

Ian Touzel – 6th June 2021

Good evening,

I am Chairman of Le Comité de la Commune Rurale de St Jean, an elected body set up by the Parish of St John to represent the Parish and Parishioners in the Island Plan Review process. Early in 2020 we conducted a survey of Parishioners and the results formed the basis of our engagement with the IPR Team and later a submission was made to the draft Island Plan 2021-2024. Copies of the survey overview and submission documents are attached.

Over the last 50 years St John has sought to provide various types of housing identified as necessary to maintain a sustainable Parish, generally via Parish led schemes in partnership with developers;

1. affordable housing for families,
2. sheltered housing for pensioners (Maison Le Vesconte administered by the Greenwood Trust) and
3. step-down housing to encourage “right-sizing” within the Parish

The survey has clearly demonstrated the continuing high level of support amongst Parishioners for Parish led developments of these types. The Parish, with the full support of the Comité, identified suitable sites within the Parish for all 3 categories which were submitted in the “call for sites”. We were extremely surprised when none of these were included in the draft Bridging Island Plan. Field 525 (a playing field and 14 affordable houses next to the Primary School) had already been through a planning inquiry and been approved by the Minister before the draft Bridging Island Plan was published, and we understand its inclusion is purely for GHE’s administrative purposes.

The Parish has maintained lists of current Parishioners and others with close links to the Parish who have registered their interest for the above types of housing. Currently there are over 170 on the list for affordable housing, approximately 40 for sheltered housing and 20 for step-down. Unfortunately, there appears to be a perception within GHE that the housing gateway is the only source of reliable information about demand for affordable housing. No affordable homes have ever been allocated in St John via the housing gateway, therefore it is entirely logical that persons with connections to the Parish who want to live in the Parish are extremely unlikely to register on the housing gateway. The Parish is the best placed organisation to understand and record this demand.

Another issue that affects the supply of housing is the question of where additional higher priced dwellings should be created. These are the dwellings that some of the affordable housing occupants may eventually go on to buy, thereby freeing-up their affordable homes for others. A specific survey question asked about this issue and there is most support for development of redundant glasshouse sites and agricultural buildings in, or adjacent to, existing built up areas, followed by dividing up large existing dwellings into multiple units and then building additional dwellings in the gardens of existing dwellings. A particular issue was identified with planning policies acting against the sub-division of large houses with outbuildings that are on the planning register. This adds to the under-use of existing housing assets and limits the “step-down” options of the often elderly owners, therefore this is an area that would ideally be reformed with a presumption in favour of sub-division to maximise use of these assets.

I am willing to meet with the Scrutiny Panel to expand on the survey findings and other issues, if this would be of assistance.

Kind regards

**Ian Touzel**

**Chairman**

**Le Comité Rurale de la Commune de St Jean**

**Submission By**

**Le Comité de la Commune Rurale de St Jean**  
(on behalf of the Parish of St John)

To

**The Government of Jersey**

On

**The (Draft) Jersey Island Plan 2022 - 2024**

**Background**

As part of an island-wide public consultation exercise to approve a new Island Plan (2021 to 2030), Le Comité de la Commune Rurale de St Jean, (the Comité Rurale) was elected to ascertain the opinions of the parishioners of St John and produce a report on behalf of the Parish to the Government of Jersey.

At the beginning of the year, 1,237 questionnaires were delivered by the Post Office to all dwellings across the Parish. 218 completed questionnaires were received. In March Covid 19 intervened and disrupted the Island consultation, the Parish's response and the new Island Plan legislation process.

Seven months later the Comité Rurale is now in a position to formally reply to the Government's original Island Plan consultation invitation, and its recently published document "Preferred Strategy Report Island Plan Review – Technical Evidence Base".

The Comité Rurale has been able to compare this year's findings with those from its last survey carried out in 2010 (for the current Island Plan).

While the general recognition and support for sustainable housing, economic and community development remained broadly similar over the past decade, the growing awareness of the need for a global response to sustainability and climate change initiatives - right down to a Parish and an individual - now underpins parishioners' views on most subjects.

**8th November 2020**

*(References in italics refer to the "Island Plan Strategic issues and options" summary consultation document ("IPSIO"), the Preferred Strategy Report Island Plan Review – Technical Evidence Base, Appendix 2 ("PSR"), and other Government of Jersey policy documents.)*

## 2020 Survey Headlines

- Four out of five accept the need for more housing development in St John over the next ten years.
- There is substantial support for creation of new affordable purchase and over 55's dwellings.
- The Parish should play a leading role in these developments.
- The rural nature of the Parish countryside must be retained with the creation and maintenance of open spaces and over 90% of parishioners support the planting of more trees.

In general, the opinions of St John parishioners are contrary to the views of some politicians who like to paint those in the countryside as overly protective and obstructive of an Island-wide approach.

**Housing** (*IPSIO Spatial strategy Question 2 - options 3-6, PSR Spatial Strategy, Planning for community needs, Placemaking, Responding to climate change, Protecting and promoting island identity*)

A clear majority (81%) accept the need for more housing in the Parish with just over half (53%) supporting the development of up to 100 new dwellings.

A large majority of responses (83%) want to see the Constable and Municipality have influence to agree or reject development in the Parish.

There is wide support for the Parish to undertake projects to address the housing needs of affordable purchase/first-time buyers (78%) and the over 55's (80%) but not nearly so much for social rental dwellings (47%).

The question of where additional higher priced dwellings should be created was also raised. There is most support for development of redundant glasshouse sites and agricultural buildings in, or adjacent to, existing built up areas, followed by dividing up large existing dwellings into multiple units and then building additional dwellings in the gardens of existing dwellings.

### Call for development sites

It has been reported that over 700 sites have been put forward across the Island for possible development or protection. The Comité Rurale and the Parish have not been informed of any in St John, with the exception of 3 private individuals who wish to build within the gardens of existing dwellings and a proposal from Constable Chris Taylor for Parish projects to provide sheltered housing, affordable homes for the elderly and first-time buyers, a memorial garden and car park and a Liberation commemorative wood.

## **A sustainable Parish economy** (*PSR – A productive diverse and sustainable economy*)

There is a distinct disconnect between the support expressed by parishioners for local community retail outlets and services and the actual use of them. This is clearly a matter to be addressed by the Government of Jersey and business owners, and not by the Comité Rurale.

## **Traffic, cycling, pedestrians and parking** (*PSR - Responding to climate change, Planning for community needs; Sustainable Transport Policy 2020*)

The views of St John parishioners on traffic are evenly split – depending on where the respondents live - 48% support more traffic calming measures and 47% are against.

However, the respondents want to see the introduction of pedestrian crossings near shops and schools (89%) methods to improve cycle and walking safety (88%), extension of pavements and footpaths (75%) and safer bus stops (67%).

Only one in ten people reported public parking as being “very problematic” with the majority (54%) feeling the issue is either not very problematic or not problematic at all. Comments relating to problems typically referred to school pick up and drop off times and funerals.

## **Conservation and Open Spaces** (*IPSIO – Question 25, PSR - Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and the natural environment, Protecting and promoting island identity*)

It is not surprising that in a rural Parish the people of St John show strong support for the creation and maintenance of landscaped areas (86% - very important or important) and the planting of more trees (90%).

Nearly a third of respondents do not know where the area currently designated as a Coastal National Park is in the Parish and a large majority (86%) support the development of offshore wind and tidal renewable energy schemes.

## **Comments**

Respondents provided a large quantity of unstructured input via comments, however it is clear from the comments that there are key recurring themes relating to quality of life and personal safety;

- Traffic volumes and speeding
- Extension of pavement and footpath networks and more bus shelters
- Bus service frequency
- Extension of mains drains and mains water provision
- Extension of cycling and walking networks
- Issues with light pollution and concerns about increasing levels in a rural parish, but also support for more street lighting in some central areas.

*(PSR- Placemaking, Planning for Community Needs, Responding to climate change; Sustainable Transport Policy 2020)*

# Proposals

## **Spatial Strategy - Housing & Future Development Sites**

### **Affordable Purchase and Over 55's dwellings**

The survey confirmed continuing support for the Constable and Municipality to have influence to accept or reject development in the Parish for these categories and to take a lead role in their provision, which should be formally acknowledged in the Island Plan.

### **Higher priced dwellings**

The Island Plan Review and previous reports and census data have identified that the island has a substantial and underoccupied existing housing stock, and also unfulfilled demand for all types of housing. The significant mismatch between current occupancy and potential capacity is a product of many factors including current planning and housing policies, and regulations that deter potential landlords from offering rental accommodation.

The preference of St John parishioners would be to prioritise the use of existing “built on” sites to provide the higher priced dwellings and this would require amendments to the existing planning framework to promote and encourage use of the following development sites even when listed on the register, ahead of green zone fields;

- Redundant glasshouse sites and agricultural buildings in, or adjacent to, existing built up areas,
- Large single dwellings that can be divided up to create multiple units,
- Existing dwellings with gardens that can accommodate additional dwellings.

