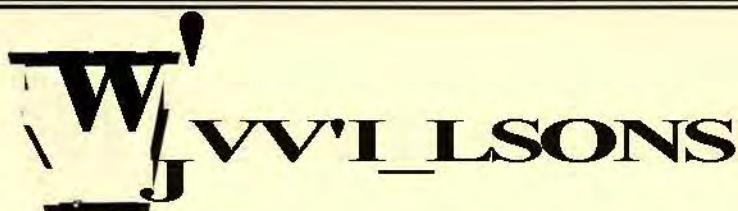


BAMPTON AN APPRAISAL

1982_N 1985



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BAMPTON
AN APPRAISAL

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INTRODUCTION

During 1982 it became apparent to the Parish Council that Bampton was on the verge of fundamental changes : a great deal of new speculative housing development was in the offing and at the same time many long established shops were closing. An increasing proportion of the community was "new" and the Parish Council felt that they could not speak for the community and represent its interest without greater knowledge of what that community actually thought of imminent changes and wanted from them. More or less development? More or less employment? To emphasise tourism and crafts or to go for growth and more industry? So with help from the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, a study was instituted.

A village meeting was called in October 1982 and it was proposed to carry out an appraisal of local attitudes.

This resulted in a questionnaire of some 240 questions on a wide range of local topics being drafted and then distributed to every resident in Bampton over the age of 11. Some 1200 questionnaires were returned : a response rate of approximately 65%. There was also a survey amongst the children at the Primary School.

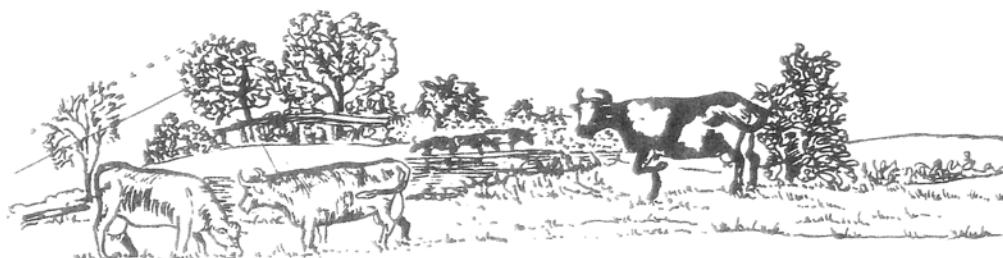
This report is largely based on the results of that questionnaire, with information from other sources such as Council publications to balance the residents' views.

The whole appraisal project has been funded by advertising, with a small initial grant from the Parish Council and thus cost constraints have inevitably meant that a lot of detail and analysis has had to be omitted.

Where comment has been made the committee have endeavoured to be as objective as human nature permits. The hardest task has been to keep a balance between the silent majority and the vociferous minority : the enthusiastic few will always be viewed by some as keen and involved ; by others as a meddling lunatic fringe.

One point which should be made is that despite the fears expressed in some of the replies, it was not the purpose of the questionnaire to pry, and it was never the purpose of the committee to seek ways or means of changing the community. If anything, the reverse was true. The committee members took part because they were concerned about changes which were on the horizon and it was hoped the results of the questionnaire would give weight to the Parish Council in its representations with higher authorities.

Finally the Committee expresses sincere thanks to all those who took the trouble to reply to the questionnaire and all those who helped in the preparation of this Appraisal.



A GENERAL LOOK AT BAMPTON

Bampton lies some 200 feet above sea level, mainly on a gravel terrace east of Shillbrook on the edge of low lying land bordering the River Thames of which the nearest crossing is Tadpole Bridge 2 miles to the south east. Witney is some 6 miles to the north, Swindon 17 miles to the south west and Oxford 17 miles to the north east. The surrounding countryside is predominantly flat and unremarkable.

Geographically Bampton is not on the way to anywhere in particular and thus has escaped the attentions of highway planners and still retains a largely unspoilt cohesive appearance. The two influences of the Cotswolds to the north and west and the Thames Valley to the south predominate.

Based, as can be seen from the plan, on three main roads converging on the Market Square, Bampton has a dominant building style of coursed natural stone under Welsh slate, or, in the case of the older properties, stonesfield slate roofs and occasionally thatches. There is a spaciousness with the layout not usually found in more traditional Cotswold towns with their predominantly high gabled fronts and steep pitched roofs. Bampton has in fact relatively few old houses of that style.



Historically, Bampton was very important and certainly qualified as a town of considerable note in the area. A brief look at the history of Bampton would be appropriate.

There has certainly been continuous settlement since pre-Christian times; what would appear to be a Romano-British burial ground in the area of the Beam (built over in the last six months) has come to light, but regrettably the authorities were not notified presumably because nobody noticed during the course of the development and no proper archaeological investigation took place. Saxon fought Dane here in 614 A.D.

The wool trade made Bampton prosperous from Saxon times: it was valued at £80 in the Doomsday survey of 1086 and already enjoyed its own market. It retained this position in the Middle Ages: in 1334 Bampton paid more in tax than Newbury and the same as Reading, and in Oxfordshire was second only to the City of Oxford itself. Certainly the administrative area (the Hundred) of Bampton covered an appreciably larger area than it does now notably to include some stone quarries in the Cotswold foothills, and the tax return figures indicate the much greater importance Bampton enjoyed at that time, and also one suspects there was not then in Bampton the number of accountants to advise on tax returns that there are now!

Later in the 17th Century, a locally-based leather industry grew up; this however disappeared (except for the local surname of Tanner!) by the beginning of the 19th Century, and Bampton continued its slow but steady decline which continued until the last few years.

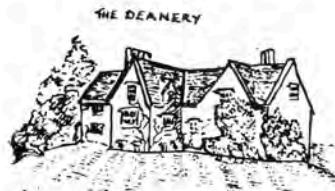
Whether Bampton is a village or a town is a matter of debate and, judging from some of the replies to the questionnaires, strong views are held in some quarters. Whatever its undoubtedly position in the past, Bampton now is a community with both a Town Hall and a Village Hall facing each other in the Market Square. A village with a town football club and its own resident fire service; a town where the majority of the residents, judging from the replies to the questionnaire, wish to retain the village atmosphere. The committee have no wish to enter this particular minefield, and as far as possible in this report, will take the easy way out and try to avoid using either word. The important message from the replies to the questionnaires is that whatever Bampton is, the vast majority of the respondents want to keep it that way - and in fact three quarters of the population have no intention of leaving.

The approach from the south, is probably the most attractive entry to Bampton past Mill Green unfortunately now a little marred by an unsympathetic development at Castle Fields. Opposite the development is Ham Court Farm which incorporates all that is left of the mediaeval Bampton Castle in a somewhat untidy surround. From the west, the road from Aston/Buckland enters the village past what was the old "Particular Methodist" Chapel (now incorporated into a private house) and the extensive and imposing Grange, largely reconstructed earlier this Century.

From the north (Witney, Brize Norton etc.) the approach to the centre passes down Broad Street past Bampton Manor and the New Road estate. The avenue of lime trees planted earlier this Century gives a very attractive appearance, although in winter the unattractive pollarding, to which the trees are from time to time subjected, is only too apparent.



CHURCH VIEW



THE DEANERY

On the opposite side of Broad Street, the red brick facades of the Victorian terraces, of a style more usually associated with railway towns, are the result of the Benfield estate improvements in the latter part of the last Century; the old rows of small and somewhat primitive cottages being enlarged and 'done up' with a red brick facade on the front, but with the old coursed stone work being allowed to remain at the back. Fashions in building materials have changed somewhat since then!

To the west of Broad Street is one of the most attractive parts of Bampton centred around the very fine Church. Substantial houses, open spaces, old terraces and a 17th Century School (now the library) are all in close proximity; happily little infilling has taken place and there is negligible through-traffic. The Church is particularly attractive and has survived the 1870's "restoration" remarkably well. A very special corner of Bampton indeed.

The focal point of the village is the Town Hall; formerly the fire station and now used by the West Oxfordshire Arts Association for meetings and exhibitions. At some stage (no doubt for some very good reason) it lost its clock to the neighbouring garage. Linking the main streets converging on the market place, there is a rambling network of back lanes and footpaths and the preservation of these, in the face of recent development pressures, has rightly been a priority for the Parish Council.



Turning now to the questionnaires, Bamptonians are clearly very concerned to keep the look and character of the old part of Bampton and to improve the tidiness everywhere. When asked if they thought the town was kept tidy, some 96% answered; one of the highest response rates to any question, and of those two to one felt that the town was kept tidy.

Of those who did not think the town was kept tidy (an appreciable 3%) litter generally accounted for half the complaints, with dog dirt next in line so to speak. The footpaths were singled out as being the area most at risk from dog dirt and litter, followed by the Market Square area, the War Memorial, Ham Court and Fox Close. The Committee understand, from a recent television programme, that some seven hundred tons of dog dirt are deposited in England every year (the mind recoils from working out how this figure was arrived at!) and certainly it would appear that the footpaths in Bampton receive their fair share of this annual tonnage. This is a source of real concern to a great many residents.

Another question concerned the Conservation Area. People were asked if there were any areas they wished to see preserved. 70% replied, and of them some 70% said they did wish areas to be preserved and, perhaps a little surprisingly, some 30% stated they did not.

Of those who did want general areas preserved, the following were the specified favourites : the whole of the conservation area 33%, all stone buildings 12%. Mill Green, the river banks and all open areas had their supporters but certainly the conservation area as a whole received the largest share of the vote.

Specific areas were identified by some:

- The Church and the surroundings 12%
- All the pubs (!) 4%
- The Town Hall and the Market Square 8%
- The Old Grammar School 8%
- The War Memorial 2%
- The large old houses 4%
- Bampton Castle 2%



The questionnaire also asked if residents would like more trees to be planted and if so where. Of the 76% who replied (a high response rate) 53% wanted more tree planting, 47% did not.

As regards where trees should be planted, the Forestry Commission will no doubt be delighted to know that "everywhere" was the favoured region; over a third of the respondents who were in favour of planting opting for this. Next most popular were the approaches to the village (15%), then the Market Square and New Road and after that the Churchyard, Bridge Street, the War Memorial area, Mill Green and the playing fields. Of note was some 5% who made specific reference to the threat to the hedgerows, and the need to replace these as necessary.

The final question on this section was whether people thought there were areas that could be improved upon. This had a relatively low response rate of 53%; slightly more than half identifying areas and the remainder clearly satisfied with their environment. The main target for popular brickbats was far and away the Market Square Garage. In fairness to the present proprietors it should be pointed out that its appearance has been radically improved by the replacement of some extremely tired and faded white weather boarding. After the garage, the Market Square generally and untidy streets were identified as areas which could be improved, as was Ham Court, the old school site and the Market Square lavatories.

The Committee are very pleased to see that the rundown old school site has, with the assistance of the Manpower Services Commission and generous County and District Council grants, been revived and rejuvenated as the Bampton Youth Centre, already housing the Youth Club, the Scouts and the Guides and will be available for hiring to the public (details in the Bampton directory).



