

Community Survey Report (April 2026)

Overview

Morton-On-Swale Parish Council ran a community survey in 2026 with the aim of identifying what matters most to the community so that these priorities can be reflected in everything we do—from allocating funding, making donations, to influencing conversations with key stakeholders.

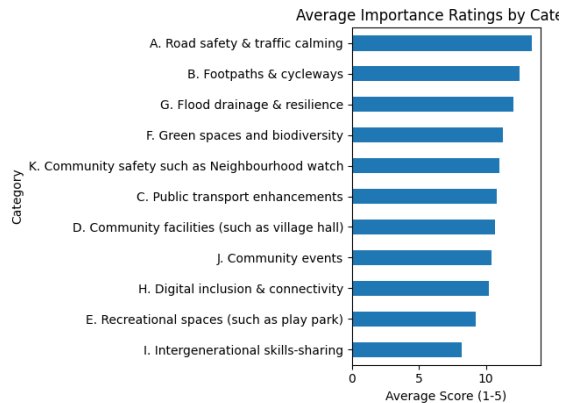
The survey shows strong engagement with a total of 89 households replying (which equates to c30% return rate). Respondents include households with children, retired residents, and long-term villagers, indicating that events should cater to mixed ages.

This report combines both quantitative survey results and qualitative resident feedback to provide a robust evidence base for future planning and investment decisions.

Quantitative evidence (survey rankings)

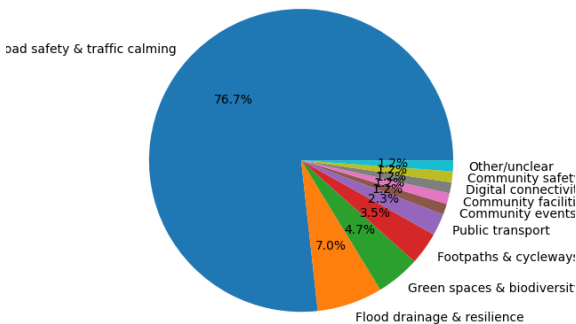
When asked to rate how important each of the following areas are (from 1-5), this is what residents told us:

Road safety	389
Footpaths and cycleways	367
Flooding/drainage	353
Green/biodiversity	330
Crime and safety	322
Public transport	316
Community facilities	314
Community events	302
Digital inclusion	299
Recreational spaces	271
Intergenerational skills	238



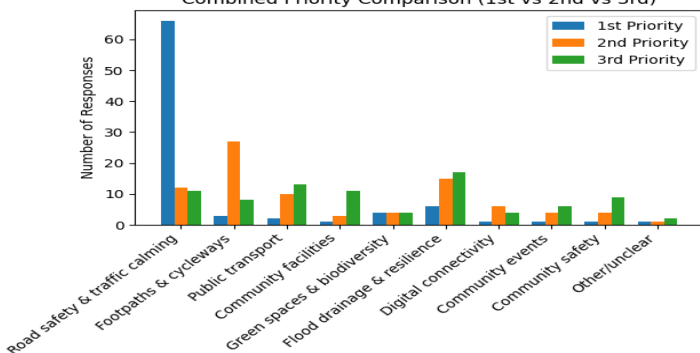
When asked what their top priority, the results were as follows:

Top Priority Distribution (1st Choice)



The results show overwhelming consensus among residents, with road safety and traffic-calming accounting for over three-quarters of all first-choice priorities. No other category exceeds 7%, indicating a clear and urgent need for intervention in this area.

Combined Priority Comparison (1st vs 2nd vs 3rd)



Residents were also asked for their second and third priorities. Whilst road safety is the overwhelmingly dominant immediate priority, subsequent rankings reveal a broader set of infrastructure and community needs. Flood resilience emerges as a consistently high concern across all priority levels, alongside improvements to walking, cycling, and transport infrastructure.