## **Creating sustainable Communities**

The Constable and Municipality has a key role in improving the quality of life and personal safety of its parishioners, but has limited capability to achieve significant environmental transformation without the support of all Government Departments. In particular, IHE and the Island Plan should formally acknowledge the Government's commitment to;

- 1 Maintenance and creation of open green spaces and tree planting
- 2 Extension of mains drains and water provision
- 3 The creation of joined up networks to encourage cycling and walking across all Parishes and the entire island
- 4 Improving pedestrian safety via measures including safe bus stops, pedestrian crossings and extending networks of pavements and footpaths.

## **Appendix A**

### Parish Description

#### **1. Planning Background**

##### **1.1 Island Plan Review Context**

The Parish has actively participated in previous Island Plan Reviews and the current Comité Rurale was elected with a specific remit to engage with and to ascertain the opinions of the parishioners of St John and produce a submission on behalf of the Parish to the Government of Jersey.

##### **1.2 Village Description and History**

The Village of St John is located in the north of the Island. It has grown from its original centre by the Parish Church which is situated near the junction of the main east – west Island route and the north – south route from the north coast to St Helier, and has now spread eastwards. The old centre contains the Parish Church, the Parish Hall and St John’s Parish School. Recent development has consisted of small residential estates mostly to the east of the old centre and infilling the area between the Parish Church and the Recreation Centre.

The Village of Sion is located in the centre of the Island and is situated on the main north – south route to St Helier. It has a number of period buildings including the former Sion Methodist Chapel, the United Reform Chapel and the period buildings around the central area near the junction with Rue des Servais.

Recent development has been generally of small estates with the exception of one large development of affordable homes to the east of the main road.

##### **1.3 Historical Growth and Recent Development**

The growth of St John’s Village covers the period from medieval times to the present and this can be seen in the style of buildings closest to the centres. The Parish Church dates from 1205, the Parish Hall from 1912 and school from 1856.

Sion Village shows growth from the older buildings near the crossroads with Rue des Servais from 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The former Methodist and United Reform Chapels date from 1809 and 1826, the Cemetery from 1851.

The Parish of St John covers an area of 4,846 Vergees which constitutes 7.5% of Jersey’s land area. The census returns for Jersey show population growth in the Parish as follows:-

	<b>Inhabited Houses</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
1821	238	771	886	1657
1861	297	843	972	1815
1871	292	772	927	1699
1901	303	757	863	1620
1931	412	717	740	1457
1961		741	760	1501
1971		849	794	1643
1981		1019	1079	2098
1991	878	1199	1241	2440
2001		1289	1329	2618
2011	1184	1447	1464	2911

This figure for 2011 is 3% of the Island's population of 97,857 at that time and had increased by 11% since 2001.

The latest available figures from the Parish are that in January 2020 there were 1,237 inhabited households.

## **1.4 Community Facilities**

### **St John's Village**

St John's Village has a good range of facilities including the Parish Church, a pre-primary nursery school for children aged from 3 - 5, a primary school for children from the age of 5 – 11, a Parish Hall, allotments and a Recreation Centre. There are three public houses all of which serve food, a medical and dental surgery, a hairdresser, a sub-post office, a pharmacy, a butcher, a convenience shop, two cafes, a kitchen studio, a ladies fashion shop, a petrol filling station and a supermarket, all of which provide a service to the Village and the Parish as a whole.

This range of facilities and services helps identify the Village as an active community rather than just a settlement.

A small group of 22 houses for the over 55s is provided at Maison Le Vesconte, and there are 14 over 55's houses in Pres de L'Eglise.

### **Sion Village**

Sion Village has a range of facilities including the United Reform Church, a village shop and bakery which is due to be replaced by small supermarket and petrol station, a retail shop, a garden nursery and a garage and petrol/filling station.

This range of facilities provides a service to the Village and the Parish as a whole. There is a recognisable sense of identity to the Village through these services creating an active community.



### **Other Commercial Activities**

The Parish also supports a light industrial centre at Mont Mado with a large number of commercial units.

At Les Ruettes there are some large retail outlets.

In addition, the Parish supports two quarries, two harbours (Ronez and Bonne Nuit) and a number of large agricultural businesses.

### **Other Social Activities**

The Recreation Centre is home to a shooting club, football teams, a youth (project) club, the Jersey Gymnastic Club to name but a few organisations that use the facilities.

There are also motor-cross scramble and karting tracks in St John.

## **Appendix B - Survey Overview**



## **La Comité de la Commune Rurale de St Jean**

### **Overview of Survey Findings – Island Plan Review 2020**

The Comité Rurale were due to present an overview of the survey findings at an open meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March but due to the Covid19 outbreak this was cancelled. We also understand the Environment Minister is likely to announce changes to the Island Plan Review process and possibly an interim Island Plan, therefore it was opportune to circulate the overview presentation now with the Parish Magazine, and present it formally at a later date when appropriate.

Back in 2011 the Comité Rurale carried out an informative survey and the results were used to advise Island politicians and planners of parishioners' views to the previous Island Plan. Last summer the States of Jersey launched their consultation process and documents for the new Island Plan covering 2021 to 2030. You may have seen a "call for sites" in the local media in which the States of Jersey were asking for suggestions of land to be considered for future development, as well as protection from development.

To assist with the Parish's response to the consultation the current Comité Rurale decided to repeat the survey exercise but also include some of the new themes highlighted in the documents, for example renewable energy and the Coastal National Park. Many of the 2011 survey questions were repeated to allow a comparison to be made between the 2011 versus and the 2020 results, as you will see on the following pages. The Comité Rurale has met with representatives from the Planning & Environment Department on a number of occasions as part of the consultation process.

The survey questionnaire was circulated at the end of January 2020 to 1,237 postal addresses in the Parish, and in total 218 replies were received. I would like to thank all the parishioners who took part and also the members of the Comité Rurale who assisted with the questionnaire, and then the input and analysis of the responses. There were a large volume of written comments including some quite lengthy ones, and as a result the comments are not being circulated as part of this overview although some have been included as examples. The comments will be available to view in the Parish Hall and on request in electronic form.

In the Parish Magazine the Constable has put forward various proposals for the area around St John's village and we understand further proposals will be following for other areas which have been informed by the results of these two surveys.

