



# THE CHARING PARISH APPRAISAL



CHARING • CHARING HEATH • WESTWELL LEACON



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# THE CHARING PARISH APPRAISAL 2000/2001

## INTRODUCTION

In March 2000 the parish council held an open meeting to find out if there would be any interest in setting up a parish appraisal, David Terry, of the Kent Rural Community Council, was the guest speaker. He explained that the objectives of an appraisal are to evaluate what assets the parish has and to establish specific areas of need, concern and aspiration.

A good deal of enthusiasm was shown and those at the meeting were asked to fill in forms if they were willing to assist in any way. The parish council selected a cross section of volunteers and these formed a committee. Their inaugural meeting was held on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2000.

It took many meetings and much discussion to select a manageable 56 questions from the 324 contained on the Village Appraisal computer programme. Sadly, 56 questions proved too many for some villagers who gave up part way through the questionnaire! 1157 copies of the questionnaire were delivered and 678 (57%) were returned.

Thanks to all those who helped by delivering and collecting the booklets, and to those who filled them in.

The Parish of Charing has much to commend it. It has bus services, a railway station, a good range of shops, a modern library, three churches, a primary school, a new surgery and many clubs and societies. However, we cannot be complacent with what we have. There is always room for improvement and the completed questionnaires have shown the committee what *you* want. It is hoped that the various bodies who can now help the parish fulfil its aspirations are willing to help.

This document has been produced from the analysis of the questionnaire. It has been sent to the parish and borough councils, Kent County Council and the Kent Constabulary. We now await their comments.

## THE CHARING PARISH APPRAISAL COMMITTEE

Sally Andrews  
Colin Burdick (vice chair)  
Richard Carrison  
Sheila Cowdry (chair)  
Ken Foster  
Janet Glanville (secretary)  
Jeremy Hackett  
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## CHARING PARISH COUNCIL

by chairman, Tylden Reed.

Charing Parish Council was set up in its present form in 1894 and has seen many changes since then. We are represented at borough level by two borough councillors but that may change with alterations to the parish boundaries.

All parish councils strive to do their best for their electors and we are no exception. We live in the parish and are always meeting and chatting with parishioners and would like to think that we know what the electors want and, where possible, we provide it. This hit and miss method of gathering the views of the parish has been the only way until now.

Never before in Charing has a parish appraisal been undertaken. We, the parish council and parishioners of Charing, Charing Heath and Westwell Leacon, will gain an enormous amount of information from the appraisal. Your council will, for the first time, know where the weaknesses and needs are and where the greatest effort should be concentrated.

Your parish council has been working to make the highways in the parish safer and has been in touch regularly with Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council. For the first time we can prove that 63% of respondents want something done about the A20 crossroads. This will give your council more ammunition when we next meet the borough and county councils.

68% believe that we should have more starter homes, sheltered accommodation and housing associations. This gives a strong argument for your council to continue with its policy of promoting such housing.

Communication seems to be a problem with 18% of respondents thinking that the parish council publicises its decisions and activities badly. We have, for the past year, issued a quarterly newsletter to every household. We publicise our minutes in the Charing column of the *Kentish Express* and they can also be found on the Charing web site at [charing.net](http://charing.net). We have several notice boards around the parish and, from time to time, use the parish magazine.

We are concerned that the parish keeps its identity and does not become a dormitory town of Ashford. If it should grow it should do so sympathetically and keep its historical values.

The whole parish should be grateful to the few who have worked extremely hard to enable this document to be published. Sheila Cowdry and her small committee have spent months raising funds to pay for the project, compiling the questionnaire, distributing it, collecting it and putting the data into the computer. The design, printing and publishing also took many hours. Thank you Sheila and your Parish Appraisal Committee.

Charing Parish Council also thanks the parishioners who returned the questionnaires. Without your interest the document could not have been written. Thank you all.

It is now up to your parish council and others to use the information enclosed to make our parish an even better place in which to live.



## Charing Parish Council

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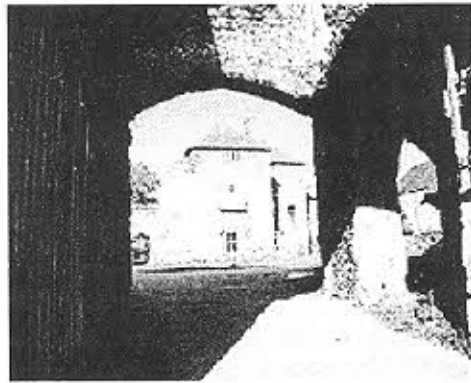
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# A SHORT HISTORY OF CHARING



*The remains of the Archbishops' Palace.*

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*'In the Domesday Book, the male population was 65, of whom 12 were unfree'*

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*An early print of the Market Place*



*Elizabethan Court in the High Street, formerly The Swan Inn.*

This page has been sponsored by  
Ardovries Shearway

The name *Charing* has been spelt in various ways. The origin is obscure, but may have been named after early settlers. The village lies on the spring line below the North Downs, where ancient trackways running east to west - wrongly named *The Pilgrim's Way* since Victorian times - were crossed by one of the north-south drove roads to the Wealden forest.

The settlement has always been a stopping-off point between London and the coast and today the A20, M20, railway and CTRL all pass through the parish.

The place first appears in recorded history in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when Egbert II, King of Kent, gave the manor of Charing to the Church at Canterbury for the use of the archbishops. The remains of their 14<sup>th</sup> century palace still survive.

Subsidiary manors in the vicinity of the village, such as Pett and those in Charing Heath, were created by the archbishops for knights who had performed military service.

The parish church, on the site of a Saxon predecessor, dates mainly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The splendid Kentish tower is 15<sup>th</sup> century and the nave roof, burnt in 1590, was replaced at the expense of the parishioners. At the Reformation the manor reverted to the Crown and was sold by Charles I in 1629. It was purchased by Sir George Wheler in 1692, and Mr Granville Wheler, now living in Otterden, is still the lord of the manor.

There was a market at the palace gate which was replaced in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by timber-framed shops in the High Street. The only property to retain its medieval appearance, Peirce House, was built by the Brents in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and eventually passed to the Sayers of Pett who allowed the aged and homeless to live there, rent free.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century several fine brick houses were erected and turnpike roads created the need for large coaching inns like the Swan, now Elizabethan Court, and the King's Head.

In 1761 Elizabeth Ludwell of Ludwell House bequeathed money for the salary of a school master. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the school was in Old School House, but moved to purpose-built premises in 1873.

In 1900 Charing was a, more or less, self-sufficient community with around 20 shops. The railway arrived in 1884, and the parish hall was built in 1897. Forty-two men from the parish were killed in World War I, and nine in World War II.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the building of several new estates, a new library, and a well-equipped health centre. Westwell Leacon was incorporated into the parish in the 1950s.

In the Domesday Book the male population was 65, of whom 12 were unfree. In 1664 there were 170 households, by 1891 the population of the parish was 1906 and today it stands at 2239 in 1184 households.



## CHARING HEATH

Charing Heath lies one and a half miles due west of Charing village on the sandy soils of the Greensand Ridge. Historically, the Greensand was used for commons, both at Charing Heath, Raywood and Westwell Leacon. Recently, the sand has been commercially extracted, and the quarries are seeking to expand.

In the Middle Ages, four of the sub-manors of Charing lay in this area; Burleigh, Newlands, Brockton and Tramhatch. Both Burleigh and Newlands had small chapels and fine 12th century remains survive at Newlands.

It is an area of mixed farming with arable, pasture and some orchards, originally worked from isolated farmsteads, many of whose timber-framed houses date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Several smaller houses survive from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. There was a brickworks at Tile Lodge from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Before the turnpike, a main road from Lenham to Ashford passed through Charing Heath, crossed by numerous drove roads from the downs to the Weald.

The common, bounded by Church Hill and Egerton Road, was enclosed in 1868, although part remains as the recreation ground. Shortly afterwards, the church, school and vicarage were built on former common land. The school has now closed and the church is united with Charing and Little Chart.

The 1840 Tithe map has 30 dwellings. By 1891 the population was 592. Today it is 334.

The M20 motorway and Channel Tunnel Rail Link have cut off the southern part of the parish, and this area has recently been transferred to the parish of Egerton.

## WESTWELL LEACON

Westwell Leacon derives its name from 'the well in the west' and 'Leacon' meaning 'a kitchen garden'. Until the 1940's, the area formed part of the parish of Westwell and a map, dated 1769, shows that Westwell Leacon was almost the same size as Charing.

Originally a heath, surrounded by cottages some, like Leacon Farm and Walnut Tree Cottage, are still standing. It was granted common land status in 1857 and there was a shop in Leacon Lane until the early 1950's.



*Village focal point - The Red Lion at Charing Heath.*

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*'The 1840 Tithe map has 30 dwellings. By 1891 the population was 592'.*

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*Leacon Lane looking towards the A20*

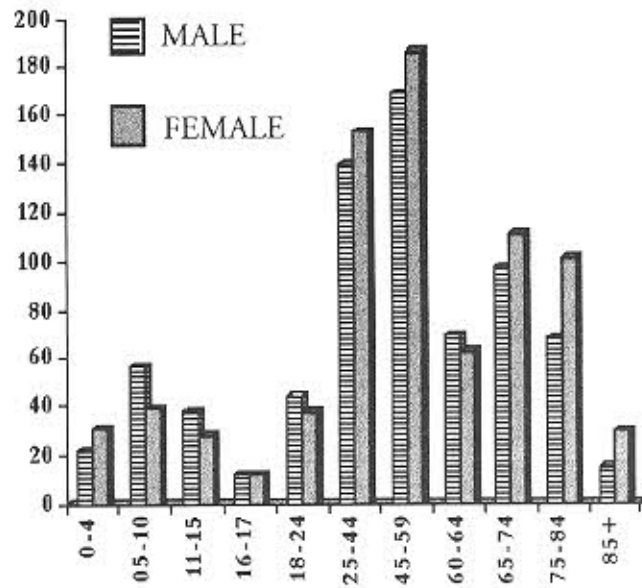
## THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

The electoral roll for 2001 has a total of 2239 adults living in the parish in 1184 dwellings. Charing and Westwell Leacon have 1019 homes and Charing Heath 165. The appraisal reflects the thoughts of 1521 people living in 678 homes.

The majority of the respondents live in the central part of Charing village (53%) whilst 11% come from Charing Heath and 3% from Westwell Leacon.

People live in the parish for a number of reasons; the highest percentage because they love country life (17%) - an important reason for Charing to fight against merely becoming a suburb of an ever-growing Ashford.

