

Uckfield Town Council

Community Questionnaire

Edited Survey Results

March 2007

Uckfield Town Council

Council Offices

Uckfield Civic Centre

Uckfield

East Sussex

TN22 1AE

Tele 01825 762774

Fax 01825 765757

Email townclerk@uckfieldtc.co.uk

Important Information

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Uckfield Town Council employed an independent agency to distribute one copy of the questionnaire to each household (see the Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire and the covering letter accompanying the form). Most of the questionnaires were distributed during the period week commencing 22nd – 27th November 2006; however, a small number of households did not receive the form until the first week in December 2006. All the completed forms received by the Council were included in the analysis.

There were, in 2006, approximately 5697 households in Uckfield. 2339 completed questionnaires were received by Uckfield Town Council.

Note that the information in this Report is that collected by this questionnaire. The information and views contained in this Report are those of the people in Uckfield and the surrounding area who completed this questionnaire. A very small number of questionnaires contained inappropriate comments; these comments were not encoded.

Report

The analysis was conducted by:

John James
Stone Cottage
Stone Quarry Road
Chelwood Gate
East Sussex
RH17 7LP
01825 740181
01825 740434
jj63@tutor.open.ac.uk

Section 2: The environment

It should be noted that several respondents ticked some or all of questions 13, 14, 15 and 16. Although a tick may indicate some 'concern' or 'belief' it is not possible to gauge its strength and, therefore, their responses were encoded as missing.

Question13

How concerned are you about environmental issues? Use a scale of 1 (very) to 5 (not at all).

Scale	Percent
1.00	42.5
2.00	24.9
2.50	.1
3.00	18.2
4.00	5.3
5.00	3.0

Question 14

- How concerned are you about the protection of endangered species?
- How concerned are you about the protection of wildlife habitats?
- How concerned are you about the protection of the countryside and open spaces?

Use the scale of 1 (very) to 5 (not at all).

The mean score of these aspects of the natural environment shows that each aspect is scored highly.

Question 15

How concerned are you about the following aspects of the built environment in Uckfield? Use the scale of 1 (very) to 5 (not at all).

- The design of new and existing buildings?
- The design of street furniture / signs?
- The protection of conservation areas?
- The preservation of historical and archaeological sites?
- The creation of traffic – free areas?
- Street lighting

Both the mean score of each aspect, and the number of respondents who scored each aspect either 1 or 2, show that the protection of conservation areas is most important followed by the preservation of historic and archaeological sites. It should

be noted that each aspect of the built environment, with the exception of the design of street furniture, is scored highly by half or more of the sample.

Question 16

Do you believe your local council should promote / support the following measures? Use a scale of 1 (strongly believe) to 5 (not at all).

- Discourage the use of cars?
- Encourage the use of alternative transport?
- Encourage the use of alternative energy (e.g. wind, solar)?
- Encourage water conservation?
- Extend recycling?
- Protect against flooding?

Protection against flooding is seen as the most important followed by the measures of extend recycling and encourage the use of water conservation. Least important, and by some margin, is the measure of discourage the use of cars. All measures, with the exception of discourage the use of cars are scored highly by over half the respondents in this sample.

Question 17

What measures do you think local government should take to improve the local environment?

Measure	Percent
Plant trees and flowering shrubs	74.7
Designate more local Nature Reserves	58.8
Improve street cleaning	73.1
Control street clutter	65.1
Preserves areas of architectural interest	65.6
Preserve buildings of architectural interest	69.3
Improve pavements, footpaths, signage	75.5
Control the design of new buildings	72.9
Control the siting of mobile phone masts	75.8
Control overhanging vegetation	69.3
Removal of graffiti	81.3

Each measure is supported by well over half the respondents in the sample; even the lowest ranked of designate more nature reserves is supported by almost 6 in 10 people. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchy of improvements with the removal of graffiti, control the siting of mobile phone masts, improve pavements, footpaths and signage and plant trees and flowering plants at the top of the list.

Question 18

Would you be prepared to pay an increased rate of council tax to fund the environmental measures you want?

It should be noted that quite a few people added a comment along the lines of 'we pay high taxes already' and/or heavily underscored the 'no' box. A few said things like 'it depends how much'.

The responses show that although 63.3% said no almost a third of the respondents in this sample said 'yes'.

