

Woodley Residents' Survey

2017



HMR

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	About the Survey	3
1.2	Respondent profiles	3
2	Survey results	5
2.1	Awareness of Woodley Town Council.....	5
2.2	Town Council facilities	6
2.2.1	Use of Woodley Town Council facilities by local households	6
2.2.2	Awareness of the facilities provided by Woodley Town Council.....	8
2.2.3	The rating of WTC facilities by users.....	9
2.3	Aggregated rating for all Town Council facilities	10
2.4	Improving facilities in Woodley	10
2.5	The Importance of Woodley Town Council services.....	14
2.6	Service quality.....	15
2.7	Value for money.....	17
2.7.1	Views on increasing the precept for specific projects	18
2.8	What other services would you like Woodley Town Council to provide?	18
2.9	The Oakwood Centre	19
2.10	The Theatre at The Oakwood Centre	20
2.11	Woodford Park	21
2.11.1	The Lake.....	21
2.11.2	The Playground behind the Oakwood Centre	22
2.11.3	Other Improvements to Woodford Park	22
2.12	Woodley Town Centre.....	24
2.12.1	Suggestions for types of entertainment	24
2.12.2	Likely viewing times at the performance space.....	24
2.12.3	Further Town Centre improvements	25
2.13	Communication	25
2.13.1	Suggestions for improvement to the website	28
2.14	The Woodley Herald.....	28
2.14.1	Suggestions for improvements to the Woodley Herald	29
2.15	Living in Woodley	30
2.15.1	Satisfaction with Woodley as a place to live.....	30
2.15.2	The sense of belonging to Woodley	31
2.15.3	Community spirit	31

1 Introduction

The 2017 Woodley Resident's survey was conducted in late April and early March 2017. This regular survey was commissioned by Woodley Town council to gain local peoples' views and ideas about the services the Town Council provides.

1.1 About the Survey

The Survey was designed in consultation and agreement with Woodley Town Council and conducted by HMR, an independent research and consultation company. It was carried out with a structured sample of households, across each part of Woodley representing all age groups and household sizes. Interviewers visited 500 households around the town and asked residents questions about their views on the services provided by Woodley Town Council, and about living in Woodley. The survey was designed to take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete, depending on how much information people wished to give.

Based on an estimated 11,000 households in Woodley ¹, the survey gives results that are 95% representative of local households to +/- 4.3%. This means that the results can be considered as an accurate guide to local residents' views.

1.2 Respondent profiles

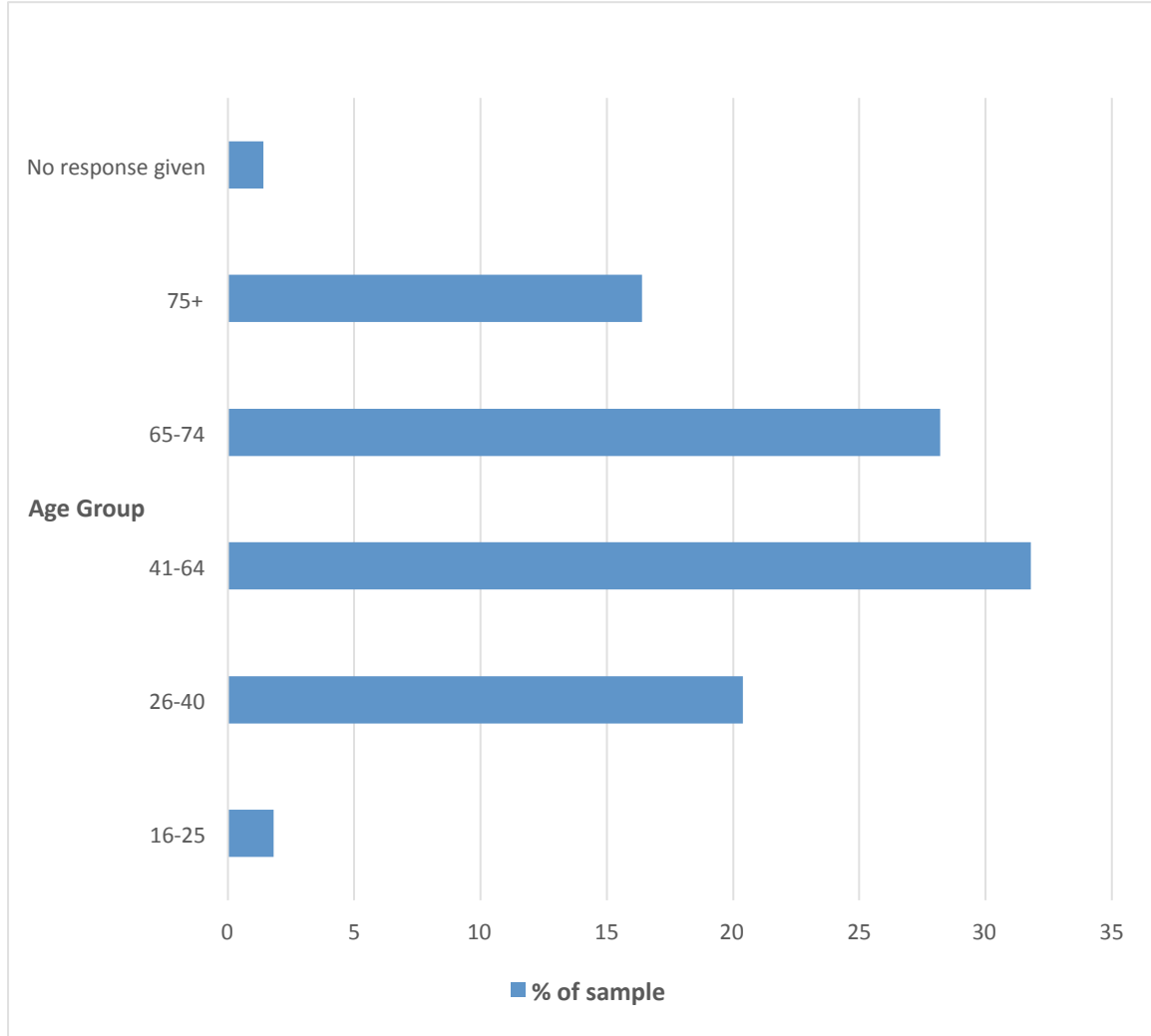
The mean household size across both elements of the survey was 2.9 people.

