



PARISH
PLAN

2025-29



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We are pleased to publish the Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Plan 2025-2029

The Parish Plan sets out a vision of how the community wants the local area to develop, and what it wishes to see conserved.

It builds on the previous 2019-2023 Parish Plan.

The parish council commissioned Locality UK (an organisation providing specialist advice, peer learning and resources, to create a better environment for communities to thrive) to survey residents within the parish on issues of local importance.

The Parish Plan is a plan of action to achieve this vision, but it does not reflect the views of any one individual or organisation; it reflects the views of our parish as a whole. The Parish Plan is linked to the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026, but sets out an achievable set of actions and tasks, designed to improve our parish in a meaningful way.

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Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council

Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council is responsible for maintaining a number of parish assets: Victory Field, Tom Green’s Field, the cemetery, allotments (Cheapside), Blythewood Nature Reserve, Cheapside play park, South Ascot Recreation Ground and a variety of open spaces.

Biennially, the parish council organises two unique and well attended events, the Sunninghill Street Fayre and the Party in the Park, collectively enhancing the community spirit. The parish council is able to provide grants to local charities and enhances the seasonal street scene with hanging baskets, flower containers, Remembrance poppies and Christmas lights.

The parish council also has a very active role in informing the planning processes and lobbying on a broad range of issues that affect our community.

Funding for parish council assets and activities largely comes out of the precept, approximately £400,000 pa, a tax that parish councils charge their local electors to meet their budget requirements. It is added to the council tax bill, which is issued to households by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

The precept is based on the number of properties in a parish that are liable to pay council tax, and the amount varies, according to the needs of the parish council.

In addition, the parish council receives funding from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), that may be used to build new infrastructure within the parish. Further details on the website: sunninghillandascotparishcouncil.co.uk



The parish of Sunninghill & Ascot

The parish encompasses the attractive villages of Cheapside, South Ascot, Sunninghill and the larger community of Ascot and North Ascot.

The area is surrounded by greenbelt land, and is in close proximity to Windsor Great Park, a royal park which for centuries was the private hunting ground of Windsor Castle.

It is alleged that Queen Anne, whilst out hunting in Windsor Forest, identified the heath at Ascot as suitable for racing, saying it was “ideal for horses to gallop at full stretch.” Following her discovery of the heath, the first race meeting was held in 1711,

and Ascot racecourse has since become famous around the world for its horse racing, and of course, Royal Ascot – the pinnacle of the summer social season.

The parish sits in the south-east corner of Berkshire. Today, around 13,000 people live in the parish of Sunninghill & Ascot, and there are about 5,000 households. Commuters are within easy reach of the M3 and M4, with a railway service provided by South Western Railway on the Reading to Waterloo line. The parish is approximately 15 miles from Heathrow airport and around 30 miles from central London.



Plan Purpose and Background

The purpose of parish plans is to look at what can be done to improve a community and its services, facilities and resources. A set of objectives and an accompanying action plan enables residents to have a say and to become involved in actively making changes for the better.

This current policy builds on the previous document, published for the period 2019-2023. We have updated and revised the Parish Plan in light of changes since the Covid pandemic of 2020, such as alterations in working patterns and the implementation and policies of new governments.

The Parish Plan 2025-2029 follows on from the general plans for our parish which are prepared and presented by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM).

A number of strategic documents have been issued by RBWM over the past four years, including the Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (BLP) and most recently, the Ascot Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD in particular seeks to provide detailed principles about how Ascot should develop and change in the years to come.

Policy QP1c of the BLP includes plans to rejuvenate the centre of Ascot, providing a vibrant place with a greatly improved high street and high-quality housing, but retaining the town's green and leafy character.

It is imperative that our parish council and the local community have their voice heard in these development proposals, and that our needs and aspirations are firmly at the heart of the new plans.

Background

Research was carried out by Locality UK, during spring and summer 2024. This was to establish what residents felt about living in the local area, their thoughts on the key issues and improvements they would like to see.