When we select those respondents who said 'yes' in question 18 we find that the priorities in question 17 change. Now the most important issues are the removal of graffiti (as before), the planting of trees and flowering plants and the control of new building design. These are closely followed by the control over the siting of mobile phone masts, cleaner streets, preserve buildings of architectural interest and improve pavements, footpaths and signage; they have almost the same score.

The lowest ranking measure is still the designation of more local Nature Reserves although, once again, it should be noted that almost 7 in 10 support this measure.

Question 19

Please name here any buildings or areas in Uckfield which you feel should be protected because of their historical and/or architectural importance.

581 people took the opportunity to make a comment; some listed a single building or area and some listed several and others combined buildings and areas. Several respondents felt much of 'old' Uckfield had already been 'lost'.

While many of the individual buildings or areas frequently mentioned are listed or in the existing conservation area a number of others are not eg The Picture House, houses in New Town, Framfield Road and London Road.

The most frequently mentioned buildings were Bridge Cottage and The Picture House

Section 3: Housing development

It should be noted that several respondents ticked some or all of questions 20 and 21. Although a tick may indicate some 'importance' or 'preference' it is not possible to gauge its strength and, therefore, their responses were left blank (which means they are recorded as missing).

Question 20

On the assumption that Uckfield must absorb around 400 new dwellings over the next five years, what do you think are the most important factors that should be taken into account when approving sites? Use a scale of 1 (strongly believe) to 5 (not at all).

The following table shows the number of respondents scoring each factor as 1 (strongly believe) and the mean score for each factor.

- Preservation of endangered species
- Protection of 'Green Belt' between Uckfield and surrounding villages
- Minimising the visual impact on the landscape / townscape
- Access to and impact on existing road network
- Access to schools
- Access to town centre

- Flooding
- Access to public transport

The most important factor, although by a very small margin, is the access to and the impact on the existing road network, followed by flooding (although flooding achieves more scores of 1). Note that each factor, including the preservation of endangered species (the lowest score), is seen to be very important.

Question 21

What kind of new housing development would you prefer to see in Uckfield? Use a scale of 1 (very) to 5 (not at all).

Note that several respondents commented that they did not want any more housing development; many others also said that all new developments must be linked to increased infrastructural capacities.

The following table summaries the information, it shows the number of respondents who scored each factor as 1 and the mean score for each factor.

Kind of new housing development		
Type	Number scoring 1	Mean score
Homes for young people	792	2.2
Homes for first time buyers	1134	1.79
Sheltered accommodation	419	2.83
Homes for families	654	2.28
Housing for rent	505	2.76
Homes for single people	398	2.84

Homes for first time buyers followed by homes for young people are preferred by this sample.

Other
266 respondents commented in the 'other box'.

Question 22

Do you think that builders should be required to incorporate energy and water efficiency features in their new developments?

Water efficiency facilities	Percent
Yes	95.4
No	2.5

Energy efficiency facilities	Percent
Yes	93.8
No	1.8

Question 23

Should traffic calming measures be a requirement for all new residential streets?

Traffic calming residential streets	Percent
Yes	64.9
No	31.3

Question 24

How many car parking places per household should be required for new housing?

One	10.3%
Two	66.1%
More than two	10.8%

Note that several respondents correlated the number of car parking spaces per household with the number of its rooms / bedrooms.

Section 4: Town Centre development

Question 25

Are you in favour of the town council's policy of retaining Luxford's Field as a green open space?

Retain Luxford's Field	Percent
Yes	90.0
No	6.9

Question 26

How would you widen its appeal? (Please specify).

984 (42% of the sample) respondents commented, sometimes at great length

The most common improvements requested were more seats, trees, shrubs and plants. Several respondents were concerned about litter, vandalism and security, especially at night. It should be noted however that a sizeable minority were satisfied with the field as it is.

Question 27

Would you like to see the development of a pedestrianised shopping area?

Pedestrianised shopping area	Percent
Yes	45.4
No	46.9

The sample is almost equally divided on this issue.

Question 28

Did you know that the northern end of Uckfield High Street is designated as a conservation area?

Awareness of conservation area?	Percent
Yes	31.1
No	67.0

The table suggest only about a third of the sample are aware of this conservation area.

Question 29

How could the conservation area be made more distinctive and attractive? (Please specify).

758 people responded to this question although the length and detail of the sample's responses varied considerably. Most frequently mentioned were the need for stylish, traditional signposting, improvements to shop facades, planting of trees and wider pavements.

Question 30

Would you like to see stricter control over signage / phone masts etc. in the conservation area?