Table 1: The Age of Respondents

Age group	% of sample	Number
16-25	1.8	9
26-40	20.4	102
41-64	31.8	159
65-74	28.2	141
75+	16.4	82
No response given	1.4	7

¹ NOMIS 2017 with estimated addition for new households

Fig 1: The Age of Respondents



2 Survey results

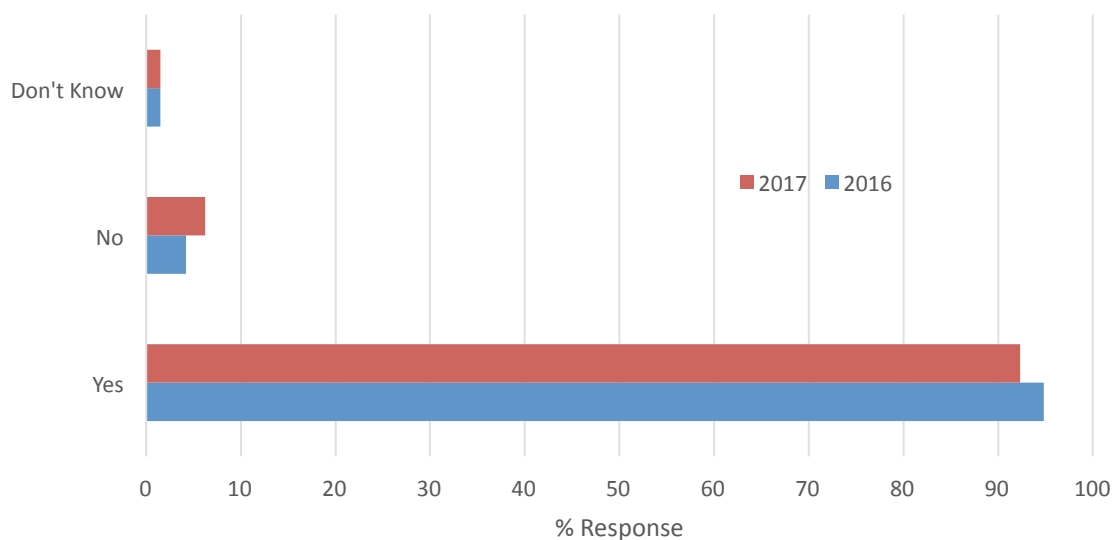
2.1 Awareness of Woodley Town Council

Although the majority (92.3%) of residents had heard of Woodley Town Council, the percentage of local people who were aware of Woodley Town Council was slightly lower than in the previous survey.

Table 2: Awareness of Woodley Town Council

Had you heard of Woodley Town Council before?	% Response	
	2016	2017
Yes	94.8	92.3
No	4.2	6.2
Don't know	1.0	1.5

Figure 2: Percentage of residents aware of Woodley Town Council



2.2 Town Council facilities

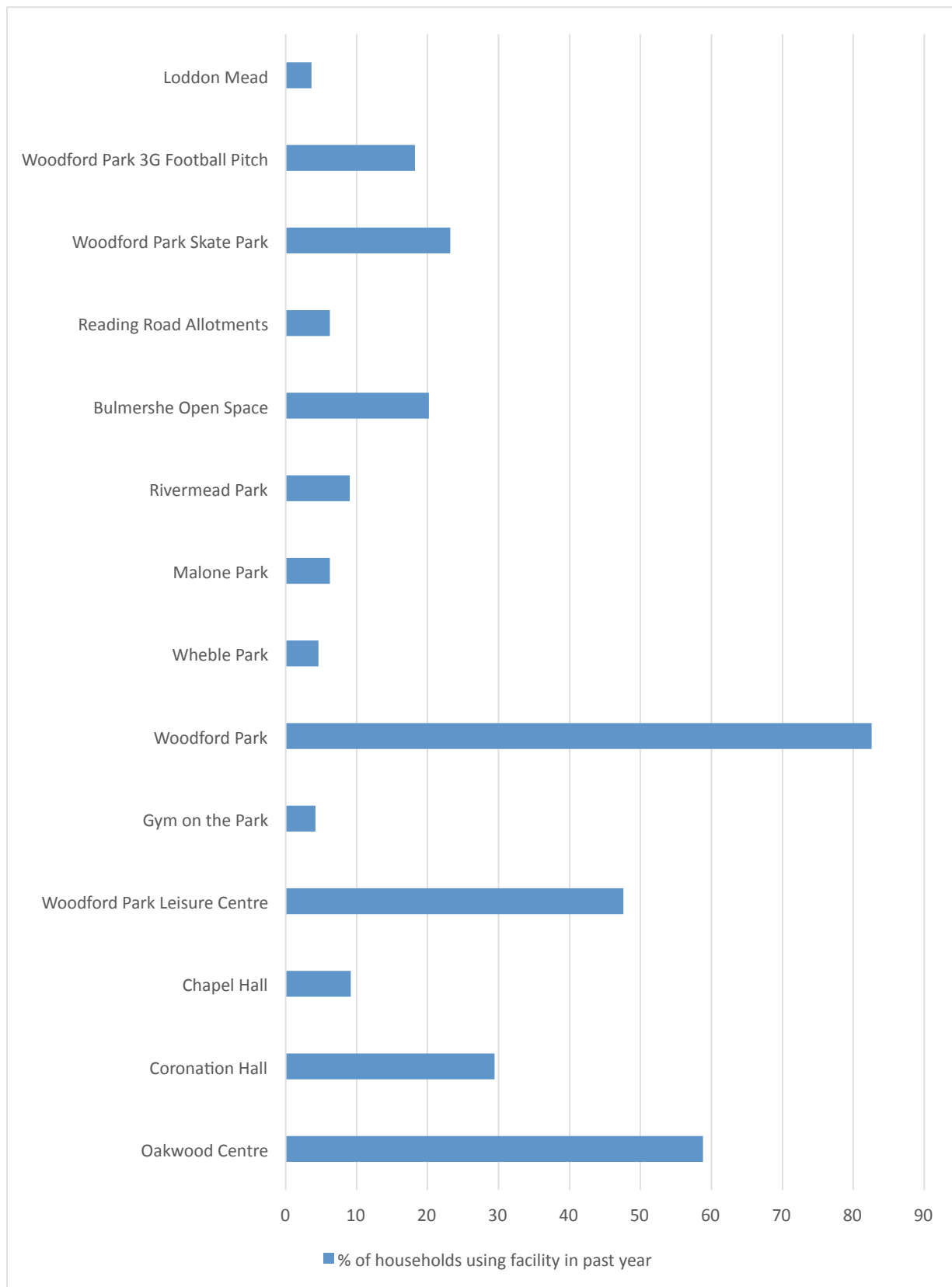
2.2.1 Use of Woodley Town Council facilities by local households