Special mention should be made here of the survey carried out of the Primary School pupils. They showed a real concern for the quality of the environment in Bampton, greater in some instances than that shown in the main questionnaire, and on the following points are particularly noteworthy.

1. Litter: over two thirds thought that litter was a problem and there should be more litter bins.
2. Play Areas: these were clearly thought to be quite inadequate : nearly 90% wanted more, including greater use of the school playing field, construction of an adventure playground near the (new) Youth Centre, and also two thirds wanted provision for picnic areas ; the area around Tadpole Bridge being favoured.
3. 3 out of 4 thought the grass should be cut more regularly.
4. Public Toilets: there are in fact only two public toilets : a mens and a ladies in the Town Hall. 7 out of 10 wanted more, but the problem of lighting, cleaning and general supervision was fully accepted.

Bampton has clearly changed and is changing. There is an infusion of new houses, new population and new money. However accurate the Scientific and Historical Survey of the Oxford Region produced in 1954 may be on other matters, it was clearly no prophet when it stated that "no injection of new life is expected in the near future for the old market centres of Bampton, Burford, Charlbury and Deddington".



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FOOTPATHS

It is commonly believed that there are not many places to walk off the public highway around Bampton. The map shows that this is certainly not the case, but the condition of the paths varies enormously.

Bampton possess a substantial network of public rights of way (PRWs). These PRWs may be footpaths (not to be confused with pavements alongside roads) or bridleways. In this parish there are a total of 38 PRWs only one of which is a bridleway ("Gog Lane"). On footpaths there is only a right of way on foot, whilst a bridleway permits passage by horse and pedal cycle.

The footpaths within the town are well used whilst those which could be called fieldpaths are variously used. The amount of use of these rights of way appears to depend on how well delineated the route is: the easier they can be found the more they are used. By law [Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981] all PRW's must be signposted at their junction with a metalled road. In this parish there are only 8 such signposts. Away from the roads intermediate signposts (waymarks) would be a tremendous aid to route finding and prevent divergence from the path. Perhaps the biggest problem is when path surfaces are destroyed by ploughing. Where a route crosses a field a farmer may cultivate over a path providing it is followed by reinstatement. No known reinstatement occurs in this parish even though the Highway Authorities have had the power to do the job itself and send the bill to the farmer. If a path is obstructed by cultivation subsequent passage around the field or crop is not on a PRW and might be considered as trespass. There are a number of obstructions to passage, barbed wire, building etc. and also stiles/gates and bridges which need attention. Path surfaces vary from metalled through grass to ploughed and, in the winter especially, mud. All the Bampton PRW's are on a legal document, the "definitive map" up to date on October 1983. If a suitable map could be permanently displayed (perhaps on the town hall or near by) it would encourage use of our delightful parish footpaths and reduce trespass.

Public rights of way are of valuable educational use. A thorough path survey and subsequent published guide would be an aid to responsible use of the paths. Brize Norton have produced an illustrated pamphlet on Field Path Walks within their Parish for only 10p. Walking in the countryside is the most popular British pastime [National Opinion Poll]. Bampton has approximately 22 miles of public right of way; a valuable asset, and with some thought and minimal financial outlay the standard could be well improved and benefit everyone.

71% of inhabitants claim that they used the footpaths but 50% said that they are inadequately signposted and only 25% think they are passable. Comments on the conditions of the footpaths vary from "muddy" to "lots of long grass and nettles", but by far and away the most common complaint is about "dog dirt". The footpath from Mill Green or Cheyne Lane to Weald comes in for the most comments - it is apparently full of nettles, the grass uncut, dog fouled, full of glass and litter, in fact just under half the comments on footpaths were about this section. Other footpaths that were mentioned as being obstructed included the one to Rushy Lock and the footpath behind the cemetery. However, for one inhabitant there is something more than nettles and styles barring his way namely "a house", his claim being "Green Lane obstructed by house" - but where is Green Lane? Someone else complains of being told by a local farmer that the footpath had disappeared into the stream and "would he please get off his land".

It is a common complaint about Bampton that there are no decent walks, but for someone this was not always the case: "the farmers in the area have taken over the lovely walks we used to have with barbed wire etc.". Perhaps one of the most valid comments concerns the variety of devices that are designed to prevent cyclists using the footpaths, those same devices prevent prams and in some cases even pushchairs from using the paths - the barrier at Sandfords field being particularly impassable - whilst the one at Cheyne Lane is just negotiable but with difficulty: cyclists experience no difficulty at all in passing it without getting off.

In summary, the footpaths of Bampton are well used, but certainly in 1983 there were many complaints about their maintenance: the comments would seem to have as much validity in 1985.

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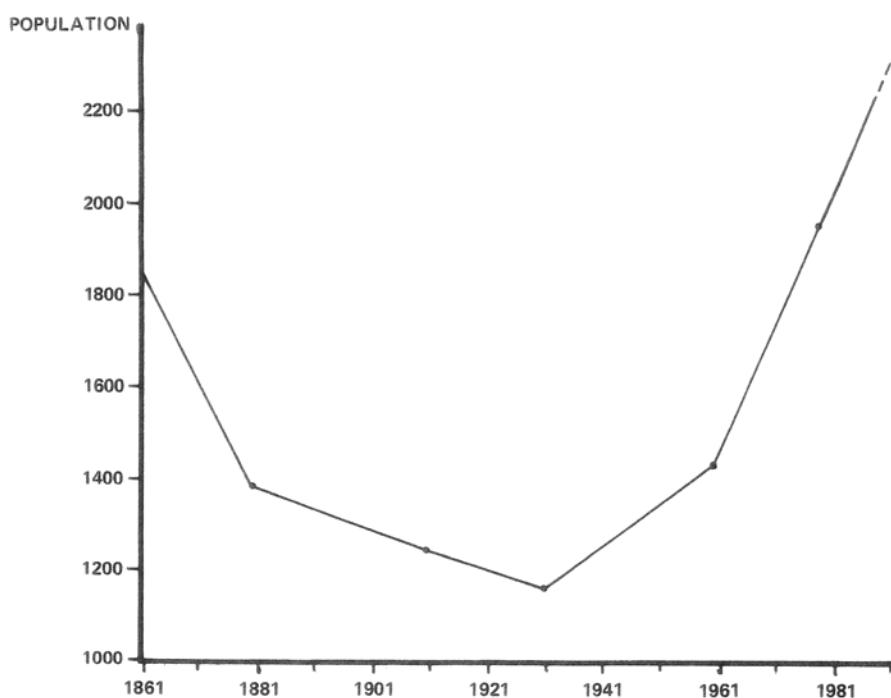
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POPULATION AND HOUSING

A look at the graph of population in Bampton (figures from the Census returns) shows a relatively high population in mid-Victorian times, then a subsequent steady decline until very recently and now the sudden swift growth.



The decline was a matter of history, reflecting national trends. The agricultural depression of the 1870's compelled a drift away from the countryside and in the middle years of this Century the attractions of better pay in the factories and towns such as Witney continued the trend.

If the decline of Bampton is of interest to historians its growth is a matter of concern to everyone. A close look at the planning authorities attitude, then at what is actually happening and finally the attitude of the residents as shown in their replies to the questionnaires, is revealing.

Looking first therefore at the Local Authority's attitude:

In the 1966 Village Plan land release and estate development was forecast to envisage some 150 further houses on "new" land (i.e. apart from infilling and rounding off). The Glebelands, The Pieces and Pocock's development by then had already been built or were in any event under way.

The Oxfordshire County Council structure plan (prepared 1974/5 and finally approved 1979) indicated that the Council was looking for limited growth in the rural areas. Housing development in West Oxfordshire (outside Witney) was to have a ceiling of 5650 new homes over the period 1976 to 1991.

In January 1982 the District Council published a consultation leaflet on new housing sites in rural areas to identify sites for future housing growth. The leaflet stated that bearing in mind the developments from 1976 already completed or anticipated, a further 1788 houses was to be the ceiling for new development in the rural areas. 80% of the ceiling figure was considered appropriate and in Bampton this meant that future development was to be limited to 80 houses in the New Road/Coalpit Lane area. It was not considered necessary to release the Aston Road site and the site between Broad Street and Bushy Row. Both were considered to be unlikely to be developed "in the foreseeable future".

In the Autumn of 1982 came the Oxfordshire County Council's structure plan review. Looking forward to 1996 the emphasis was to be on safeguarding the rural areas and concentrating development into the market towns, Witney, Didcot, Banbury and Bicester. The growth of small firms in villages and small towns was to be encouraged while at the same time keeping housing growth in line with "environmental and servicing capacity".

Then in February 1983 the District Council produced its draft report on the rural areas local plan which was substantially in line with the County Council approach. Confirming its January 1982 proposal to limit housing growth, the report stated in its introductory paragraph on housing:

"The impact of continuing new development in the rural areas gives rise to increasing concern about the conservation of this attractive part of the country"

The limit of 80 houses was repeated; if demand in fact exceeded this figure there was spare capacity in Witney.

As regards larger villages and small towns (including Bampton), some estate development was going to be necessary but in Bampton it was to be limited, as in January 1982, to the New Road/Coalpit Lane sites.

The Council gave its reasons.

"The Council is satisfied that the survey and subsequent consultation demonstrated that higher levels of growth than those proposed could only be achieved at the expense of undermining environmental and conservation objectives"

Such are the published views of the County Council and the District Council.

If we look at what has in fact occurred, the position does not appear so straightforward.

In 1981 there were approximately 600 houses in Bampton. If the 1966 village plan had been carried out there would have been an increase of 150; some 25%.

Prior to 1982 30 houses had in fact already been approved (the development at the rear of Mercury Close along to Coalpit Lane) and the Council as we have seen approved the principle of a further 80 on the adjoining New Road site: a reduction from 150 to 110.

The density of permitted development would appear to have gone up appreciably (from 30 to 45 houses on the Coalpit Lane site) but of particular note is that on the land specifically deleted as not being required for development some 22 sheltered housing units have now been approved; this is in substitution for an earlier approval for some 12 houses.

In 1983 the Council wanted a ceiling of 80 new estate development starts. Ignoring "one-off" private applications for individual houses and looking only at speculative developments there have been in fact some 173 constructions or approvals.

The table shows what has now been approved. (The bracketed name being that of the Developer).

Number of Houses in Current Developments

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------------------------|
| New Road | 70 | (Pye) |
| Coalpit Lane | 45 | (Leach) |
| Bushey Row | 22 | (Ivydean) |
| New Road | 14 | (W.O.D.C.) |
| The Beam | 12 | (Kibswell) |
| Mill Green | 6 | (Quartersbarn) |
| Deanery Farm | 4 | (Church Commissioners/Field) |
| Total | <u>153</u> | |

The Council having only two years ago emphasised an overall ceiling of 110 an increase of nearly 60% must indicate a very real change of attitude on the part of the powers that be in the Planning Department to Bampton's status and growth potential.

