

## Appendix 3

# Qualitative Analysis of Comments

This report draws on the handwritten comments that were included by many respondents in answering the questionnaires. It is not a 'scientific' or representative report of those comments, but attempts to give the flavour, of what respondents wrote about living in Steeton-with-Eastburn, by quoting them directly. This report should be read as an adjunct only to the main report which gives the quantitative analysis of the 'tick box' and other answers to the questionnaire.

The anonymity of the respondents here is of course preserved, and it is hoped that none will be 'recognisable' (except perhaps to themselves)!

The report is arranged under the following headings:

- Life in Steeton-with-Eastburn - general
- Traffic and road safety
- The environment of the villages
- Local services including shops
- Transport
- Sport, leisure and social life

### Life in Steeton-with-Eastburn – general

Steeton-with-Eastburn is a remarkably stable community, with, as the main report makes clear, many people having lived here for decades. For example, the main analysis of responses showed that 159 respondents to the questionnaires had lived in the parish for between 16 and 25 years, and even more people – 179 – for between 26 and 50 years. 22 respondents had lived here for more than half a century; 74 for their whole life. The questionnaire did not ask for the number of years 'whole life' represented, but the longest-residing respondent must surely be one who volunteered this information - a man of 93 who had lived in the parish (in Eastburn) for his whole life.

The advantages of a stable community include strong networks, sometimes lasting for generations, and a strong sense of identity. 'Mixed and varied but a community!' wrote one respondent; 'a thriving little community,' said another; and another: 'An exceptionally friendly spirit especially among the long-standing residents'. This close-knit feature can produce a dislike of change: 'I feel that Eastburn is already subject to the onslaught of development on all sides,' wrote one Eastburn resident,' and this needs halting now in order to retain our identity as a village.'

Although the wording of the questionnaire perhaps invited critical comment and the airing of complaints, the 'tone' of the responses was not always critical, and sometimes reflected highly favourable views of Steeton-with-Eastburn. For example, 'Very pleasant, friendly,' wrote one respondent, 'everyone says "Good Morning"'. Another resident wrote: 'A well rounded community for working, retired and family people' (while also asking for more footpaths and bridleways); and another: 'We are very lucky to live in Steeton. In general it is a pleasant rural environment with good transport links, and a Hospital on the doorstep. AND we still have a Post Office. All Steeton needs is to maintain the status quo, it does not need "developing"'. Another

comment was: 'We moved here because of the rural aspect and would like it to remain that way,' and in similar vein another person said: 'Remain as it is largely – nice and quiet which is the reason for moving,' adding that the facilities were good for a village, and other facilities were not far distant. Another resident had lived in Steeton for just a month when he/she answered the questionnaire, and wrote: 'Having relocated from East Yorkshire [I think] Steeton is excellent. Hospital, excellent transport including train/bus, local shops well-stocked, butcher's very good', adding their opposition, also, to further development. A family who had lived in Steeton for seven months were glad of their move despite traffic congestion, saying: 'we are enjoying Steeton very much .... The local newsagents and greengrocer and butcher are excellent and so friendly and we like very much the quietness and charm of the village.' The relatively low price of housing in Steeton has obviously been an attraction for some (but see below under housing development), as has the closeness both to the countryside and major towns.

However, there were also more negative views. One questionnaire contained the comment: 'The general 'run-down' atmosphere of Steeton Eastburn should be addressed as a priority. You should aim to create a pride in the community policy. Anti-littering campaigns should be stepped up'. Some saw deterioration in the quality of life, particularly with respect to motor vehicles. The closure of shops was also mentioned. One respondent felt that: 'For a village to have atmosphere, it needs shops, and they need parking. Steeton feels a strange village as there is nowhere to park'. Another cautioned: 'As more and more people move into Steeton ... they should be made aware that the village is not a race track, a place to play blaring loud music, and respect the village as it is respected by people who have lived here all or most of their lives.' One respondent wrote at length on the shortcomings; a few excerpts are quoted here: 'I feel it is a great pity that we have no Co-op, no library, a severely restricted Post Office .... and no major leisure facilities for the adult population. .... It would be great if local businesses looked towards their Mediterranean counterparts and became more flexible.' Another couple had moved back to Yorkshire 10 years ago after nearly 30 years in the south-east. They had seen many advantages in Steeton, but commented: 'things have changed ... from traffic congestion, inability to park in the railway car park, loss of local Co-op shop etc.'. And in a similar vein, another respondent wrote: 'Steeton village has gone downhill in the past 5 years; more traffic queuing and speeding through village', and another: '[Steeton's] rural atmosphere is disappearing because it is getting too big'.