Overall, residents greatly valued living in the parish, seeing the area as friendly and with a good village and community feel:

“

Good access to London, slower pace of life, good green places – nice restaurants, hairdressers.

Sunninghill is particularly nice – village feel, community led, friendly.

Ascot, from a resident perspective, is functional; it is safe, it's got the basics.

Easy access to anywhere, decent high street, good primary and secondary schools.

”

- However, the report also highlighted a number of key points:
- Hidden poverty and socio-economic diversity mean the needs of all residents are not being met
 - A lack of activities, services and spaces for young people
 - A lack of facilities for young families, lone parents and older people
 - The absence of community spaces for meetings, activities, advice and information
 - High levels of traffic congestion and parking problems, especially in Sunninghill high street
 - Poor public transport options beyond the railway service
 - The extremely high housing costs and lack of affordable homes, particularly for first time buyers and young families.



Neighbourhood Plan

To work with our community to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of our Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 in managing development in accordance with community aspirations.

Actions

- A** Raise awareness of the value of our Neighbourhood Plan in constraining inappropriate development.
- B** Continue to interface proactively with the planners and developers to influence planning policies and ensure all developments deliver community aspirations, as set out in our Neighbourhood Plan.
- C** Engage with our community on all significant planning applications and major developments.
- D** Keep our community updated on all planning matters.
- E** Work with RBWM planners and Sunningdale Parish Council to revise the Neighbourhood Plan to bring it up to date and include new ideas. In particular, improving Ascot high street and its pedestrian areas.

Background

- Following the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2014, its policies became a formal part of RBWM's planning regulations and therefore carry full weight when deciding planning applications.
- The Neighbourhood Plan has had a genuine impact on preventing inappropriate development and ensuring that the character of our parish is preserved. A measure of this is that the success rate of appeals against refusals has reduced significantly.
- Our planning committee holds regular meetings with planners and makes representations on all key RBWM planning documents. These include the emerging Ascot Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (BLP) and other supplementary documents, aimed at ensuring the policies in our Neighbourhood Plan are properly reflected in both the RBWM's planning documents and their planning decisions.
- We also meet with developers, engage with their consultations, and participate in stakeholder meetings in an effort to ensure that developments meet community aspirations. Planning meeting minutes are published on our website.



Building Development and Infrastructure

To make Ascot a special place which retains its character, while becoming a vibrant and healthy community where people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy living, working and visiting.

Since our last Parish Plan there has been significant building. The largest project has been the rebuilt Heatherwood Hospital, which is now operating successfully, with houses being constructed on the old hospital site. There has also been new housing built on the Sunninghill gasworks site.

We will work closely with RBWM to maintain and enhance our infrastructure to resolve current problems and ensure it is able to absorb the significant new developments in and adjacent to, our parish. Using the CIL monies allocated to the parish council for infrastructure projects will partially address this issue of the growing population.

Actions

- A** Continue to actively engage with developers and RBWM planners, to ensure that the proposed Ascot Rejuvenation Project is delivered to a high standard and meets the Neighbourhood Plan objectives in line with the Prince's Foundation and the views expressed by residents in the 2024 Locality UK survey: "Revamp the high street as the overall look is still pretty shabby 1970s."
- B** Engage with the planners in their place making exercise covering the Ascot growth area and seek to ensure that the Ascot Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) delivers excellence in the built and natural environment, re-invigorates Ascot high street, and provides a focus for our community.
- C** The parish council was represented on the Ascot Rejuvenation stakeholder group, and we were involved in the consultation for the SPD. We will work with RBWM planners and councillors to highlight concerns and incorporate the views made by residents for a greatly improved town centre for Ascot. We hope to ensure that the correct balance is struck between improving parking provision, pedestrian facilities, vehicle congestion and active travel.
- D** We will continue to press RBWM for the original 'intent' laid down in the Neighbourhood Plan and will fight to stop Ascot from becoming a very large housing estate with no soul.
- E** Further details of the projects we hope to fund with CIL monies received through building developments can be found on page 12.