As is usual, Woodford Park was the facility used by most people in Woodley. The Oakwood Centre was used by over half of households and Woodford Park Leisure Centre by 44% of households.

Table 3: Use of Woodley Town Council facilities by local households

Facility	% of households using facility in past year
Oakwood Centre	58.8
Coronation Hall	29.4
Chapel Hall	9.2
Woodford Park Leisure Centre	47.6
Gym on the Park	4.2
Woodford Park	82.6
Wheble Park	4.6
Malone Park	6.2
Rivermead Park	9.0
Bulmershe Open Space	20.2
Reading Road Allotments	6.2
Woodford Park Skate Park	23.2
Woodford Park 3G Football Pitch	18.2
Loddon Mead	3.6

Fig 3: Use of Woodley Town Council facilities by local households



2.2.2 Awareness of the facilities provided by Woodley Town Council

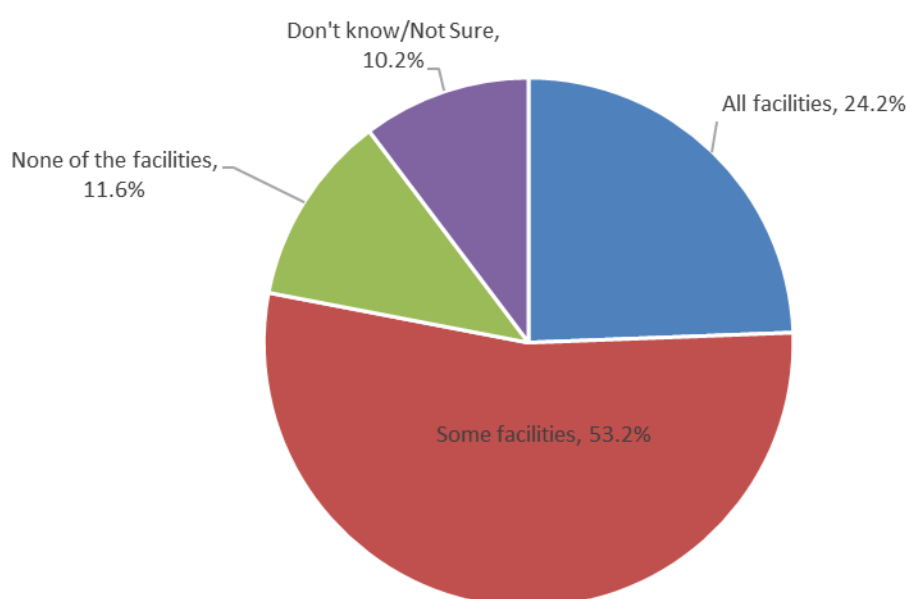
In 2017, fewer respondents than in previous years were aware that Woodley Town Council provided all or some of the facilities they had been asked about. This might reflect a higher proportion of people who had recently moved to the area. Twenty four per cent of those asked were aware that Woodley Town Council provided all the facilities listed.

As in previous surveys, peoples' comments showed that Woodley residents often do not understand the difference in function between the Town Council and Wokingham Borough Council. There is also a lack of awareness about the services that the Town Council provides, as compared to those provided by the Borough Council.

Table 4: Knowledge of facilities provided by Woodley Town Council

Awareness that Woodley Town Council provided the facilities listed?	% response
All of the facilities	24.2
Some of the facilities	53.2
None of the facilities	11.6
Don't know/Not Sure	10.2

Fig 4: Knowledge of facilities provided by Woodley Town Council



2.2.3 The rating of WTC facilities by users

The majority of users rated Woodley Town Council facilities as good or satisfactory. In 2017 there was a slight increase in the rating of most services, particularly The Oakwood Centre, Woodford Park Leisure Centre and Woodford Park. Notably, the new facilities at The Gym on The Park and the 3G football pitch in Woodford Park were rated as excellent by most users. Spontaneous comments showed that users like the simplicity, convenience and low cost of the gym, and the low cost and accessibility, particularly to children and young people of the 3G football pitch.

