

Moorfoot Consultation for Local Place Plan

The Community Council organised a consultation across Moorfoot during December, 2023 and early January, 2024 using the Place Standard Tool.

This comprised a series of questions to encourage the community to think about physical elements of their place (for example its buildings, green spaces etc) as well as social aspects (for example do people feel a sense of civic pride? Do they feel as though they have a say in decision making?)

The consultation was available on line and was widely advertised on our own website and using local social media. A number of the more rural addresses were mail- dropped. Paper copies of the consultation were made available at the village hall's coffee mornings and tuck-shop.

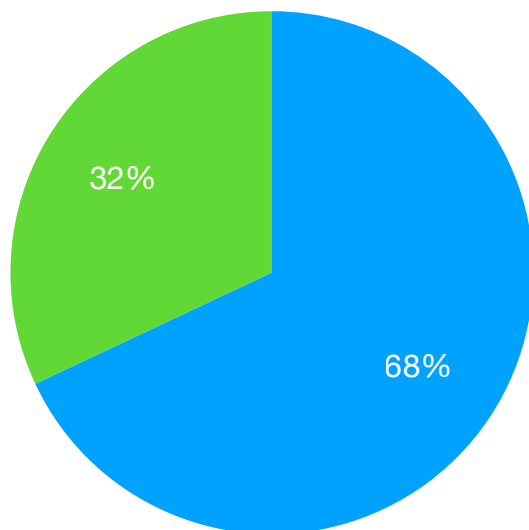
What follows is an analysis of the responses made together with an attempt to organise the many comments made, both positive and negative.

We also had some feedback from Midlothian when they invited comments from the primary school children and these have been fed into the comments as appropriate

With some of the questions it was interesting to analyse separately the responses from the different age groups.

1 Play and Recreation

Responses were largely very positive giving an average score of 68% with little difference across the age groups.



Asked to rate our Play and Recreation in Moorfoot scored 68% positivity

Positive Comments:

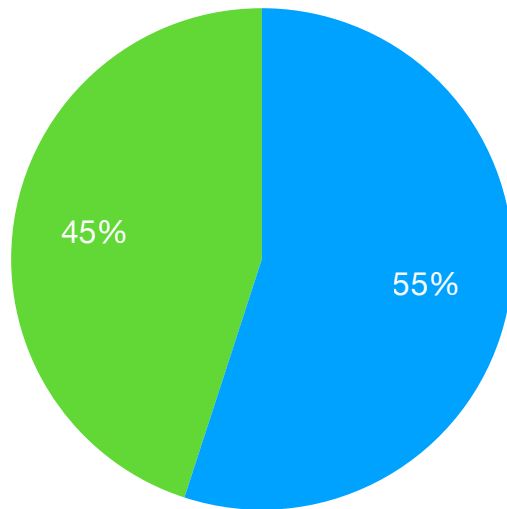
- Excellent access to varied countryside for walking and cycling
- Excellent country parks
- Leisure centre in Gorebridge is very useful and should be protected against closure
- Newbattle Pool is much appreciated
- Play-parks in villages are adequate
- Mobile library appreciated

Areas requiring attention:

- While play-parks are adequate some could do with upgrading eg play-park in Carrington is poor and there is no path to it
- Parking problems since Covid at Gladhouse Reservoir
- No facility for football in N.Middleton since school football pitch is not open to the public
- Dogs and dog fouling
- Improved cycle paths

2 Moving Around

Asked to rate their opinion on moving around the area, regardless of age the group came in with a score of 55%



Responses to Moving Around positivity rate of 55%

Comments:

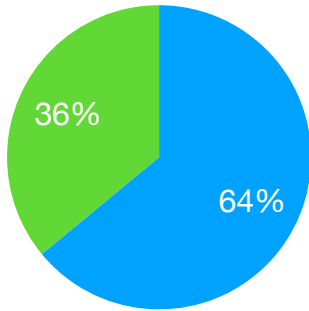
- Dangerous speed of traffic through villages and on main road mentioned over and over again
- Unsafe condition of both roads and pavements because of pot-holes and lack of maintenance
- No pavements between villages
- Lack of cycle ways connecting into the towns
- Poor, or no public transport, making a car essential
- Increased traffic in recent years
- North Middleton residents complain about speed of traffic at A7 junction and the volume of HGV's manoeuvring at the junction.