The Attitude Of The Residents

The questions on housing had a response rate of 70%; this was above average (but not exceptionally so). Of those 44% wanted more development and 56% wanted no more development. It should be borne in mind that the questionnaire was circulated when the Castle Fields Development had been built and Mill Green Close was just being started. Planning consent had been granted for the Pye and Leach Development but little building work had been carried out. The Beam, Bushey Row and further extra Council house developments, although no doubt already twinkles or perhaps gleams in their developers' eyes, had not in any way become public knowledge.

In any event on the then known development one thing the questionnaire did not show was any overwhelming feeling against the principle of further building. The Bampton junior survey (Primary School children) was similarly evenly split, with a slight majority (48 to 42) in favour of greater development.

In the main survey, strong feelings were felt by both sides and there was an exceptionally high number of specific comments and people giving specific reasons for their answers. Of those who wanted more development over 85% gave reasons while virtually all of those who did not want development similarly gave reasons.

Of those who were in favour, the reasons given included increased trade for local businesses, and a greater opportunity for first time buyers. There was a strong feeling that the prices of the older properties were by now too expensive for young people to buy and it was a question of either new houses being built or young people leaving the area.

Typical comments of those who favoured new development were as follows:

"If the young people go Bampton will go stale like Buckland has and lose its character".

"Housing is needed to keep our school going. If new housing doesn't appear within a year we shall end up with half a teacher".

"I feel the village will become a retirement area only in the future unless more Council housing or first time buyer priced housing is built".

"I feel the population (total 1,948) is enough but there is insufficient available housing for young couples either in the public or the private sector. If more houses are to be built the priority must be for first time buyers or Council houses. A young couple from the village getting married generally have to move elsewhere for accommodation".

Different areas were favoured for development (one Publican, not unnaturally, wanted any new development as near to his Public House as possible!) and all but a very small number of those in favour of increased development wanted both private and tenanted property.

Of those who did not want to see further development the common thread running through their replies was the fear that this would alter the character of Bampton for the worse.

Comments such as

"Bampton is a nice village; it won't be if more houses are built".

"Bampton is already quite large enough. Having chosen to live in Bampton and in the country I am not in favour of it becoming suburban in aspect".

"Big is not always better and neither is the new always an improvement on the old".

are typical. There was a general feeling that the planned estate developments had not been and would not be in harmony with traditional surroundings. Of concern also was the lack of local employment to offer new residents, and there was doubt that new developments would in fact increase local business.

Conclusion

The Council has done something of a "U" turn in its attitude to land release. Commercial pressures on land owners to sell and Developers to build as many houses as possible on a small area of land (up to 16 houses to the acre is quite common on lower priced estates) are enormous. Agricultural land in this area fetches around £2,500 per acre : the value with development consent increases up to £180,000 per acre.

This figure is going up all the time; a recent figure for the South East showed development land fetching £225,000 per acre. With these sort of figures the problem of course is keeping down the price of houses : only time will tell how many will go to first time buyers from Bampton.

PLANNING

Planning controls are administered by the District Council. The parish council is allowed to make representations and recommendations but has no power to compel the District Council to take notice of its views.

The centre of Bampton falls within a conservation area as shown on the plan; within this area, contrary to what many residents believe, there is in fact no automatic veto on development but the authorities have to pay particular attention to proposals so that any alteration or development blends with its neighbours. Few sections in the questionnaire aroused so much comment as planning matters.

Of the 60% who expressed an opinion on the operation of planning controls 2 out of 3 were dissatisfied, with comments such as:

"Infilling developments such as near Mill Green are appalling" and

"My main concern is that the character of the village is maintained and not spoilt by new housing estates on the outskirts of the village".

While many people had nothing to say on the modern developments and indeed as we have already seen approximately 50% approved in principle further development, when it came to general comments on the appearance of the new developments there was not one single comment in favour. The Castle Fields development had been completed and did not find favour. This respondent was typical:

"I wonder how Castle Fields new building got planning permission. They are extremely overpowering and tower over all the buildings in the locality."

Since the Castle Fields development we have seen the Mill Green development consisting of low buildings which do not "loom" as Castle Fields tends to and on the principle that infilling development should be as unobtrusive as possible one should no doubt be thankful for that. The loss however of much of the front wall is at the very least a pity, but the District Council appears to be quite reconciled to the breach of what the committee understood to be a condition of the original development consent.

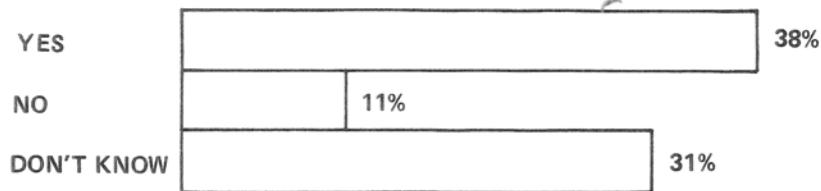
The planning authority appear unfortunately to be under the impression that Bampton is part of the Cotswolds and accordingly steep-pitched roofs are all the rage. Great expanses of artificial stonesfield slate, largely unbroken by any gables or dormer windows (whether because of planning requirements or the structural inadequacy of cheap roof construction we are not sure) are appearing, in the middle of the conservation area.

One such it would seem from the plans is the proposed new vicarage; which will be clearly visible through the gates of Deanery Farm, and cannot exactly improve the view of the Church. The same construction appears to be favoured for the substantial old people's development at the back of Bushey Row.



On the Conservation Area generally, of the 83% who answered nearly half did not know if they were in the area or not. The attached plan should assist, and the Committee expresses its appreciation to the District Council for allowing this plan to be reproduced here.

DO YOU LIVE IN THE CONSERVATION AREA ?



Greater concern by the planning authority to retain features such as old walls and existing skylines would help to increase the general awareness of the conservation area.

It goes far beyond the scope of this report to look at all the various planning consents in any detail. Suffice it to say that in the committee's opinion the planners do not appear to be anything like sufficiently concerned that in a Conservation Area such new housing as is allowed is designed, laid out and constructed of such materials as to be unobtrusive and sympathetic to the existing buildings. Concrete roof tiles, Dark stained window frames and "T block" walls do not blend with the existing buildings in either scale, design or appearance. The resident who wrote "Bampton is beautiful; one of the best villages in the Cotswolds. Very precious to me. Lets not spoil it and lets take care of it" would appear to say it all. Perhaps he or she should stand for the District Council.



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SHOPPING AND COMMERCIAL

Shopping facilities and commercial activities have declined steadily over the last 20 years. The High Street - the main street of shop in the 1950's - has only one shop left, The Fleur de Lys. 20 years ago nearly all the houses on either side were shops. Despite this decline the shopping facilities, when compared with many surrounding villages, are still extensive for a population of only two thousand. Shops undoubtedly survive and depend on their ability to draw customers from the surrounding villages as well as Bampton.

If there was (and indeed still is) a dark cloud on the small business horizon, it is the rates. The District Council encourages or discourages businesses by the rating levels, certainly it is felt that those in Bampton are not treated fairly. One local trader asked us specifically to say

"I have a loo and one tap: for that I have to pay £600 water rates. My general rates are over £2000 a year. It is making life very difficult."

He then muttered darkly about the big multiples in Witney exerting their rate-paying muscle to gain a greater share of the Bampton trade. As another trader said

"People only come here to get what they forgot to buy at Waitrose."

There are in fact over 30 shops and organisations selling goods or services, ranging from all the obvious shops in the centre to individual enterprises which include dressmakers, a potter, a publisher, a private taxi service, picture framing services and a carpet fitter to name a few. The variety and size of these enterprises is so great that it is dangerous to generalize about them, other than to say that their aim is survival - few prosper.

"In the ten years I have lived in Bampton three shops have disappeared, despite all the house building in The Pieces and Ampney Orchard. There is no certainty that another large housing estate will mean existing shops survive. If Bampton had grown gradually and ALL ROUND (not necessarily spoiling the entrance to the village!) newcomers would feel part of the village by being within easy walking distance and more likely to support existing shops and services".

As well as Bovington's greengrocery and fishmonger, we have since lost the bakery ("Constables" to all residents of more than five years standing), electrical shop (Lewis'), Mace's General Store, Angela John Antiques and Arthur Hill (antiques and bric-a-bac). To balance this, in the last four years, new shops have opened, namely a hardware shop (replacing the launderette), estate agents (Wilson's of Witney), Solicitors (Parker's), an Off-Licence (Butlers of Bampton), Hairdresser (Hair Design Studio) and children's clothing and gift shop (The Gift Box).

Do Bampton residents feel the shopping facilities are adequate? From the answers to the questionnaire the following figures emerge.

Are the Shopping Facilities Adequate?

| | Yes | No | Did not Answer |
|-------|-----|----|----------------|
| Men | 45 | 50 | 5 |
| Women | 40 | 38 | 22 |



SHOP & OFFICE:

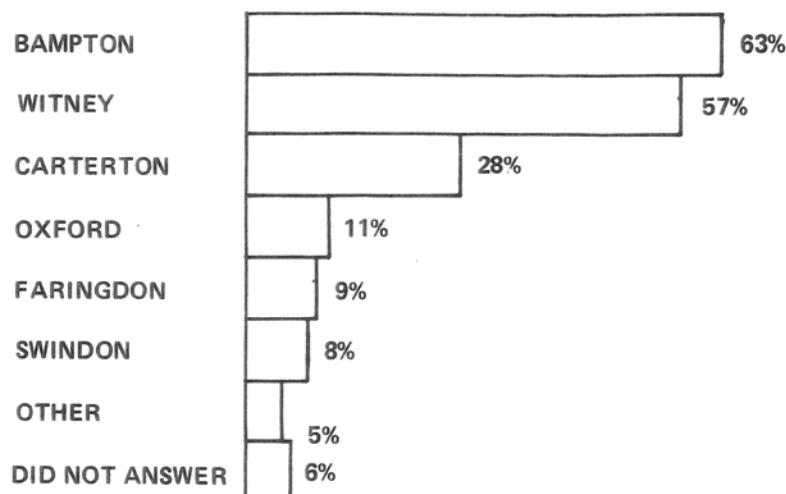
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Considering that women probably do most of the shopping, the men seem to have strong views.

Of greater significance to local trades is the high proportion of people who normally do their household shopping outside Bampton.

WHERE DO YOU NORMALLY DO YOUR HOUSEHOLD SHOPPING ?



Why go elsewhere for shopping?

| | % |
|------------------------------|----|
| Wider selection of goods | 56 |
| Cheaper | 49 |
| Special products | 25 |
| Nearer to place of work | 15 |
| For a change of scene | 12 |
| Other reasons | 5 |
| Did not answer this question | 18 |

Nearly as many shop in Witney (57%) as in Bampton (63%). The following comment is representative of many:

"The shopping facilities are declining rapidly. I'm sure the shopkeepers blame us for not using them, but really there are so many things you can't get in Bampton these days, i.e. fresh variety of fruit and veg., cheap aspirins, decent birthday cards, that if you're going out of Bampton to buy these things you might as well buy everything else too, therefore I feel that it is only by increasing their stock that the shops will increase their trade. I used to do all my shopping in Bampton, since Mr. Bovington died I have been going to Witney virtually every week".