Slightly more females than males filled in the questionnaires and it was interesting to see that there were more people in the 45 - 59 age range than in any other group.



## HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

From the questionnaire it was ascertained that the current housing stock in the parish is largely owner-occupied, consisting mainly of detached and semi-detached properties. There is, however, a wide variety of homes throughout the parish. There are houses owned by the borough council and rented out, a small number of housing association dwellings, a number of council flats and bungalows for the elderly, together with the sheltered accommodation at Pym House.

There are owner-occupied flats, bungalows, mobile homes, terraced cottages, detached houses, manor houses and semi-detached houses, some built as starter homes in the sixties at Haffenden Meadow and Woodbrook. Sadly, at today's prices, the latter are no longer affordable as starter homes for most young couples.

Most people were happy *not* to move, although a few would like larger accommodation.

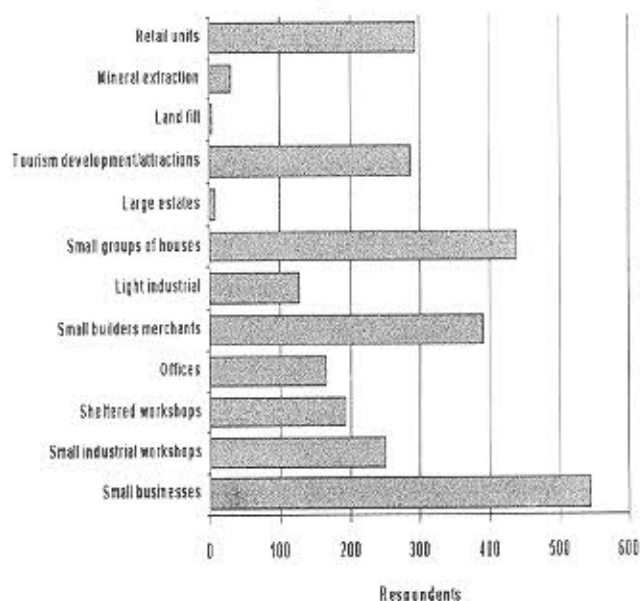
70% of the respondents did not want to see any more commercial development within the parish, while those that did favoured the EuroCharing site. 64% did not want to see any more housing development but those that did selected the sites at Hither Field and EuroCharing as areas suitable for house building. They were in favour of small groups of houses and felt these should be compact, affordable starter homes to keep young families in the parish.

However the majority of people who answered question 52 about the number of new houses needed in the parish said they would like it to be less than 25.

Clearly then, it seems the parishioners do not want too much development. Does this mean that we are happy with what we have?



### Q22) Development supported within the parish



## CRIME, POLICING AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Weald police division covers approximately one quarter of Kent, including the parish of Charing. It has the lowest budget of the Kent forces because it has lower crime figures and less dwellings. Over the past few years, there has been significant changes in the area with an expanding population, growth in housing, the decline in farming and the construction of the Channel Tunnel rail link, all of which bring added pressures on the constabulary and, it is for this reason, that the Ashford area has been designated for policing investment opportunity.

The findings of the parish appraisal questionnaire are, more or less, in line with the Weald Police's own public survey which highlighted the following priorities;

- (1) A reduction in the number of domestic burglaries.
- (2) A reduction in the perceived risk and fear of crime.
- (3) A reduction in visible drug abuse.
- (4) To provide a visible response.

On the whole, the Weald police area, especially the parish of Charing, is a relatively safe place in which to live and work. From the questionnaire, parishioners want better contact with the police and two thirds of the respondents said that they would support public meetings with the police and other agencies. Respondents also wanted more activities for young people. This is an area of great concern, particularly as the youth club has been closed because of a lack of adult help. If the community want more activities to help keep youngsters off the streets, they must be willing to help. Vandalism will thrive if there is nothing better to do!

From the survey, the areas where respondents felt most threatened were School Road, Downsway and the railway station at night.

If a crime occurs and is *not* reported to the police then, as far as records are concerned, there has not been a crime. All crimes *must* be reported, otherwise the police cannot assess what is happening in a particular locality. Everyone has their part to play, if not their duty, to help make the parish a better place in which to live and work.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Within the parish there are thirteen active watches. Any area that is interested in setting up its own watch should contact one of the following for assistance:

Ken Foster: 01233 712852

Janet Lockyer: 01233 713533

Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Office, Ashford: 01233 619111  
or by writing to PO Box 53, Ashford, Kent.

The Neighbourhood Watch Website can be found at:

<http://www.nwatch.org.uk>

### AREAS WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEMES:

Charing Heath, Market Place, Pett Lane, Hart Hill, Warren Street, Pilgrims' Way, Haffenden Meadow, Pluckley Road, High Street, Woodbrook, Downs Way, Old Ashford Road, Stalisfield Road, Bowl Road and The Moat.



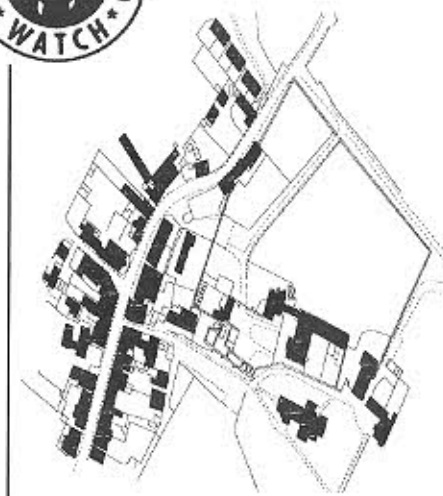
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*'On the whole, the Weald police area, especially the parish of Charing, is a relatively safe place in which to live and work'.*

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*Charing fire station has an ongoing requirement for new recruits.*





## PARISH AMENITIES



*The Parish Hall, built in 1897.*

The parish is fortunate in having recreation grounds at Westwell Leacon and Charing Heath, while Charing village has the Arthur Baker Field, Clewards Meadow and Piquets. Charing has its parish hall, built in 1897 to commemorate the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Church Barn, completed in 1958 and the sports pavilion at the Arthur Baker Field. Charing Heath has its Memorial Hill which has recently undergone a major face-lift.

The questionnaire revealed that many parishioners would like to see a better sports facility; perhaps an all-purpose building that could accommodate the pre-school group as well as a youth club, but be big enough for badminton and five-a-side football. Younger respondents asked for better equipment in the play area with a fence to keep dogs out. They would also like to see a BMX track and a skateboard and roller blade park. If these aspirations are to be anything other than dreams, the village must pool its resources and energy to raise the necessary funding.



*The Church Barn moved to its current location from High Halden in 1958.*

There is a private health club in the parish, HiLife at The Green, which boasts a 20 metre indoor pool. It has well-equipped cardiovascular and resistance rooms, sauna, steam room, spa and a members' bar. Non members can use the club for aerobic, aqua-aerobic and karate classes and make use of the solarium, together with the services of an osteopath, holistic therapist and beautician.

Charing boasts its own purpose-built KCC branch library which is open to everyone that can provide identification.

### Opening hours:

Tuesday and Thursday: 9.30am - 12.30pm & 2pm - 5pm

Friday: 2pm - 5pm

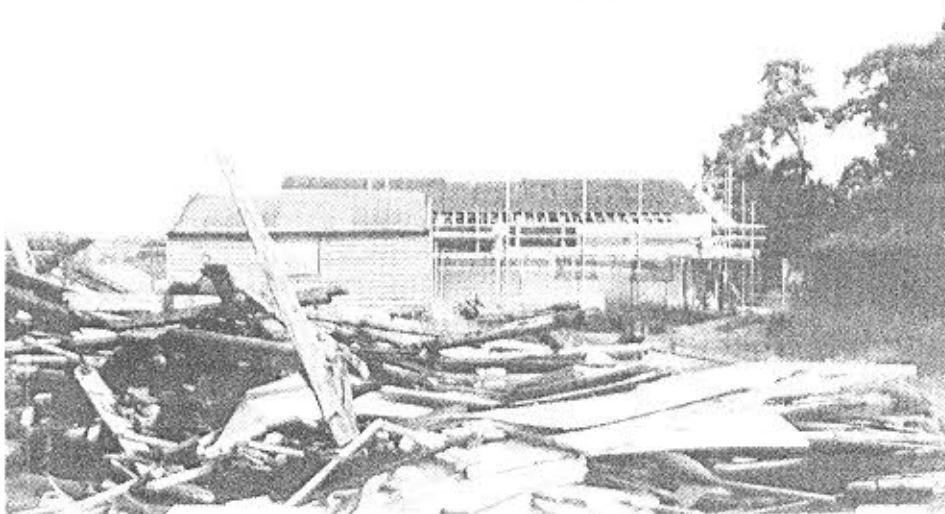
Saturday: 9.30am - 12.30pm



*Charing library. As well as books, the library stocks video tapes, audio cassettes and jigsaws.*

There is no charge for borrowing books but video and audio cassettes carry a small rental fee. A range of jigsaw puzzles is also available on free loan. It is hoped that internet facilities will become available within the next twelve months.

For further information call: 01233 713177 during open hours.



*Nearly there! Charing Heath's Memorial Hall has recently undergone extensive modernisation.*

*Villagers held a huge number of fund raising events to enable the work to be carried out.*

Another parish amenity is the surgery. The original practice was founded in 1910 when Dr Littledale Senior started a surgery at Wakely House. He was joined in partnership by his son Dick in 1935. Since then the practice has grown and moved its location several times, the new surgery opening in February 1997. The range of services available was extended to include a full dispensing pharmacy, together with a wide choice of complementary therapies. The practice provides medical care for around 6500 patients in 21 villages and communities around Charing with a catchment area in excess of 200 square miles.

The senior partner is Dr Lister who has been at the surgery since 1979. He is supported by four partners, a retained doctor and, at times, GP registrars. There is a full complement of administrative staff headed by the practice manager, Gill Magson, and a registered nurse is always on duty when the surgery is open.

The Charing Pharmacy opened with the new building and the pharmacist, Derek Meadows, is available to advise on all aspects of medication. The pharmacy is open weekdays from 9am until 6pm and Saturdays from 9am until noon. Weekday surgery hours are between 8.30am and 6pm and there is an emergency only surgery on Saturdays from 9am until 12 noon.



*'The practice provides medical care for around 6500 patients in 21 villages and communities around Charing with a catchment area in excess of 200 square miles.'*

Nineteen people in the survey said that they would like to see a chemist in Charing. If they read this document they will now know that there is a pharmacy which is only a fancy name for a chemist! Over the counter medicines are available, together with many other items including shampoo, hair brushes, bubble bath, sponges, flannels and a next-day film processing service.