#### Traffic and road safety

This has to be the most commented-on issue, and included the problems of speeding vehicles and other traffic misbehaviour, ignoring of road signs, parked vehicles, pedestrian safety and convenience, congestion, and troublesome junctions, drop-off points and crossings. 'Through traffic' in particular was seen as a problem, especially on the Keighley-Skipton road. Various traffic 'hotspots' were identified – some well-known (such as Barrows Lane and High Street, the bottom of Mill Lane, and Station Road, Steeton; around the school in Steeton; the hospital junction; and Sutton Lane and Green Lane, Eastburn), some perhaps less well-known (for example, I was unaware there was a parking problem on Chapel Road, Steeton, or that Halsteads Way, Steeton had become a 'rat run'). A few respondents wrote graphically of the dangers to pedestrians at Whitley Head. More than one questionnaire pointed to the danger of large vehicles parking partly on the pavement at the newsagent's shop in Steeton, with one respondent commenting grimly: 'It seems some drivers think that the further they get on the pavement the less they're on the double yellow lines'.

There was overwhelming demand for a pedestrian crossing on the Keighley-Skipton road somewhere between the existing one in Steeton and the Hospital – most commonly called for at the junctions with Thornhill Road and Chapel Road. One respondent wrote: 'You take your life into your own hands when crossing to the postbox', and others made similar comments. One

respondent reported that their child had been knocked down on the road. There was also awareness of the dangers of crossing the Aire Valley trunk road/bypass. The words ‘an accident waiting to happen’ – or similar – were used of a number of sites. One respondent wrote: ‘Children playing at the bottom of Elmsley Street [Steeton] will one day be run down’; and another: ‘Cars park on the corner of Thornhill Rd by the path leading to Airedale [Hospital], this is dangerous for the many children who live in that area .... an accident waiting to happen’ (a number of respondents commented on this specific traffic problem on the bend on Thornhill Road). A further respondent put of Barrows Lane, Steeton: ‘It is only a matter of time until there is a fatality’. Perhaps unusually, one respondent had been hit twice by cycles on the pavement at ‘Steeton top’.

The disregarding of speed limits was widely commented on, with respondents complaining bitterly about the lack of enforcement – for example: ‘The recently introduced 20 mph limit on Thornhill Road is a waste of time. Who is enforcing it?’ said one. Some saw traffic calming measures (such as speed bumps), cameras or ‘speedwatch’ as better tactics for slowing vehicles than limits that are just ignored. Indeed, speed signs did not command universal support. ‘Which idiot decided to ruin the countryside by painting 20 mph speed limits on every little lane?’ wrote one respondent, and another: ‘looks like “Disneyland”! What have they achieved – NOTHING!’, while yet another thought too many signs created a hazard.

The problem of parking around the villages was frequently commented on – both from the point of view of difficulties caused by vehicles parked inconveniently (or illegally), and the point of view of problems experienced finding anywhere to park – obviously two sides of the same coin! Parking by trade vehicles was picked up by one respondent as a problem.

The railway level crossing at Crosshills attracted some adverse comment, as adding to traffic queuing problems.

Nevertheless, traffic has its positive side. ‘Steeton and Eastburn need through traffic for the shops to survive,’ commented one respondent thoughtfully.

**The demand for another pedestrian crossing on the Keighley-Skipton road was so widespread, that the Parish Council should perhaps take up this issue again with Bradford Highways Department, although they have declined to provide such a crossing in the past.** There was also a less commonly voiced demand for a pedestrian crossing on Station Road, Steeton.

#### The environment of the villages

Opinion was divided on general cleanliness and litter, but the Steeton-with-Eastburn street-cleaner (employed by Bradford Council) was commended by several respondents, some of whom wished him to receive an award or bonus. Another respondent wrote of Steeton: ‘The village is generally very well kept and clean. The flowers opposite the nursery are very nice ....’. There were other favourable comments on tidiness and lack of litter. On the negative side, dog excrement (not the street cleaner’s responsibility, note) was a concern to a number of respondents; for example: ‘Dog fouling in recreation, dogs should not even be there. Dog faeces contaminated the grass where children play, this causes infection etc. Also dog walking in the cemetery. Unless you are visiting a grave you shouldn’t even be there.’ It should be noted here that Bradford Council does not provide dog refuse bins, as a matter of policy (although some local authorities do so), and the Parish Council does not provide them because it does not employ the staff to empty them. There are ‘Clean-it-up-zone’ signs around the area, which are clearly not always respected.