More positively:

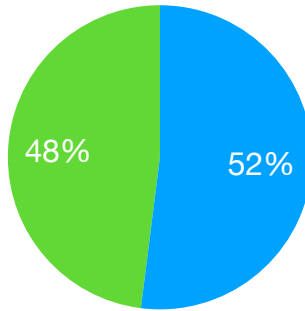
- Bus and train connections to the city from Gorebridge are very good
- Cycling around the countryside is great

3 Transport

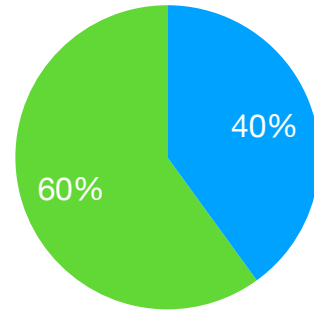
While the overall average positivity was 47%, age range made a clear distinction to responses on this question as shown in these graphs.



under 40's, 64% positive



40 - 59 52% positive



60 and over 40% positive

Comments:

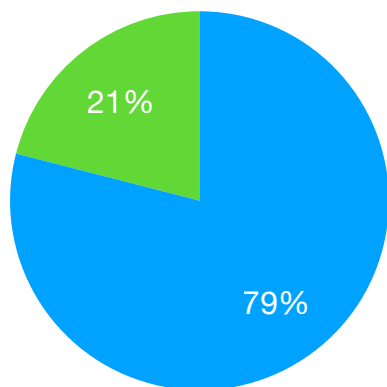
Principal comment being made is that you need a car to live in Moorfoot

Suggestions:

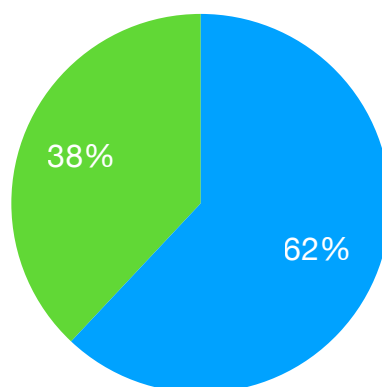
- Use of public transport should be encouraged but will only work with better links across Midlothian
- A shuttle service to Gorebridge (to buses and train station) linking from the villages
- Lothian buses might serve North Middleton, as Border buses are very expensive
- A park-and-ride option on **this** side of Sheriffhall

4 Natural and built environment

This question was looking at how easy it is to regularly enjoy natural space. Overall positivity was 73% but again age made a clear difference to opinion with this response as shown below.



Under 60's 79% positive



60 and over 62% positive

Positive comments:

- Peaceful villages
- Lovely community
- Beautiful landscape
- Public buildings and spaces are well kept and looked after, considering current financial constraints
- Regular litter picks by volunteers keep the villages tidy
- Village halls are hugely valued

Wish List:

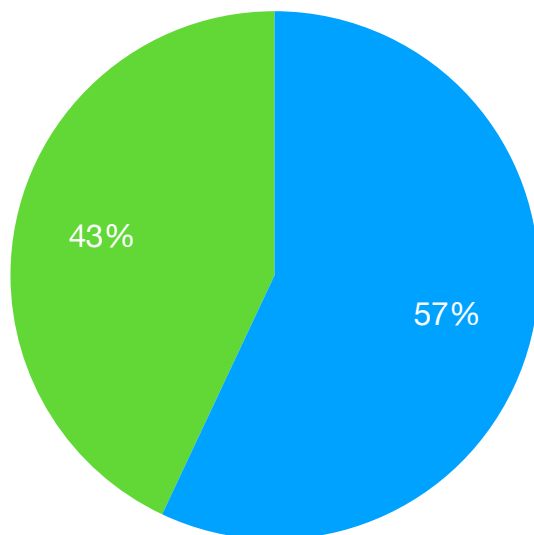
- Better maintenance of paths, handrails and steps on local path network
- A village shop or cafe to sit in (N Middleton)
- A swimming-pool closer to this part of Midlothian

Please do not:

- close the public library
- lose any more countryside to building over with houses
- build a wind-farm on the Moorfoot escarpment

5 Services and Facilities

Asked about how facilities and services meet the needs of Moorfoot residents led to the following result. Regardless of age range the positivity level came in at 57%



Average score on this question was 57% positive

Looking at the comments, this question very much showed up, that living rurally you can only access facilities easily with a car, and therefore there is a balance between enjoying rural life and the restrictions this brings.