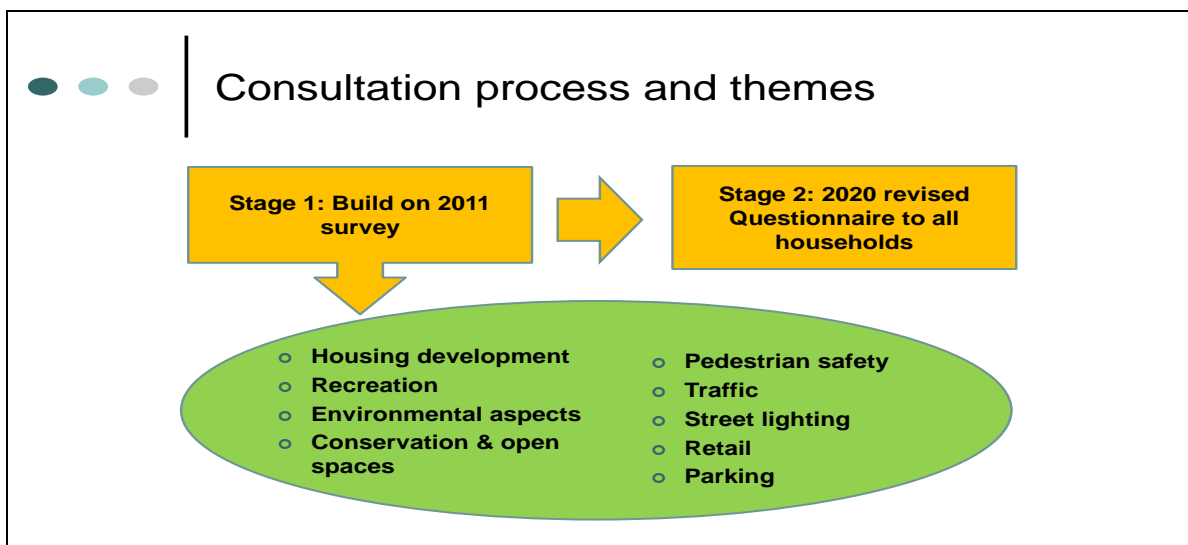
**Ian Touzel**

**Chairman**

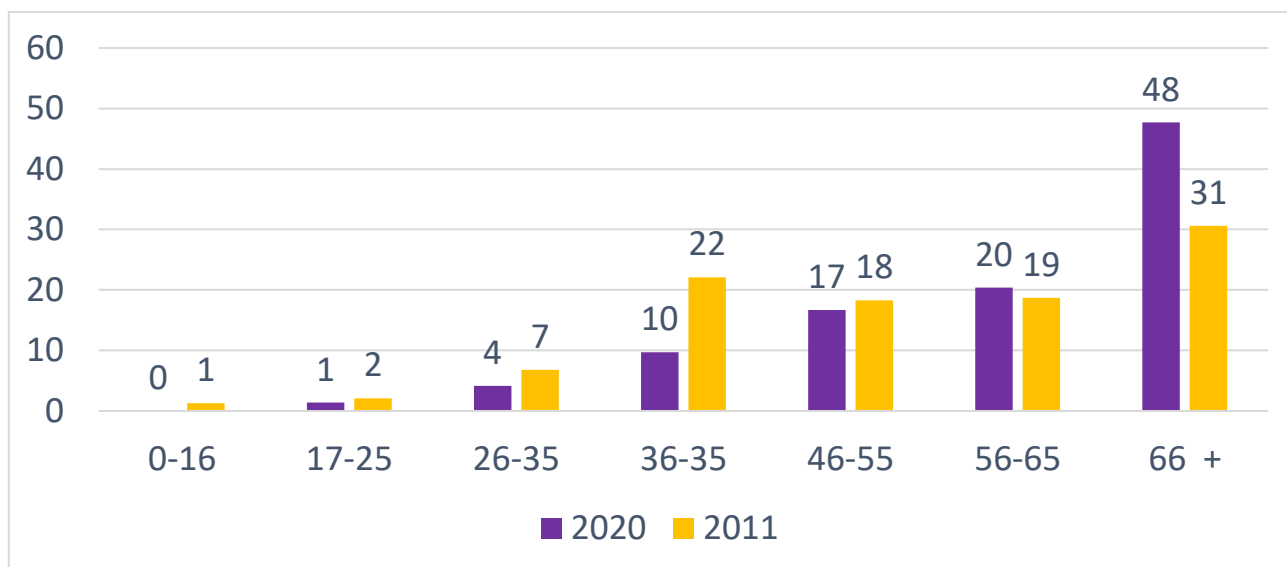
**Comité Rurale – 15th June 2020**



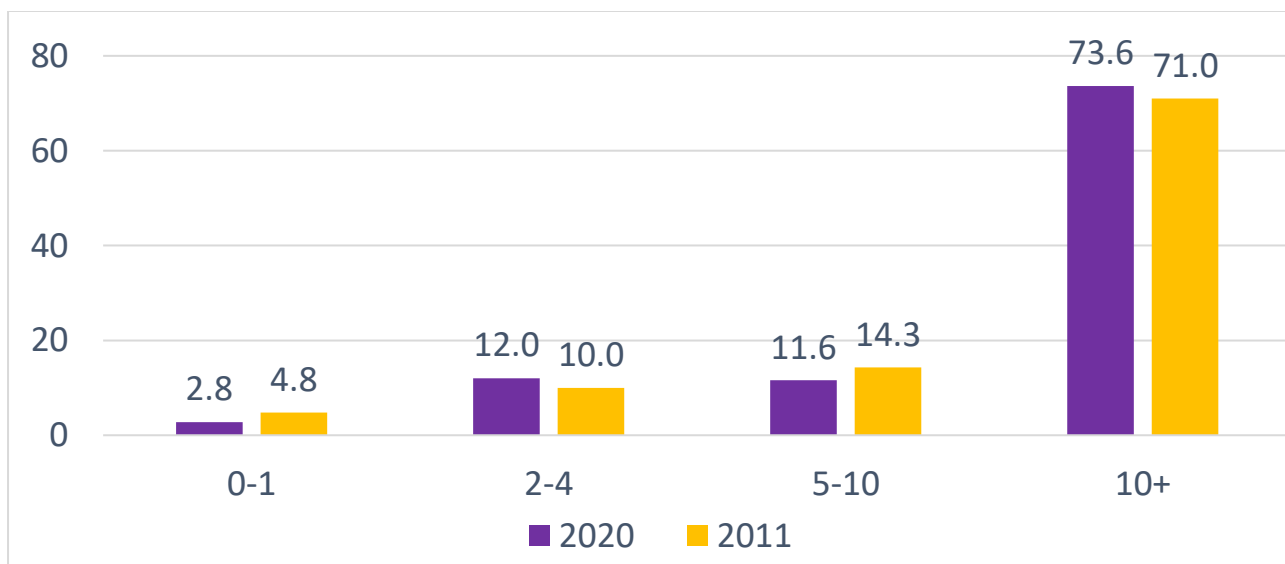
## 2020 Survey Questionnaire



### Q2. To which age category do you belong? (% comparison of respondents age group)

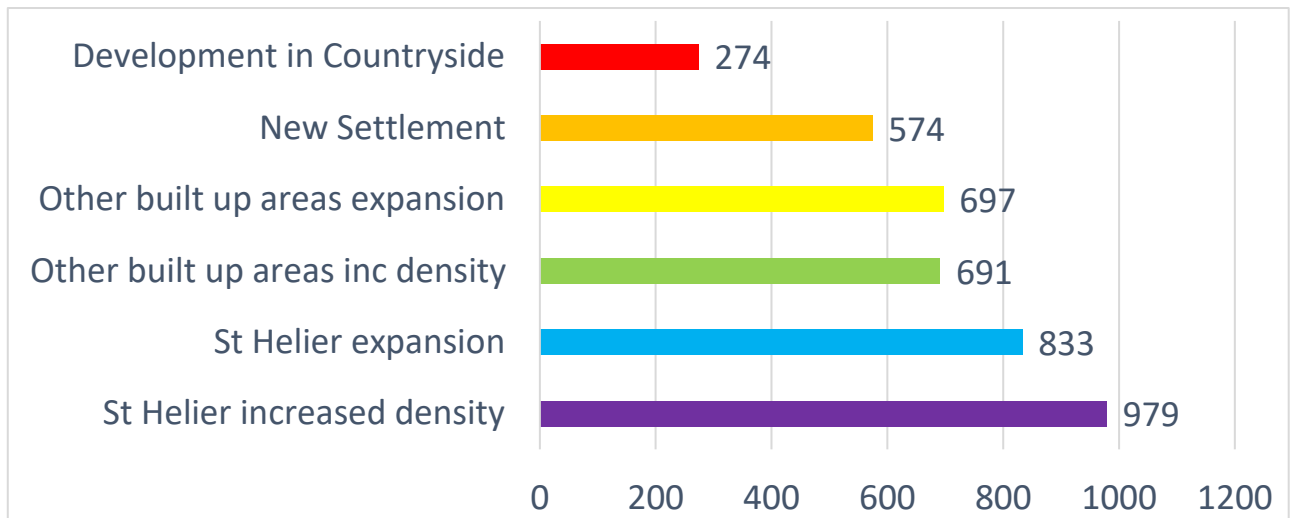


### Q3. How long have you lived in the Parish? (% comparison)



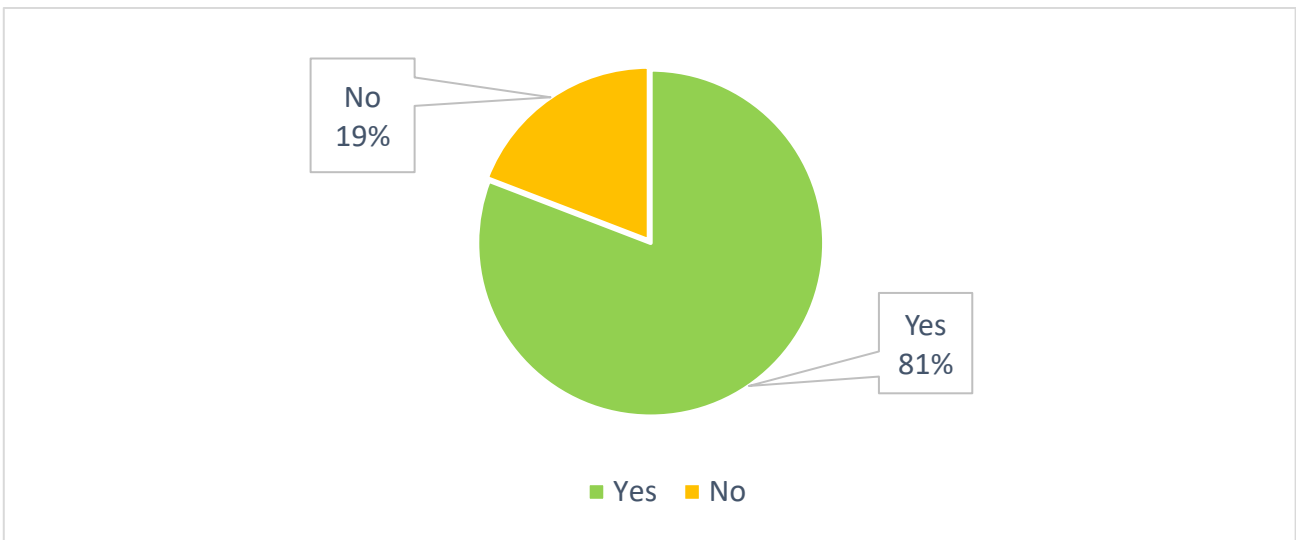
**Q4. Your preferred view of the six options proposed by the Government? (ranked scores)**