If the shops could keep, say 10% of the spending power that goes to Witney and Carterton, their turnover would increase dramatically. Apart from Witney and Carterton the use of the other towns mentioned in the survey was primarily due to convenience of shop close to work.

The greater mobility of those under 60 is indicated by their ability to shop outside Bampton; elderly (63% of those in their 70's) are reliant on the local shops.

Of a given age group, where do they shop?

The drop of 54% for those over eighty is interesting.

And before the numerate reader says that the total is more than 100%, some used two modes of transport! From these statistics the most significant aspect is the few people who use public transport; a reflection, one suspects, of the few buses rather than the low demand for shopping in this way.

54% of people who answered where they did their normal household shopping, shopped in more than one place. And of these, as well as shopping in Bampton 39% shopped in Witney, 16% in Carterton and 10% in Oxford - a good indication of the relative popularity of the nearby shopping centres. There is a significant 18% who shop in Witney and who do not shop in Bampton.



What new type of shop would people like to see? 23% wanted a chemist, followed in popularity by a clothes/haberdashery/drapers (17%), greengrocer (13%), fresh fish shop (5%) and a wide variety of other (probably uneconomic and/or impractical) suggestions such as a betting shop, supermarket, sports shop and chinese takeaway.

More people shop outside the village because of the variety of goods obtainable elsewhere than because prices are lower in the supermarkets in Carterton and Witney; thus from the shopkeepers point of view, when deciding on what to stock, it seems they should go for a wider range of goods. The residents of Bampton will apparently pay.

The market stalls and mobile shops are used by a minority - 35% use them in some way, 53% not at all, 12% didn't answer.

It is not surprising that Bampton supports eight pubs as 51% of respondents said they regularly went to a public house, 15% occasionally, 29% did not go at all and 5% were not saying. Eating out is not so popular. Only 15% had had a meal in any public house or restaurant in the previous six months (52% had occasionally, 26% never and 6% did not answer).

To balance the views of the residents on the commercial life of the village, a brief survey was carried out by interviewing the owners or managers of 39 local businesses. There was a general feeling of guarded optimism - 42% felt that trade was increasing, 40% that it was static and only 18% that it was falling.

What did the owners feel attracted customers? The ease with which people can park near shops was the only consistently mentioned positive attraction. Most of the shopkeepers seemed to be in Bampton because it is "a nice place to live" - the business taking second place. The only other frequently occurring reason given for starting in business in Bampton was that the owners had found suitable premises.

What is the major drawback to trading in Bampton?

1. Too few local customers
2. Competition from big stores in Witney and Carterton
3. None - over half felt this!

Given that almost a half of those interviewed said that they did not advertise, the comment "too few local customers" is not surprising. As residents feel that the shops are expensive, is it not up to the shopkeepers to persuade them otherwise by advertising their prices - possibly a single broad sheet of adverts dropped through every door once a month. Some suggested that more market stalls would attract more people into Bampton and therefore to the shops. This however is an issue hotly debated by shopkeepers who sell produce also sold in the market.

The main attitude to new workshops/industrial premises is summed up by the person who said they wanted "any (workshops) in keeping with character of village and providing employment". 43% were in favour of more small industrial/craft workshops. The area behind College Farm and up towards Weald was suggested for this sort of development.

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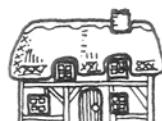
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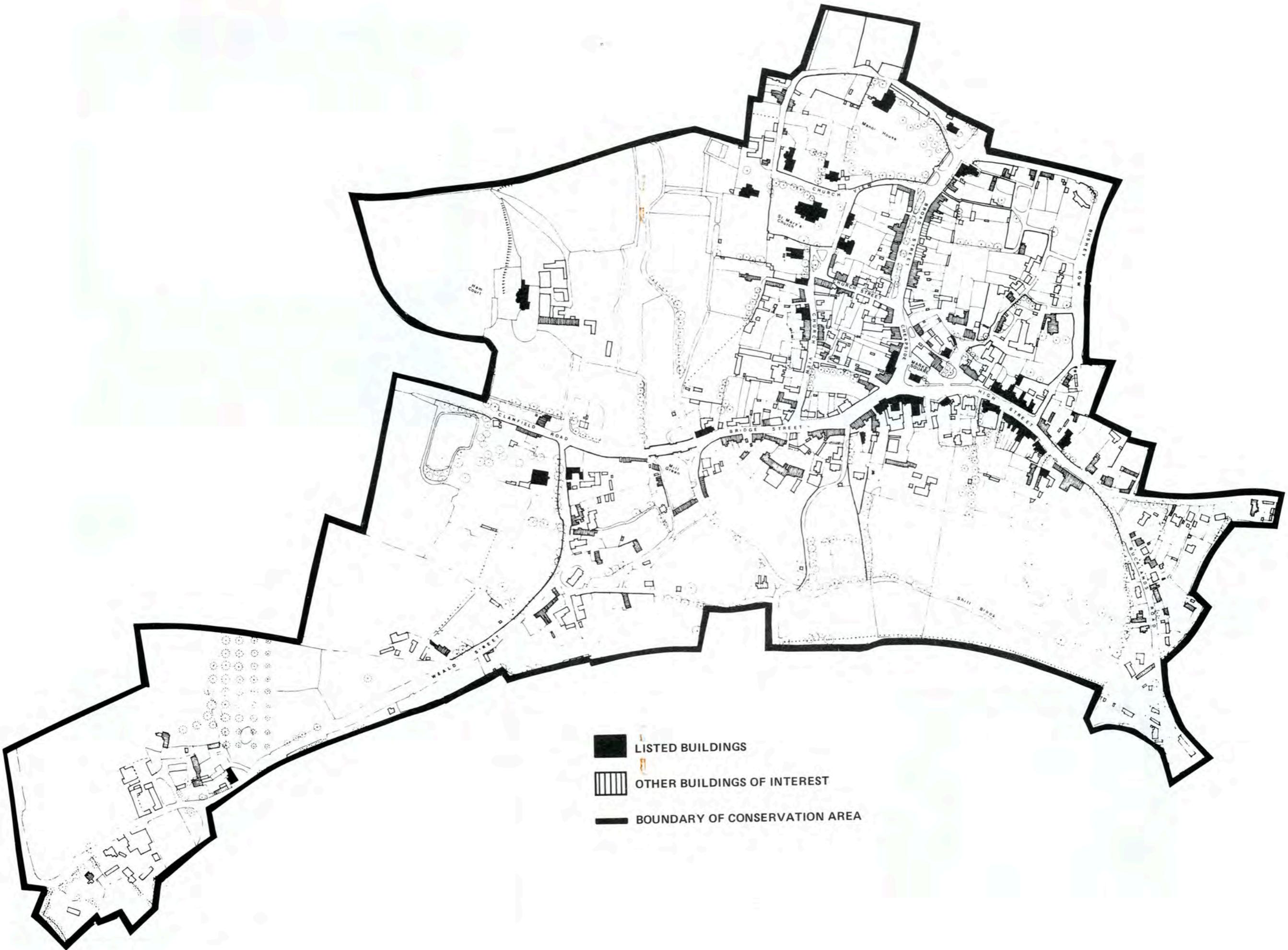


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EMPLOYMENT

This Section produced the surprising result that employment was not the urgent issue in Bampton that it appears to be nationally. Those who completed the questionnaire formed the following pattern:

Are you Employed

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Full-time | 41% |
| Self-employed | 5% |
| Part-time | 3% |
| Government Training Scheme | - |
| Retired | 15% |
| Full-time Education | 9% |
| Housewife | 17% |
| Unemployed | 0 |

These statistics contrast with the position shown by the 1981 census giving 7.5% males and 3.6% females as unemployed (a total of just over 50). Why the answers to the questionnaire showed such a contrast to this can only be guessed at. Perhaps the unemployed did not complete the questionnaire or did not wish to admit to being unemployed.

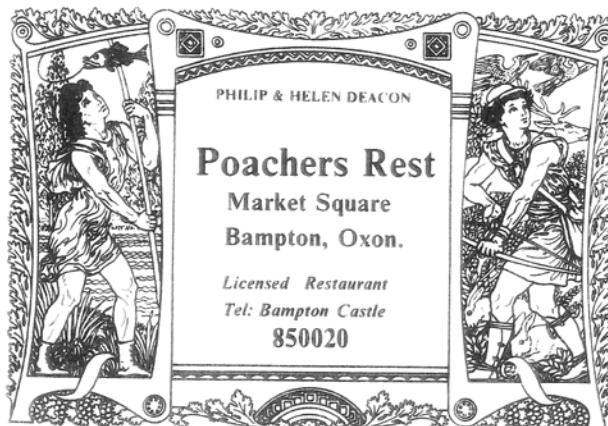
For interest the question "Do you employ anyone in Bampton?" produced the response, Yes 6% No 52%; And, "Do you employ anyone outside Bampton?" Yes 3%, No 52%.

The Department of Employment Office in Witney was not able to help with specific local statistics as they appear not to differentiate between Bampton and the surrounding area.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

As Bampton is at least six miles from Witney and Faringdon with their greater shopping facilities and at least sixteen miles from Oxford, Swindon, Abingdon and Wantage, residents are very dependant on their means of transport. At open Parish Council meetings the subject of the bus services, or rather the lack of them, is usually raised by somebody. As things stand at the moment Bampton is served by only one bus: the 469 going to Witney 4 times each day. 8.00am; 10.24; 13.45; 18.15; The return times are 13.00; 17.40; 19.31 and 19.55. There is also a private coach which goes to Oxford from Bampton on a Wednesday.

If destinations further afield are required connections can be made at Carterton and Faringdon but there is only limited transport to Carterton and none for Faringdon.



Answers to the question "Do you think that the bus service to and from Bampton are adequate?" showed that 47% thought that they were not, 25% said yes they were adequate, and 28% didn't answer the question. The attached table shows how these figures are broken down amongst the groups of people who use the buses.

Is the Bus Service Adequate?

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes | 23% |
| No | 47% |
| No answer | 30% |

I always use the bus (overall 4%)

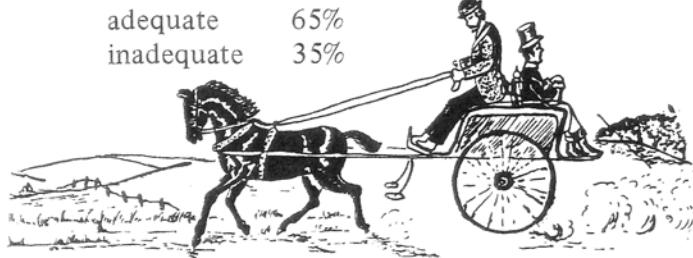
| | |
|------------|-----|
| adequate | 75% |
| inadequate | 25% |

I sometimes use the bus (overall 51%)

| | |
|------------|-----|
| adequate | 34% |
| inadequate | 66% |

I never use the bus (overall 45%)

| | |
|------------|-----|
| adequate | 65% |
| inadequate | 35% |



Perhaps most surprising is how so many of those who never use the bus service consider the service adequate! Of perhaps more significance is that of the 55% who use the buses (groups [a] and [b]) over 60% are not satisfied with the service provided.

