interventions, more than half (55.6%) selected a new pedestrian crossing as their top priority. Traffic calming measures (38.9%) and safe cycleways (27.8%) also scored highly. This evidences the village's view that mobility and safety require urgent attention.

Comments show the A603 effectively divides Barton, creating severance between facilities such as the recreation ground, shops, and school. Narrow pavements and high traffic volumes exacerbate risks. New Road and Wimpole Road are repeatedly named as hotspots for speeding, lorry traffic, and unsafe crossings. Street lighting drew mixed views: while 71.7% consider it sufficient, around one in five describe it as inadequate after recent changes to LED bulbs.

Public transport compounds mobility challenges. Only 38.5% of respondents use the local bus. Among those who do, most ride weekly or less. Satisfaction is weak: 30% dissatisfied and 10% very dissatisfied. Non-users cite infrequency (63.3%), unreliability (40%), and absence of evening and Sunday services (30%). When asked if improvements would prompt use, 40.6% said yes. This suggests latent demand if routes, frequency, and reliability improve.

Pull-out quotes highlight these views:

- "The A603 gets busier year on year. It effectively cuts the village in two."
- "Pedestrian crossing for the school!"
- "Having to cross the road near Kings Grove and then back is a problem."

Children & Young People

Families in Barton report both appreciation of existing provision and gaps that need filling. Of the 45 respondents who answered questions on childcare, 44.4% had responsibility for children. Parents requested a broader range of activities, especially sports, music, and social opportunities. While the recreation ground is valued, many describe its equipment as outdated and call for more options for older children and teenagers. Several also noted the lack of safe walking and cycling routes to the recreation ground and school.

Drop-off and pick-up traffic around the school emerged as a specific safety concern. Respondents describe buses blocking roads near the school entrance and parents parking on pavements. These issues contribute to the wider frustration with road safety.

Quotes illustrate these sentiments:

- "Play equipment on the recreation ground could do with some updating."
- "Wider pavements and a safe crossing for A603. More facilities/clubs for children."

- “Parking near the school is dangerous ... the bus should not stop near school as it blocks the road.”

Housing & Development

Housing and growth divide opinion in Barton. A majority (57.1%) said they do not want more housing, with only 28.6% supportive. When asked if Barton can support additional housing, 61.5% said no. The most cited reasons were increased traffic, worse air quality, pressure on green spaces, and loss of village identity – each mentioned by more than half of opponents. Concerns also included strain on medical services, childcare, and school capacity.

That said, there is cautious support for affordable housing targeted at young families and key workers. Residents recognise that younger generations struggle to remain in the village. Some argue for small-scale, sensitive developments such as infill or plots of fewer than 11 homes, or for redevelopment of brownfield land. Few supported large estates.

When asked what improvements should accompany growth, the most frequent answers were improved public transport (71.4%), preserving village character (71.4%), protecting green spaces (64.3%), and infrastructure upgrades (50%). This reflects a clear hierarchy: if growth is to happen, it must be balanced by strong safeguards and community benefits.

Quotes illustrate the dilemma:

- “Young people can’t afford to live here ... after higher education or training away.”
- “Need more affordable but don’t want character of the village to change.”
- “Do not want Barton to lose village identity by being swallowed by creeping Cambridge expansion.”

Environment

Environmental questions drew divided but passionate responses. On verge management, 54.7% said they opposed more frequent cutting, preferring a wilder look. Many linked this to biodiversity, praising Barton’s verges and wilder spaces for supporting pollinators and wildlife. Others voiced concern about overhanging vegetation on pavements and footpaths, citing safety and accessibility. Drainage was another recurring issue, with blocked drains and standing water mentioned.

Street signage produced mixed opinions. Some residents called for more clarity and enforcement, particularly regarding cycling, while others objected to visual clutter. This balance reflects the village’s sensitivity to maintaining its rural character.

Environmental attitudes intersect with housing debates. Protecting green belt land, opposing large-scale development, and valuing the countryside setting are prominent

themes. For some, these concerns link to national debates on East-West Rail and urban expansion.

Quotes include:

- “Leave the grass to grow (embrace no mow May and let it bloom June).”
- “That we have lots of ‘wilder’ spaces, verges that allow for better biodiversity.”
- “Overhanging vegetation ... narrows the cyclepath.”

Leisure, Amenities & Communications

Leisure and amenities generated constructive criticism. Many residents expressed pride in local assets such as Conkers, Burwash, the pubs, and the recreation ground. However, there is consensus that indoor facilities fall short. The Village Hall and Pavilion were described as too small and poorly equipped compared to neighbouring villages. Suggestions included redeveloping the Hall, expanding the Pavilion, and creating a space for films, sports screenings, or a youth club.

Families sought better play facilities, with calls for updated equipment at the recreation ground and more provision for teenagers. A few suggested bringing in rotating street food vans or new evening dining options to diversify social life. Broadband and mobile coverage also drew criticism, with several respondents urging improvements to digital connectivity.