**Summary – Most support for increased density in St Helier**



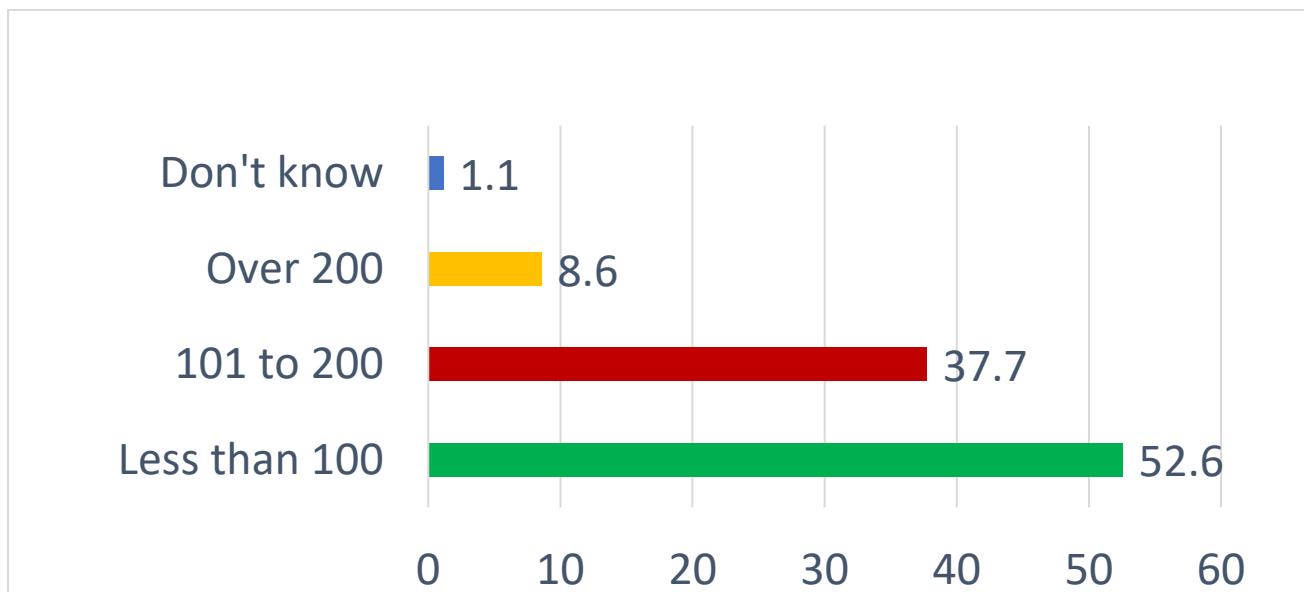
**Q5. Do you accept the need for more housing development in St John up to 2030? (%)**

**Summary – Majority accept the need for more housing in St John**



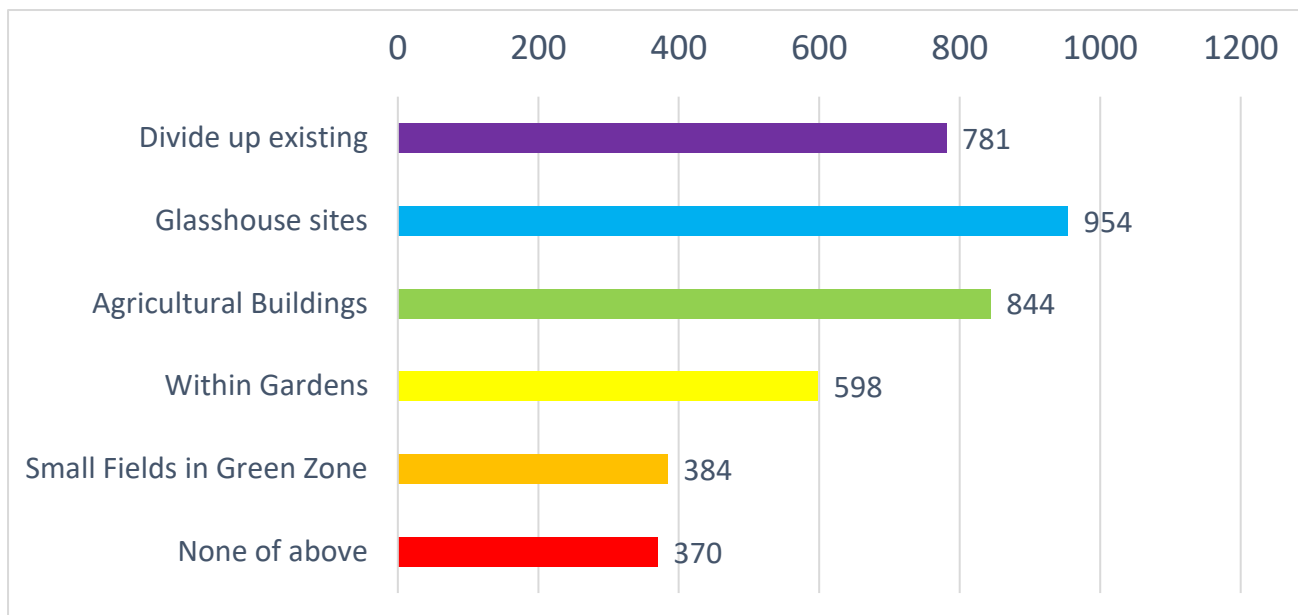
**Q6. If yes, please indicate the amount of new dwellings which would be acceptable? (%)**

**Summary - Majority support less than 100 new dwellings**



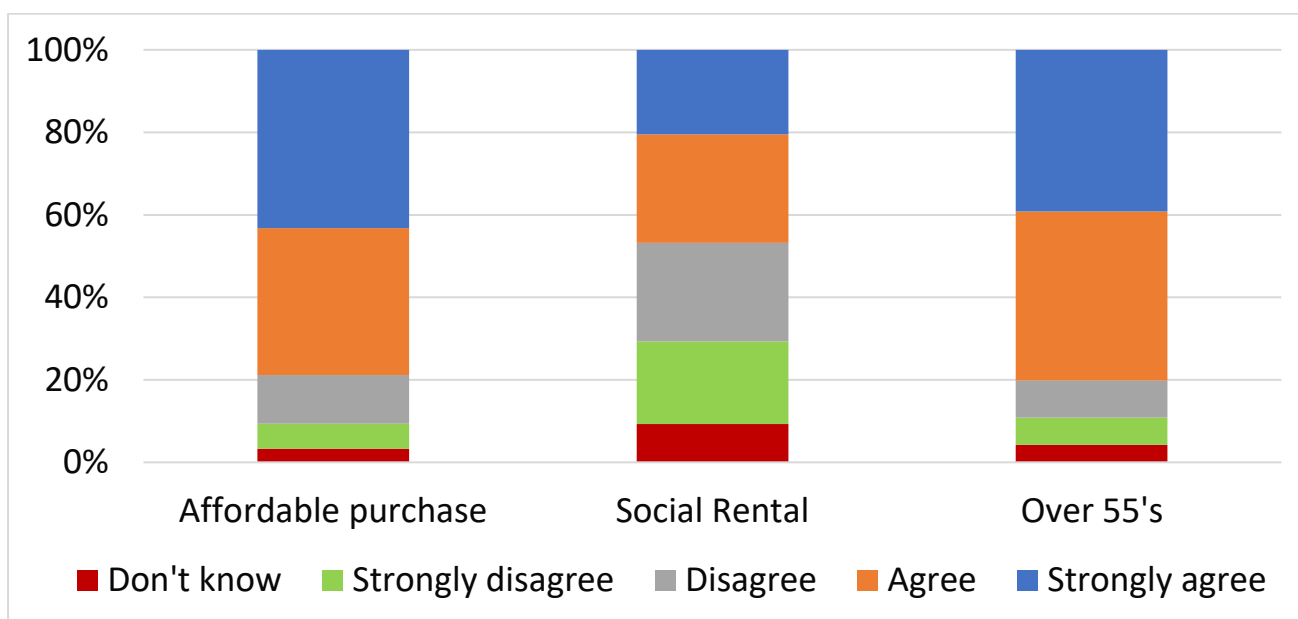
**Q7. Where in the Parish would you find it acceptable for additional higher priced dwellings to be created?**