Comments made by the 47% of dissatisfied customers were too many for a complete list but here are a few examples:

"I feel there is a strong need for a local return bus service either private or public. For although most people do drive and have their own cars today, there are still a large proportion of people who do not drive and are paralysed by living a restricted life because the only alternative to getting out of the village are: 1) relying on a friend for a lift - not always convenient - 2) Taxis - which are expensive".

"There are not nearly enough buses from Bampton to Witney or Oxford".

"The bus service to Witney, Faringdon, Oxford and Swindon is hopeless and there are no evening buses".

"The village has a very inadequate bus service especially at times for people going and returning from work".

"Apart from 4 buses to Witney each day Bampton has no other public transport. There is no bus to Faringdon which is ridiculous. Also the return buses to Bampton are at least 5 hours after you get to Witney".

On the subject of bus tokens for old age pensioners, the majority of people answering the question thought that the token system was adequate. The most important people to consider are the pensioners themselves and over half of these who answered were quite happy with the system.

At present there is no scheduled evening bus service (the last bus returns to Bampton from Witney at 19.55) and the appraisal revealed that there would not be a great demand if such a service were available. 35% said they would not use an evening bus. 38% didn't answer the question so one can assume that they didn't feel too strongly about it. However the 27% of people who said they would use an evening bus into Witney were quite happy to pay up to £1.50. The latest development here is that there is now a mini-bus service to and from Witney: details are in the Bampton Directory.

The general impression from the appraisal is that the bus services to and from Bampton are inadequate and the lengthy waiting times between arrival and departure is most inconvenient. Despite this dissatisfaction with the public transport there are, unfortunately, no plans to improve the bus service from Bampton. It is therefore just as well that 98% of Bampton household own at least one car.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Following on from public transport the questionnaire dealt with the question of traffic in the village and the parking problems. Pedestrians were asked whether they found the traffic difficult or dangerous. 81% replied; a high response rate and of them over half said they did. Typical comments were as follows:-

"Traffic travels too fast on the corners between Bridge Street and Broad Street. It is dangerous crossing the road by the Town Hall and the garage".

"Traffic generally, but especially heavy lorries, enter Bampton either end far too quickly paying little attention to speed limits. It is extremely dangerous especially on the corner of Broad Street near Yeats".

"It is dangerous for pedestrians when they are forced onto the road because cars are parked on the pavement. This is a real problem for mothers with prams and small children".

"Far too many heavy lorries use the Buckland Road as a short cut. This once had a weight restriction; when was it changed?"

"The heavy traffic (longer and larger lorries it would seem) using Buckland Road in and out of Bampton should be restricted. Apart from the potential damage to the very old Tadpole Bridge there is also risk of damage to the fabric of older houses along the road".

While Bampton does not have the traffic problems of Lechlade clearly the present situation is far from satisfactory.

As regards parking, the principle complaint was that there was never sufficient parking space in the Market Square area; the main culprit for this was the Market Square Garage, using the parking spaces which should be available to shoppers for their own purposes.

Traffic problems and the parking situation will obviously become no easier as Bampton increases in size with more cars and more demand for the limited parking available.

EDUCATION

This section of the questionnaire was clearly only answered by those for whom education plays a significant role in their daily lives, i.e. school children and parents of school aged children. Starting at the bottom of the educational ladder, the attitude to the Bampton Playgroup is very positive. The playgroup was established over 20 years ago and it is 7 years since it found its present home in the grounds of the primary school. It is funded completely on the small school "fees" charged (75p per child per day, with the Mother and Toddler Group being 40p), and fund raising exercises, such as stalls at various fairs, disco's etc.

Some typical comments in the playgroup section were:

"playgroup is excellent, very well run and good for the children"

"playgroup is good but too little variety for a child to remain in one room doing the same things for 2 years".

A common and general comment about pre-school facilities was that the playground on New Road does not have good play equipment for this age group: the slides, swings and roundabouts are "too big and too dangerous". Many people commented on the dog fouling in the playground.

Criticisms of the primary school indicated more the prejudices of the writers with respect to education nationally rather than being constructive about our own primary school, such as "Our present education system is pathetic".

However, there were many more positive comments about the primary school and they were more specific:

"school very well run and has good facilities with excellent staff."

"friendly atmosphere for both parents and children."

"we are very fortunate to have such a first class primary school."

At the time of the appraisal there were 110 children at the school which was the lowest number that there had been for a long time. Recent settlements of families in the village together with the new houses that are being built, are both causing increasing numbers at the school. However, the school teaching staff has recently been reduced by one because of the previous low numbers. The school is in the fortunate position of having a large site and good facilities: many of these facilities are due to the efforts of the P.T.A. which raises funds for various projects. However, less than 10% of the people who answered the education section of the questionnaire (and only 15% of the total questionnaires were answered in this area) stated that they took any part in the P.T.A. As with so many local organisations, a few people work very hard to raise money.

It is noticeable that there was hardly a single adverse comment about either of the Witney Secondary Schools - Henry Box or Wood Green. The typical comments was "Henry Box is very suited to the temperament of both our children: they both settled down easily and seemed to enjoy lessons". Rather gratifyingly for the secondary schools, the typical "customers" comments were "I was very happy at the primary school and at Henry Box", "I feel happy with the education I'm receiving". So that Burford doesn't feel missed out: "It is very good at Burford"! One comment which links in with the transport section was "it is iniquitous that transport is not provided for Bampton children to go to Wood Green". This was also said of Burford. Burford parents do, however, provide a bus and Wood Green parents operate a lift share rota.

As far as further and higher education is concerned, Bampton is fortunate in being able to benefit from the facilities offered by the West Oxfordshire Technical College in Witney where technical courses concerned with Agriculture, Engineering Science and Business Studies in addition to 'O' and 'A' level courses can be taken. A tutorial centre for the Open University is also available in Witney.

As a point of interest with respect to the costs of education, a recent analysis showed that it costs £681.00 per year to educate a primary school child and £924.00 per year for a secondary school child.

A third of the respondents to the questionnaire commented on the use of the primary school facilities outside normal teaching hours and would like to see further use of the tennis courts, swimming pool facilities and sports facilities generally (top of the list came the swimming pool facilities) together with supervision of such activities for children during holidays. There was in fact such a scheme but it had to be dropped because of, as ever, a lack of parents prepared to commit themselves to giving up time to supervise. Perhaps this could be reconsidered if more parents were prepared to help.

There was significant demand for using the facilities for adult educational purposes over an extremely wide range of subjects which included car maintenance, languages, upholstery, flower arranging, painting, keep fit (very popular), archery, cookery, dog training, judo, woodwork and horse training with stable management!

The demand would appear to be there for using the existing facilities more fully (classrooms, gym, playing field etc.) and in a way which can be used by all age ranges throughout the year. As a matter of interest this is believed to work extremely well in Cambridgeshire, as a "village college".

HEALTH CARE IN BAMPTON

We are very fortunate in having a Doctor's Surgery based in Bampton. There are four General Practitioners who divide their time between Bampton Surgery (Manor Cottage, Broad Street) and the Carterton Health Centre.

The Surgery also has a full time Nursing Sister, a Health Visitor, a District Midwife and five District Nurses who help with nursing care in patients homes.

As well as the regular morning and evening surgery at the Health Centre there is a child health clinic held three times a month on Thursday afternoons, providing consultations with the Doctor and Health Visitor. The usual infant and pre-school inoculations are given and babies can be weighed and their growth and development observed.

An Orthoptician visits the clinic several times a year to carry out routine eye tests on all three year olds.

The Health Visitor provides the link between the patient and other medical or community services.

Another less well known (perhaps not well advertised) medical service is the Chiropodist who comes to the village once a month. Appointments however have to be made via the Chiropody Headquarters at Rivermead Lodge, Abingdon Road, Oxford (Tel: 91-728191). This is in addition to the Chiropody clinic held at the Carterton Health Centre each Thursday.

Results of the questionnaire indicated that very largely Bampton residents are satisfied with the facilities offered them both through the general practice and in the wider community care.

To the question "Are you satisfied with the local health service?" 90% answered that they were. Comments such as

"We are very fortunate in that we have a mini clinic and a dispensary provided at the surgery".

"Service is excellent".

were typical of these.

Of the remaining 10% (approximately half of whom, it should be pointed out, had visited the Surgery more than twice in the previous twelve months) who were not satisfied, their criticisms were almost all levelled at the appointment system at the Surgery and the amount of time spent in the waiting room. Comments such as "Appointments don't seem to work unless you can forecast illness two days in advance", "When appointments are made you have to wait anything from one hour to two hours to see the Doctor" and even "The appointment system is laughable" were typical of the dissatisfied 10%.

The current trend away from home visits towards a Health Centre based practice is clearly shown from the questionnaire results: the table below showing the difference between those patients who visit the Surgery and those who receive home visits.

| Visits to the surgery in the last year | Received Home visits in the last year |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 18% | Not at all 79% |
| 21% | Once 11% |
| 11% | Twice 4% |
| 45% | More than twice 6% |

It should be emphasised that on the whole people did not appear to find this a problem; the person who complained that "You have to be dead to get a home visit" was not typical!

As regards the supportive services (Chiropodist, Home Help, District Nurse etc.) some 75% said that these were adequate. The lack of a Chemist and an Optician was noted as was also, surprisingly, a Chiropodist. It would be appropriate to mention at this stage that in that section of the appraisal which invited suggestions for additional shopping facilities a Chemist was far and away the most popular choice.

There is a dispensary at the Surgery, able to dispense drugs and medicines throughout surgery hours on a regular basis and at any other time on an emergency basis. If a Dispensing Chemist were to be set up in the village the Surgery Dispensary would not, contrary to popular belief, have to close but it would probably not be economically viable for the practice to keep it going, and many, especially the elderly would probably miss the convenience of receiving their prescriptions as soon as they have seen the doctor, and, of course, the benefit for all residents of an emergency service always being available in Bampton. Similarly a non-dispensing Chemist would probably not be practicable.

As regards hospitals, Bampton is within the Oxfordshire Area Health Authority and accordingly the vast majority of admissions are to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. It is outside the scope of this report to look at hospital services but one aspect which was dealt with in the questionnaire was the question of transport to and from hospital.

Of the 30% of patients who required hospital treatment within the last 12 months approximately one fifth stated specifically that they had had problems getting to and from hospital.

"Transport from Bampton is useless so I had to hire a car for hospital visits".