Comments:

Things that work well (albeit with a car):

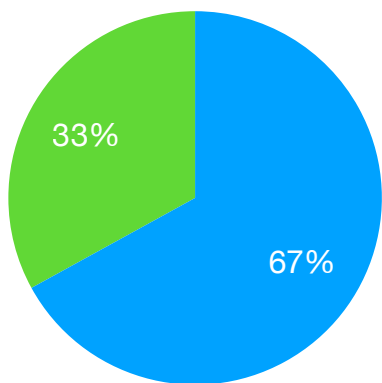
- Library
- Dentist
- Train
- Broadband
- Re-cycling facilities

Things that are missing - or need upgrading:

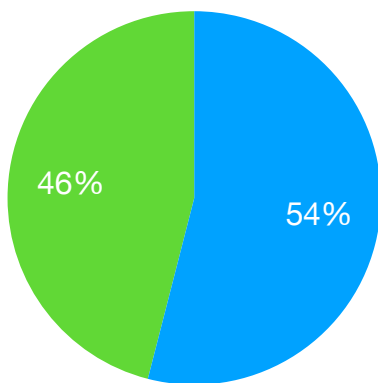
- High School and its integrated facilities - this had been promised
- Doctor's facilities - very difficult to get appointments
- Supermarket in Gorebridge (current facilities expensive and poor quality of fresh food)
- Food re-cycling
- More for children, especially teenagers, to do locally
- Village shop in N Middleton
- An after- school club
- Breakfast club

6 Work and the Local Economy

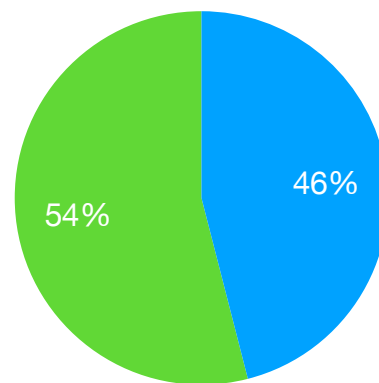
Asking about opportunities for work, volunteering and training led to a mean score of 57% with clear differences across the age range, though a number felt unable to comment.



Under 40's 67% positive



40-59 54% positive



60 and over 46% positive

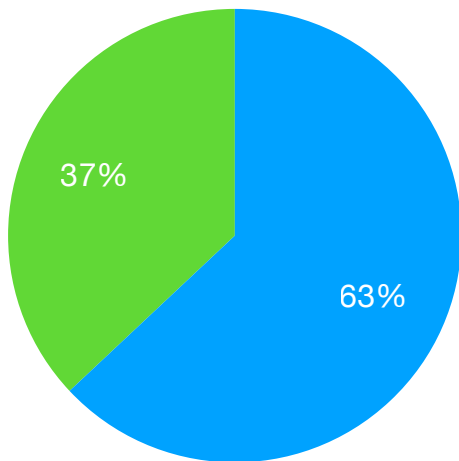
Comments:

- No problem with employment providing you are prepared to travel
- Very good tradesmen in vicinity
- Job and training opportunities are all out-with the villages
- Need more local apprenticeships for school leavers

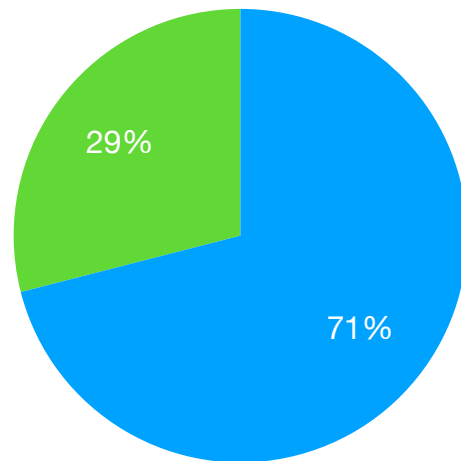
- A number commented that there were lots of volunteering opportunities

7 Social

Asked about meeting and spending time with others led to a very positive average of 70%, (slightly lower with under 40's, 63%, and higher with 40's and over, 71%)



Under 40's 63% positivity



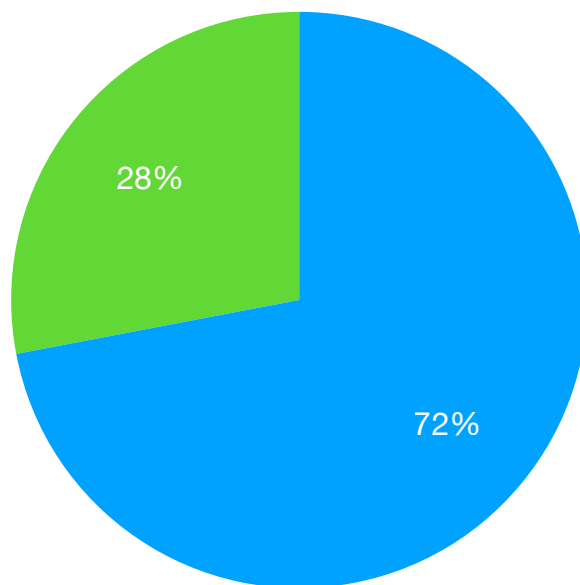
40 and over 71% positivity

Comments:

- Nearly all the comments mentioned the local village halls run by volunteers, and were all positive.
- Other positive comments mentioned the social events held in Gorebridge and church youth group
- School allows networking opportunities

8 Identity and Belonging

This question led to a very positive average score of 72% with similar results across the age range



Sense of belonging 72% positivity

Comments arising:

Looking at the positive - villages described as very welcoming, great, amazing, supportive

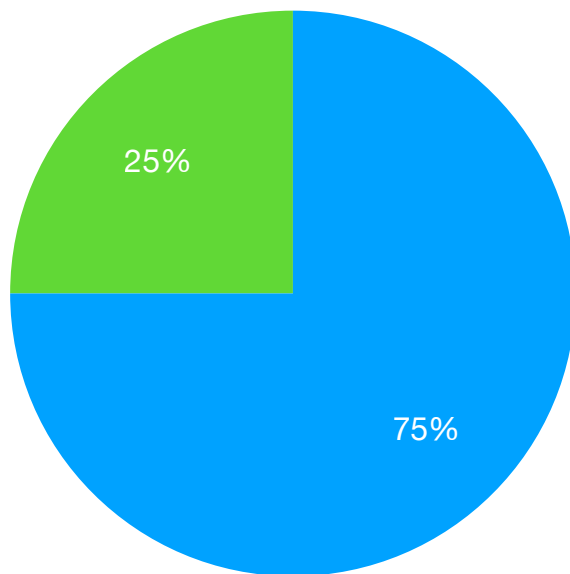
But some comments are more negative:

- Rural identities being eroded by incomers
- Newcomers don't identify with the area
- Rural Midlothian is increasingly treated by Midlothian Council as the urban fringe, and so is losing identity

A few made the point that they were happy to be anonymous

9 Feeling Safe

This question drew a very positive response from all across the age range. From a top score of 6, most people responded 5 or 6, giving a positivity rate of 75%



Asked to rate how safe a person feels in Moorfoot, the response was 75% positive

Comments expressed:

On policing:

- A few commented that they feel completely safe while some would like to see more police presence, especially around hot spots
- A request to see community police attending Community Council meetings
- This depends on the time of day because there can be a heavy presence of youths and anti-social behaviour in the evenings

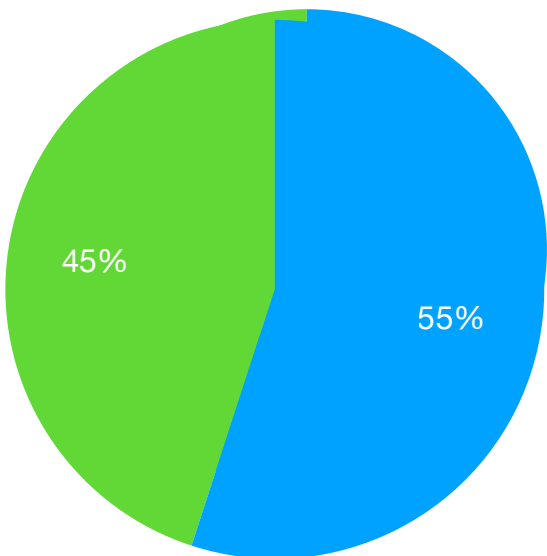
Safety on roads - we need:

- Speed restrictions around villages
- Speed restriction on A7 at North Middleton
- Better road surfaces and no potholes
- to make rural roads safer for walkers and cyclists