Table 5: How users rated WTC facilities

Facility	% response			
	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Oakwood Centre	39.2	36.9	16.1	7.8
Coronation Hall	13.4	35.5	37.9	13.2
Chapel Hall	5.3	37.7	44.1	12.9
Woodford Park Leisure Centre	32.9	33.6	24.2	9.3
Gym on The Park	61.2	28.8	9.2	0.8
Woodford Park	37.1	40.1	18.9	3.9
Wheble Park	6.4	29.3	41.2	23.1
Malone Park	17.1	49.5	22.2	11.2
Rivermead Park	14.2	31.8	45.3	8.7
Bulmershe Open Space	13.2	61.3	17.9	7.6
Reading Road Allotments	34.9	48.6	10.4	6.1
Woodford Park Skate Park	33.1	41.2	23.5	2.2
Woodford Park 3G Football Pitch	75.3	17.2	6.4	1.1
Loddon Mead	2.9	29.1	58.9	9.1

Most frequent response

Second most frequent response

2.3 Aggregated rating for all Town Council facilities

Table 6: Aggregated ratings for Woodley Town Council services

Rating	% response (all data)		
	2017	2016	2013-2014
Excellent	27.6	18.8	22.5
Good	37.2	39.8	36.0
Satisfactory	26.9	30.5	25.0
Poor	8.3	10.9	16.5

In 2017 the overall weighted rating score for all the facilities rated satisfactory to excellent was 69%. This was an increase from 63.9% in 2016 and 62% in 2013-2014.

2.4 Improving facilities in Woodley

When asked to comment on what could be done to improve the facilities their household uses, the most frequent responses were as follows.

There was positive comment about the Gym on the Park and the 3G pitch, although in each case there were some people who did not like the change from the old facilities provided in each place.

28 people said that they felt that Woodley Town Council should do more to let residents know what facilities are available and how to arrange to use them.

In General

- Most of the older buildings need to be refurbished and modernised in décor and/or facilities
- Have more community initiatives for litter picking, decorating facilities, general upkeep of the town
- The Town Council to be more proactive in letting local people know what is available and how to access it

- Do more to make Woodley green, especially in the town centre – more floral planting, trees etc.
- Have a community tree planting scheme
- Provide regular community skips in the Town Centre
- Have easy ways to inform the Town Council of issues and problems with facilities
- Have a maintenance hotline
- Have a Woodley Community Pride week – lots of events with free access to facilities, performances at the theatre, community group open days etc.
- Have a community exchange scheme – similar to freecycle, but a place on the town council website, or a stall in the market where people can bring and swap old things they no longer need for things that are useful

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

- Update and brighten up/modernise paintwork
- Maintain more frequently
- Have a maintenance needs suggestion box
- Improve cleanliness
- Improve the lighting
- Have a small café

The Oakwood Centre

- Make it clearer to local people what rooms can be rented and how much they cost
- Have a small 'Sanctuary' room. Like a peaceful non-denominational chapel style of room. A place for people to sit and reflect quietly and safely.

- Have a box in the Oakwood Centre (and/or a contact box on the website) where people of any age who are having difficulties or who are worried about their safety or the safety of someone else can make contact with someone who can help, in safety
- Allow self-catering for people hiring rooms
- Make the Oakwood Centre more of a flagship for Woodley Town Council
- Have closer disabled parking

Town Council Offices

- Make it clearer where the offices are (including sign posting from the town centre and car park)
- Make the reception feel more accessible
- Make the reception desk at the Oakwood Centre look and be more like a reception for the Town Council
- Help people feel welcome and well informed by lots of available information and friendly helpful staff at the entrance to the Oakwood Centre

Other community building and halls

- Improve décor
- Improve lighting
- Update toilet facilities
- Update and clean Coronation Hall.
- Have an online booking system
- Make one or two of the rooms or halls suitable for music rehearsals and/or recordings
- Have a hall that young people can hire at low cost to arrange their own events (with appropriate adult help if needed).

Parks and Open Spaces

These are important to the people of Woodley. In general, the main comments were that they should be kept well and that unruly behaviour should be prevented in them.

One person suggested that Woodley should be promoted as the town of open spaces with each one having its own identity and facilities. A map could be drawn up and publicised to show where parks and open spaces are and what is distinctive about each one.

Another person suggested that Woodley could be developed and maintained as a 'green town' making the most of existing green spaces and doing more to have flower displays all through the town, and more events and local pride in having green open spaces to enjoy.