There was one request for a litter-bin near the public telephone on Chapel Road, and a few requests for more recycling facilities. The lack of a physical focal point was a concern for some. For example, one respondent said that the village (Steeton) needed a physical centre and a more attractive main street, with a reduction in street furniture ('railings at lights, signs, posts etc'), and another said that Eastburn particularly lacked a focal point.

The state (or lack) of pavements was an issue for some respondents. However, one respondent commented that recent pavement improvements 'have been much appreciated'. A number of questionnaires asked for more or better footpaths for walkers. One specific criticism was of the footpath from Eastburn Post Office to the hospital.

Further housing development in the villages was seemingly not popular (see above also, under Life in Steeton-with-Eastburn – general), although a few did want more affordable housing. On one side of the debate, a respondent wrote: 'I don't think there should be any more houses built as drains and local facilities would not be able to cope.' Others also commented on the likely strain on infrastructure and services, and the increased traffic, arising from further development. One questionnaire included the comment: 'I would like to see an end to the current trend of breaking up large gardens and building on them. Losing these properties is a loss to the community.' Another objected to large buildings in particular. An impassioned plea came from one Eastburn resident: 'There should be restrictions on further housing developments ... not large estates that would swamp our small communities and change the rural environment by bringing in hundreds of commuters.... adding to already stretched services ... Please, please take note of this.' Giving a rather different slant on the issue, another person said: 'We need more affordable housing for retired people,' and another in the 17 – 24 age group pointed to: 'lack of affordable housing', saying: 'I can't afford to move out [from the parental home] and live on my own'. Another person in the 17-24 category asked: 'What prospects of staying and affording to live in Steeton do I have?' with a parent (presumably) adding later in the same questionnaire: 'Houses here are so expensive that my 2 children will have to move away from our beautiful village.' Another questionnaire contained the remark: 'It would be lovely to get house[s], instead of outsiders coming and getting them!'

On other environmental issues, one respondent felt the cemetery should have been mentioned as: 'a working example and of historical interest of the development of the village'. Another had an interesting environmental idea: 'I read something recently about villages developing as [an] energy self-sufficient community, wind turbines etc. It would be good to investigate that possibility here.' And, of the respondents who commented on trees, one said: 'Please address this', of tree-planting around the village. Others were concerned about trees that needed cutting back.

#### Local services including shops

Some respondents thought Steeton-with-Eastburn was well-provided with shops and some thought there should be more. The closing down of the 'Co-op' on High Street, Steeton a few years ago prompted many adverse comments, and not just because of the loss of this shopping facility. For example, one respondent wrote: 'The old Co-op building in High St. is falling into dereliction. It would be good to see this site/building used/re-furbished. It's just an eye-sore'. Another thought the Co-op building: 'could be turned into a place for children to go to'. One respondent highlighted two trends in tension with each other: 'So many shops have closed over the years, yet the housing estates have grown ..... Steeton needs a Co-op.' Yet another comment was: 'We have lived in the village for 12 years and slowly the facilities seem to be reducing. Closing the Co-op down was a great loss to the community ....'.

There was some dissatisfaction with local pubs, and one respondent wrote: 'I would like to see an improvement in the local pubs so that they are suitable for children and adults and provide food in the evenings and weekends so that they may attract visitors from outside the village rather than us going out to other villages.'

Many wanted a greater local police presence, especially in relation to traffic issues. There were some crime, security, and antisocial behaviour concerns, sometimes associated with concerns about youth, particularly at night, and sometimes concerns about alcohol, or possibly drugs. One respondent felt unsafe walking from the station in the dark. Some people showed strong feelings about others' behaviour - for example: 'Stop alcoholics and undesirables from sitting around Steeton, disgusting and bad example to children and young people'; or about their own situation - one respondent in the 17 - 24 age group wrote: 'People moan about youngsters causing mayhem. Why not fundraise or request government funding to create activities or even a youth centre. .... Stop criticising and start doing'.

Transport services were the object of both some positive comments - for example, one person thought the bus and train service: 'cannot be faulted'- and some criticisms. For example there were negative comments on high fares, crowded buses and trains, and timetabling (including late evening services). One respondent wrote: 'Workers pay more often for the dubious honour of standing because the buses are full'. One person pointed to the absence of a Skipton-Silsden direct bus link, one to the difficulties of travelling by bus with a pram or baby buggy, one to the absence of seats in bus shelters, and another to a misplaced bus stop at the Grange Road junction in Eastburn.