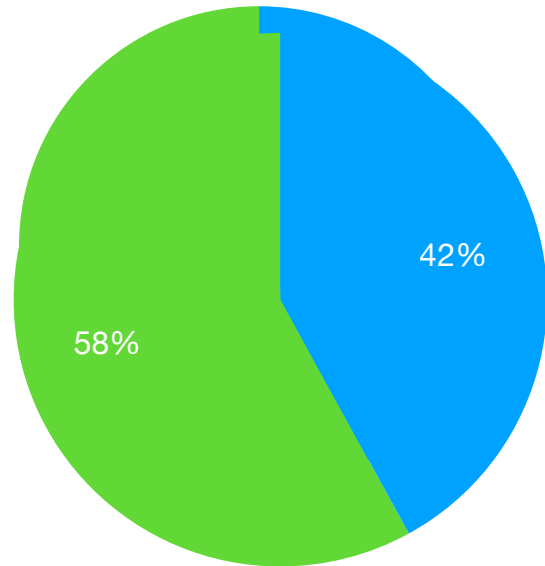
10 Care and Maintenance

On this question, asking about how well our area is looked after, regardless of age and where folk lived the positivity ratings were low with an average score of 57%

Under 60's were more positive at 58% compared with the 60 and over group at 43%



under 60's scored 55% positive
58%



Under 60's scored 60 and over scored 43%
60 and overs scored 42% positive

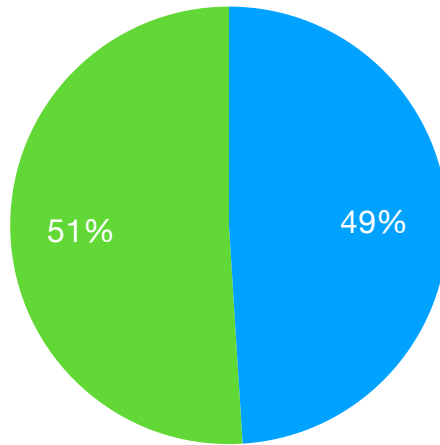
Comments:

- Poor road maintenance including
 - blocked drains
 - pot holes
 - litter and leaf clearing
 - flooding
 - hedges
 - grass cutting and weed control
- Large land owners not looking after stone walls
- Factors and the Council could do better
- There is a lot of dog fouling
- Poor response to complaints

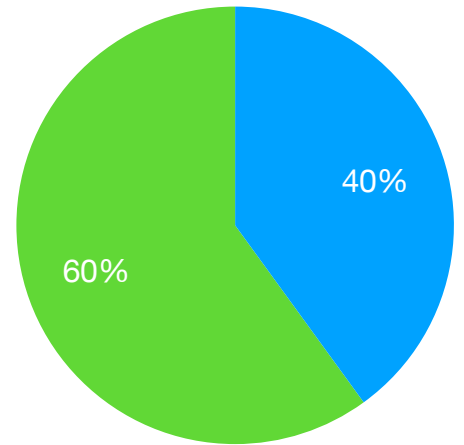
On a positive note:

- Village residents look after the village
- Local volunteers do their best with litter clearing

- Comments from school pupils about liking 'Green' spaces



40 - 60's scored 49%



60's and over scored

11 Influence and a Sense of Control

This question was asking about how well a resident is listened to and whether they feel included in decision making. There was a clear divide on this question between the 60's and over, compared with the under 60's

Comments being expressed:

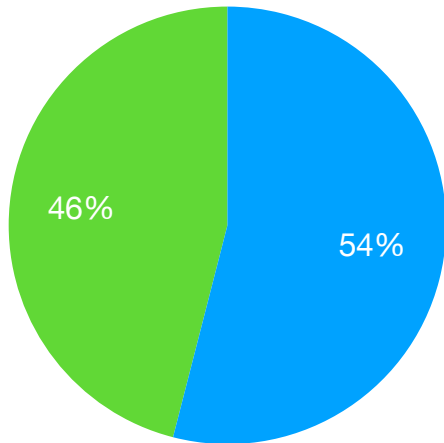
- A feeling of powerlessness when making objections to planning.
- A lack of confidence in Midlothian Council in dealing with Health, Education
- A High School in Gorebridge had been promised but was no longer in the pipeline.
- Living rurally leads to a feeling of being at the mercy of the urban majority

More positively:

- Local Councillors were rated well especially in responding to queries
- Community Council seems to be better at becoming involved in planning matters
- Villages have good means of communication

12 The Future

This question was asking about how positive we feel about the future and the overall average score was 47%. Again there was a clear difference between the 60's and over compared with the under 60's



under 40's scored

Comments Expressed:

- Continuing cutbacks both at local and national level give little hope of improvements
- Many were concerned about the continuing spread of housing with increasing population, leading to increased traffic and services struggling to cope.
- Villages should not be allowed to coalesce
- Proliferation of wind farms is a concern

More positively

- Our beautiful rural landscapes must be valued and protected
- Village life and community is highly valued
- More people recognising the importance of nurturing the rural environment