**Summary - Preference for re-development of existing "built on" sites. (ranked scores)**



**Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Connetable and Municipality should undertake and develop the Parish's own developments for the following dwelling types? (Affordable purchase, Social Rental or Over 55's) (%)**

**Summary – Most support for Affordable Purchase and Over 55's developments**



**Q9. If you agree with any of the options, where in the Parish do you propose these dwellings are developed?**

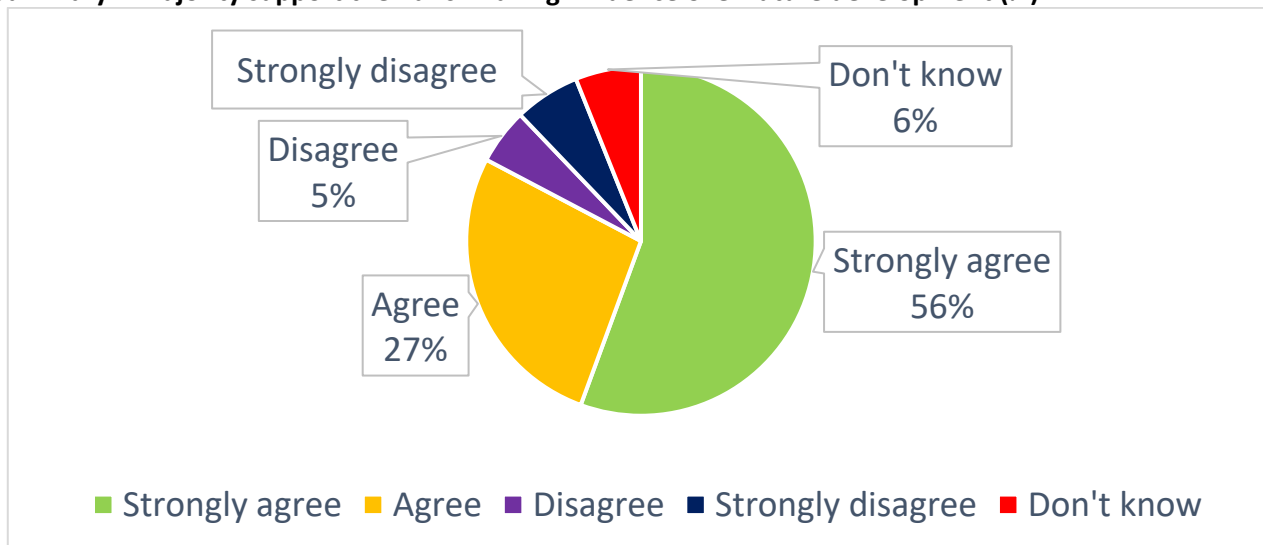
*"Amenity is most important, therefore close to the school, church and shops. Equally near to the bus routes and main roads."*

*"Near the present village areas so as to not 'over build' the rural landscape of the parish - also easier therefore to promote sustainable transport (eg walking, buses),"*

*"Old agricultural sheds, glass house sites and on the edges of the existing village including using small fields"*

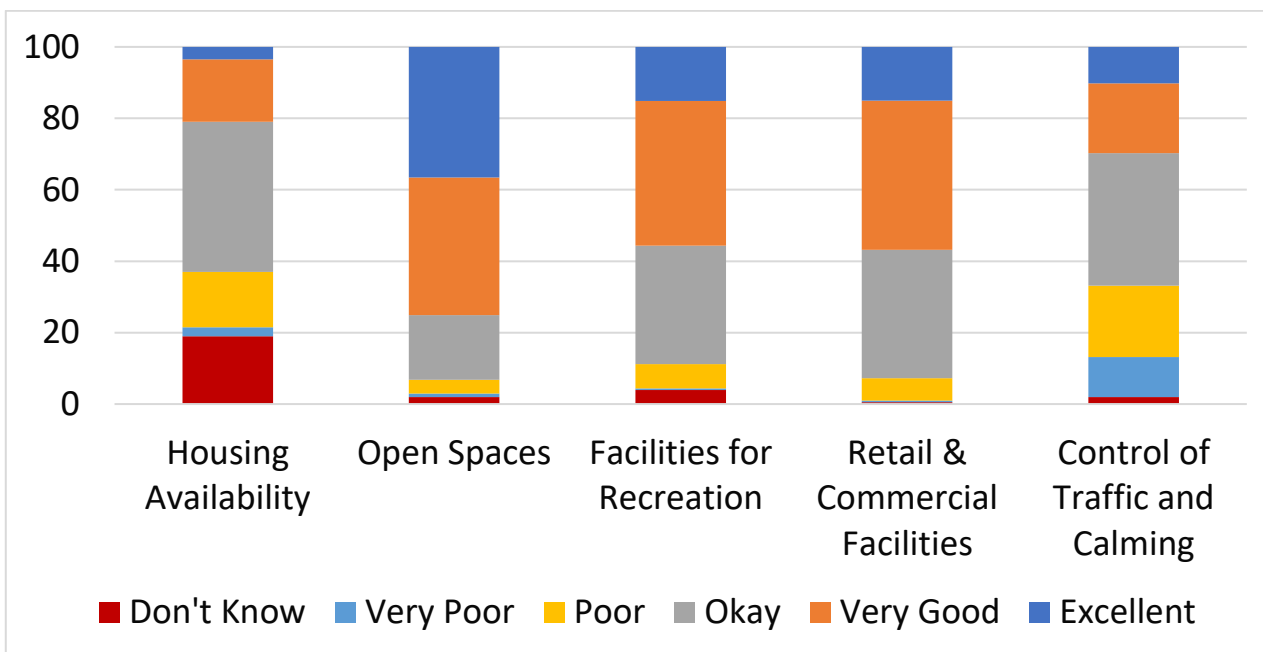
**Q10. To what extent do you agree, or disagree, that in order to protect the vitality and viability of St John's rural settlements, the Connétable and Municipality should have parochial influence to agree or reject development?**

**Summary – Majority support the Parish having influence over future development (%)**



**Q11. How would you rate living in the Parish according to the following aspects? (%)**

**Summary – Open Spaces, Facilities for Recreation and Retail & Commercial Facilities most highly rated**



**Q12. In your own words how would you describe the Parish as a place to live?**

*“Good friendly - good community. Church, school + shops being near each other makes it different + special.”*

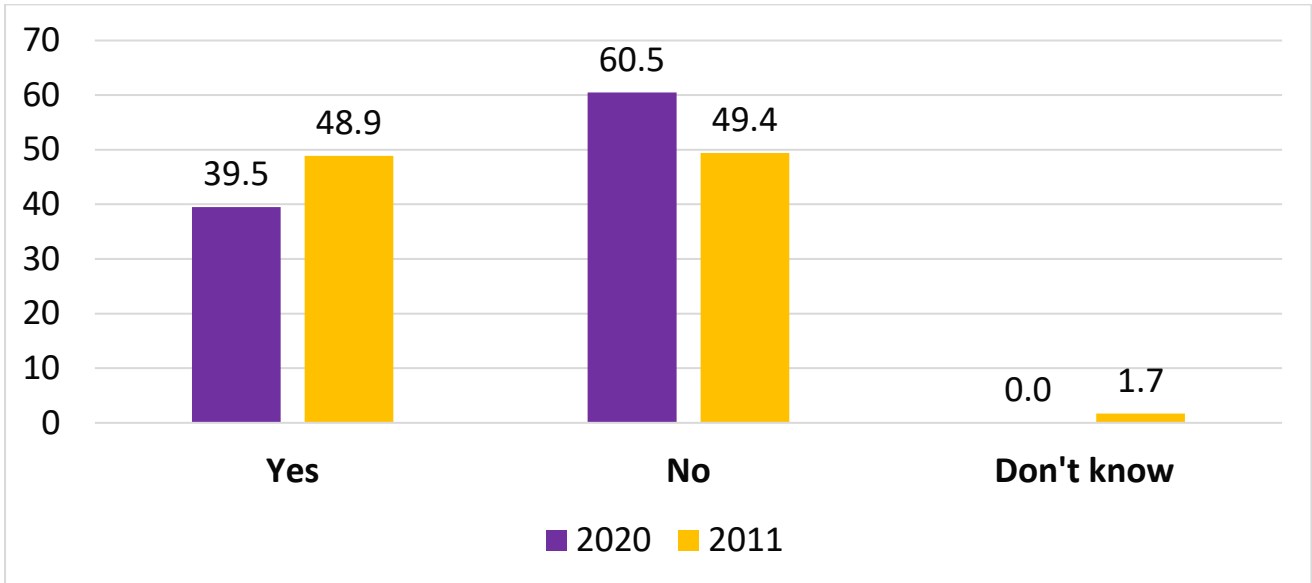
*“It is wonderful to live in a parish, where there is still countryside to enjoy on your doorstep and to be part of the rural life here.”*