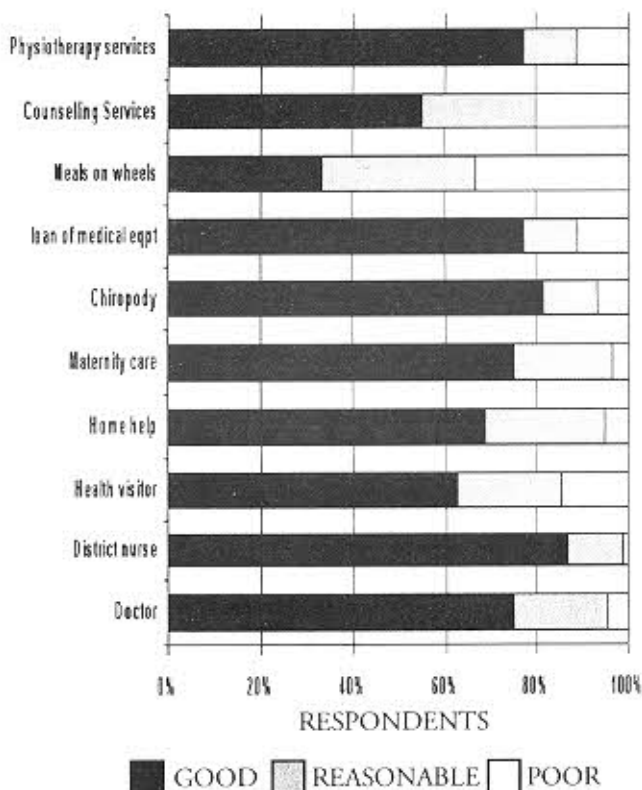
From question 32 most people who had used the facilities at the surgery said that they were 'good or reasonable'.

There is a volunteer car service which provides transport for those who have no other means of getting to appointments. A list of these drivers can be found on the notice board just inside the main doors of the surgery waiting room.

A hearing aid clinic is held in an upstairs room of the surgery on the first Wednesday of each month between 2pm and 3pm. Hearing aids can be cleaned, re-tubed and new batteries are available.

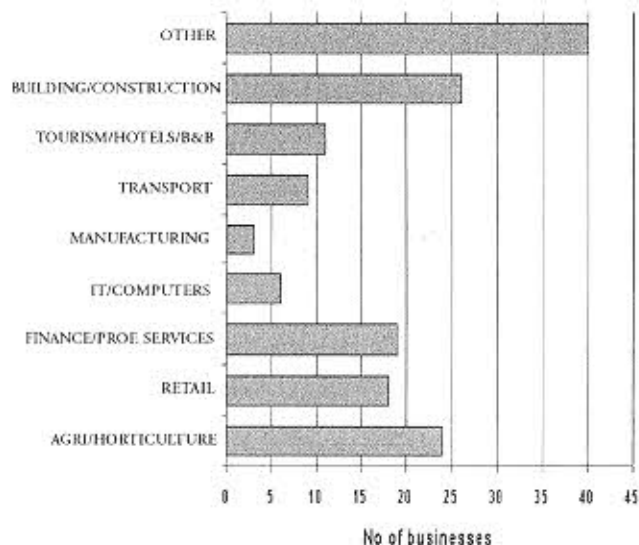
The Charing Surgery Liaison Group is made up of members who represent the various villages where patients live. The group meets regularly with the doctors and any patient with a query or complaint about the service should contact their village representative. Members of the liaison group are listed on the notice board by the main surgery entrance door.

Q32b) For those with an opinion, how do you rate the following services?





**Q16) If you run a business, into which category does it fall?**



*It was noted from replies to the questionnaire, that some people are not aware of just what services are available locally - here are some answers:-*

**Hardware**

The Fixings Warehouse, top of Charing Hill.  
Electrical bulbs, batteries, torches etc  
Post office and Charing Stores.

**Bank**

Co-op, Lloyds, Barclays, Alliance & Leicester at the post office.

**Fast food**

Queen's Head and the Little Chef  
The Rainbow Chinese at Westwell Leacon & The Swan also do takeaways. A fish and chip van visits various locations around the village on Monday evenings between 6pm and 7pm.

**Cashback facility**

Wady & Brett

**Café or Tearoom**

Pilgrim's Table, Royal Oak,  
The Church Barn (summer Sundays only).

**Chemist**

Pharmacy at the surgery.

**Baker**

Glen Kirton.

**Haberdashery**

Small selection at the post office.

**Men's hairdresser**

Yvonne Harvey's also cut men's hair.

Some of the respondents asked for a dentist in the village. The doctors have been seeking one for some time and it is hoped that, in the not too distant future, there will be one at the surgery.

## EMPLOYMENT

From the questionnaire, it was interesting to see that more respondents work in the parish than elsewhere. Ashford came a close second, while 11% commuted to London.

Most people travelled to their place of work by car, 7% went by train. 133 respondents said that they employed people in business within the parish. The most popular business being the service sector, building and agriculture. 34% were employees, with the same percentage being retired. Only 20 people who replied to the questionnaire were unemployed. Seventy seven people were registered disabled and over 12% were employers.

## BUSINESS IN THE PARISH

History tells of seven pubs, two banks, a chemist, tea-shop, a bakery and a host of other trades and crafts in the parish. More recently the ironmongers and electrical retailers have closed, but recent gains include a good restaurant, carpet and DIY retailer, a dress agency and a redeveloped newsagency and gift shop.

The survey shows that there is much loyalty to the shops and services in the parish with 72% of the respondents supporting them on a regular basis. Nearly everyone used the post office, but its viability will again come under threat in 2003 when the treasury plans to pay pensions and allowances directly into bank accounts. This would represent a loss of 30% to the post office as the postmaster is paid according to the number of over-the-counter transactions carried out.

Higher prices and a lack of choice locally were cited as the most common reason for shopping in the towns. Services most missed were the hardware and electrical shops and the banks.

At present, the parish is still managing to thrive as a working village despite the recent closures and has a good range of varied retail businesses; butchers, grocers, restaurants, bakery, hairdressers, computer services, post office, greengrocers and florist, newsagent and gift shop, watchmaker, accountant, interior designer, pubs, chemist, garages, bathroom shop and estate agents, together with many one-person businesses.

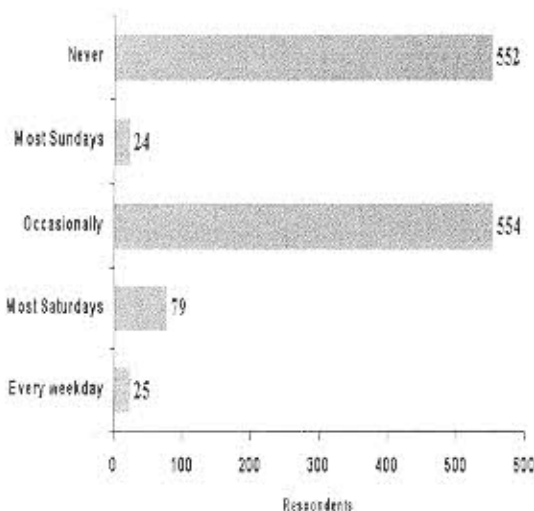
Sadly, Charing Heath has no shops since the post office closed some years ago but it does have a pub and market gardens. Westwell Leacon has recently acquired Ardovries Shearway, on the site vacated by Stelmo, and its own recently refurbished Rainbow Chinese restaurant and take away.

If parishioners want businesses to thrive, they need to use them regularly but parking is a problem in the Market Place and High Street. Overall, loyalty to local businesses, and a desire to see more small businesses develop, were encouraging aspects of this section of the survey and should form the basis for promoting further investment in commercial enterprises. The increase in population that will come about when the field behind Hither Field is developed, underlines this point.

## TRANSPORT



Q28) How frequently would you use a parish bus if it was provided?



1907 and a traction engine pulls it load into, what is now Hither Field, from Station Road. The village gas works can be seen in the background.

Although regular public transport is really only accessible from Charing village centre, the parish is more fortunate than most rural communities in still having rail and bus services.

Train timetables are available from the station and bus times from the Stagecoach office in Ashford. The post bus times are listed above the post box at the post office.

Like all rural areas, the car is the most predominant form of transport. It would be good to see cycle lanes on our roads which might encourage more cyclists.

When one is too old or infirm to drive, public transport services become very important. Question 28 in the booklet asked if you would use a community bus to the cinema complex in Ashford. 554 people said they would use it only occasionally whilst 552 said they would never use it. Half of all respondents said they have some difficulty getting to the shops within the parish as well as the shops in Ashford, Maidstone and Canterbury.

## CHARING STATION - A BRIEF HISTORY

Now showing signs of age, Charing station and the surrounding area has a history of its own. In the 1840's and 50's the South Eastern Railway Company had a monopoly serving the principal towns in Kent, when along came an intruder, the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. The real prize was the fastest route from London to Dover and onwards to the continent. The SERC set about building the line through Headcorn, so the LCDR made Charing its main labour camp, building a shanty town on the north side of the existing station, complete with religious facilities and other creature comforts.

Unfortunately, Lord Hothfield refused permission for the LCDR to cross his estate until the company agreed to build him his own station, Hothfield Halt, long since demolished. Carved into the rafters of the station master's house at Charing are the names of the principal engineers and gang bosses who controlled the original work, creating the line between Maidstone and Ashford. The Charing station cutting involved the excavation of one million tons of soil.

Opened in July 1884, Charing became a Victorian commuter station with the gentry having horseboxes on the south side of the station. After a busy day in the City they could trot home to Westwell and beyond. The north side of the station, where the houses in Hither Field are today, had a busy goods yard which was extended in 1867 to serve the village gas works. By 1914 it supplied 100 households and 15 street lights which consumed 3445 tons of coal annually.

In 1889 the two railways merged to form the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. This became the Southern Railway in 1923 before nationalisation in 1948.

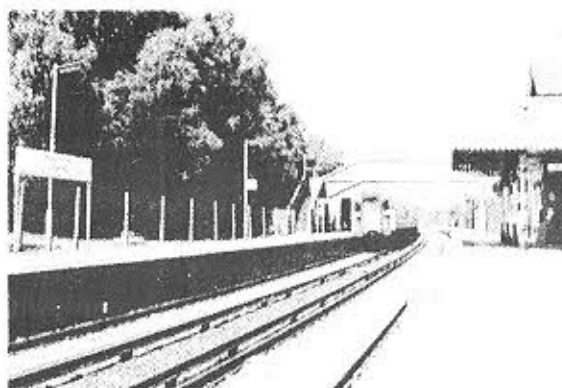
A 1906 timetable shows that the 07:18 from Charing would arrive at Victoria at 09:40.