Qualitative evidence (resident feedback)

Analysis of written responses identified recurring themes, with approximate frequency counts:

Traffic, Speeding and Volume (~45–55 mentions)

- Persistent speeding through the village
- Dangerous overtaking and aggressive driving
- High traffic volumes, particularly heavy goods vehicles and tractors
- Reports of dangerous driving behaviour and excessive speeds
- Work on potholes and manholes - reports of effect on houses such as shaking
- Volume of traffic makes it hard to turn out of side streets
- Common requests:
 - Fixed or average speed cameras
 - Reduced speed limits (e.g. 20mph)
 - Traffic-calming measures
 - Pedestrian island to make crossing safer
 - Strong and repeated calls for a bypass
 - Community speed watch

Pedestrian Safety and Crossings (~30–35 mentions) - closely linked to traffic issues

- Difficulty crossing roads safely, especially at peak times
- Safety concerns for children, elderly residents, and bus users
- Poor lighting
- Takes long time to cross road
- Common requests:
 - Additional pedestrian crossings (shop, west end, village centre, bus stops)
 - Improved crossing design and visibility
 - Safer infrastructure near schools
 - Work on pavements to make wider and safer – overgrown and in poor state of repair
 - Work on hedges etc, such as near crossing to make it safer and wider for pedestrians
 - Better parking facilities and drop off provision at schools in village

Footpaths and active travel (~18–22 mentions)

- Narrow, poorly maintained, or overgrown footpaths
- Lack of safe walking/cycling routes to nearby towns
- Common requests:
 - Strong demand for safe walking and cycling infrastructure
 - Wider, safer footpaths
 - New off-road routes (e.g. to Northallerton and surrounding villages)
 - Replacement/renewal of public footpath signage
 - Better policing of parking on pavements especially near junctions
 - Regular street cleaning
 - Better broadband

Flooding and Drainage (~12–15 mentions)

- Regular flooding, particularly near the bridge
- Road closures due to flooding
- Blocked drainage and soakaways
- Common requests:
 - Improved drainage systems
 - Flood mitigation measures

Public Transport (~10–12 mentions)

- Limited and unreliable bus services
- Lack of evening and late services
- Cost and accessibility concerns
- Common requests:
 - More frequent services
 - Extended operating hours

Infrastructure and Development Concerns (~10–12 mentions)

- Strong concern about expansion without supporting infrastructure
- Repeated references to need for a bypass, road upgrades and service capacity
- Potholes mentioned which cause shaking to houses
- More parking needed for Village Hall – especially for disabled
- Parking at Village Hall should not be ‘all day’ facility
- Play Park signage and management
- No more development frequent request

Environment and Maintenance (~8–10 mentions)

- Tree and hedge maintenance
- Poor street lighting due to overgrowth
- Concerns about loss of green space and suggestion of conservation area
- Dog mess and irresponsible owners

Community and Social Needs (~8–10 mentions)

- Desire for more community events and activities (cinema, crafts, fitness, youth clubs)
- Call for greater community cohesion
- Support for elderly and isolated residents
- Neighbourhood / speed watch
- Desire for more events

Road Condition and Other Issues (~10–12 mentions)

- Potholes and road surface deterioration
- Parking issues and obstruction of footpaths (village hall, school areas)
- School drop-off safety concerns
- Footpath obstructions

Workshops/events/activity ideas:

Residents were also invited to share ideas for activities and events they would like to see in the village. Responses show strong support for initiatives that **bring people together, reduce isolation, and make better use of the Village Hall**, while recognising time constraints and the need for realistic, well-attended events.

Key Findings (by Frequency)

1. Arts, Crafts & Practical Workshops (~16 mentions) The most frequently mentioned category, appealing to all ages.
 - Craft groups / craft sessions (non-age-specific): 6
 - Practical workshops (woodwork, DIY, candle making, silver ring making): 6
 - Craft fairs / markets for local creatives: 2
 - Gardening / garden club: 2
 - Cooking classes (e.g. chutney making): 2