*“Living in Sion it is quite difficult to feel part of St John. There are no amenities here for children, no bus shelters, no traffic calming measures.”*



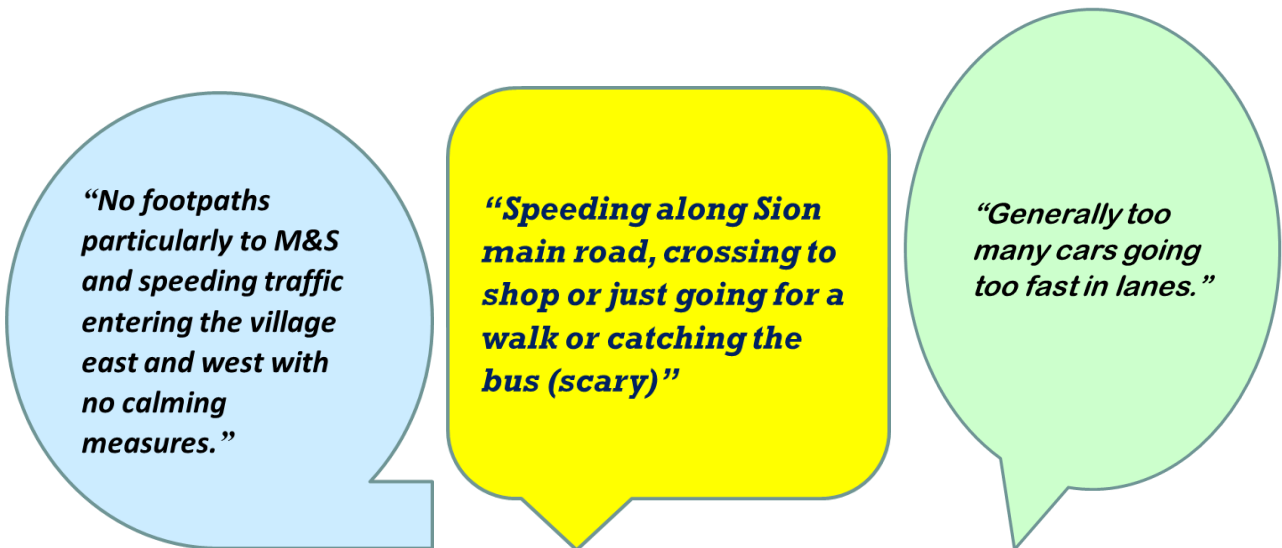
**Q13. Is traffic a significant problem where you live in the Parish? (% comparison)**

**Summary - Traffic (where respondents live) perceived to be slightly less of a problem than in 2011**



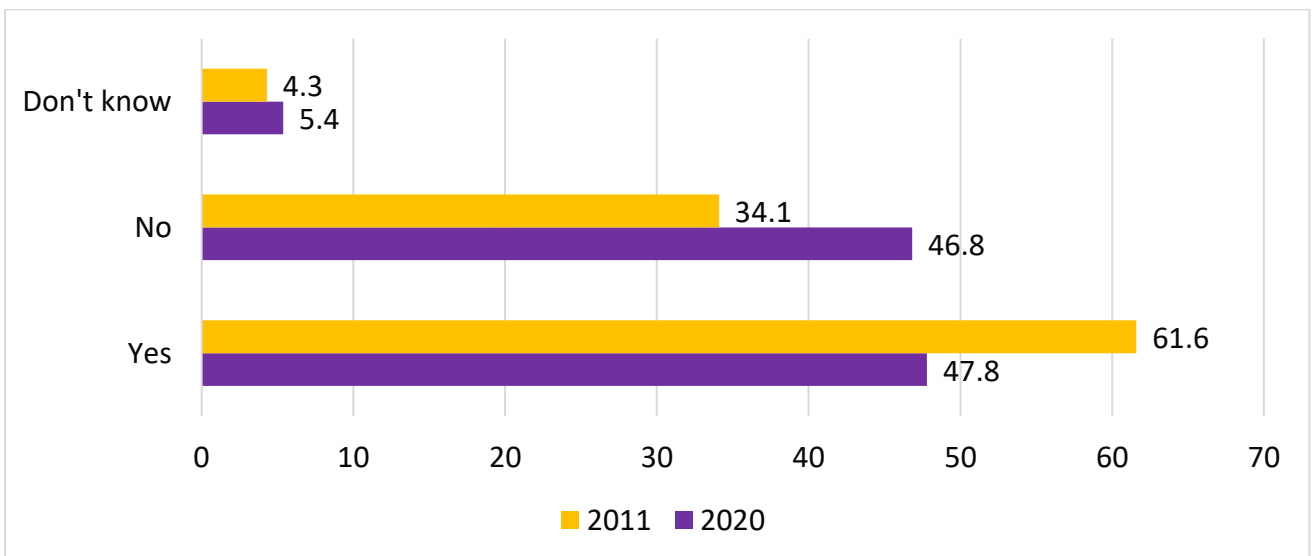
**Q14. If yes, what is the nature of the traffic problem that affects you and where in the Parish?**

**Summary - Common themes in what the traffic problems are and where...**



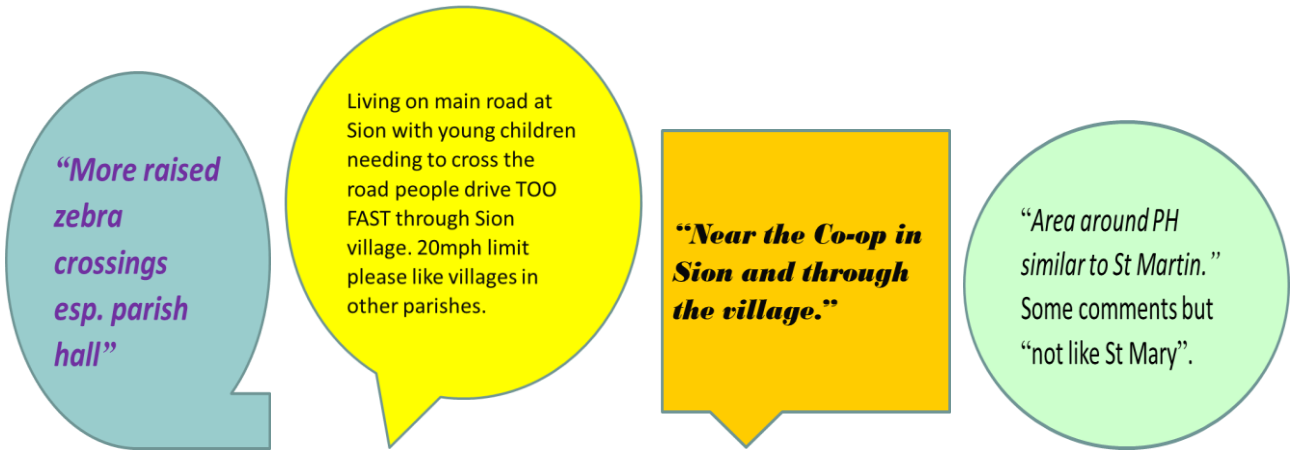
**Q15. Would you like to see more traffic calming measures in your area of the Parish? (% comparison)**