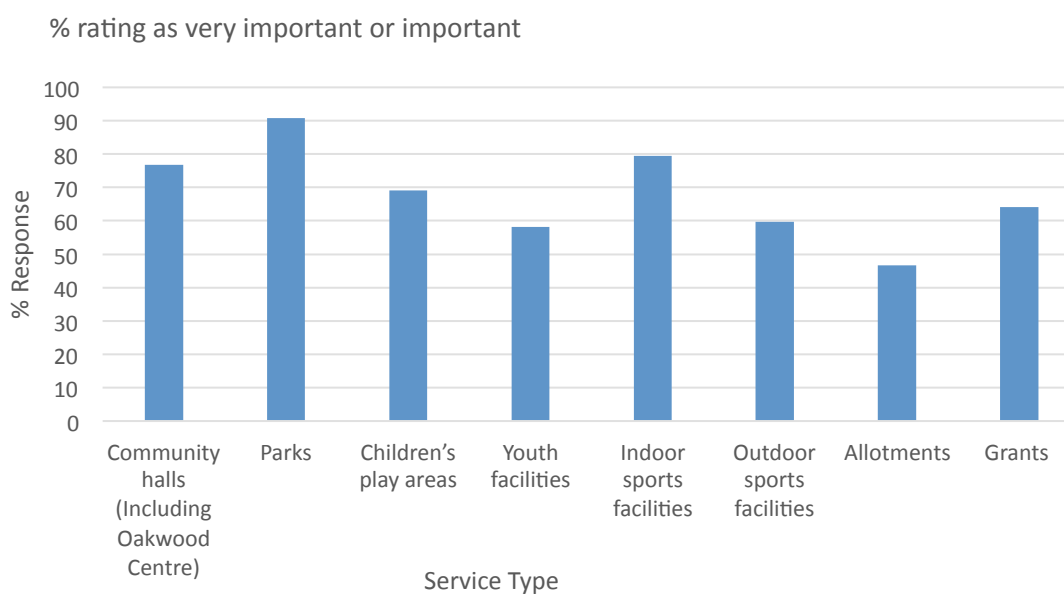
A further suggestion was to have a 'green town walk' or run to and through all of the parks and open spaces

2.5 The Importance of Woodley Town Council services

Table 7: The importance of Woodley Town Council services

Type of service	% rating as very important or important
Community halls (including Oakwood Centre)	76.8
Parks	90.7
Children's play areas	69.2
Youth facilities	58.1
Indoor sports facilities	79.5
Outdoor sports facilities	59.8
Allotments	46.7
Grants to services for local people and community groups	64.1

Fig 5: The importance of Woodley Town Council services



As in previous years, Woodley's parks are felt to be the most important service provided by the Town Council. Community halls and indoor sports services were also rated as important or very important by over three quarters of residents.

There was a slight decrease in the way that people rated the importance of the services provided by Woodley Town Council. However, it is important to note that comments made underline that local people believe all the services provided to be very important to the community, even if they as individuals did not use them at this time.

One respondent said that they liked that there are so many facilities available for hire by groups or individuals in Woodley. They thought this was important part of community life.

Another person who was new to Woodley said that they didn't know much about the facilities available in Woodley but wanted to find out. They explained that they had decided to come to live in Woodley because it is a self-contained town and seems to have a good and peaceful community.

2.6 Service quality

Thirty four per cent of people had been in contact with Woodley Town Council in the past 2 years. Most people who had been in contact with the council in this time were happy with the service they had received.

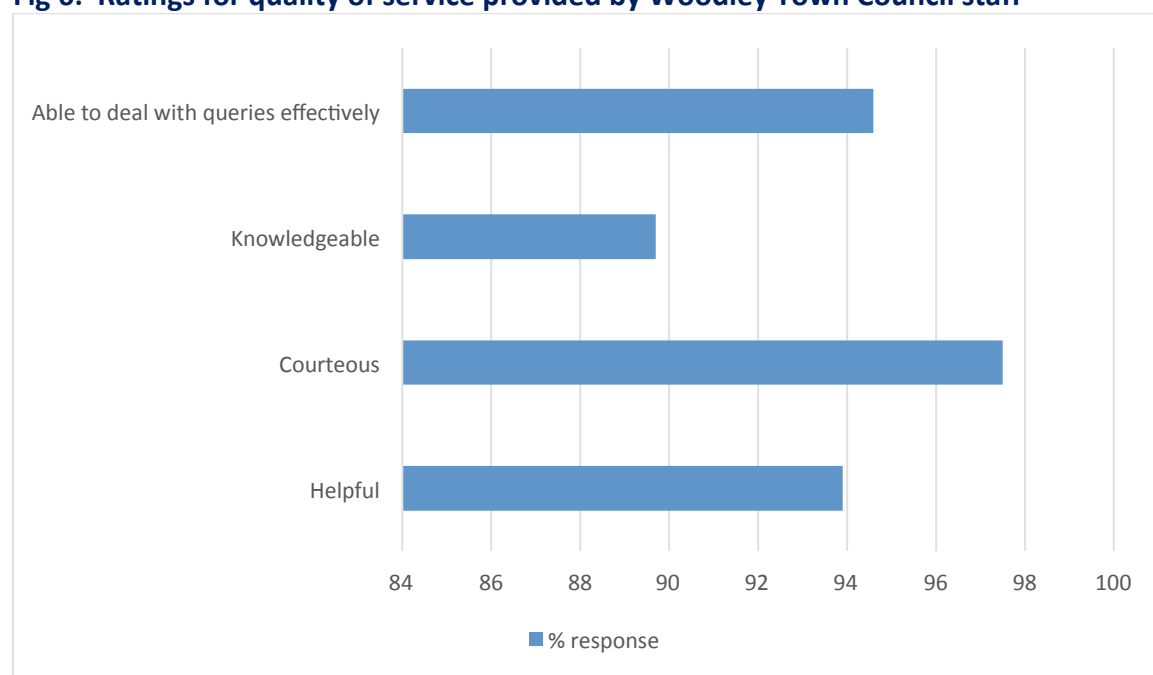
One person was very dissatisfied, feeling that their complaints to the Council had been ignored and dismissed without due consideration. One other person had problems that they did not know how to raise with the Council. Both were given contact details of the council to raise their concerns.

Four people said they were very unhappy with their contact with Woodley Town Council but when questioned further it was found that their problem was with Wokingham Borough Council.