2. Community & Social Connection (~14 mentions). The strongest overall theme was a desire for activities that build community and reduce isolation, particularly for older residents.
 - Community-building events: 6
 - Walking groups / social fitness: 4
 - Bingo, poker, film nights, social games: 4
 - Volunteering together (gardening, litter picking, green spaces): 3
3. Health, Fitness & Wellbeing (~15 mentions). Residents want affordable and varied exercise options, not limited to yoga.
 - Pilates: 6
 - Yoga / yoga-pilates (often noted as currently too expensive): 4
 - Other fitness classes (Zumba, non-yoga exercise): 4
 - Walking groups: 4
4. Learning, Skills & Training (~10 mentions). Practical, confidence-building learning was strongly supported.
 - IT / computer training (especially for older people): 4
 - First aid & defibrillator training: 3
 - Skill-sharing workshops (passing on experience): 2
 - AI training / sign language: 2
5. Children & Young People (~7 mentions). There is demand for more structured but informal youth provision.
 - Children's activities / kids groups: 4
 - Youth group (games and crafts): 2
 - Nature club: 1
6. Village Hall & Facilities (~6 mentions). The Village Hall is valued but seen as under-utilised.
 - Desire for more regular activities: 4
 - Reintroduction of film nights: 3

Barriers & Considerations

- Some residents work full-time and have limited availability (2 mentions)
- Concern that some activities may struggle to attract attendance (1 mention)

There is clear appetite for community-focused, affordable, and inclusive activities, particularly crafts, fitness (notably Pilates), walking groups, and practical skills training. A phased approach, starting with pilot or monthly events, is recommended to test demand and build sustainable participation.

Skills

Residents were asked if they had any skills they could contribute and we received the following feedback:

- Event organisation and project management
- Gardening / horticulture / ecology expertise
- Digital / IT
- Fundraising experience
- Arts, crafts or creative skills

Conclusions

- Across the survey, residents consistently rated the following as high priorities:
 - Road safety & traffic calming
 - Footpaths, walking, and cycling
 - Biodiversity
 - Crime and safety
- The findings present a clear and consistent message: **Traffic, road safety, and pedestrian safety are the dominant concerns within the community.**
- Both statistical rankings (quantitative) and written comments (qualitative) strongly align to support these priorities, identifying traffic speed, volume, and safety as the dominant concern within the community. This is reinforced by frequent references to pedestrian safety.

- The expanded evidence base provides overwhelming and consistent support for prioritising traffic management, road safety, and pedestrian infrastructure. These concerns are repeatedly expressed across a wide range of responses, indicating both importance and community-wide impact.
- This evidence base demonstrates a clear, consistent, and urgent need for intervention.
- Need for a pedestrian crossing and associated safety concerns were the most frequently mentioned issue in qualitative feedback, appearing in multiple responses across different locations in the village.
- Residents expressed concerns about proposed expansion in Morton-on-Swale, emphasising that any growth must be supported by significant infrastructure improvements, including consideration of a village bypass.

Priorities

There are 2 distinct sets of community priorities emerging from the survey - those that are the responsibility of strategic partners and those that are community led.

<p>Strategic / Partner-Led</p> <p>Large-scale, requires external partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic & speeding • Flood defence • Bypass • Public transport • Major infrastructure • Footpaths <p>Delivered by: Council / Highways / Agencies</p>	<p>Community-Led</p> <p>Local, deliverable by community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events & activities • Biodiversity projects • Digital inclusion • Community safety <p>Delivered by: Parish Council / Local groups / volunteers</p>
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- Community priorities for CIL Investment Strategy will focus on key capital infrastructure interventions that focus on:
 - Road safety
 - Traffic calming
 - Improvements to walking & cycling
 - Green/biodiversity infrastructure
 - Maintenance and development of existing Council facilities such as play park
- Community Priorities for Community Donations Policy will focus on community cohesion opportunities as highlighted in this survey – focusing on:
 - Activity to support community facilities
 - Community events
 - Community-led interventions to address community priorities

Next steps

- Update draft CIL Investment Strategy and Community Donations Policy to reflect the priorities as set out above.
- Publish report on Council website so it's available to all including residents, groups and other interested parties.
- Parish Council to share reports and findings/priorities with key stakeholders and partners and lobby for key changes to:
 - Deliver immediate traffic calming and enforcement measures
 - Install speed cameras and reduce speed limits where appropriate
 - Improve pedestrian crossings and footpath safety
 - Address flooding and drainage infrastructure
 - Enhance public transport provision
 - Ensure infrastructure upgrades precede any development
- Re-run a survey in 2027/28 to see if any changes or impact.