**Summary – Almost evenly split for or against more traffic calming in 2020**



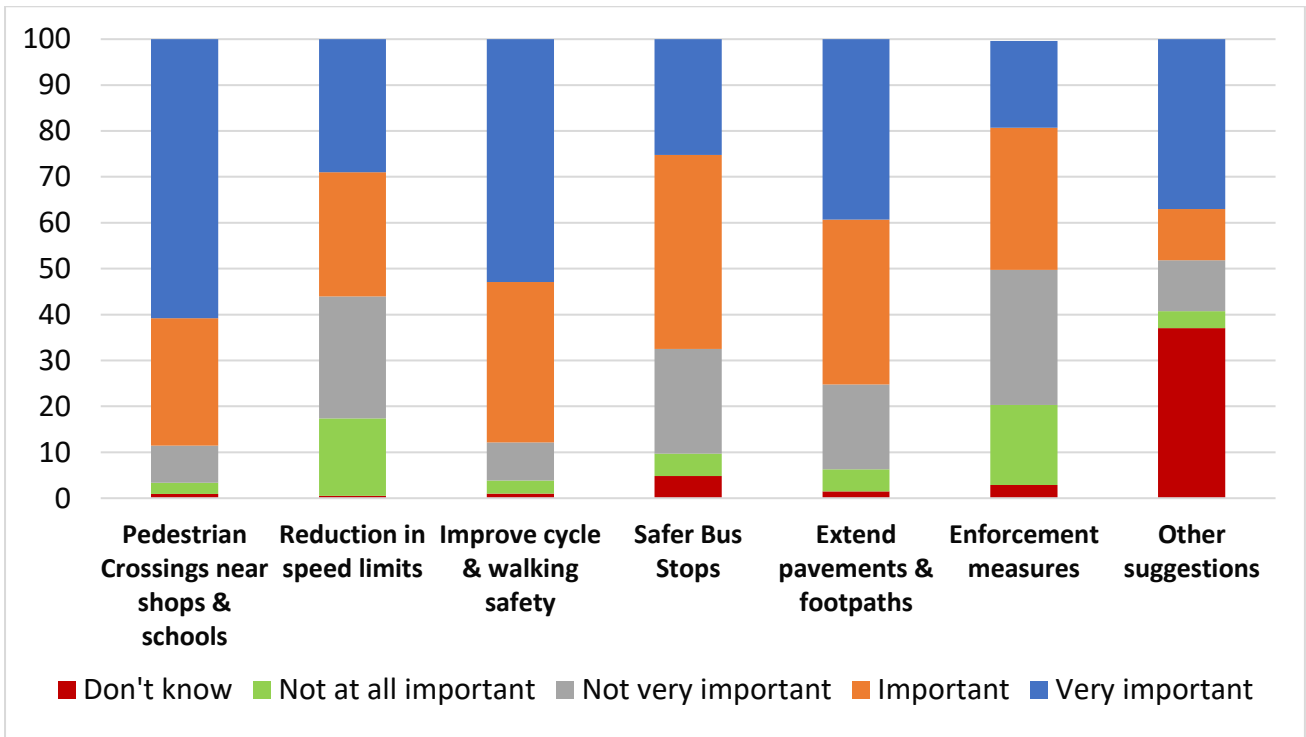
**Q16. Where would you like to see more traffic calming?**

**Summary – General agreement on where more traffic calming is wanted.**



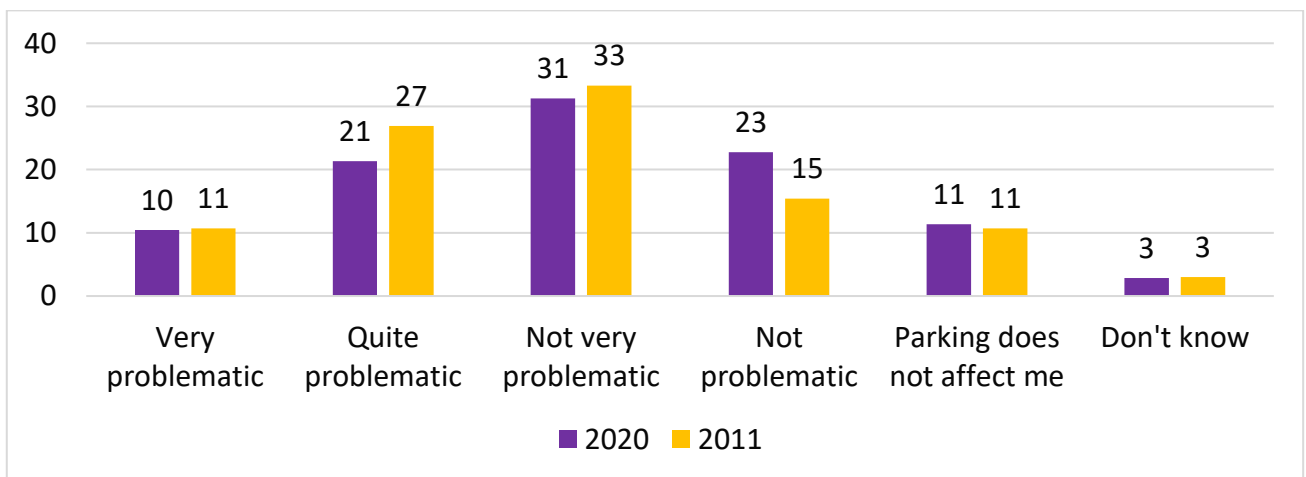
**Q17. How important, or not important, do you feel that each of the following possible measures are taken to promote pedestrian safety in the Parish? (%)**

**Summary – Varying support for pedestrian safety measures**



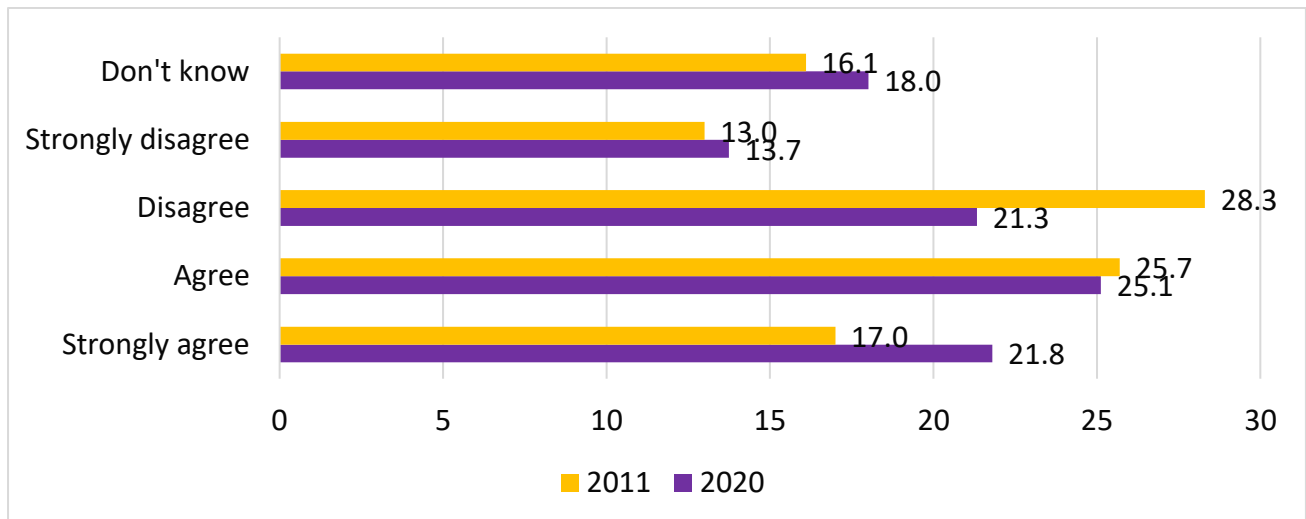
**Q18. To what extent do you think that public parking is a problem in the Parish? (% comparison)**

**Summary – Public parking perceived to be slightly less of a problem than in 2011**



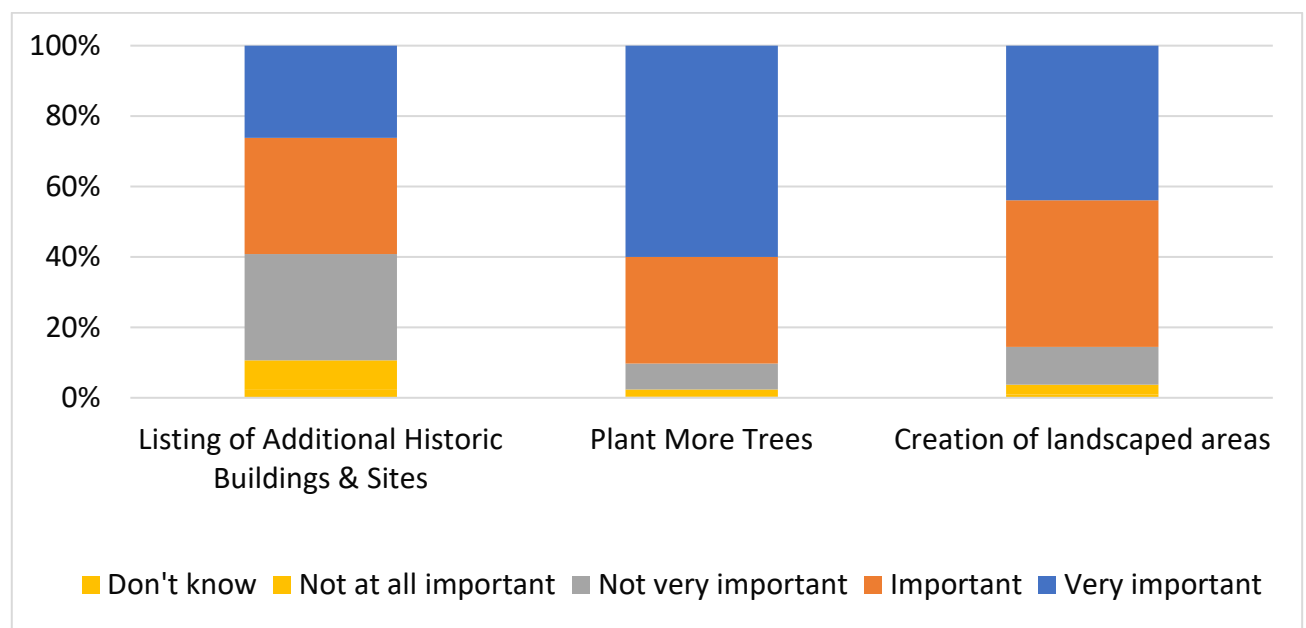
**Q19. To what extent do you agree, or disagree, there should be more lighting in areas where pedestrians frequently walk after dark? (% comparison)**