During the Second World War the station sidings and yard were adapted for off-loading tanks and armoured vehicles which were then hidden in the woods above Charing. 1962 saw the last regular steam-hauled service and the building of the 'new' footbridge at the west end of the platforms. Charing station featured in the television series *The Darling Buds of May*.

In recent years Charing has been exceptionally served by a series of station masters, notably the present incumbent Roy Cook, who has rightly won no less than five station awards, until Connex got bored and suspended the competition. A predecessor, Jim Evans, is now a director of Eurotunnel and the widow of the last serving Charing signalman, Daisy Anderson, still lives in the village.

So what of the future? No doubt the 'new' footbridge will still be there in fifty years time and there will, hopefully, be a much-modernised service. For those who work in London, the railway is the principal reason to live in Charing. Long may it continue, with a future as well as a history.



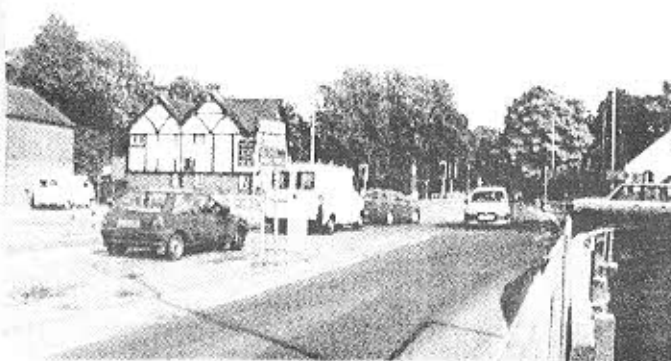
*Charing station today.*

## TRAFFIC

Traffic congestion is a countrywide problem and the parish has its own share. From the survey it was discovered that 81% of vehicle owners have parking problems in the village centre at some time. A few respondents had problems with cars blocking their entrances, or blocking the road near their homes.

Speeding and congestion in the High Street and School Road were recognised as danger areas that needed attention. A majority of people wanted a 20 mph speed limit imposed in both streets, whilst nearly half favoured speed ramps. The main danger area in the village was cited as the A20/High Street/Station Road crossroads. This danger will increase as more houses are built on the land between the A20 and Hither Field. The Highways Department of the borough council were made aware of these facts during a recent public meeting when they were told what action parishioners would like to be taken. Their response was that the cost of slowing traffic on the A20 would be 'prohibitive'. Would flashing lights around a 30 mph sign *really* cost so much?

For respondents of Charing Heath, the biggest danger areas were named as the Tile Lodge Road/A20 junction and the problem of cars parked in Tile Lodge Road.



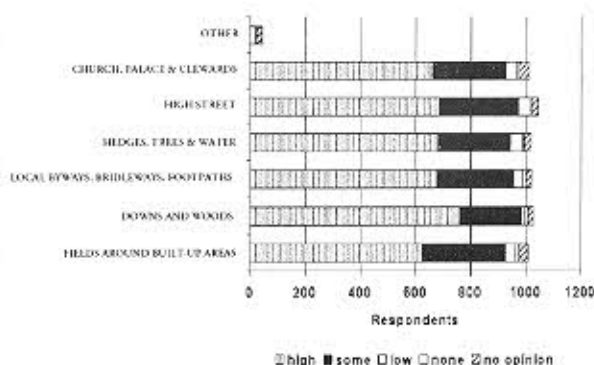
*'The main danger area in Charing was cited as the A20/High Street crossroads'.*

## THE ENVIRONMENT

Most people answered the recycling question positively. The one thing they decided against was compost, probably because most already recycle it in their own gardens. Bottle glass and newspapers were the most popular items set aside for collection. The village already has two paper bins; one at Charing school behind the canteen, and the other at Charing Methodist Church. Drink cans can also be left at the latter for recycling.

There is a bottle bank in the grounds of the Swan Inn on Maidstone Road and the borough council's recycling facility visits the Market Place on the second Friday of each month between 9am and 10am.

Q55) What level of protection do the following require?



The question about local footpaths brought some interesting replies. The majority knew where they were, but most only used them occasionally. Lack of good sign posting seems to be a problem, as do broken stiles and overgrown paths. From the questionnaire, 91 people said that they were willing to help maintain the footpaths, but only 19 filled in the slip at the back of the booklet. The questionnaire was anonymous so, if you did not sign, but are willing to help, please contact the parish clerk, Maggi Hill, on 01233 713599.

A group called Charing Ramblers has recently been set up with three objectives. The first is to carry out a survey of all the footpaths in the area to ensure that they actually exist, are clear of obstructions, clearly marked and any stiles, steps and bridges are in a satisfactory condition. The second objective is to organise regular walks of varying lengths and difficulty in the area, while the third objective is to produce a leaflet of circular walks starting from the centre of Charing, useful for both residents and tourists. Contact Maggi Hill for further details.

Most people who returned the questionnaires felt that fields, footpaths, trees, hedges, water, the High Street and areas around the church all needed high levels of protection, but most in need were woods and downland.

The majority of respondents said that they most valued the views of the surrounding countryside. Interestingly, 318 people said that they came to live in the parish because they loved country life.

Litter and dog fouling were areas of concern for nearly 10% who answered question 56. The parish needs more litter bins, particularly in the High Street, and they need to be emptied on a regular basis. It is also important to report people who are seen allowing their dogs to foul pavements.

## CHARING SCHOOL

Charing school opened on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1873. There were 87 children present, 24 in the infants and the rest divided into four classes. The head, John Williams, took two of the older classes and a candidate for pupil teachership took the other two. The infants paid two old pennies a week for their education, while the older children paid three-pence a week. Twelve lime trees were planted outside the school in January 1874, all but one are still standing.



Over the years, the school expanded and the first extension to the original building was in 1955 when two infant classes and the toilets were added. In April 1966, with 244 children on the roll, the new hall and junior classroom were added. In 1973 the infant block was built and the roll had increased to 266.



*Charing from Hart Hill.*

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*'Interestingly, 318 people said that they came to live in the parish because they loved country life'.*

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*'From question 7 in the survey, it was sad to see more children going to primary schools outside the parish than in it'.*

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## CHARING C/E (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

*An up to date account from Rosemary Olley, the school's head teacher.*

The school has 120 pupils, the majority of whom are resident within the village and its immediate surroundings. The school is staffed by a head teacher, supported by a teaching staff of six, four teaching assistants, a secretary, cleaner and maintenance man. The personnel are paid from the school's annual budget which is determined by the number of children on the roll each January.

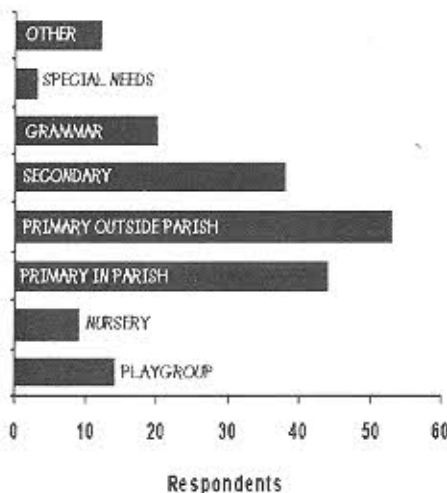


As an aided church school, there are close links with the Canterbury Diocese and St Peter & St Paul's Charing. The Rev. Judy Griffiths is a regular visitor to the school and provides a positive and direct link with the church community. The school visits the church for harvest, Christmas and Mothering Sunday. The vicar is a member of the school governing body. The community of Charing further supports the school by providing the majority of the members of the governing body. They work voluntarily and monitor, and oversee, the work of the school and help in the process of teacher appointments.

The children at the school range in age from four to eleven. All children are given the opportunity to start school in the September of the academic year in which they become five, and are taught the Foundation Stage curriculum in that year. After this, all children are taught the National Curriculum.

Children who have specific, special, needs are afforded extra help, either within the class, or on an individual basis. In line with national requirements, the children are assessed at ages four, seven and eleven. Assessment is, however, an ongoing and developmental process and happens on a regular basis within the school.

### Q7) Under 16's school attendance



The school uses the community to complement its work, particularly in history, geography, RE and art. Environmental science work is enhanced by an after school club called the *Green Gang*. Charing school is keen to encourage interest and active involvement in its work from the village community. Older villagers and parents visit the school to hear children read, share expertise, attend coffee morning and other specific events. The Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is a very active, dynamic and committed group that provides much-needed extra money through their fund raising efforts. Computers, curtains, a library and paint are just a few of the things that they have provided for the school.

Charing school is working hard to continue raising standards in all areas. Its aim is that, through effective teaching and high expectations in a happy, Christian environment, all school members will learn, grow and develop skills to enable them to participate in a rapidly-changing world.

### Number of pupils in school

1873 - 87  
1966 - 244  
1973 - 266  
2001 - 120



## RELIGION

From the survey it was interesting to see that most people felt that the church was more important as an historic building than as a place to worship on Sundays. Only five people thought that churches were quiet places in which to reflect.

There are three churches in the parish; St Peter and St Paul and the Methodist Church in Charing and Holy Trinity at Charing Heath.



*Photos*

*(Left) St Peter & St Paul  
(Top right) Holy Trinity  
(Bottom right) Methodist*

### CHARING PARISH CHURCH

It is thought that a church has existed on the site before Norman times (7<sup>th</sup> century) although there is no trace of it in the present 13<sup>th</sup> century building.

In 1590 the church was devastated by a fire so fierce that it melted the bells! The church had only a single bell hung in 1608 until a peal was installed in 1878. The bells continue to be rung regularly by both the local, and visiting, teams of ringers.

The church is open during the day as a place of quiet and receives many visitors during the summer months. The building has many interesting features which include a 15<sup>th</sup> century priest's room above the porch, windows dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, monuments to benefactors of the village, painted roof beams, carved bench ends and a carved rood screen war memorial. The church had flood lighting installed to mark the second millennium of the birth of Christ.

The most notable of Charing's rectors was St Richard, who held the post in 1243, later becoming Bishop of Chichester.

### HOLY TRINITY CHARING HEATH

In 1861 the Sayer family of Pett Place, Charing, built the western part of the present church which served as both a school and a vicarage. Later a separate school and vicarage were built and the chapel was extended eastwards to create the present church which was consecrated on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1872.