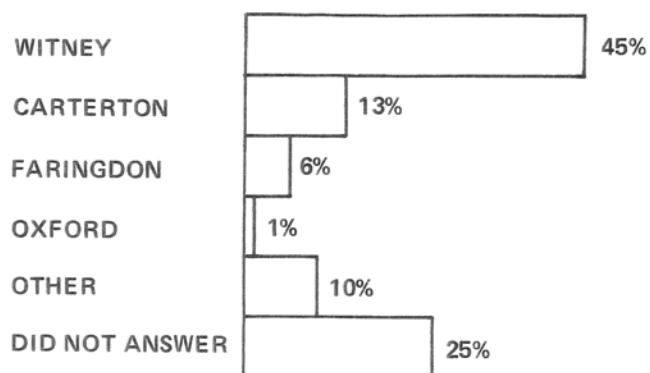
"I had problems finding transport to get to the Hospital".

It may not be widely known that the Red Cross provides a transport service but needless to say they are always short of drivers.

Dental Care

As regards dental care there is no practice in Bampton. The residents largely go to Witney as can be seen on the table.

WHERE DO YOU GO TO THE DENTIST ?



For visiting the dentist Bamptonians are probably no better and no worse than the rest of the country. There was no strong evidence of demand for a dental practice to be set up in Bampton.

Veterinary Services

Bampton does not boast a Veterinary service and it can be assumed from the answers to the appraisal that a Vet would not be overstretched if he practised in the village. One third of households have at least one pet and of these only 4% use a Vet's services regularly. The Vet patrons (if one can call them that) are clearly satisfied with the arrangements in Faringdon, Witney or Carterton as the requests for a local Veterinary service were negligible.

While not strictly a matter of health care, but following on from the Veterinary question, the questionnaire asked about pet ownership. Not surprisingly cats were the most popular pets followed closely by dogs. Approximately 2 in 7 households have either a cat or a dog and there is a miscellany of rabbits, tortoises, guinea pigs and hamsters.

We were a little disappointed on the analysis made of this section to find nothing exotic.

It is unfortunate for dog owners that there is so little open space in the village where dogs can be exercised etc. A theme that has already been mentioned and which came up again and again was the disgust felt by residents at the fouling of the pavements and footpaths by dogs. The same also goes for the recreation ground (where dogs are now prohibited) and even more so for the childrens playground where quite apart from the unpleasanliness of the soiling, there is the real factor of a health hazard. So perhaps this was the appropriate place to mention pets!



*Big Jim Perkins would shoe a horse,
whilst his wife would pull a pint
at the Horseshoe*

TOURISM

Looked at nationally, tourism is probably the fastest growing industry and in terms of employment is probably the most important. Certainly tourism-based industry is a greater employer of local labour than, for example, manufacturing or the new high-tech industries. For instance, when Metal Box started up in Witney of the six hundred employees, some five hundred were transferred from other areas and only a hundred new jobs were created for local employees.

A measure of the importance that central government attaches to the tourism industry is the fact that when the Conservative Government was returned in 1983, one of its first actions was to increase the grant to the English Tourist Board by 60%, giving the board some £8,000,000 to offer by way of grant aid for the encouragement of tourism based industries.

For the tourist, Bampton is very well situated as a centre for access to the Cotswolds and such varied attractions as the White Horse Hill at Uffington, Blenheim Palace at Woodstock and the magnificent Cistercian Tythe Barn at Great Coxwell.

Within Bampton itself the attractions are perhaps less spectacular although the Church, the largest in West Oxfordshire and dating back to Saxon times, certainly justifies mention here, as of course does the Whit-Monday Morris Dancing Festival which attracts Morris-Dancing enthusiasts from all over the country and teams even from America.

As regards tourist accommodation and general facilities in Bampton, it is not possible in this Appraisal to list the pubs, guest houses, restaurants and hotels; interested readers are referred to the Bampton directory and to local advertising. It was also felt that there should be more bed and breakfast facilities within the village.

In the questionnaire, Bamptonians on the whole showed themselves remarkably apathetic to tourism.

When asked if they would like to see steps taken to attract more tourists, 60% said they did not, 16% said they did while 24% did not know.

When asked if they derived any benefit from tourism, 81% said they did not and 7% said they did; the remaining 12% did not know.

The suggestions of those respondents who were in favour of encouraging tourism included starting craft shops, planting more flowers and generally keeping the streets tidy. One particular suggestion from the questionnaire was the setting-up of a local museum: on this some 32% wanted to: 27% did not and the remainder did not commit themselves. Only about 15% of the respondents felt they would be able to contribute to such a museum. It will be interesting to see whether the current festival, with its exhibition of old photographs and memorabilia of Bampton will give any impetus to this.



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Enquiries: Liz Banham - Bampton Castle 850019

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is organised in three levels - County, District and Parish. Bampton comes under the Oxfordshire County Council for Strategic Planning, Education, Fire, Police, Libraries, Social Services, Waste Disposal, Highways etc.; under West Oxfordshire District Council for Local Planning, Building Regulations, Environmental Health, Housing, Refuse Collection, Markets, Local Licensing, Rating, and Public Conveniences. Bampton Parish Council has responsibility, among other things for Street Lighting, the Cemetery, the Allotments, the Children's Playground, the Town Hall and is allowed to comment on local plans.

Its funds from the rates in 1985/86, at 3.5p. in the £, amount to £8,022. It meets monthly (second Wednesday, in the Town Hall) and its meetings are open to the public and the press. There is also a statutory annual Parish Meeting, which all may attend and vote at, but whose decisions are not binding on the Parish Council.

Regular matters of concern recently have included street cleaning, street lighting, and planning applications. The first two are constrained by limitations of finance; the Parish Council can express its views on planning matters but, as it is only too well aware, the District Council can ignore these views.

The answers to the questionnaire on local government do not evince any great interest in the Parish Council's performance. Only some 60% answered at all, and the majority of these did not think that the Council could "serve the community better". Those who did call for improvement differed widely in their requests, from a "junior committee" and "greater public involvement" to "more street lighting" and "helping children more".

Views on the effectiveness of the Parish Council varied between "they do a good job" to a "useless body" and "they would serve the community better by resigning" - a healthy breadth of opinion. However, the silence of the majority on this topic suggests that most people realise that the effectiveness of the Parish Council is severely limited by lack of money and power.

The questionnaire also asked whether respondents voted in local elections. 65% said they always or sometimes voted, 14% never - some of these being too young or having votes elsewhere.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Library is in the Old Grammar School, Church View. It is part of Oxfordshire County Libraries and it is open 14 hours a week. At the time of the questionnaire it was housed in one small room, into which was squeezed a stock of over four thousand books. There were plans to extend into a much larger room in the same building and this move took place at the beginning of 1984. Even in the former room it was a busy library, lending over 20,000 books a year (about 30 loans each hour of opening) as well as obtaining more than four hundred books a year from other libraries for special request. Additional books for the new premises were provided both from County Library Headquarters and by special purchase by the local librarian. The bookstock is now some 7,200 and borrowings have increased by more than 15% in the past year.

Nearly half the respondents to the questionnaire did not use the library. They were asked if they would use it if it were open longer hours and/or had more books, but few non-users said this would induce them to use it. From existing users there were some requests for evening and Saturday opening, more requests for a wider range of books, and one or two requests for the provision of records and video tapes, the last of which might of course encourage new users to use the library facilities.



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OPENING HOURS

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Admission to Exhibitions is Free

Phone Bampton Castle (0993) 850137
during opening hours.

THE POLICE IN BAMPTON

Policing Bampton is the responsibility of Thames Valley Police. There has been a resident Police Constable in the village since at least 1900, and in 1927 the present police house was built as a Police Station with a Sergeant in charge and the adjoining house was built for a constable. Now the police house is the residence for a PC whose area extends from Clanfield to Shifford, and the nearest full-time Police Station is in Witney. The PC's schedule means that he can spend only five days in four weeks in "his" area; for the rest of the time he is a member of a mobile team covering a much wider district.

In answer to the questionnaire about half the respondents thought the policing in Bampton to be adequate. Put another way, half were dissatisfied! In the Primary School survey, over two thirds wanted more police "presence", to cut down, in particular, vandalism and thefts.

On the main survey, while almost all thought it was an advantage to the village to have a resident PC, there was again concern that he did not spend longer in the village; typical comments being:

"Where is the policeman? You never see him"
and

"the PC may live in Bampton but he is hardly ever seen around".

Many commented that "foot or bicycle patrolling would be better able to deter crime" and "it is most important to have a policeman walking around Bampton". Specific complaints raised by several people concerned the prevalence of illegal parking (making life hazardous for pedestrians) and the flagrant breach of speed limits : the 30 mph limit in Broad Street in particular being a bad joke.

BAMPTON FIRE BRIGADE

Bampton Fire Brigade has a long and distinguished history; while still a parish responsibility - till 1948 - it often won prizes at the annual national competitions at the Crystal Palace.

It is now one of the "retained" fire stations of Oxfordshire County Council. (County fire services currently cost a 2p. rate). The nearest other stations - also retained - are at Witney, Burford and Faringdon. Bampton is in 'A' Division, with HQ at Banbury; County HQ is at Kidlington. The fire services at RAF Brize Norton are available off the base only when there is no flying; the County fire services are called in to help fight fires at RAF Brize Norton.

Bampton Fire Station has one pump and 12 "retained" firemen, under Sub-Officer T. Papworth. The Station is on 24 hour call, and is called out 120 to 150 times a year. Firemen must live and work within one mile of the Fire Station in New Road, and it would not be possible to maintain the service without the co-operation of local employers, who release firemen during working hours. Recruits must be aged between 18 and 30; they are required to have a minimum of 16 hours training before going out on a call. Fire drill is on Wednesday evenings.

There is no doubt that the inhabitants of Bampton are extremely glad that there is a Fire Station in the village. If another Station were established in the district - e.g. at Carterton - either Bampton or Burford would possibly have to be closed, for there is not the money for an additional Station.

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COME TO US FOR THAT PERSONAL SERVICE

PUBLIC SERVICES

During the winter of 1983/84 the Government utilities of South West Gas, Thames Water, Southern Electricity and British Telecom together with the West Oxfordshire District Council were contacted for their comments and views relevant to the topics raised in the questionnaire. As the replies were so detailed and helpful it has been thought useful to include the complete text of each letter as an appendix to this report. As regards the responses to the questionnaire:-

Mains Water

Generally there was little dissatisfaction with the taste or pressure of the mains water supply. However, a few people complained of the chemical taste and flouridation or as one respondent put it "a rather heavily chlorinated water".

Sewerage

This is obviously not a subject of great concern to people receiving a negligible response. This contrasts with the major concern that the Parish Council have expressed over many years as to the likely inability of the ageing sewer system to cope with the increased volume of sewerage arising from the new housing. Justification of the Parish Council's stance on this matter, however, was amply demonstrated when after torrential rains recently, sewerage seeped up through the manhole covers around Fox Close - an undoubtedly health hazard.