Table 8: The quality of service provided by Woodley Town Council staff

Characteristic	% response
Helpful	93.9
Courteous	97.5
Knowledgeable	89.7
Able to deal with queries effectively	94.6

Fig 6: Ratings for quality of service provided by Woodley Town Council staff



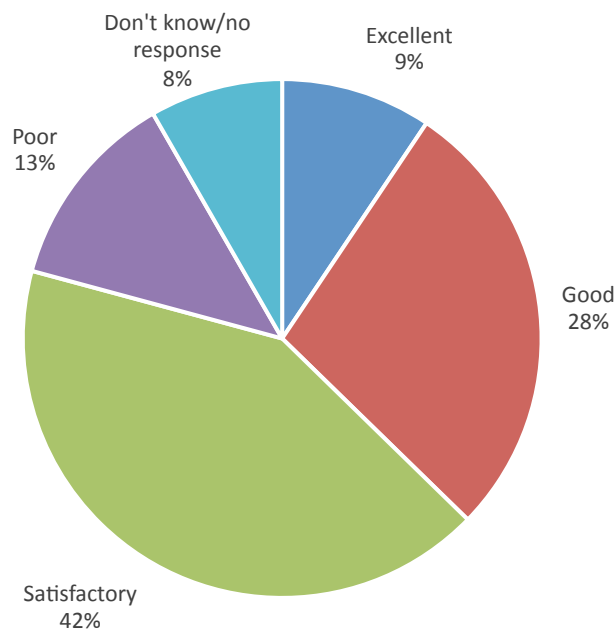
2.7 Value for money

Thirty seven per cent of respondents felt that Woodley Town Council provide good or excellent value for money. A further 42% said that the council provides satisfactory value for money.

Table 9: Woodley Town Council: Rating of value for money

Value for money rating	% response
Excellent	9.4
Good	27.9
Satisfactory	41.9
Poor	12.5
Don't know/no response	8.3

Fig 7: Woodley Town Council: Value for Money Rating



2.7.1 Views on increasing the precept for specific projects

The idea that the Town Council precept could be increased by a small percentage and the money raised used for specific community projects was thought to be a good idea by 69% of people. 11% thought it was a bad idea, and 21% felt that they would need to have more information about the projects that would be carried out before they could say.

In principle residents thought this would be a positive way forward to make improvements in Woodley, but 72% of people said that it should be well publicised. Most people also wanted the council to be open and accountable for any money spent in this way.

31 people suggested there could be a referendum or full community consultation about the amount to be raised and what projects this money should be used for.

2.8 What other services would you like Woodley Town Council to provide?

When asked this question, 10 or more respondents gave each of the following suggestions

The Oakwood Centre	Have drop in days free tea/ coffee etc. for local people to get to know each other
Woodford Park	Have 'Park Guardians' or wardens – voluntary or paid people to look after the park, but identifiable so that people having problems can approach them Have a befriending area – a place with seats for people to sit who want to chat Have outside games for all ages – big chess, drafts, petanque etc
Community groups and events	Have a befriending/community support scheme
Other	Run themed walks around Woodley (i.e. green spaces, history themes walks, healthy walks, walk and chat, local wildlife, learning new language walks)

2.9 The Oakwood Centre

Almost 5% of people asked had previously hired a room at the Oakwood Centre.

Table 10: Have you ever hired a room a room at the Oakwood Centre?

	Number	% response
Have hired a room	23	4.6
Have not hired a room	448	89.6
No answer/don't know	29	5.8

However, over half of people questioned would be interested in hiring a room at the centre, if they had a need to, if the room was available and if the price was competitive. Eight people said that they had considered hiring a room but were put off by the Oakwood Centre website not having prices for hire displayed on the website.

Table 11: Would you consider hiring a room at the Oakwood Centre in the future?

	% response
Would consider hiring a room	59.2
Would not consider hiring a room	31.6
Don't know	9.2

There appeared to be a lack of awareness that individuals could hire rooms at the centre. There was also a perception that room hire at the Oakwood Centre was restricted or expensive. Sixteen people commented that they thought the Oakwood Centre was available for weddings and businesses only. Other typical comments reflected a lack of awareness that rooms could be hired by individual residents, or that the rooms were available for formal occasions, or for social events for adults only.

2.10 The Theatre at The Oakwood Centre

The majority of local residents are aware of the Theatre at the Oakwood Centre. Of those who had attended a production, most made spontaneous comments that they had enjoyed the production and that they either visited the theatre often, or they intended to do so.

Table 12: Are you aware that there is a theatre at the Oakwood Centre?

	% response
Aware of Theatre	87.8
Not aware of Theatre	12.2

Just over a third of residents had been to a production at the theatre.

Table 13: Have you ever been to a production at the Theatre?

	% response
Have been to a production	36.1
Have not been to a production	63.9

Although almost three quarters said that they would be likely to attend a production. Typically, people commented that this would be if the production sparked an interest and was well advertised.

Table 14: Are you likely to attend a production at the theatre in the future?

	% response
Likely to attend	73.2
Not likely to attend	25.6
Don't know	29.1

Nineteen people asked if the theatre was available for hire to local individuals and groups. 28 said that they thought the theatre should be used to encourage local talent by having more open community events.

Various suggestions were made, including having a community pantomime, talent shows, tribute bands, running free courses for drama and self confidence.

There was interest in having band nights at the Theatre to promote local bands, or to have the theatre as an easily booked, low cost venue for local bands, choirs and drama groups.

One person suggested having the Theatre as a base (which also could include other community halls and the new performance space) for Woodley residents to show their talents, give talks and promote new ideas.