Background

- RBWM's adopted Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (BLP) stipulated that at least 720 new homes would be built in our parish including the Heatherwood Hospital site, the Shorts site, the Ascot Railway station car park and the Ascot Rejuvenation site (ref. 6.8.8, QP1c). Our parish council sees it as our key priority to ensure that these developments strike the right balance between the need for new retail and employment and building a place where people want to live and work.
- The previous Parish Plan 2019-2023 as well as our current Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 (pp. 55-59) set out our vision for the Ascot Rejuvenation Project: a new town centre for Ascot, with a pedestrian area, town square and many community facilities, including a community centre, cinema, arts space, cafés and bars, which would offer a "vibrant and prosperous daytime and evening economy".
- An increased population requires additional GP and medical services, plus schools and sports facilities. Funding that the parish council receives from its portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be used to fund infrastructure, broadly covering the following categories: roads and transport, flood defences, schools and educational facilities, medical provision, open spaces, sporting and recreational amenities.
- Of real concern are the plans submitted by landowners and the need for additional infrastructure to cope with a larger population, and to mitigate the effects of the loss of green belt land.
- The SPD for Ascot outlines some, but not all, of the infrastructure improvements required.



Parking and Transport

To work with RBWM to address the serious issues of traffic and parking problems in our parish and ensure that we are able to maintain our roads and footpaths, as well as looking at alternative forms of transport for the increased population.