The east windows are a memorial to Charlotte Sayer, who appears to have been the prime mover in the provision of the church.

Holy Trinity aims to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and new residents and visitors are warmly welcomed.



### CHARING METHODIST CHURCH

The land where the church stands was given in 1814 by a Mrs. Slaughter whose cottage stood between the Queen's Head and where the Methodist Church is now. The gap between her cottage and the church allowed her 'easement for her horse and carriage'.

In 1905 the schoolroom behind the church was built and in 1975 a toilet and kitchen were added.

The upper room was constructed in 1994 and finally, in 1999, the church was completely refurbished. This allows complete flexibility in the arrangement of furniture for different types of services.

Charing is part of the Ashford Circuit and the minister is based in Tenterden. Every Sunday the service is led by different preachers, each bringing their own personal style to the service.

Family and discussion services are held regularly and there is a thriving Sunday school for the 0-18 year olds. Prayer meetings and events of a more social nature are held regularly on the premises.

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## SPORT IN THE PARISH

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The leaders of the various sports associations and leisure clubs were asked to give a little information about their activities.

### THE CHARING PLAYING FIELD

This came into being in the mid 1960s along with its administrative committee. The main aspirations have been to promote sports and recreation activities for the benefit of the parish. The land, known as Arthur Baker Field, was generously donated to the village by Mr. Wheeler and now provides facilities for football, tennis, bowls, table tennis, a sports club, scouting, a pre-school group and meeting and function rooms. It is hoped that the cricket club will re-open in the near future. There has recently been a further kind donation of an adjacent parcel of land which includes woodland and wetlands. This area is currently being assessed for recreational uses that would include a woodland nature walk, a car park for the Bowls Club and Scout hut and if, all goes well, a BMX track at a later date.

The committee is also considering a multi-purpose sports hall with meeting rooms and additional facilities although these plans are in the early stages of negotiations. The Charing Playing Field is a registered charity, number 302707, with limited reserves. A number of fund raising events are due to take place which will help swell the coffers, but the support of parishioners is vital.

### TENNIS CLUB

The club has two courts with floodlights at the Arthur Baker Field next to the sports pavilion. Club nights are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6.30pm, with junior coaching and playing time on Monday evenings. Members are issued with a key and may use the courts at any time except, when league matches are being played. The club has a men's and a ladies' team which play in the Ashford League. New members are welcome and those interested in joining should contact the Secretary, Adele Blythe on 01233 634281.

### BOWLS CLUB

The club opens in the Spring from 12 noon until dusk every day. New members will be very welcome, with or without experience. There are sections for men and women who play mixed bowls matches. There is a good social programme with an open day in July. Contact J Rowland on 01233 712538 or V Allen on 01233 714005 for further information.

### POINT TO POINT

The Charing Point to Point is regarded as one of the most important in Kent and generally holds three meetings each year, organised by the Ashford Valley Hunt. Further information from Hugh Ellison on 01233 770594.

Other sports clubs in the parish include Badminton - Margaret Bardwell (01233 712032), table tennis, Pigeon Club and the Red Heathens F.C. - Graham Hills (01622 850157)

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## CLUBS FOR YOUNGSTERS

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### BEAVERS

The First Charing Beavers has been in existence for over 10 years. The group was started to satisfy the needs of the younger brothers of the Cub pack with an age range from 6 to 8 years. The Beavers come from Charing, Challock, Egerton and Pluckley and are encouraged to show consideration to others and hold events involving the wider community at both district and county levels. There is a short waiting list at the time of writing, but anyone with a son under six is recommended to let the leader know if they wish to reserve a place. New leaders started in September 2000 and are undergoing an ongoing training programme. Anyone interested in Beaver Scouting would be most welcome to join the team.

Further details from Glenys Goldsmith on 01233 714277



This group is for boys between the ages of eight and ten and a half. There are weekly meetings during school term time on Thursdays from 6.45 until 8.15pm. The Cubs are part of the world wide Scout movement and follows programmes which develop the young people through games, activities, crafts and quizzes. The Cubs take part in competitions and activities with other groups in the Ashford district.

Contact: Nigel Wills 01233 713275

CUB SCOUTS

At the time of going to print the youth club has been closed through lack of adult help. The young people of this village need somewhere to go. Is there no-one out there who is prepared help them?

CLUB 2000  
YOUTH CLUB

The group meets at the pavilion on the Arthur Baker Field and offers two and a half year olds to four and a half year olds the opportunity to work towards the Early Learning Goals in a safe, warm and friendly environment. The children are encouraged to learn about people and their different cultures with regular visits to the primary school, library and the church.

More details from Sue Newman on 01233 714116

CHARING  
PRE-SCHOOL  
GROUP

Owing to the renovation of the Memorial Hall at Charing Heath the club will not re-open until September 7<sup>th</sup>. The *Tiddlers* group meets every Friday from 9.30am until 11.30am. Admission fee is £1.50 which includes tea or coffee and juice and biscuits for the toddlers. All parents with a baby or toddler are welcome and the group has lots of toys for all ages up to 4 years. There are sales of children's clothes and toys and outings are arranged periodically.

More information: Victoria Bates 01622 850974

LENHAM HEATH &  
CHARING HEATH  
MOTHER AND  
TODDLER GROUP

Other children's groups include the Rainbows - Sheila Winter (01233 712069) Brownies - Mrs Stannard (01233 840672) and the Guides - Caroline Sanford (01233 712126)

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## ADULT LEISURE CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

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This national charity hosts a local pop-in every Tuesday morning in Pym House from 10am until noon when all senior citizens in the parish are welcome. Refreshments are served and a chiropodist is in attendance on the first Tuesday of each month. There are jigsaws available on loan from Pym House and from the library, there is also a wheelchair that can be borrowed.

Further information from Sheila Cowdry on 01233 712695.

AGE CONCERN  
(CHARING)

The group, originally known as the Over Sixties, has been in existence since the 1950's. In the new Millennium it was decided to change the name to the Charing Seniors. The group meets every other Friday in the parish hall and hosts a range of activities including beetle drives, bingo and competitions as well as featuring regular guest speakers, slide shows and musical entertainment. A number of bring and buy sales each year helps raise funds. The group has regular outings and, once a year, invite other senior groups to a special meal, complete with entertainment and a raffle. A monthly whist drive is held in the parish hall on a Wednesday evening and the year finishes with a Christmas lunch.

Further details by calling 01233 712747



CHARING SENIORS

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## GROUPS FOR WOMEN

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Open every Thursday morning between 9.30am and 11.30am at Palace Farm Cottage in the Market Place, the shop offers for sale home made cakes and savouries, preserves, pickles, chutneys, fresh farm eggs and seasonal fruit and vegetables. Craft products including knitwear, greeting cards, toys, picture frames and jewellery are also available. A selection of plants and flowers are also on sale in season.

CHARING & DISTRICT  
WI MARKET

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#### CHARING WI

The institute meets on the second Monday of each month at 2pm in the village hall. They are a friendly group who have a range of interesting speakers and entertainment. To find out more, contact:

Margaret Austen (President) 01233 712662 or Shirley Duncan (Secretary) 01233 712632

#### CHARING HEATH & LENHAM HEATH WI

This branch of the institute meets on the first Tuesday of each month in the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. Contact Barbara Hook 01233 713106

#### CHARING CHURCH WOMEN'S GUILD

The group is attached to the Church of England, but welcomes women with sympathies toward any religion. The guild meets monthly in the Church Barn during the afternoon and entertains guest speaker on a variety of topics including travel, hobbies, cookery, charities and health. A charity coffee morning is held annually, raising money for local good causes; the Pilgrim's Hospice in Ashford having been the recipient for the past few years.

The group takes an annual outing in August to a place of interest, complemented with a cream tea. The AGM is combined with a *do it yourself supper* and the group keeps its membership fee at a minimum to encourage new recruits. The group has a current membership of forty, but this is decreasing as individuals become older and new blood would be most welcome.

Information on 01233 712751

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### ORGANISATIONS FOR BOTH SEXES

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#### THE THREE PARISHES LUNCH CLUB

The Lunch Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 12.45 in the Church Barn and is open to any resident of Charing, Charing Heath or Little Chart. A two-course lunch, including tea or coffee, is served for a modest £3. Places are limited to fifty each month and booking is essential.

Contact Hilary Cavell on 01233 712808

#### THE CHARING GUILD OF PLAYERS

The players moved into the Church Barn on its completion in 1958 and many of today's members were actively involved in the planning and construction of the barn. The group presents three productions each year in the autumn, winter and spring. The season begins in September when rehearsals begin for the first show in November.



The summer months are spent doing the housework; cleaning, lighting and electrical maintenance, sorting out costumes and repairs and stocktaking of the scenery and sets. Members are also responsible for the upkeep of the garden area around the barn. It is not, however, all work for the guild as the group holds at least two social event each year and both the AGM and casting evenings tend to be informal.

Like many other drama groups, the guild are always seeking new acting and backstage members of all ages. Most productions require as many people working behind the scenes and front of house as there are on the stage, sometimes more! The group endeavour to produce a wide cross section of work and last January, by public demand, produced their first, and quickly sold out, panto.

The guild meets every Monday and Thursday evening during the season and anyone interested in any aspect of stagecraft should contact:

Val Parsons (Secretary) 01233 631559

#### THE READERS' CIRCLE

This group meets on the second Monday of most months in the library at 2.30pm. During the preceding month, members read a book, chosen by a group member, and then discuss it at the monthly meeting. Anyone interested in joining the circle should contact one of the library staff during normal opening hours.

#### THE TEASET

The Tea Set meet monthly from October until April in the schoolroom behind the Methodist church between 4pm and 6pm. The group offers a varied programme of both visiting and home-grown speakers covering a wide range of topics. Proceedings commence with a good tea.

Contact Michael Cowdry 01233 712695



At present there are four of these groups meeting each month, with a quarterly seasonal tea also taking place when the groups come together. Any parishioner who is lonely or housebound and would like to be taken out to tea, or who can walk to the Church Barn, is welcome to go along. Transport will be arranged, if possible.  
Contact: Janet McIntyre 01233 712143.

The society arranges events and discusses issues affecting villagers. They meet, usually, on a monthly basis and have organised, and coordinated, events ranging from a litter collection to frog racing, barn dances, annual shows, barbecues and quizzes.  
Contact: Stewart Newman (Chair) 01233 713182 or Sharon Barkley (Sec) 01233 712661

The society has around one hundred members from Charing and surrounding parishes. Seven lectures on topics of local, regional, or national interest are organised each year on the second Thursday in the month between September and April. There is a Christmas social and an AGM which is held in May and at least one outing is organised, usually during the summer months. Specialist groups study subjects including historic photographs of the district or the palaeography of local documents.  
Contact: Sarah Pearson 01233 712772.