Twenty one people said that they would be more likely to attend the theatre if there was a high profile production with well known actors. One person suggested teaming up with the Mill at Sonning and other local venues to promote and build enthusiasm about small local theatres.

2.11 Woodford Park

2.11.1 The Lake

Respondents were given information about planned changes to Woodford Park, particularly improvements to the Lake and an upgraded new play area (behind the Oakwood Centre). They were asked to give suggestions for other improvements and ideas for upgrades.

In general, the response to the planned upgrade was positive, and people were excited by the concepts presented. There was a strong consensus that the Lake should be a community focus and resource, accessible to all, and with improved wildlife support, less smell in the summer and better paths around it. Pond dipping and nature spotting activities for children were popular ideas.

There were relatively few suggestions for improvements that were not included in the existing plan, except that several people suggested having a voluntary group to care for the lake, which should include local schools and youth groups.

Notice boards around the lake showing what wildlife is there were popular, as were memorial seats and trees.

2.11.2 The Playground behind the Oakwood Centre

There was almost unanimous agreement that the play area behind the Oakwood Centre should be upgraded. Typical reference points were Dinton Pastures and Palmer Park for the type of equipment that people suggested.

In particular, the play area at Dinton Pastures was popular as it provides equipment that the whole family of all ages can enjoy and play on together.

Residents favoured equipment made of natural materials which allowed adventurous and self directed play by children (and adults).

2.11.3 Other Improvements to Woodford Park

The most popular additional suggestions for improvements to Woodford Park were:

- Increase the wild flower areas
- Keep the playgrounds well maintained
- Bring back a crazy golf course
- Have regular community picnics – in aid of local charities?
- Encourage litter picking by all
- Of those giving an opinion, 31% thought a permanent path should be laid across the memorial ground, 58% though the informal path should be left, 1% thought that people should be prevented from walking across the memorial ground to stop the path. 10% were not sure.
- Have more trees around the park
- Build a splash/sprinkler park near the paddling pool (maybe where the old playground used to be)
- Maintain the park and grass cutting to a high standard

- Enter the park for an award as an incentive to maintaining well
- More hanging baskets and flowerbeds
- Have a community orchard
- Improve lighting
- Have a community allotment for local youth groups to use
- Start a Men's Shed in the park (www.menssheds.org.uk)
- Run regular Tai Chi in the Park – free and for anyone to take part
- Have a paved footpath around the outside of the pitches behind Woodford Park Leisure Centre
- Improve the Tennis Court
- Have more picnic tables
- Have barbeque stands

Access and car parking

Those that knew about the improved parking at Woodford Park liked it. Those that did not know about it suggested better parking at Woodford Park.

2.12 Woodley Town Centre

Residents were given information about the new performance area in Woodley Town Centre. This was under construction at the time of the survey.

2.12.1 Suggestions for types of entertainment

- Local musicians
- Artists in residence
- Displays from local clubs such as dance and drama, gymnastics
- Cookery demonstrations
- Workshops for exercise
- Provide a free space for charity sales (identical to the old Pagoda sales)
- Busking days/times (Buskers could book to use the spot)
- Woodley's got talent contests (auditions at the performance area, finals in the theatre?)
- Battle of the bands
- Local choirs and bands
- Childrens shows
- Taster performances of events at the theatre
- Local youth groups and other societies having stalls there to promote themselves
- Community exercise
- Use it as a starting point for local races etc.
- 'Walk in' quick doctor clinics for minor ailments (by local doctors)
- Have times where local people can stand up and talk about their views (like Speakers Corner in London).

2.12.2 Likely viewing times at the performance space

The majority of people thought that they would be most likely to view entertainment at the performance area if they were visiting the town centre for shopping or another purpose.

Several people thought that this might change if the town centre became well known for performances and if performances were well publicised.

2.12.3 Further Town Centre improvements

Residents were also asked for suggestions for other improvements to the town centre:

- Plant more trees and have more planters – make the town centre greener
- Improve the paving so it looks more up to date
- Improve the look of the shopping centre (several people commented that it looks dated and can feel bleak)
- Have brighter paintwork
- Have more notice boards
- Have a community notice board
- Have a contact notice board – people wanting or needing a service or item can post there
- Encourage small, local shops
- Have a shop unit where local people can sell their crafts/services etc
- Encourage a high quality well known chef to start a restaurant

2.13 Communication

As part of this survey, Woodley Town Council wished to investigate ways to improve communications with local people. Local people wanted the following kind of information from Woodley Town Council

- How to make contact with the Town Council
- Who to make contact with at the Town Council
- How to contact the Borough Council
- Help to contact the borough council, local politicians, hospitals etc.
- What's on in Woodley
- How to hire halls and rooms
- Schools information
- Information about clubs and societies
- Information about community events

When asked what methods would be best to receive information about Woodley, residents preferred online and social media methods. However, this was truer of younger people than older, and depended on the kind of information being given

Table 15: Preferred methods of communication about Woodley

Method	% response
Newsletter	56.2%
Website	73.1%*
Email	37.1
Facebook	68.0
Twitter	22.3
Local Press	46.9
Local Magazines	29.2
Other	20.6

The website was the most popular source of information, but was not efficient unless people were actively seeking information. It was less effective on its own in providing new information or for marketing new services. Social media, notably Facebook and Instagram would be more effective at promoting unfamiliar information. However, these channels would not be effective for some people in the community.

The most frequently suggested alternative methods of communication were notice boards, fliers in public places and information delivered by hand to local households, fliers given out in the shopping centre and local radio.