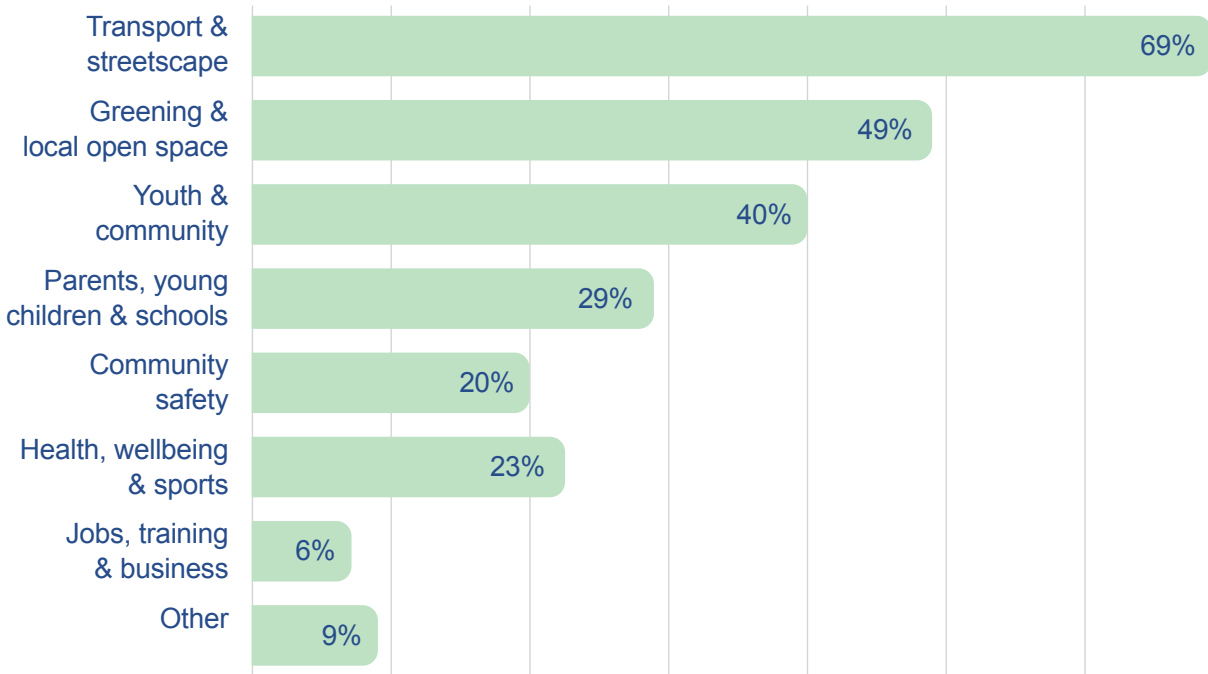
Actions

- A** We will work with RBWM and borough councillors (through consultation) to identify ways to mitigate both the current and projected traffic, congestion and parking issues in and around our high streets (and Sunninghill in particular). These could include parking options such as increased multistory or underground parking, to relieve parking pressure.
- B** We will continue to press RBWM to deliver those parking and traffic projects which fall within their responsibility, for the benefit of local residents.
- C** Work with RBWM and borough councillors to keep our roads and footpaths in a safe condition, improve the pedestrian areas of Ascot high street through the SPD and reduce obstructions to pavements. We will also hold RBWM to account for footpaths which they are not maintaining adequately.
- D** Look at options for new public transport, such as local hopper style bus services and enhanced cycle paths and routes in conjunction with the Ascot SPD, encouraging people to use their cars less.

Background

- The 2024 Locality UK survey and previous surveys have indicated that there is significant concern at the current high traffic levels, congestion and parking shortfall in our villages. Furthermore, the proposed new developments will add to these concerns.
- Traffic in Sunninghill is another major concern. There is a need to balance throughput against safety. We do not want to speed up traffic to the detriment of Sunninghill's village atmosphere and to that of pedestrians.
- We have been addressing these issues for some time and have introduced cycleways and 20mph speed limits and put forward other proposals for Sunninghill, but progress is slow.
- RBWM is considering parking alterations for Ascot (and Sunninghill) high streets, plus the introduction of 20 mph speed limits. Possible options the parish council wish to consider include two hour parking limits on both high streets, contributions towards parking wardens, partial pedestrianisation and the diversion of some traffic on the A329 around the north side of Ascot racecourse.
- We are very fortunate to live in a leafy and semi-rural area, with many footpaths and routes crisscrossing the parish. We are constantly monitoring the state of the footpaths and bridleways in our parish and continue to work with RBWM to address their maintenance issues, improving access for all.

Resident survey findings: *Priority improvements*



Parks, Open Spaces and Community Facilities



We are committed to enhancing the environmental sustainability of our parks and open spaces, while also providing new facilities where this doesn't damage their sensitive ecology or neighbouring amenities. We are also committed to providing additional community facilities that can be used by all local residents.

Actions

- A** Continue with the environmental and biodiversity enhancements at Blythewood and Tom Green's Field, by working with groups such as Wildlife in Ascot and utilising wildlife surveys as appropriate.
- B** Ongoing management and improvements of Blythewood, Victory Field, South Ascot Recreation Ground and Cheapside play park.
- C** Continue a full programme of works for Victory Field and South Ascot (through consultation) as already agreed, to improve facilities and replace the play equipment at both sites.
- D** We will continue to look into other areas where the parish council can directly help RBWM with the provision of community facilities and spaces for people to meet.
- E** We will continue to look at options to repurpose or set up community spaces, using CIL monies or other sources of funding, to improve this aspect of the local area.

Background

- Our local parks and playgrounds are highly valued by residents, but there is a need to improve our offerings (through consultation), particularly at Victory Field and South Ascot Recreation Ground.
- A rolling programme of maintenance for all our parks and open spaces will ensure that these sites remain available. Each year we agree enhancements to our parks and open spaces for inclusion in our annual budget. These are funded through the precept and delivered by the parish clerk.
- We work with local wildlife groups to enhance wildlife and biodiversity at our sites and follow our published parish council biodiversity policy, which can be viewed on our website.
- The 2024 Locality UK survey showed that there is a strong need for more and improved community spaces where people can meet, especially for young people and those from economically deprived backgrounds, whose needs are not being met. Young families and isolated older people also need to have spaces to come together.
- The parish council has stepped in to rescue services such as the Sunninghill Library, street flowers and Christmas lights which were previously funded by RBWM. Cordes Hall has received a grant from the parish council and the Picturehouse Theatre (formerly Novello) is recognised for CIL support.