Quotes include:

- “Village Hall compares very poorly with Coton’s ... Pavilion is too small to be useful.”
- “Play equipment on the recreation ground could do with some updating.”
- “It would be great to have a wider variety of places to eat out in the evening.”

Medical Services, Health & Wellbeing

Medical services, while not the most prominent theme, still drew concern. Several residents commented on difficulties accessing GP appointments and the limited local provision of health services. Respondents suggested that growth in housing should be matched by expanded medical capacity. The survey did not show widespread dissatisfaction, but comments underline the importance of ensuring healthcare resilience, particularly for older residents and families with young children.

This theme connects to transport issues: poor public transport and unsafe walking routes make access to healthcare outside Barton harder. Improved bus routes to Cambridge or nearby GP practices were suggested indirectly.

Quotes include:

- “More public transport, greater availability of doctor appointments, better road surfaces,

better internet.”

- “Improve our medical services.”

Employment & Business

Barton residents voiced consistent support for existing local businesses. The village shop, post office, Wallis garage, Conkers, and Burwash Manor were praised as assets. Respondents see them not only as amenities but as symbols of village vitality. Employment itself was less frequently discussed, but there was interest in small-scale developments such as workshops, studios, or flexible workspace for local entrepreneurs. Respondents generally opposed large commercial estates, preferring organic growth in keeping with Barton’s scale.

This suggests a vision where Barton remains a service and amenity hub for its residents and neighbouring communities, but does not seek to transform into a larger employment centre. Support for business is closely tied to protecting Barton’s character.

Quotes include:

- “More support for local business.”
- “The success of the local businesses especially the village shop and post office ... valuable additions.”

Community

Community spirit is one of Barton’s strongest assets. Many comments praised the friendliness of neighbours, the shared upkeep of amenities, and the sense of collective identity. Residents value village events, clubs, and the simple act of greeting one another. This social cohesion appears central to why satisfaction levels are so high.

Still, there is appetite for more activities that bring people together. Several residents suggested new social spaces, events, or opportunities for teenagers and older residents. Protecting the village’s identity in the face of growth or infrastructure changes was framed not only as a planning issue but also as a community concern.

Quotes include:

- “Lovely community spirit.”
- “Village unity.”
- “I’d like more social activity.”

4. Next Steps (Evidence-Led)

Under UK planning law (Localism Act 2011), a **Neighbourhood Plan (NP)** must be community-led, not just a parish council document. The council can act as a “qualifying body” but the process is designed to put residents and local organisations in the driving seat.

1. Designation of Neighbourhood Area

- An application is made to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (in Barton’s case, South Cambridgeshire District Council) to designate the parish (or another agreed boundary) as the “Neighbourhood Area”.
- The LPA runs a short consultation and formally approves the boundary.

2. Forming a Steering Group

- The community forms a **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**.
- This must include local residents, business owners, and community representatives — not just parish councillors (although councillors can participate).
- The Steering Group is responsible for leading engagement, drafting policies, and ensuring community involvement.

3. Evidence Gathering & Community Engagement

- Baseline evidence collected: parish survey data, housing needs assessments, transport and environment reports, heritage studies, etc.
- Community engagement is continuous — open meetings, workshops, school/youth involvement, local businesses, etc.
- The key principle: the plan reflects *community consensus*, not the council’s position alone.

4. Drafting the Plan

- The Steering Group develops a **vision, objectives, and draft policies**.
- Policies can cover: housing type and location, design principles, transport improvements, protection of green spaces, biodiversity, and local business priorities.
- Importantly, policies must align with national planning law (NPPF) and the South Cambs Local Plan. They cannot block growth entirely but can shape *where* and *what type*.

5. Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 14)

- The draft plan is shared for **at least 6 weeks** consultation with residents, statutory consultees (e.g. Highways, Natural England), and neighbouring parishes.
- Feedback is reviewed, and the draft is revised.

6. Submission to Local Authority (Regulation 15)

- The Steering Group submits the plan to South Cambs District Council.
- The LPA checks it meets legal requirements, then runs a further **6-week consultation**.

7. Independent Examination

- An independent examiner (usually a planning inspector) reviews the plan for compliance and reasonableness.
- They may suggest modifications to ensure it passes the “basic conditions”.

8. Referendum

- Once approved by the examiner, the plan goes to a **local referendum** (organised by the District Council).
- All registered electors in the designated area can vote.
- A simple majority (“Yes” votes >50%) is required.

9. Adoption (Making the Plan)

- If passed at referendum, South Cambs District Council formally “makes” (adopts) the plan.
- It becomes part of the statutory development plan, meaning planning applications **must** take it into account.

5. Conclusion

The survey confirms Barton is a thriving community with strong satisfaction levels, but with consistent concerns around road safety, transport, and the balance of development. Residents want modest, sensitive growth, clear protection of village identity and the Green Belt, and safety and infrastructure improvements to come first.

The Communications Working Group recommends using this evidence base to shape the Neighbourhood Plan, set out a clear transport improvement agenda, and inform planning responses to South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.