Charing Gardeners' Society meet every month for social evenings with a guest speaker, flower show, local visits to gardens of interest and an annual day's outing to the Royal Horticultural Gardens at Wisley. One off events are also held occasionally, such as flower shows in a marquee on Clewards Meadow and garden safaris. The society sells quality compost at an advantageous price to members and publishes an annual magazine which contains interesting articles and details of the society's activities. Members also look after the sundial garden near the library and meet there on the first Sunday of the month - weather permitting - for an active gardening morning.  
Contact: Lucy Simmons 01233 712875 Tony Evans 01233 712736

The Charing and District Branch was formed in 1923 and covers the villages of Charing, Charing Heath, Egerton and Horthfield. The branch holds four meetings each year and an active ladies' section meets monthly. Four further meetings, with a social element, take place in Charing where the branch meets with other members from the Group Five area. The branch exists to act as custodians of the act of remembrance in conjunction with local churches and the parish council, facilitate the Poppy appeal Collection within its branch area and acts as a point of contact for serving and ex-serving member in the community who may be in need of assistance.  
Contact: 01233 712915 or 01233 712745.

There is an Ashford branch that has fifty three full members and seventeen associates. The committee meets on the second Wednesday in the month and there is a social on the fourth Wednesday. Meeting are held at the British Rail Club, Beaver Road, Ashford.  
Contact: John Mills 01233 712745.

There is a Weald branch of the association which covers this area.  
Contact: Adrian Nash 01233 712238.

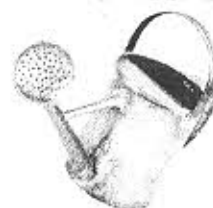
Not all clubs and societies responded to the committee's appeal for information about themselves. However, the Parish Magazine publishes a *Whom to Ask* supplement each year which lists religious and civic personnel together with leaders of sports groups and leisure clubs. The most recent was published in March 2001 with a new issue in August.

## CONTACT GROUPS & QUARTERLY TEAS

## CHARING HEATH & LENHAM HEATH VILLAGE SOCIETY

## CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## CHARING GARDENERS



## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

## ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION

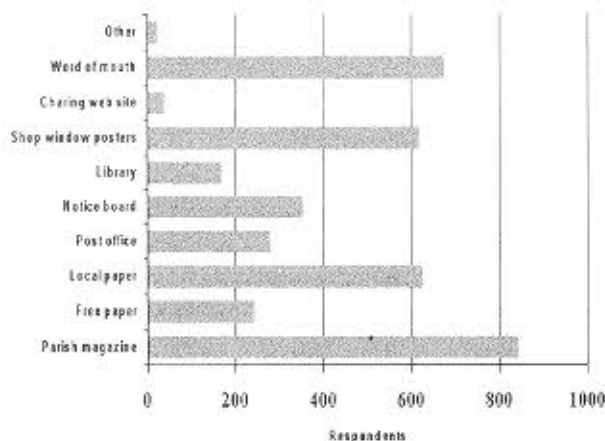
## KENT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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### Q34) - Where do you usually get information about Parish events?



### USEFUL CONTACTS

Charing Parish Council  
01233 713599

Ashford Borough Council  
01233 637311

Ashford Borough Councillors (Charing)  
Stuart Butler-Gallie

01233 712340

Doug Gillard

01233 712649

Ashford Police Station

01233 625789

Charing Surgery

01233 714141

Kentish Express

01233 623232

Charing Library

01233 713177

Parish Magazine

01233 712808

### COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

For most parishioners, the main source of information was the Parish Magazine which is published monthly and contains parish and church news for Little Chart, Charing and Charing Heath. Copies are available from the newsagent, or by monthly or yearly subscription. For details of free, local delivery, contact Cynthia Shaw on 01233 712637.

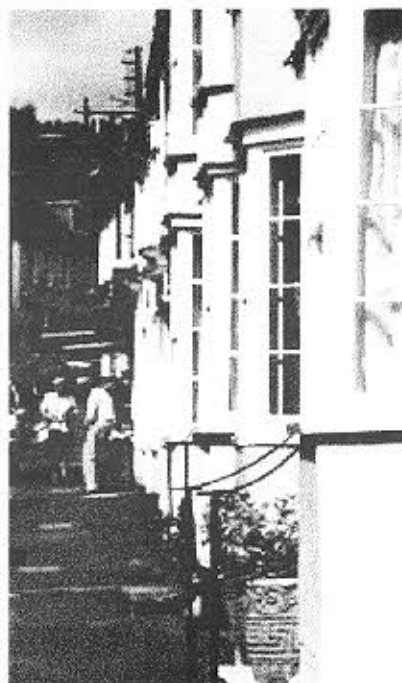
Word of mouth came second in the list and the local paper, the *Kentish Express*, third. A close fourth were posters in shop windows. The Charing website (charing.net) had only a few votes, despite receiving over 15,000 visits from around the world during the last twelve months. Perhaps IT is still in its early days for most of us!

### CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

This is not a club, but no appraisal of the parish would be complete without a mention of the High Street at Christmas. The lights and Christmas trees transform a picturesque part of the village into a fairytale street, a tradition started by the traders in 1979.

The expenses are funded by a Christmas Fayre held on the first Sunday in December. In 1999 a new committee was formed and has endeavoured to involve as many people as possible. For further information, or to help with the lights or fund-raising,

Contact: Hazel 01233 712089 Margaret 01233 712853 or Anita 01233 714068.



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## CONCLUSIONS.

Some interesting and important facts have emerged from the results of the appraisal questionnaire.

Two thirds of respondents want the parish to stay as it is, whilst one third would like to see small commercial, or housing, development. For parishioners between the ages of twelve and sixty, more replies said that social and sport facilities were poor, whereas facilities for the over sixties fared better.

This, then, is an area that needs to be seriously addressed. The youth are our future and in order for the village to thrive, their needs should be catered for. Apart from the various uniformed groups, there are no organised activities for the young people in one of Kent's largest villages.

The danger of road traffic in the village centre was highlighted, along with other danger spots at the High Street/A20 crossroads, the Hart Hill and Tile Lodge Road crossroads, also with the A20 and the hazard of parked cars in Tile Lodge.

A majority of respondents said that a greater police presence was needed; some even jokingly asked, 'What *is* a village bobby, we've never seen one?'

Time and again we were asked to provide more activities for young people. Activities *can* be provided, but it is the people needed to run them who are missing. A quarter of the answers asked for CCTV to combat vandalism. If we had a BMX track, skateboard ramp, better play apparatus and a youth club, vandalism would be dramatically reduced. Mischief comes from idle hands.

These are just some of the conclusions that the analysis produced. There must be many more and the committee would encourage feedback from all interested parishioners and relevant authorities.

Please send your comments to:

Sheila Cowdry  
11 Haffenden Meadow  
Charing  
Ashford  
Kent TN27 0JR

email: [cowdrycharing@eggconnect.net](mailto:cowdrycharing@eggconnect.net)

## AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

This document is being sent to the parish, borough and county councils, as well as the Kent County Constabulary who will all be asked for their comments and ideas on how the aspirations of parishioners can be fulfilled.

Their comments will be published in the next issue of the *Parish Council Newsletter*.

(1) The Playing Field Committee has the land where the young people could spend a lot of their time. The parish must help raise the funds to provide the facilities outlined by Paul Blundell on page 15.

(2) A village design statement is being produced.

(3) Ashford Borough Council should be asked to do everything possible to preserve our shops by realistic use of the rating system.

(4) More street lighting is necessary and needs to be priced.

(5) Car parking, especially in High Street and its vicinity, should be reviewed.

(6) Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council should be asked to review the speed limit on the A20 through the village and, perhaps, install flashing signs or speed inhibitors of some kind.

(7) A more-visible police presence throughout the parish.

(8) The reintroduction of the youth club.





The Charing Parish Appraisal Committee gratefully acknowledges the financial support given by the following. Because of their generosity, no funding was required from the parish precept.

The Kent Rural Development Area Small Projects Fund  
The Kent Rural Community Council

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Wady & Brett • Whitehead Machinery

• PICTURE CREDITS •

Simon Burchett: Front cover aerial photo  
Charing & District Local History Society: Page 2 - Archbishops' Palace  
Page 10 - Traction engine  
Stagecoach: Page 10 - Bus  
Kent County Constabulary: Page 6 - Police car  
Gill Magson: Page 8 - Charing Surgery  
Charing School: Page 12 (lower left)  
Class of '63 in data section  
AC Video Productions: Page 17 - Cinderella

All other photos, appraisal artwork and layout: Dave Hutton

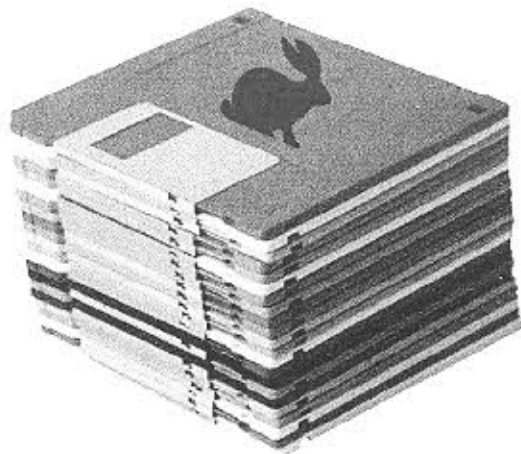
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# CHARING PARISH APPRAISAL



## QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

## QUESTIONNAIRE DATA HOUSEHOLD SECTION

Q 1) 1521 people were resident in the 678 households who returned a completed questionnaire

Q 2) Please enter the number of people in your household in each age group:

	Male	Female
0-4	22	31
5-10	57	39
11-15	38	28
16-17	12	12
18-24	44	37
25-44	139	153
45-59	169	186
60-64	69	63
65-74	97	111
75-84	68	101
85+	15	30

Q 3) Where does your household live?

Charing village	367 (6%)
Charing outlying	222 (33%)
Charing Heath	72 (11%)
Westwell Leacon	17 (3%)

Q 4) Is this dwelling?

Private rented	31 (6%)
Local authority rented	102 (15%)
Housing association rented	27 (4%)
Owner occupied	502 (74%)
Shared ownership	0
Provided as part of employment	5 (1%)
Other	4 (1%)

Q 5) What type of dwelling is this?