Parish Council Services and Community Engagement

We are committed to providing a high quality service to our community and giving it a voice on all matters of importance to our parish.

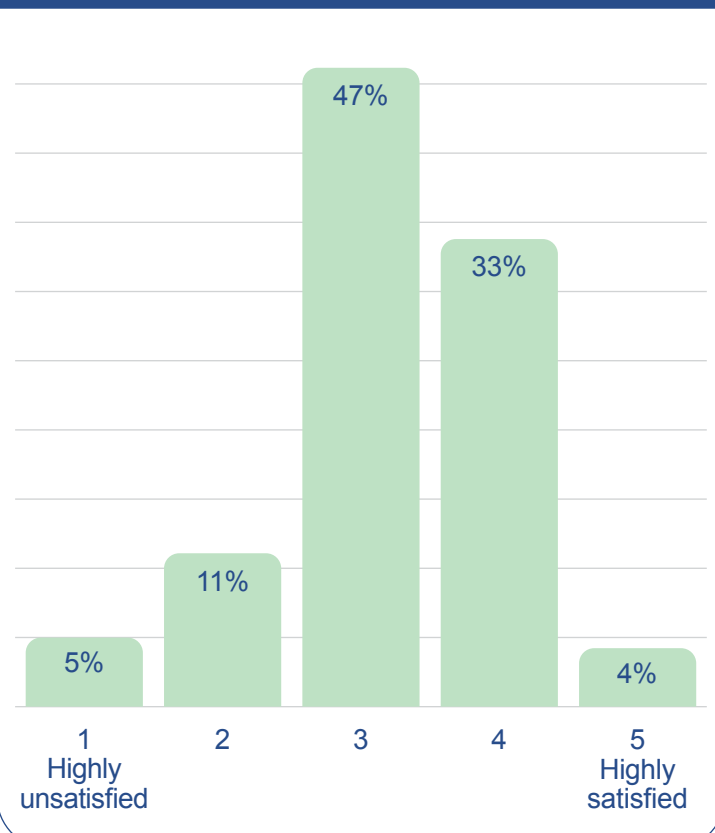
Actions

- A** Improve the delivery of our services. We will continue to work on our communications and address residents' concerns.
- B** Enhance our website to provide more information about our services and activities and allow us to consult our community on local topics.
- C** Engage more closely with all parts of our local community (including through social media) and be responsive to their concerns and aspirations.
- D** To hold the Annual Meeting of the Parish, to which all local residents are invited.

Background

- On average, residents were found to be satisfied with the work of the parish council, through the research carried out by Locality UK in 2024.
- We are already reaching out to local residents in more ways than before, through the use of email distribution lists and increased social media engagement.
- The Annual Meeting of the Parish is held in an easily accessible location and all parish residents are invited to attend, to give their views and have a say in how funds are spent.
- We are continuing to investigate how we can ensure our website provides more information on the parish council's role, activities, local events and other matters of interest to the community. We want to ensure that the parish council's website provides a platform for consulting with our community on matters of importance.

Resident survey findings:
Satisfaction with parish council



Climate Change

We will work with RBWM and our community to mitigate the impact of climate change in our parish in line with RBWM's target of zero emissions by 2050.

Actions

- A** Continue to deliver the planned biodiversity enhancements at Blythewood and Tom Green's Field.
- B** Complete the wildlife corridor surveys and prepare / implement a programme of enhancements where it is found necessary.
- C** Review the Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (BLP) policies on climate change mitigation and make representations where we consider these to be too weak to deliver RBWM's environmental target of zero emissions by 2050.
- D** Consult our community on what further actions we should sensibly take to reduce the carbon emissions in areas within our control or influence.
- E** Continue to object to developments that impact negatively on the biodiversity of our parish, particularly in relation to the proposed third runway at Heathrow. We use the Noise & Airspace Community Forum (NACF) to continue to raise our concerns over current aircraft noise levels affecting our parish.