There were a number of comments about the railway station. Parking was widely recognised as a problem around the station. Although there are extensive car parks at Steeton and Silsden station, these are still not large enough to accommodate the demand, with the result that many cars are parked on adjoining roads in the village. One questionnaire noted that: 'The volume of commuters on the train appears to have doubled in 3 years. We are a commuter village and should play to that strength by servicing the commuters'. Many respondents wanted a footpath from the Thornhill Road area to the station - making it overwhelmingly easier to *walk* to the station from this area and thus reducing the number of cars travelling to, and parking there. However support for this was not universal: 'over which poor farmer's land?' wrote one resident in response to the footpath suggestion in Part 2 Q. 1. Another idea was for the station car park to charge, perhaps with permits for local residents, and another to remove the grassed area on Station Road to provide parking. Better integration between bus and train times, to alleviate the need to drive to the station, was another idea; and another was that the old Kildwick station should be rebuilt - or a new station opened for the hospital. A few people mentioned that demand on Steeton station would ease if the fares from Skipton were cheaper.

A few respondents mentioned disability (and pushchair) access at the station as a problem, with one stating that the station did not offer Disability Discrimination Act compliant facilities; and a few mentioned the danger of cars dropping off passengers on the bridge above the station. One respondent thought that a turning circle to the right of the bridge, and a 'no dropping off' sign, would be helpful. At least one respondent commented on the dirtiness and inadequacy of the shelters at the station.

One questionnaire complained about a lack of toilet facilities in the parish, suggesting the rose garden in Eastburn as a possible site.

It is useful to consider 'the Councils' here as providers of local services. Occasionally there was an understandable confusion in respondents' minds between the roles of the Parish Council

(which issued the questionnaire) and Bradford Council. The resident who wrote: ‘Do something with this survey. Do not just tick boxes. Own [earn?] your pay!’ needs to be aware that **Parish Councillors are unpaid** (and yes, he or she can be reassured that we *are* doing something with the survey!). On planning matters, **the planning authority for the area is Bradford Council**; and although the Parish Council always gives a view on planning applications, and can make representations to the Keighley Area Committee, the ultimate decision is taken above the Parish Council level. One of the questionnaires that referred to the Damart warehouse (‘an eyesore and a blot on the landscape’), said: ‘we were all let down by you!!’ In fact, the Parish Council opposed the warehouse, but was over-ruled by Bradford Council. Residents may also have over-optimistic ideas about what any Council can realistically do. Neither the Parish Council nor Bradford Council can simply order a shop or restaurant to open or re-open, for example. And the respondent who made the following cry from the heart: ‘Eastburn Christmas Tree! Lack of! No Excuses!’ needs to be aware that, sadly, and after intensive investigation, the Parish Council has found **no suitable site or legal power supply for a Christmas tree with lights in Eastburn**. It might also be helpful to point out, in view of some comments made, that the numerous ‘**unadopted roads**’ around the parish – which often have very poor surfaces – are the **responsibility of neither the Parish Council nor Bradford Council**. (Residents would have to pay for them to be brought up to a certain standard, for them to be adopted by Bradford Council.)

#### Sports, leisure and social life

Many respondents wished for a play area in the Thornhill Road area, and many for some kind of village meeting place/focal point. For example, on needed leisure activities, one respondent wrote: ‘A meeting place for all ages. The pubs are not suitable and there is nowhere else’, and another: ‘...encourage a greater presence of community spirit with a focal hall where all activities are catered for’. Yet another wrote: ‘There are a lot of interesting people in the village but nowhere to go to meet them.’ One Eastburn resident thought that Eastburn Methodist Church ‘should be made available for village activities, or changed to village hall status’. The specific social needs of both younger and older people were raised. One respondent wrote of the need for: ‘Teenage ... drop in centre to encourage youths not to drink and take drugs on the streets. This should be for 15 – 18 year olds; they are too old for the youth club and don’t fit in in any social group.’ See also the comment on youth activities in the previous section on local services. Another person remarked: ‘We need OAP facilities as many widows and pensioners/widowers are very lonely.’

The need to develop Eastburn Playing Fields was often commented on (**the Parish Council is indeed doing this**).

#### And finally:

‘The Parish Council works hard for their community. Thank you.’

‘The whole parish should be reviewed by a professional organisation. Asking residents to make recommendations will lead to emotive decisions.’

#### Conclusion

There is a lot to be learnt from the handwritten comments that respondents took the trouble to write on the questionnaires – and we are grateful for their contribution. Some of the issues the Parish Council is aware of and is acting on – for example, the development of Eastburn playing fields. Others will be taken forward.

**See the main Parish Plan document for further clarification.**