Detached house	191 (29%)
Semi-detached house	190 (28%)
Terraced house	44 (7%)
Detached Bungalow	105 (16%)
Semi-detached Bungalow	43 (6%)
Flat/maisonette	27 (4%)
Sheltered accommodation	14 (2%)
Mobile home/caravan	47 (7%)
Other	10 (1%)

Q 6) If your household/Individual needs to move, why?

For employment reasons	9
For family reasons	7
For education	3
To move to a larger home	18
To move to a smaller home	9
To move to a better area	5
To meet the needs of an elderly or disabled person	11
To move to a more urban area	3
Medical	10
Social	1
To move to a more rural area	4
Other	11

Q 7) Enter the number of children under 16 in your household who attend the following :

Play group	14
Nursery school	9
Primary school within the parish	44
Primary school outside of the parish	53
Secondary school	38
Grammar school	20
School for those with special needs	3
Other	12



*Class of '63*

Q 8) If any of your children under 16 are unable to take part in after school activities, please give the reasons why :

Lack of transport home	15
Distance between home/school	20
Expense	7
Special needs not catered for	2



**PERSONAL SECTION** number of respondents shown in [ ]

**Q 9) [1,301] Gender?**

Male	604 (46%)
Female	697 (54%)

**Q 10) [1,307] What age group do you belong to?**

11-15	56 (4%)
16-17	24 (2%)
18-24	67 (5%)
25-44	275 (21%)
45-59	352 (27%)
60-64	125 (10%)
65-74	198 (15%)
75-84	165 (13%)
85+	45 (3%)

**Q 11) [1,281] How did you come to live in the parish ?**

Born here	143 (8%)
Work in area	198 (11%)
Relatives live nearby	122 (7%)
Love of village life	177 (10%)
Love of country life	318 (17%)
Availability of housing	172 (10%)
Retired here	177 (10%)
Marriage	99 (6%)
Setting up home	96 (5%)
Came with family	238 (13%)
Other	49 (3%)

**Q 12) [1,274] Are you at present?**

An employee	437 (34%)
Unemployed	20 (1.6%)
Self-employed - employing others	71 (5.6%)
Self employed - not employing anyone	89 (7.0%)
In a government training scheme	2 (0.2%)
In full-time education	94 (7.4%)
Unwaged housewife/husband	99 (7.8%)
Retired	429 (34%)
Permanently sick/disabled	33 (2.6%)

**Q 13) [667] Where is your main place of work?**

Within the parish	175 (26%)
Ashford	146 (22%)
Maidstone	57 (9%)
Canterbury	20 (3%)
London	74 (11%)
Medway and Sittingbourne	23 (3%)
Other villages within 10 miles	65 (10%)
Other rural areas within 10 miles	14 (2%)
Other locations over 30 miles away	30 (4%)
Mobile (use parish as a base)	21 (3%)
Other	44 (7%)

**Q 14) [1,010] What is, or would be, your main means of transport to work, training or study?**

Car/Van/People carrier/4 x 4	654 (64%)
Public bus	36 (4%)
Private bus	28 (3%)
Taxi	1
Bicycle	5
Motor-cycle/scooter/moped	4
Train	66 (7%)
Walking	41 (4%)
Not applicable	173 (17%)
Other	2

**Q 15) [133] If you run a business, how many people do you employ?**

0	83 (62%)
1-3	33 (25%)
4-5	8 (6%)
6-10	4 (3%)
11-25	3 (2%)
26-99	2 (2%)
100+	0 (0%)

**Q 16) [156] If you run a business, into which category does it fall?**

Agriculture/Horticulture	24 (15%)
Food Processing	0 (0%)
Retail	18 (12%)
Finance/professional Services	19 (12%)
IT/computers	6 (4%)
Manufacturing	3 (2%)
Transport	9 (6%)
Tourism e.g.hotels catering B & B	11 (7%)
Building & construction	26 (17%)
Other Service e.g. hairdressing	40 (25%)

**Q 17) [1,372] How often do you use the following shops and services?**

A=Daily B=weekly C=monthly D=less frequently  
E=never

	A	B	C	D	E
Local food retailers	225	576	99	144	53
Local pubs & restaurants	27	170	169	355	185
Post office	89	526	207	224	61
Pharmacy	14	83	413	379	117
Library	6	104	131	225	424
WI market	6	61	23	151	589
Other shops & services in Charing High Street	116	339	141	251	78

Q 18) [1,195] If you usually shop in the parish is it because?

The local shops give good value	224
You like to support local shops	865
You like the social contact	296
It saves time	583
It saves transport costs	438
You don't have transport	99
You need 'last minute' items	696
Never shop in the parish	35
Other	13

Q 19) [1,096] If you usually shop out of the parish, is it because?

Goods are cheaper there	713
You have more choice there	866
Convenient to your place of work	183
Nearer local school or nursery	23
Easy to park	386
Other	39

Q 20) [1,171] If you use the local post office, please say what for.

Postal services	1012
Pensions/allowances	327
Giro bank/savings certificates etc.	213
Vehicle tax/tv licence/other bills	818
Information leaflets	146
Other services	322

Q 21) [710] What additional local shops, services and facilities would you use if they were available in the parish?

Hardware & ironmongers	397
Bank	147
Electrical (inc. electrician)	117
Fast food (Takeaway)	40
DIY (inc. timber supplies)	36
Fish & chip shop	31
Arts & crafts (inc. hobby & gifts)	28
Cashpoint	26
Café/tea shop (to suit all ages)	26
Chemist	19
Bakers	13
Haberdashery	12
Barber	12
Dentist (NHS)	10
Better High Street parking	10
Clothing (including children's)	10

Q 22) [945] Which types of development would you support in the parish ?

Small business development	544
Small scale industrial workshops	251
Sheltered workshops	192
Offices	165
Small scale builder's merchants	389
Light industrial	127
Small groups of houses	438
Large estates	8
Tourism development/attractions	286
Land fill	3
Mineral extraction	31
Retail Units	294

Q 23) [1,150] Which of the following items would you be prepared to keep separate from your refuse for recycling if a separate collection was made?

Bottles & glass	1057
Garden waste	588
Newspapers	979
Compost	193
Clothing	636
Cans	737
Cardboard	642
Plastic	639
Other	30

Q 24) [982] If you have a vehicle, do you have problems parking in Charing village centre ?



Often	341 (35%)
Occasionally	459 (46%)
Never	182 (19%)

Q 25) [1,372] Do you experience the following parking problems at your home?

	YES	NO
Nowhere to park	56	792
Cars blocking your entrance	99	738
Traffic blocking the road	140	711

Q 26) [1,166] Would you support the following speed control measures in Charing High St & School Road ?

20mph speed limit	922
Traffic calming (eg: speed bumps)	449
Children at play signs	426
More road warning signs	303
None of the above	66
One way system	14
Other	63

Q 27) [969] Which are the two greatest danger spots in the parish?

In the Charing area:-

Cross Roads (A20/High St/Pluckley Road including pedestrian crossing)	600
High Street (parking a big problem)	114
School Road inc. junction with Downs Way, particularly outside the school and especially at school arrival/dep times.	113
High St/School Road junction	69
Charing Hill (speeding a big problem)	56
Pluckley Road (Speeding & lorries the main issues)	45
Upper High Street inc. Pett Lane junction & The Hill (speeding & parking)	41
Station Road inc. station junction (especially pedestrian crossing)	31
High Street/The Market junction	29
Lower High St/Old Ashford Rd junction	28
A20 Roundabout	28
Charing Hill/The Hill junction	23

In the Charing Heath area:-



*Tile Lodge Cottages. Speeding cars and parked vehicles combine to produce a potentially lethal situation.*

Tile Lodge Road by the cottages (parking & speeding)	19
Tile Lodge Road / A20 junction	19
Tile Lodge Road	16
Charing Heath Road	10

Q 28) [1,190] If a community bus were provided between Charing Heath, Westwell Leacon, outlying parts of the parish, Charing village centre and the cinema, how frequently would you use it?

Every weekday	25
Most Saturdays	79
Most Sundays	24
Occasionally	554
Never	552



Q 29) [1,372] Do you have transport difficulties in getting to the shops in the following locations?

	often	occasionally	never
Within the parish	115	44	396
Ashford	153	133	359
Maidstone	128	84	360
Canterbury	136	93	342
Other	44	28	224

Q 30) [1,079] What types of homes are needed in the parish ?

Detached houses	183
Semi-detached houses	217
Terraced houses	140
Housing association	127
Bungalows	240
Flats and maisonettes	88
Starter homes	448
Mobile homes	13
Nursing home	72
Sheltered accommodation	155
Affordable housing	11
No need for any of them	321
Other	27

Q 31) [1,229] Are you registered as disabled?

Yes	77 (6)
No	1152 (94)



Q 32) [1,372] If you have used any of the following services that cover the parish during the last year, how do you rate the service?

A=good B=reasonable C=poor D=no opinion E= not used

	A	B	C	D	E
Doctor	724	198	44	9	155
District nurse	216	30	3	4	466
Health visitor	38	14	9	5	543
Home help	13	5	1	3	568
Maternity care	21	6	1	4	564
Chiropody	48	7	4	4	544
Medical equipment loan	34	5	5	5	555
Meals on wheels	2	2	2	4	570
Counselling services	11	5	4	6	555
Physiotherapy services	102	15	15	9	500

Q 33) [1,372] What are your views on the standard of the following services in the parish?

A=good B=reasonable C=poor D=no opinion E=not used

	A	B	C	D	E
Fire	436	36	7	27	667
Ambulance (Emergency)	189	119	36	30	737
Hospital (Transport)	84	61	33	48	832
Police (Emergency)	89	123	147	39	711
Police (Bobby)	30	34	215	58	737

Q 34) [1,242] Where do you usually get information about events taking place in the parish?

Parish Magazine	846
Free paper	244
Local paper	629
Post office	281
Notice board	355
Library	171
Posters in shop windows	622
Charing web site	40
Word of mouth	677
Other	24

Q 35) [1,264] Have you ever attended a meeting of the Parish Council?

Yes	273
No	991

Q 36) [1,227] How well does the local parish council publicise its decisions and activities?

Very well	173 (14%)
Reasonably well	566 (46%)
Badly	220 (18%)
No opinion	26 (22%)

Q 37) [1,210] Would you be prepared to pay a slightly higher council tax to meet some of the needs of the parish?

Yes	307 (25%)
No	722 (60%)
No opinion	181 (15%)

Q 38) [1,207] Which, if any, of the following crimes and anti-social behaviour concern you in the parish?