Road Surfaces

Most felt the road surfaces were average to poor. However, this has improved since 1983 and the roads have been partially re-surfaced following renewal of the gas mains and the upheaval at the time of the survey. Pavement surfaces on the other hand received a generally low rating: the elderly finding the pot holes and general disrepair particularly aggravating.

Refuse Collection

75% felt that the service was average to good but provision of skips obviously leaves a lot to be desired. The comment "always full within an hour of arriving" was often expressed: this has to be seen against the cost-constraints upon the provision of further skips, and some form of 'Murphy's Law' that decrees that all skips are filled within an hour of setting down.

Electricity and Gas

There was minimal expression of dissatisfaction with the supply of either electricity or gas to households. People appeared pleased that at least they have the choice of gas, unlike many other villages around. The question "Are you satisfied with the service from the Gas Board" elicited no horror stories.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Bampton has two charities/societies of its own. There is the Bampton Pumpkin Club, which raises money mainly by a May Street Fair and a Pumpkin Weigh-in (immortalised in a poem by Pam Ayres) to enable it to give every pensioner in Bampton a Christmas gift. Also there is the Society for Preservation of Ancient Junketing (SPAVERS) which raises money by a variety of local events, principally a Donkey Derby and a Ball, to provide a dinner and an outing for pensioners.

Many ancient charitable trusts, dating in some cases from the 16th Century were combined in 1972 into the Bampton Welfare Trust. Money is distributed by the Board of Trustees to relieve sudden distress or sickness, to help pay travelling expenses to visit relations in hospital, and to provide fuel and food for the sick.

The British Red Cross Society's local branch runs a fortnightly Day Centre at Brize Norton and also arranges a local chiropody clinic and a loan service on medical equipment. The Royal British Legion local branch and the local Women's Section raise funds for the work of the Legion by holding a Bazaar and through the sale of poppies in November. The Legion also provides local ex-service personnel and their families with help and advice when it is needed.

The League of Friends of Bradwell Grove, about 30 strong, raise money and provide their services for the work of Bradwell Grove Children's Hospital.

Many other national charitable societies have a local representative and many residents are involved giving or raising money to finance their operations, among them the N.S.P.C.C., R.N.L.I., R.N.I.B., National Children's Homes, Cancer Research, Dr. Barnardo's and many more.

In response to this barrage of charitable activities the residents of Bampton manage to maintain a fairly positive attitude. Of those who answered the question "Do you support a local charity by giving money or goods" 84% said they did, 71% said they attended fund raising activities whilst 34% said they actually gave time helping. 65% approved of house to house collections and 77% of flag days.

Many people did in fact feel that there were "too many" charities in Bampton but these were outweighed by those who felt that the charitable coverage was "on the whole very good". There was definitely a feeling that the charities are "good for the aged : not so good for the young, handicapped and lonely", but apart from this not many people were moved to comment on the charitable activities of the village.

THE CHURCH IN BAMPTON

There was already an ecclesiastical parish of Bampton, with a parish church, before the Norman Conquest. The present church building dates mostly from the 12th Century, the tower from earlier and the spire from about a hundred years later. In 1870 the roof was altered and a number of changes made to the interior.

For many centuries, before and after the Reformation, the parish had three vicars ("portionists") - a very unusual arrangement. In 1845 it was split into three parishes - Bampton, Aston and Lew - each with its own vicar. By 1976 they were reunited into one parish of Bampton with Clanfield, with one vicar for the whole.

There is normally one Sunday service at the parish church in the morning, with a congregation of about 50. There is also a Wednesday communion service and, in the summer, a monthly evening service combined with the Methodist Congregation.

The Church has a mixed choir of 15 members, a band of bell ringers who ring each Sunday, and a Sunday School with about 16 members who meet in the Town Hall. There is a Mother's Union with members from the whole parish which meets monthly.

There was a Calvinist Church in the town from about 1750 which in the 19th Century became Strict Baptist, one of a group of 5 congregations in the area. By 1948 the congregation had dispersed and the chapel building in Buckland Road was later converted into a dwelling house.

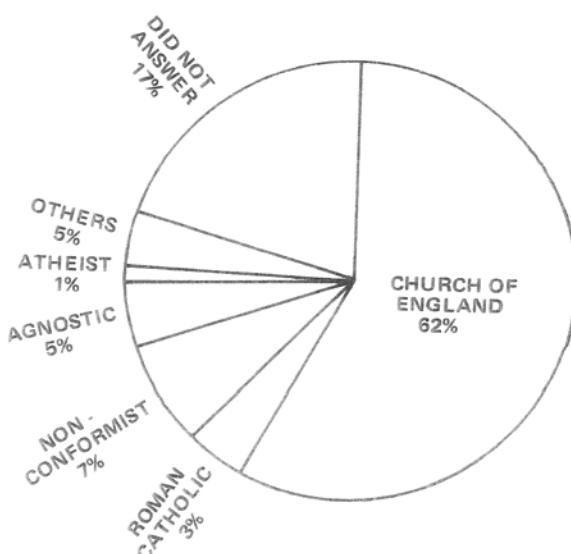
There has long been a Baptist Church in Bampton (1775). Lately it has become a much more informal family group. Members, about 20 of them, join for Sunday worship in the Cote Baptist Fellowship of Aston, which is charismatic in life style and evangelical in doctrine. A weekly house group meets in Bampton, and the Baptist Women's League meets fortnightly in the Bampton Chapel in the High Street.

The Methodist Church in Bridge Street was built in 1892. The church is part of the Witney and Faringdon Circuit. There is one Sunday service at 11 a.m. with a normal congregation of 13. There are also house meetings.

The Roman Catholic congregation have, since 1950, gathered variously in the Town Hall and the Old Grammar School. Now they worship each Sunday in the parish church (before the Church of England service) with a congregation of about 40. They also have Mass there on other festivals and a Monday Mass most weeks in a private house in Bampton. The congregation is part of the parish of St. Joseph's Carterton, and Bampton members also worship and work there.

The questionnaire quizzed the people of Bampton as to their religious affiliation, and the diagram below shows their answers.

WHAT RELIGION ARE YOU?



Thus 77% of the population profess a religious affiliation. This compares with 83% who had been baptised, 52% who were former Sunday School members and 8% who attended service regularly in Bampton. Despite the relatively low regular turn out at Sunday services 56% would like there to be a religious service when they die. 37% would like to be buried in Bampton. 35% would like to be cremated but a large number of people said that they hadn't made up their minds yet, obviously forgetful that "we know not the day nor the hour"!

SOURCES OF LOCAL INFORMATION

There are several sources of information in Bampton. The library has the widest range; it has copies of the Minutes of the Parish, District and County Councils, rail and bus timetables, and books and leaflets on very many subjects - business and trade, education, housing, employment, finance, health and safety, travel, leisure, and many others. The Post Office has the Register of Electors, DHSS and other official leaflets, local posters and notices, as well as specifically Post Office information. The Surgery has leaflets and information on many health and welfare topics, and the names and addresses of clinics and self-help groups. The Bampton Arts Centre (West Oxfordshire Arts Association) displays posters and leaflets about local, and not so local, artistic, musical and dramatic events.

The commonest and most rapid source of local news is of course word of mouth, however, for more formal information the Parish Council has two publications. The Bampton Directory first published in 1983 includes a ten-page listing of names and addresses of local, official and other organisations, names of officials and times of meetings where relevant - churches, schools, playgroups, Scouts, and more than twenty other groups and societies. A new edition has recently been distributed. The Parish Council has also published a Newsheet, two A4 pages printed, twice a year for three years. Both the Directory and the Newsheet are delivered free to every household, funded by advertising.

The appraisal questionnaire asked whether people would welcome the expansion of the Newsheet into a general Bampton newsletter. Well over half the respondents said they would, but the money (originally estimated at £30 to £100 a year) and the voluntary labour (10-20 days a quarter) that would be needed have not yet been found. Almost all respondents thought it would be a good thing to have an updated Parish Notice board, and most people thought it should be in the Market Square (but not exactly where the previous one was, outside the Men's lavatory!)

Commercial sources of local information include newspapers - Oxford Times, Witney Gazette, West Oxfordshire Standard (all weekly), Oxford Journal (free weekly) and Oxford Mail (daily) - and radio - Radio Oxford (BBC) and Radio WR (commercial, Swindon). The questionnaire asked which local papers were read. The Witney Gazette and the Oxford Times were by far the most often named, followed by the Oxford Mail, with the Oxford Journal and the Standard read much less frequently. Few respondents said they used local radio for news of local events.

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Mrs. Lawrence, Telephone: 850450
Mrs. Godden. Telephone: 841016

17 Pococks Close, Bampton
Fir Tree Cottage, Brize Norton

CONCLUSION

Despite a popular feeling that Bampton is a town for the elderly, the Appraisal figures show otherwise. The population spread in fact is as follows:

Population Spread

| | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 1. | 11-20 | 13.5% |
| 2. | 21-30 | 13.0% |
| 3. | 31-40 | 20.0% |
| 4. | 41-50 | 15.0% |
| 5. | 51-60 | 11.0% |
| 6. | 61-70 | 13.0% |
| 7. | 71-80 | 9.0% |
| 8. | 81-90 | 1.5% |
| 9. | 91- | 0.5% |

(3.5% didn't answer this question)

Of those who answered the questionnaire 53% were women, 44% were men and 3% were not prepared to commit themselves (!)

As regards those who were born in Bampton the breakdown is as follows:-

| | % of age group |
|-----------|----------------|
| Age 11-20 | 31.2% |
| 21-30 | 17.7% |
| 31-40 | 8.9% |
| 41-50 | 11.2% |
| 51-60 | 6.7% |
| 61-70 | 15.4% |
| 71-80 | 6.7% |

The question "why do you live in Bampton" provided a very enthusiastic response; typical comments were "I love Bampton; I wouldn't live anywhere else its such a great place" and "attractive village and nice house", and, of course, "married a Bampton girl".

Many of the older residents recall a time when they knew everyone in Bampton. Clearly those days have gone forever. Bampton has changed, is still changing and indeed is bound to change. No village or community has ever stood still; building and development is inevitable. It is the recent speed and scale of this development which concerns so many of the residents.