Control signage / masts	Percent
Yes	76.5
No	14.0

Question 31

Would you like to see additional shops in Uckfield?

Additional shops	Percent
Yes	71.3
No	24.2

Question 32

If 'yes' where should this development be?

Place	Percent
In the town centre between Luxford car park and High Street	27.8
On the Bellbrook industrial estate	31.8
Incorporated in new, major housing development	11.4

Note that 134 respondents ticked more than one box, each was recorded as a 'yes'.

242 respondents used the 'elsewhere' box to comment.

Question 33

What type of additional shopping would you like to see? (Tick all that apply). The details are as follows:

Type of shopping	Percent
National clothes chains	56.9
Independent clothes shops	34.9
Shoe shops	33.8
New major supermarkets	31.5
Speciality food shops	26.6
Gifts and luxury goods	23.3
Hardware and DIY	21.4
Electrical goods	20.6
Furniture	19.7
Expanded existing supermarkets	19.3
Carpets	3.6

Other: 310 respondents took the opportunity to comment.

Question 34

Would you like to see more places to eat and drink in the town centre?

Eating	Percent
Yes	31.1
No	62.8

Drinking	Percent
Yes	19.8
No	71.3

The tables show that only 31% wanted more town centre eating establishments and even fewer, (20%) want more places to drink.

Question 35

If yes, please specify what type.

677 people commented. Note that a lot of respondents mentioned 'middle range' and 'reasonable' prices and more convenient opening hours.

Most frequently mentioned were the need for traditional, quiet, adults only, clean, mature, nice over 25s/ 30s pubs and wine bars and both family and upmarket 'non-ethnic' places to eat.

Question 36

Are the current car parking arrangements sufficient?

Long term

Yes 77.1%
No 16.2%

Short term
Yes 70%
No 24%

Question 37

If there were more shopping opportunities would you be prepared to pay for car parking in the town centre?

Pay for car parking	Percent
Yes	23.6
No	69.4

The data shows that about a quarter of the sample would be prepared to pay for car parking.

Question 38

Would you object to the building of an underground car park in the town centre: a multi-storey car park in the town centre?

Underground
Yes 30.7%
No 64.4%

Multi-Storey
Yes 65.8%
No 28.3%

Just under a third of the respondents would object to an underground car park and approximately two thirds would object to a multi-storey car park.

Question 39

What changes would you like to see in the town centre?

1079 respondents commented.

The most frequently mentioned changes were restrictions on the number of charity shops and estate agents, enforcement of parking controls, the introduction of pedestrianised areas, reduction of traffic and improvements to shop fronts.

Section 5: Traffic and transport

Question 40

Do you support the town council's policy of lobbying for the reinstatement of the Uckfield – Lewes rail link?

Rail link lobby	Percent
Yes	84.1
No	13.1

Question 41

Would you use the link if it was reinstated?

Use rail link	Percent
Yes	79.2
No	15.6

Question 42

What would encourage you to use public transport more often? (Please specify)

1509 respondents took the opportunity to comment.

Note that where a place is mentioned it was often accompanied by the respondent needing a service to and from there or a greater level of service and, frequently, the demand for a more direct, faster service. The most frequently mentioned factors were cheaper, affordable, low, reasonable, family rates etc, more frequent, more reliable services, more late night services, more parking and the reinstatement of rail access to Lewes and Brighton. Bus to station

Question 43

Do you think there is a problem of speeding traffic in Uckfield?

Speeding	Percent
Yes	48.9
No	45.8

The table shows that the sample is fairly equally divided.

Question 44

If 'yes' where do you think the worst problems are? (Please specify).

1080 respondents commented. Note that many respondents offered specific parts of roads, and times of day (mostly at night, several suggested the culprits were 'boy racers').

A large number of locations was mentioned, the most frequent being the High St, Eastbourne Rd and Framfield Rd

Question 45

Do you think that there is a traffic congestion problem in Uckfield?

Traffic congestion	Percent
Yes	87.2
No	9.1

Question 46

If 'yes', when is there a problem?

A surprisingly large percentage failed to answer this question. This sample perceives traffic congestion as a 'peak time' problem, followed by a problem at school run times.

At peak times only (7-9am and 5-6pm)

Peak times	Percent
Yes	59.1
Missing	40.1
Total	100.0

School run times (3 - 4.30pm)

School run	Percent
Yes	52.3
Missing	47.7
Total	100.0

Question 47

If 'yes' where do you think the worst problems are? (Please specify).