Theft and burglary	997
Mugging	212
Vandalism	762
Drunkenness	136
Drugs	410
Bullying	147
Litter	22
Anti-social behaviour by youths	11
Not concerned	84
Other	30

Q39) [240] In which areas do you feel unsafe?

School Road (yobs)	25
Downs Way (yobs)	24
Station at night (poor lighting & youths)	23
Alleyway - church to Arthur Baker Field (lighting)	22
Charing Hill between The Hill & Pilgrims' Way (traffic & lighting)	16
Anywhere after dark (yobs)	13
Alleyway - church to Woodbrook (lighting)	13
Churchyard at night	11
Poorly lit areas	10
The Moat after dark	8
Pig Alley	8

Q 40) [1,195] Do you think that any of the following measures are needed?

A greater police presence	826
Better consultation between police and local people	378
A neighbourhood watch	406
Improved street lighting	483
More drug/drink education/prevention	238
More activities for young people	612
CCTV	373
Other	24

Q 41) [1,059] Would you support community safety half-yearly meetings attended by the Fire Brigade, Police and other agencies?

Yes	689 (65%)
No	370 (35%)

Q 42) [279] What additional educational or recreational facilities would you like to see in the parish?

Up-to-date youth club (for all age groups)	35
Adult education evening classes including computers, crafts, cooking, arts etc	32
Better sports pavilion on Arthur Baker Field for outdoor sports (football, cricket, basketball, tennis)	23
Skateboard or skate park	22
More youth sports activities	21
BMX track	18
Evening (after school) meeting place for the young (cybercafe, clubs etc)	17
Indoor swimming pool	16
Better children's playground	11
Indoor sports hall for squash, tennis etc	10
Cybercafe	10
Use of village hall for (ballroom) dancing, keep fit etc	9
New village (parish) hall	8
Computer club (all ages)	7
Children's holiday club	7

Q 43) [1,372] Where do you take part in the following activities?

A=in Charing B=in other parts of the parish C=elsewhere D=do not partake

	A	B	C	D
Football	21	9	49	655
Tennis	48	9	31	627
Swimming	64	15	285	469
Cricket	0	7	37	656
Badminton	8	2	26	662
Squash	1	1	33	663
Bowls	20	0	7	677
Keep fit (eg:gym)	21	8	135	539
Other sport	12	7	110	302
(including golf [24] & horse riding [11])				



Q 44) [1,084] Are the facilities provided in the children's playground?

Good	89 (8%)
Reasonable	357 (33%)
Poor	257 (24%)
No opinion	381 (35%)

Q 45) [408] Which new clubs/activities would you attend in the parish if they were provided?

Rambling club	189
Art club	117
Choir	50
Music society	77
Band	30
Young people's drama group	43
Creative arts for children	65
Other	48

Q 46) [49] Would you be prepared to help with the following leisure time activities for young people?

The Summer play scheme	18
After-school club	7
Uniformed organisations	6
Youth club	18
Sunday schools	8
Sports	16

Q 47) [1,372] What are your views on local social facilities for?

A=good B=reasonable C=poor D=no opinion

	A	B	C	D
Pre-school	68	106	65	450
Children aged 5 to 11	26	106	135	428
Young people aged 12 to 17	12	70	262	366
Young people aged 18 to 25	2	62	239	385
People aged 26 to 60	46	172	158	351
People aged over 60	127	186	67	421

Q 48 [1,024] Is the church important to you?

For Sunday worship	290
For baptisms	336
Weddings and funerals	547
As a focal point for the community	489
As an historic building	693
Every place should have one	414
Quiet place to reflect	5
Other	22

Q 49 [1,372] In relation to local footpaths and bridleways, can you answer the following questions?

(?=no opinion)	yes	no	?
Do you know where the local paths are?	578	361	37
Can you use them without difficulty?	380	264	178
Are they well signposted?	286	319	204
Would you be willing to maintain them?	91	477	138
Do you use them several times each week?	122	530	58
Do you use them 1-4 times each month?	219	383	49
Use them very occasionally	432	142	51
Never use them	166	186	55

Q 50) [1,001] Would you like to see any future commercial development in the parish? If so where?

Yes 304 (30%)  
No 697 (70%)

EuroCharing site 89  
Charing High Street 26  
Along the A20 12  
Other 21

Q 51) [993] Would you like to see any future housing development in the parish? If so where?

Yes 364 (36%)  
No 629 (64%)

Hither Field 47  
EuroCharing 36  
A20 opposite Mote Park Houses 17  
Pett Lane 8  
In-fill sites 8  
A20 Ashford Road 7  
Edges of village 6  
Other 40

Q 52) [895] How many new family homes do you believe are needed in Charing over the next 10 years to sustain the existing level of shops and social activities?

Less than 25 426 (48%)  
25 to 50 219 (24%)  
50 to 75 95 (11%)  
75 to 100 88 (10%)  
Over 100 67 (7%)

Q 53 [1,372] What aspect of Charing is of most value to you? (graded by importance)

A=very important B=important C=not very important  
D=of little interest E=no opinion

	A	B	C	D	E
Sense of place and local identity	530	320	56	20	32
Access to countryside	568	298	43	14	22
Views of surrounding countryside	606	296	32	13	14
Church, Palace and Clewards	369	359	107	29	45
High Street and surrounding area	526	391	38	13	23
Other	54	12	0	2	14

(inc. central location and links to other towns)



Q 54 [1,372] Which areas of Charing does your household use?

A=most days B=about once a week C=once or twice a month  
D=occasionally E=never

	A	B	C	D	E
Playing fields in Charing	80	80	74	274	372
Recreation areas in Charing,					
Charing Heath or Westwell Leacon	32	54	73	244	388
Clewards	73	81	63	275	353
Local byways, bridleways or					
footpaths	126	129	125	376	183
Pilgrims Way and the downs	64	86	124	418	234
Other	10	4	6	5	41



Q 55) [1,372] Which features in Charing do you think need most protection?

A=high level of protection B=some protection C=low level of protection D=none E= no opinion

	A	B	C	D	E
Fields around built-up areas	627	295	39	15	29
Downs and woods	762	220	14	10	21
Local byways, bridleways					
and footpaths	676	277	36	9	22
Hedges, trees and water	680	262	43	5	26
High Street	686	284	41	9	23
Church, Palace and Clewards	663	261	38	10	36
Other	20	7	0	0	16

Q 56) [234] Have we missed anything? Need better bus service within parish, (Smaller & more frequent buses and early start to station): 16

Litter problems, dog fouling and general unkempt village appearance. Need more regularly emptied bins: 21

Additional village centre parking: 9

Poor footpath maintenance, not wheelchair friendly: 8

Other comments related to noise and light pollution, the need for affordable housing, HGVs on minor roads and the general condition of minor roads.



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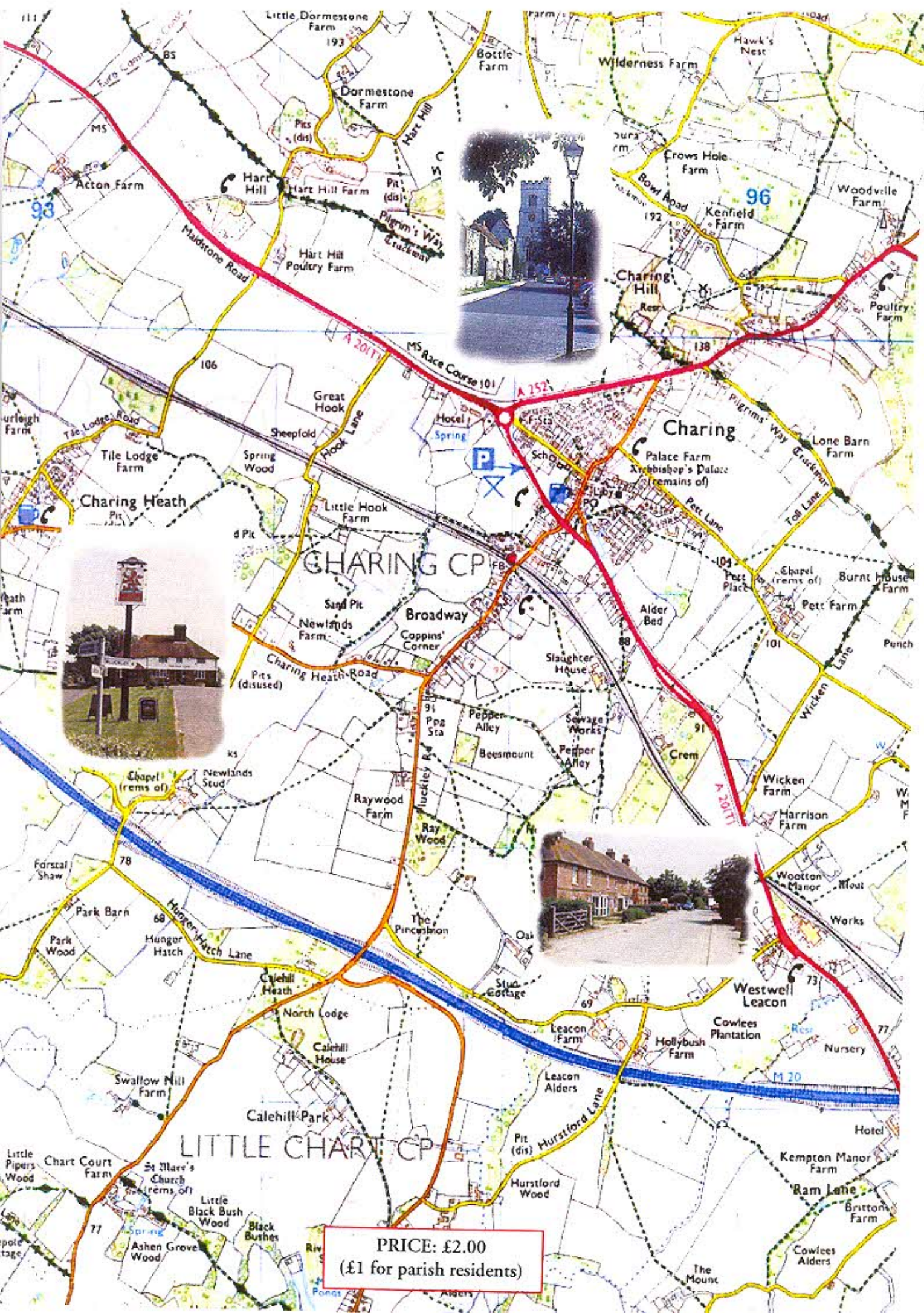
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