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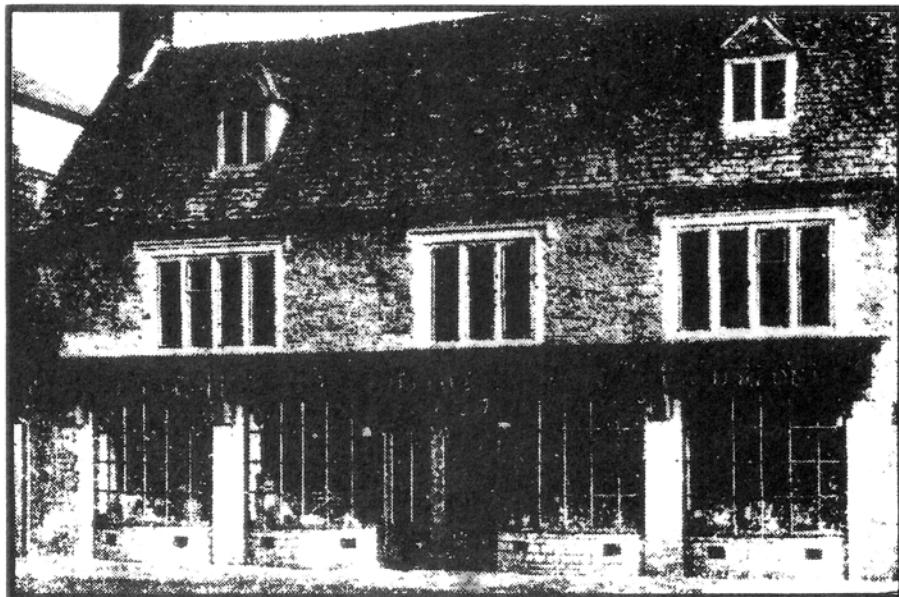
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- 3 BEDROOMED TOWN HOUSES with integral garages.
- 2 BEDROOMED SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES with integral garages.
- 2 BEDROOMED TOWN HOUSES with integral garages.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Telephone: Witney 3051

M. G. KNAPMAN

Chief Executive Clerk of the Council

Council Offices,

Woodgreen, Witney,

Oxon. OX8 6NB

Your Ref.

Our Ref. MGK/CRB/CAD

23 December, 1983

Dear

Thank you for your personal letter of the 11 December. I do, of course, agree with your comments on rate capping and hope that the day may yet be saved!

Secondly, the Environmental Health Officer has given me the following answers to your questions about services in Bampton :-

- 1) The refuse service is weekly.
- 2) We collect from the back door where the occupier is so elderly and/or infirm that they cannot put their own bin out, and do not have a fit person living with them.
- 3) Large items of domestic origin (not builders' materials, or garden refuse) are collected free of charge upon request, usually within a week.
- 4) The frequency of skips depends upon the overall allocation of funds by the District Council and the cost per emptying. The total number of emptyings is spread uniformly around the District, and Parish/Town Councils are asked to advise when and where they would like their particular allocation. They can supplement their allocation at their expense via our scheme.
- 5) The Parish Council freely chooses where the skips are sited, and it is left to them to publicise this. However, a record is kept in the Environmental Health Department.
- 6) The skip service is per emptying not per week. This has been the case since its inception in 1974 and before under the Rural District Councils. The Environmental Health Officer understands your point, but regrets the budget would not stretch to provision of skips for a whole week.
Parishes are free to "group" their allocation to particular days or weeks if they think this more useful.
- 7) Whenever the Environmental Health Department receives specific complaints about litter bins not being emptied, they investigate, and rectify where necessary.
- 8) The refuse collection service, including the bulky item service and skips for Bampton for 1983/84 is approximately £12,108 or £6.21 per head of population per year.

If telephoning ask for: Extension 209

telephone Kidlington 4311 (std code 086-75)

If telephoning or calling please ask for

Oxford District Office
1 Woodstock Road
Yarnton
Oxford
OX5 1PR

your reference

in any reply please quote

28th December 1983

Dear

Thank you for your letter of the 11th December 1983.

With regard to the questions you pose in your letter I hope that the following information will be of assistance:

1. Street Lighting

- a) During the current financial year the charge for installing an electrical service to a street lighting column has averaged around £262. The charge for installing the column varies according to the height and type of the column installed, but the scale of charges starts at £140.
- b) The maintenance charge for a street light is also variable according to the height of the column used and the type of lantern, and the electricity charge varies according to the type and wattage of the lamp, but as a very rough guide a figure of £20 per annum to cover both items is not unreasonable.

2. Emergency Service

- a) It is not possible for me to give the cost of one emergency team. As I suspect you are aware, the Board operates a 24 hour emergency service in support of which, on a rota basis, Engineers, Linesmen, Jointers and Electricians are available for immediate call-out.
- b) Our emergency service can be contacted by ringing our normal telephone number, i.e. Kidlington 4311 at any time in the 24 hour period. If a major supply emergency has been declared by the Board another number, Kidlington 4303, will also be available and will give direct access to the Emergency Information Centre which will have been set up and manned by our clerical and administrative staff.

3. Concessions

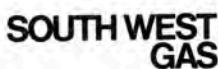
The Act of Parliament which nationalised the Electricity Supply Industry prohibits us from offering concessionary prices to any particular group of customers. However, we are aware that elderly people and others may from time to time encounter difficulties in paying their quarterly account, and we go to considerable lengths to assist such customers during periods of hardship. To assist in this we have a very close liaison with the Department of Health & Social Security. *

4. Connection Charges

The charge for connecting a domestic dwelling to the mains is £140, but this may be increased if exceptional costs are incurred. There is no charge for installing or removing or changing the electricity meter unless the changing of the meter is due to the existing meter having been damaged after installation.

I trust that the above information is of assistance to you, but if I can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



South West Gas
Area Office - North
Chapel Street
Gorse Hill
Swindon SN2 6DB
Telephone 0793 26288

13th February, 1984

Dear

I apologise for the delay in following up my letter of 12th January, 1984, in response to your enquiries.

I will deal firstly with your questions related to our emergency service. South West Gas and all other Regions of British Gas maintain a 24 hour, 365 day a year emergency service to deal with reports of gas leaks. Any person whether customer or not should be encouraged to report any suspected gas escape at once whether at home, at work or in the street. This service is provided by the use of standby arrangements with operatives available from home for out of hours periods and this service for Bampton would be part of the integrated cover provided for the whole of the Swindon District therefore I could not provide you with the cost you ask for.

The telephone number for our emergency service appears in the appropriate area Telephone Directory under GAS. In the case of Bampton the Oxford Telephone Directory notes that the numbers are Freephone 9000 or Swindon 30121 during and freephone 9000 or Bath 28383 outside of normal office hours.

Referring now to the questions related to charges, you did not ask but let me say that for any emergency call to attend a suspected gas leak there is no charge if the leak is subsequently found upstream of the meter and for leaks on customers' appliances, fittings or pipework the first 30 minutes attention is free of charge. Any time spent after the first 30 minutes in this latter case is charged at standard rates.

With regard to connecting new supplies as I am sure you will appreciate there are many different circumstances in which we may be asked to connect a new supply and I have taken the opportunity of enclosing a copy of our current leaflet 'Can I have a Gas Supply'. Only in the case of 2 and 3 in this leaflet can I give you an indication of cost since in other cases quotations have to be prepared taking account of the circumstances existing. In the case of an existing service requiring only a new meter control to be fitted our current standard charge is £20. The minimum charge for the first 5 metres of pipe inside the boundary of the property in the case 3 in the leaflet is currently £75. subject to the terms and conditions set out in our standard quotation form, a copy of which is also enclosed. The renewal of an existing 'dead' service (case 2 in the leaflet) would currently attract a charge of £75.00. Disconnections are normally non-chargeable but would clearly attract the above charges as appropriate for subsequent reinstatement.

Dealing now with the elderly and those in receipt of Social Security benefits we operate various schemes to ease the burden of paying gas bills, e.g. budget plan and savings stamps and these of course are available to all customers. When customers experience difficulties in paying their bills we ask that they contact us immediately when we listen sympathetically to the circumstances and help to decide how best to pay the account, either allowing an installment plan or liaising with Social Security where appropriate, to arrange a weekly budget scheme under their Direct Support Scheme.

I would draw to your attention the Standing Charge Rebate Scheme described in the enclosed leaflet which allows for a reduction on standard standing charges for small gas users.

Additionally for Senior Citizens (or registered handicapped) living alone we provide a free gas safety check service as described in the enclosed leaflet 'Helpful Services from the Gas people' together with additional aids for meters and appliances. We also provide free Home Service visits for the elderly as described in the attached leaflet 'We're Here to Help'.

I enclose two further leaflets which you may find helpful in your project. 'At home with gas' is a guide to all of the help and services offered by British Gas to all domestic customers. 'Don't be wasteful' is aimed at energy saving.

Finally, I enclose a copy of a leaflet produced by the South Western Gas Consumers' Council which covers the various points already mentioned but which also refers to assistance which might be available from the Social Security for people already on Supplementary Benefit.

I hope that I have provided you with sufficient information for your Committee's purposes in formulating its report but should you require clarification of any of this or additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ET



Business Systems Division

British Telecom Oxford
Telephone House
16 Paradise Street
OXFORD
OX1 1BA

Telephone number
National Oxford (0865) 812475
International + 44 865
Telex 83123 BT OF G
Giro a/c 214 0004

Your reference Our reference
BS35

30 December 1983

Dear

PUBLIC TELEPHONE SERVICE

Thank you for your letter of 11 December. I have dealt separately below with each of the queries that you have raised.

- 1 The annual cost of maintaining a public call box is approximately £2,100.
- 2 As British Telecom provides the kiosks initially there is a moral obligation on us to ensure that they remain in good repair, and are as well kept as is feasible. Any damage is therefore made good as soon as possible after it has been discovered.
- 3 With regard to this latter point, it is a rather inaccurate generalisation to assume that public telephone service is difficult to obtain in all rural areas. Although there are some villages which do not have kiosks, the majority of those for which the Oxford Telephone Area is responsible, particularly those which are of a reasonable size do have a public telephone.

British Telecom investigates every request that is made for the provision of a public telephone kiosk. Each case must be considered in the light of its own particular circumstances, as we do not usually provide a public telephone where it will not prove to be a viable proposition. The following parameters are used to evaluate each case:

- i. The location of existing payphones.
- ii. The percentage of households in the community that have a private telephone.
- iii. The anticipated usage of the proposed public telephone.

I hope that this information will be of use when you draft your report.

Yours sincerely

Telecommunications Superintendent

Thames Water
Western Division

Divisional Manager J.L. Dakers

Date 29th February, 1984

Mansart House,
62 Stert Street, Abingdon,
Oxon, OX14 3UQ

Telephone Abingdon (0235) 32222 Ext.

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Please reply to:

Dear

I refer to your letter in relation to the detailed appraisal of Bampton which is being carried out and the questions raised in respect of Thames Water.

Please find detailed below the answers to your questions:-

1. The current cost of water charged by meter is 19.17 pence per cubic metre (220 gallons).
2. The average domestic use is 120 litres per head per day.
3. The average ratio of domestic/industrial is approximately 75% Domestic 25% Industrial (Metered) for Western Division.
4. Charges for connecting water to properties vary depending on length and type of ground. The present cost for a 2 metre x 15 mm supply on a building site is £87.80.
5. The Division operate standby systems to cover emergency work, together with a 24 hour emergency service to deal with all emergency situations. The public may contact the emergency service by phoning one of the 24 hour emergency numbers as shown in the appropriate telephone directory.

Should you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me.

May I apologise for the delay in replying to your letter.

Yours faithfully,