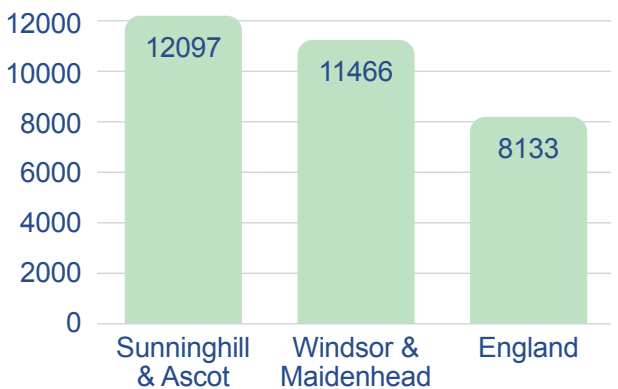
Background

We are all aware of the need to take urgent action towards achieving zero emissions. It is right that the parish council responds to this challenge and sets out its actions towards this target. As explained above, we are already taking steps to mitigate climate change, including the following:

- We have an ongoing programme to enhance the biodiversity of Blythewood and Tom Green's Field. Our Neighbourhood Plan identified a network of wildlife corridors and put protection measures in place. We have worked with Imperial College and Wildlife in Ascot to survey these corridors.
- We have successfully negotiated with RBWM to get tree preservation orders on many more trees. When a tree is felled, we request that it is replaced with two trees.
- When reviewing planning applications, we identify and object to any features we consider to be damaging to the environment.

- RBWM has an Environment and Climate Strategy 2020-2025 and also a section on Environmental Protection in the BLP, pp.130-13, which we use to inform our planning recommendations.
- The parish council has a published biodiversity policy on its website.

 Residents' Carbon Footprint (kg)



Further Actions and CIL Projects

We will continue to respond to changing circumstances and ongoing community feedback and refocus our objectives and actions where appropriate.

We will promote the application for funds for local projects and use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to make projects happen, to benefit the whole parish community.

Background

- As presented above we are committed to improving communications with our community. Over time new issues and concerns will inevitably arise and new ideas for improvements to our service, new community events, etc. will come forward.

As and when our parish council becomes aware of anything of importance to our parish, we will advise our community and seek feedback where appropriate.

- We have already committed funding for the following projects, using our share of CIL funds, eg. Royal Ascot Cricket Club for replacement of nets; Cordes Hall lighting; Ascot Locomotive Society refurbishment works; Sunningdale Scout hut rebuild.

- We would like to contribute funding the following projects, using CIL funds:

- Cemetery expansion
- A multi-purpose community centre
- Increased car parking facilities

Applications for funds

We welcome applications from the community in line with our processes. If you have any questions, please let us know by contacting us:

✉ enquiries@s-a-pc.com

☎ 01344 623480



Locality UK's Survey Findings: Summary

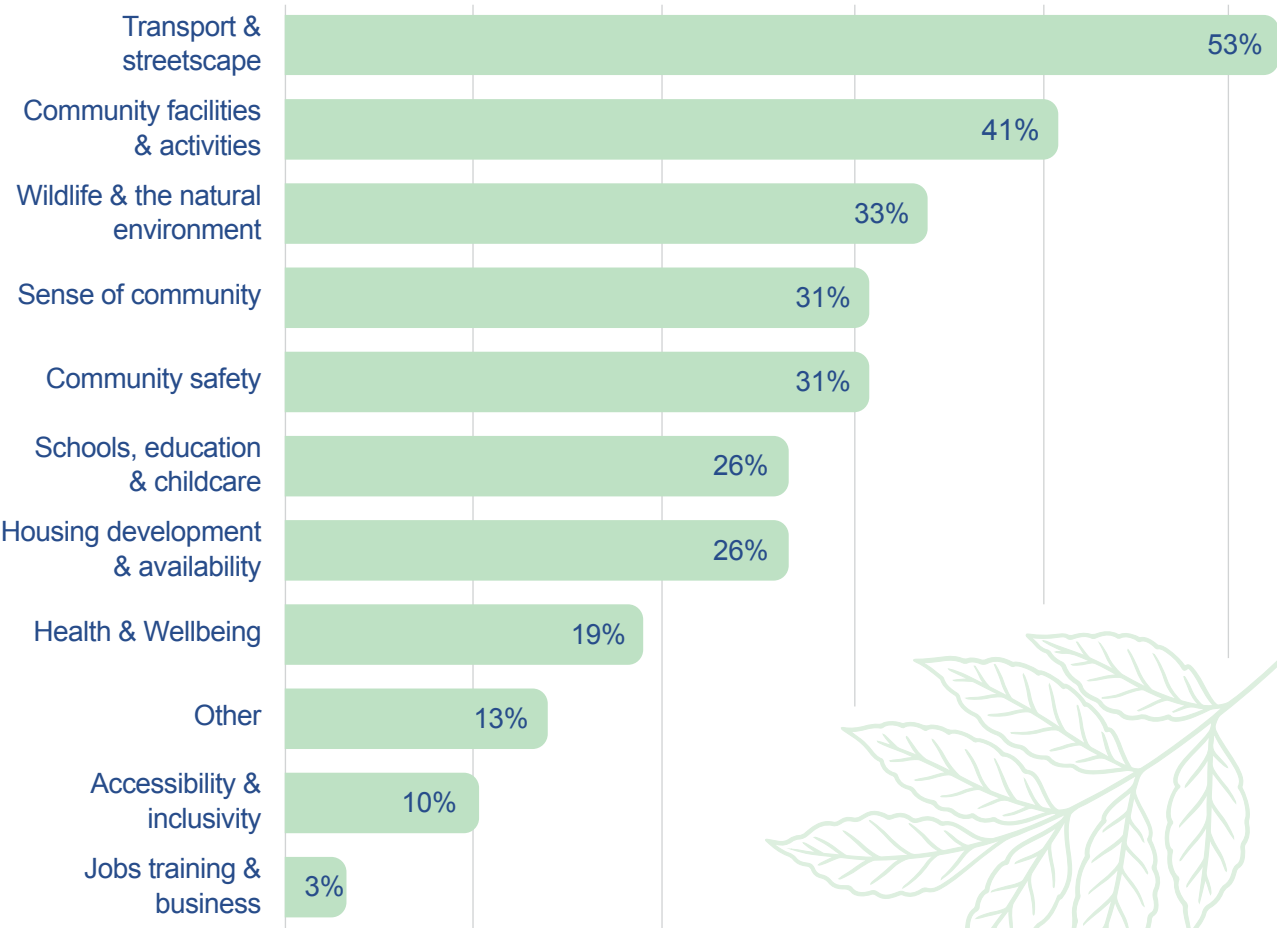


Resident survey findings: *Key local issues*

In the online survey, respondents were asked:

“From the following list, what do you consider the most important issues currently affecting the Sunninghill and Ascot community? [Pick the 3 most important.]”

Issues around **‘Transportation & streetscape’** were most commonly cited, followed by **‘Community facilities and activities’**, and **‘Wildlife and the natural environment’**.