Other suggestions included:

- Be proud and be ample in promotion
- Use a range of ways of letting people know what is happening
- Prominent notice boards in the Town Centre and other community places.
- Leaflets in local schools, organisations and businesses
- A Woodley radio station
- Start a local paper, similar style to the “Wokingham Word”
- Street banners in the town centre
- Regular information stalls/days in the Town Centre
- Town Crier at weekends in the Town Centre
- An ‘In Woodley this Week’ leaflet available in local shops and community places
- More community gatherings

Table 16: Use of the Town Council Website

	% response
Have used website	38.7
Have not used website	54.4
Don't know	6.9

Table 17: Experiences of Woodley Town Council Website

% of users who found Woodley Town Council Website:	% Response
Useful	84.6
Informative	91.3
Helpful to people who live in Woodley	82.4
Well Presented	63.1
Interesting	71.2

2.13.1 Suggestions for improvement to the website

The website was thought to be easy to use and helpful.

One person with technical website design knowledge suggested more information to help people with low vision (metatags etc).

Have contact details, council meeting times, voluntary community support groups etc. prominently displayed.

2.14 The Woodley Herald

The Woodley Herald is a newsletter produced by the Town Council and distributed to all households in the town. Over half of recipients were aware of having received the Woodley Herald; 43% had read it.

Table 18: Receipt of 'The Woodley Herald'

	% response
Woodley Herald received	57.1
Woodley Herald not received	24.7
Don't know	18.2

Table 19: Reading 'The Woodley Herald'?

	% response
Woodley Herald read	43.1
Woodley Herald not read	32.6
Don't know	24.3

Table 20: Opinions about the Woodley Herald

% of readers rating the Woodley Herald as:	% Response
Useful	78.1
Informative	82.6
Well Presented	81.3
Interesting	68.2
Helpful to people who live in Woodley	88.9

2.14.1 Suggestions for improvements to the Woodley Herald

The Woodley Herald was thought to be well presented, the correct length and useful.

There were a number of comments that it should include more information about community events, less about local dignitaries.

A small percentage of people felt it should be printed more cheaply (or appear to be printed more cheaply).

There were suggestions that local people should be encouraged to contribute to the Woodley Herald, or that there should be a newsletter for local people to write articles in, promote community events and write about local clubs.

2.15 Living in Woodley

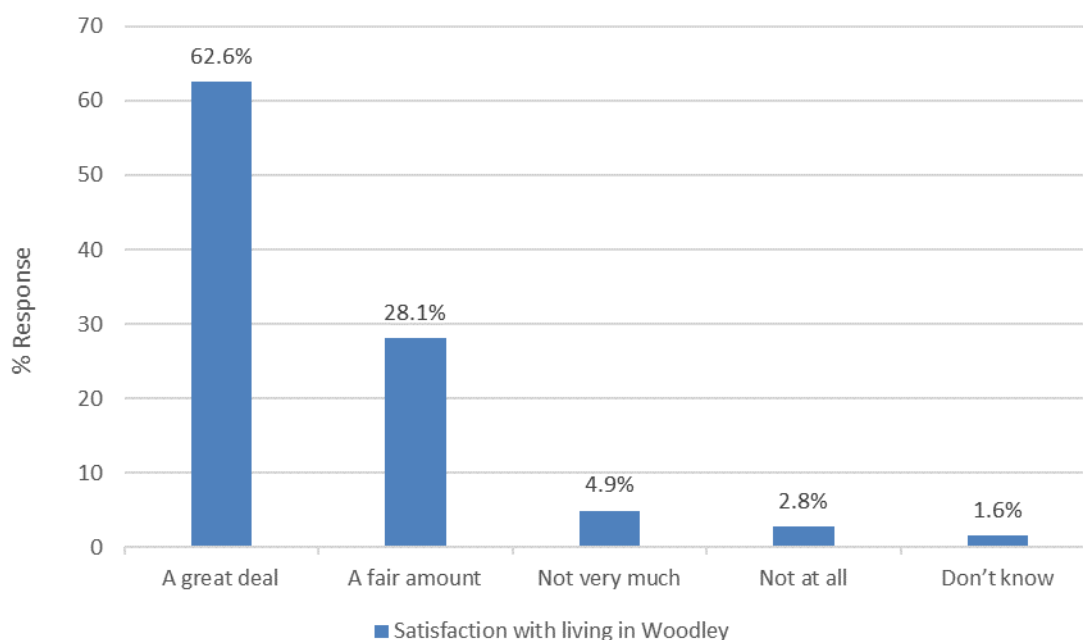
2.15.1 Satisfaction with Woodley as a place to live

Almost two thirds of local people like living in the Woodley a great deal. Over a quarter liked living in the town a fair amount. This is an increase in the satisfaction that people had with living in Woodley compared to the last survey.

Table 21: How satisfied are people with living in Woodley?

Rating	% Response
A great deal	62.6
A fair amount	28.1
Not very much	4.9
Not at all	2.8
Don't know	1.6

Fig 8: How satisfied are people with living in Woodley?



2.15.2 The sense of belonging to Woodley

Just over a third of people questioned felt they belonged to Woodley a great deal, almost 40% felt they belonged to the town a fair amount.

Table 22: Identifying with Woodley

Rating	% Response
Great deal	33.9
Fair amount	38.8
Not very much	16.1
Not at all	8.2
Don't know	3.0

2.15.3 Community spirit

This year, there was a greater uncertainty than in previous surveys about the extent to which people in Woodley work together to improve the local area. This was especially true among people who were new to the area.

Table 23: To what extent do people in Woodley work together to improve the local area?

Rating	% Response
A great deal	9.6
A fair amount	36.7
Not very much	27.8
Not at all	7.6
This kind of improvement is not needed	4.7
Don't know	13.6