1936 people responded to this question. The most frequently mentioned places were the Tesco roundabout, the High St and the traffic lights at the New Town-Framfield Rd and Church St-High St junctions.

Question 48

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is considering a gyratory system at the lower end of the High Street. Would you support such a scheme?

Yes 36.3
No 46.6

Question 49

Which of the traffic alleviation / management measures would you support? (Tick all that apply).

Scheme	Percent
Improvements in public transport	61.1

Methods to discourage town – centre car use (e.g. pinch points)	25.5
Blocking the High Street to through traffic	26.1
Rerouting the traffic using existing roads	29.2
An alternative new road system to that currently being considered by ESCC	31.2
Dualling the bypass	50.1
More cycle paths and footpaths	35.6

The data shows that only improvements in public transport and dualling the bypass receive majority support from this sample of respondents.

279 people added a 'other' comment.

Section 6: Economic activity and employment

Question 50

Should Uckfield be further developed as a centre for commerce, industry and employment?

Yes 57.1
No 33.2

The table shows that about a third of the respondents say 'no'.

Question 51

Do you agree that the Uckfield area would benefit from the development of tourism?

Tourism	Percent
yes	48.4
no	42.2

Although 48% of the respondents agree to the development of tourism, 42% disagree.

SECTION 7: Social and Community Development

Question 52

Are there sufficient leisure and entertainment opportunities in Uckfield?

The table shows a divided set of respondents with 47% saying 'yes' and 41% saying 'no'.

Question 53

If 'no' what would you like to see introduced or further developed?

The total number of respondents (and percent of sample) selecting each facility is shown in the following table:

Leisure and entertainment	Frequency	Percent
Indoor sports	543	23.2
Outdoor sports	528	22.6
Theatre	693	29.6
Music	544	23.3
Clubs	375	16.0

Note that several people added a comment along the lines of 'cheaper,' 'affordable' etc.

In the 'other' space 303 respondents commented. Most frequently mentioned were more activities / Community Centre for young people and an indoor Bowling Complex.

Question 54

Are there particular community support activities missing or poorly developed in Uckfield?

The total number of respondents (and percent of sample) selecting each facility is shown in the following table:

Facility	Frequency	Percent
Day centres	337	14.4
Community transport	427	18.3
Youth services	705	30.1
Services for older people	532	22.7
Family support	314	13.4
People with disabilities	421	18.0

In the 'other' section 112 respondents offered a suggestion.

Question 55

Do you actively support community events such as the following? If 'yes' please specify.

Bonfire, carnival	
Yes	63.8
No	24.0
Town festival week	
Yes	61.8
No	23.9
Night Xmas shopping	
Yes	61.1

No	26.1
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In the 'other space', 113 people commented. The most frequently mentioned activities were the Farmers' Market and church events.

Section 8; Conclusion

Question 56

Which one thing do you most like about Uckfield?

1893 respondents offered comment(s). Note that so many respondents offered two (or more) factors that up the first three comments were recorded.

The most frequently mentioned factors were

- the people of Uckfield, who were seen as nice, gentle, friendly and good neighbours.
- the compactness of the town centre, the 'village atmosphere' and the good range of local shops and services
- Access to beautiful countryside, forest, fields, woods, nature, fields, green, walking dogs
- the community spirit and activities
- good access to the coast, London and nearby towns
- Free parking

Question 57

Which one thing do you least like about Uckfield.

1930 people offered comment(s). Note that so many respondents offered two (or more) factors that up the first three mentioned were recorded.

Factors most frequently mentioned were

- Traffic congestion, bottlenecks, High Street, chaos, too much, constant delays and hold-ups, queues, too busy
- Youths at night, shouting, noisy, menacing, rude and disrespectful children, hanging about, intimidating, disruptive, disgraceful, abusive, aggressive, scary, ill mannered, rowdy, violent, underage drinking, drunk, revellers, gangs, troublemakers, drugs, bad language
- Housing, overdevelopment, overcrowding, over – population, sprawling, new developments without infrastructure, piecemeal, hotch-potch, too fast, extending into Greenfield sites
- Litter and rubbish
- Lack of chain stores and clothes shops
- Traffic congestion

Question 58

What would be your one main priority to improve Uckfield?

1912 respondents offered comment(s). Note that many people offered two (and often more) priorities. Up to the first three were recorded.

The improvements most frequently mentioned were

- elimination of traffic congestion
- improved rail links
- a stop on more housing development
- improved litter collection
- more visible policing