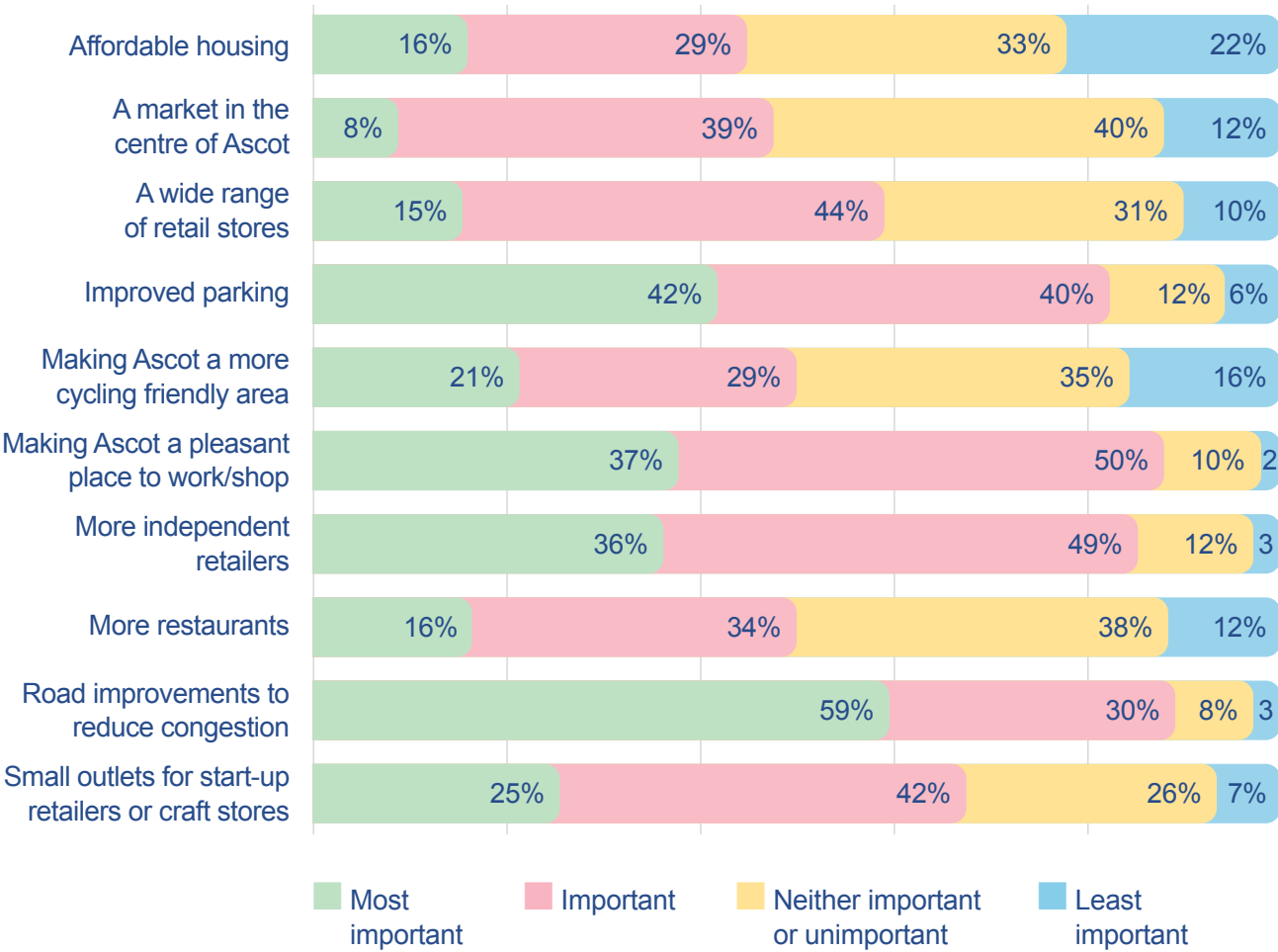


Resident survey findings: *Ascot rejuvenation / growth area*

In the online survey, residents were asked:

“From the following list, which aspects of the rejuvenation of Ascot are most important to you?”

The most important areas to residents were **Road improvements to reduce congestion**, **Improved parking** and **Making Ascot a more pleasant place to work and shop / More independent retailers**.





☎ 01344 623480

✉ enquiries@s-a-pc.com

🌐 sunninghillandascotparishcouncil.co.uk

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