**Summary – Split for or against the need for more street lighting**

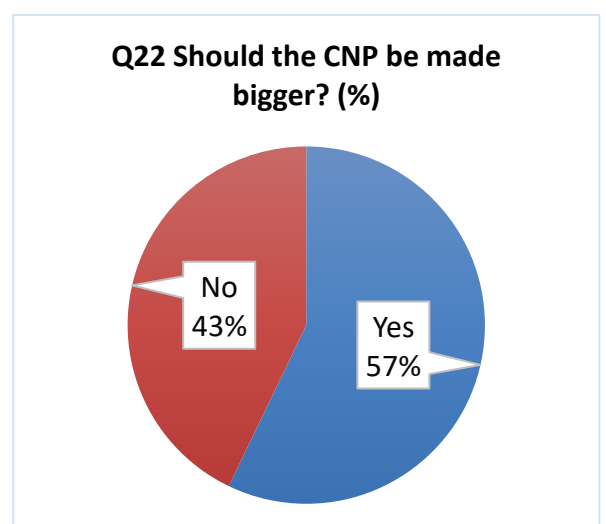
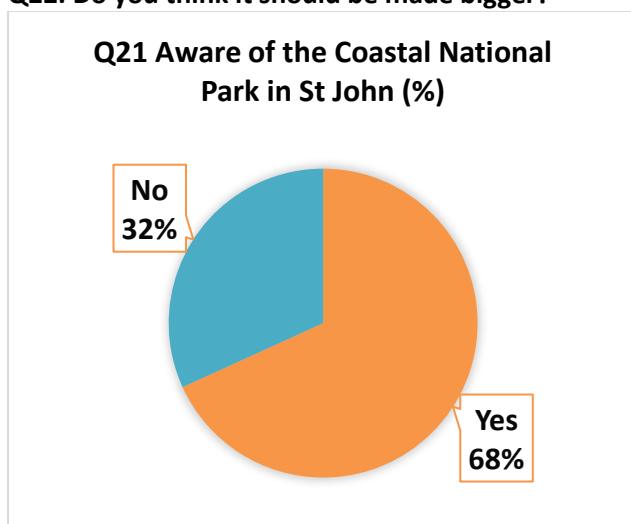


**Q20. How important, or not important, are the following measures relating to Building Conservation and the retention of open spaces in the Parish? (%)**

**Summary – Most support for planting of trees and creation of landscaped areas.**

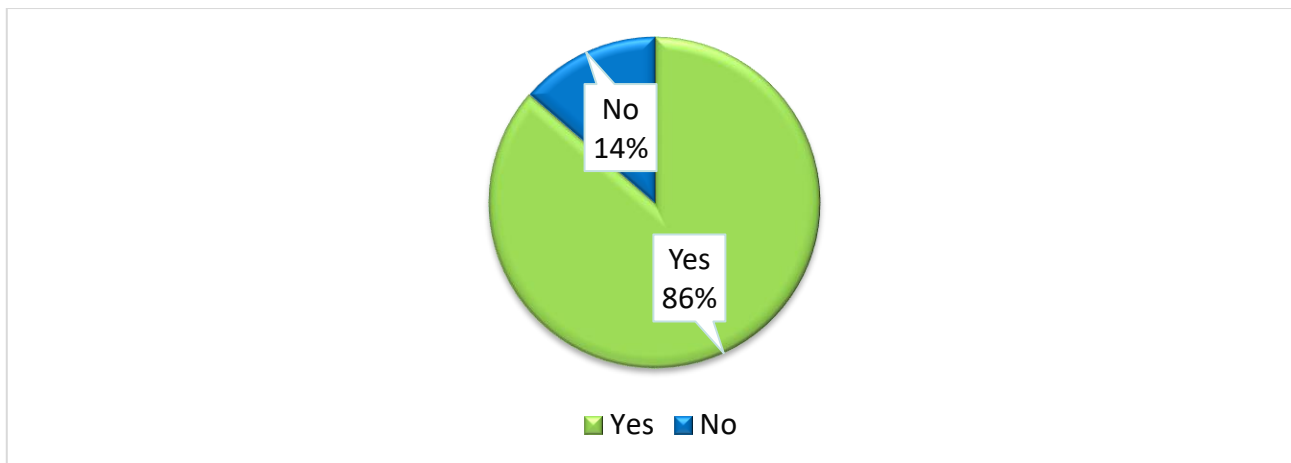


**Q21. Are you aware of the area currently designated as part of the Coastal National Park in St John?**  
**Q22. Do you think it should be made bigger?**



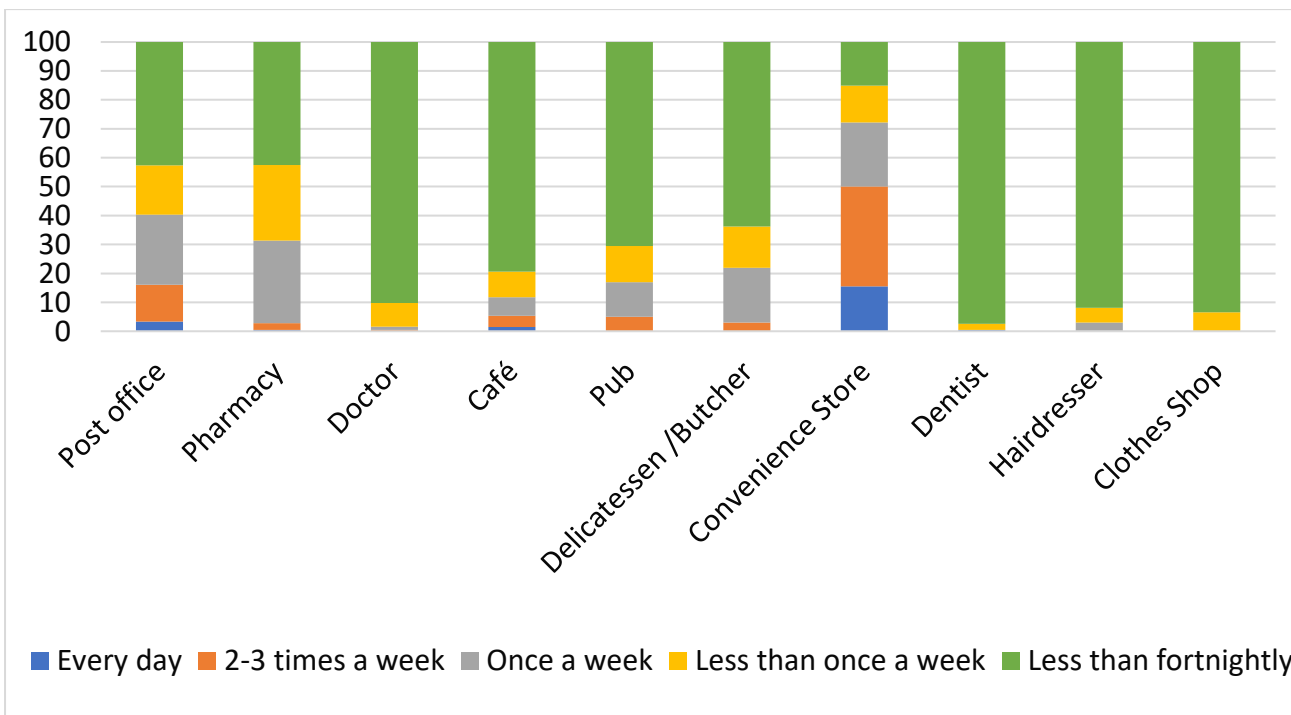
**Q23. Should the Island encourage the development of offshore renewable (wind and tidal) energy,..... would you support such schemes being sited off the coast of St John? (%)**

**Summary - Clear support for Renewable Energy Schemes**



**Q24. How often do you use the following shops and services in the Parish?**

**Summary – Please support local shops and services**



**Q25. Are there any other types of retail outlet you would like to see in the Parish?**

**Summary of Recurring Themes**

“Baker - farm shop- veg shop.”

“No - we currently have an excellent selection of retail outlets for a country parish.”

“Retail for fish wet and shell.”

“Take away shop such as fast food.”

**Q26. Is there currently anything that you feel can be changed to improve the Parish for its residents?**

**Summary of Recurring Themes**

- Traffic volumes and speeding
- More pavements and bus shelters
- Bus service frequency
- Mains drains and water
- Support for cycling