



# Chard Community Plan 2022-23



**Community** Review  
*Your future plan*

Delivered by



**smart communities**  
part of the CCS group

On behalf of



Funded by



**Somerset Council**

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### Action plan (available as a separate document with funding plan)

#### Appendix 1: June 2023 consultation

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*Image below: Some of the Community Plan Steering Group members left to right Roz Hall, Cllr Dave Bulmer, Serena Wootton (chair), Beverley Newman, Cllr Banah Crook, Cllr Claire Richter, Tim Bickham, Howard Bailey*



*Front cover images left to right: Spring Festival 2023; Arts and Crafts at Chard Community Hub; Chard Museum; Howard's Row; Redstart pupils at Chard Museum preparing Episode 8 of ChardCast.*



## Introduction

Welcome to the Chard Community Plan 2023. It is with great pleasure that the steering group publish this plan, which has been put together as a result of a community survey and a range of engagement events. Areas of specific interest have been investigated, researched and views sort to enable this plan to come together. We accept it is not perfect and does not address everything that needs to be done to improve Chard. However, it does represent a great number of views from those who chose to get involved, identifies some key areas for improvement and some proposed actions.

The process by which this report and action plan has been produced is as follows: A steering group was set up from people who expressed an interest through the Chard Town Council website and was a mixture of Councillors and members of the community with particular areas of expertise. A survey was developed in collaboration with Smart Communities and published for completion in March 2023. To assist those who didn't have internet access or needed help in completing the survey, three in-person engagement events were also held. A total of 539 people completed the survey. The survey findings were analysed, and the findings placed into this report.

Steering Group Members are; Serena Wootton (Chair), Cllr Andi Grief-Page (Vice Chair), Cllr Dave Bulmer, Cllr Banah Crook, Claire Edmonds, Roz Hall, Cllr Jenny Kenton, Ryan Parr, Cllr Claire Richter, Louise Tompkins and Andy Webb.

The steering group was ably and patiently supported by Beverley Newman and Tim Bickham of Chard Town Council.

### The Town

Chard is an historic market town nestled within the glorious countryside of South Somerset, close to the Devon and Dorset borders.

Chard is the second largest town in South Somerset. At 121 metres (397ft) above sea level it is both the southernmost and one of the highest located towns in Somerset.

People have been living in the Chard area since prehistoric times and villas nearby at Tatworth and Wadeford show that Romans lived here too, but the first written mention of the town was in 1065 just prior to the Norman invasion.

Like many towns in England, Chard became closely involved in the wool trade. The rise of the woollen trade in the north of England badly affected the industry in Chard but in 1819 the manufacture of lace arrived. Soon there were mills in and around Chard producing bobbin lace net which was exported worldwide.

The industry continued throughout the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the last mill in the town finally closed, although net is still made in one of the nearby villages. A thriving engineering industry grew up alongside the lace mills and several of the firms, such as Numatic, which developed from this are still operating in Chard today. Certain industrial developments such as Oscar Mayer have encouraged people from Europe to settle here and have enriched the Chard cultural experience.

The Town Council wishes to build on the past achievement of the town, celebrate its heritage and deliver both services and improvements to help Chard continue to grow, to meet the needs of residents and those who work here and provide a high-quality visitor experience and offer.

Alongside the Town Council, Chard has a vibrant and very active voluntary sector with many groups supporting and providing a range of services for residents and visitors.

The Town is also very proud of its physical assets, the Reservoir, the Museum, the Guildhall, and the newly built Leisure Centre to name but a few.

Chard has a strong heritage of entrepreneurs and philanthropists. The 'Chard Five' represent those from Chard who rose to national prominence. Margaret Bondfield was a lacemaker's daughter who became the first female Cabinet minister when she served as the Minister of Labour in the Labour Government of 1929. James Gifford was a talented amateur scientist who produced one of the first X-ray photographs of the human hand and developed optics for telescopes and periscopes for use in World War I. James Gillingham became a pioneer and expert in designing and producing artificial limbs, frequently advising top surgeons. Arthur Hull kept a daily diary about life in Chard. As a land surveyor he found or was given many artefacts that became the heart of the Museum's collections. John Stringfellow, with William Henson, developed and built a steam powered airplane which flew in one of the Chard Lace Mills in 1848 and was displayed at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The Domesday Book recorded details of the settlement, which was then a large, though not rich, manor. In the middle of the 13th century the lord of the manor, the Bishop of Wells, drew up a charter founding a new borough of Chard. The site of the original village, now known as Old Town, was near St Mary's Church but the new borough was created a little distance away on what is now the A30.

## Some Key Facts About the People that Live in Chard

(sourced from the 2021 census)

Please note this data reflects the Chard Parish but not all respondents come from within that area.

- The Chard population is 50.4% female and 49.6% Male.
- 11.8% of people living in Chard were born outside the UK.
- We have fewer under 50s and more over 50s than the English average.
- There are 55.6% in employment and 2.8% unemployed whilst 46.1% are economically inactive (e.g. retired), with 22.3% having no qualifications (this excludes people under 16 years of age)
- 36.8% of over 16-year-olds are in employment work in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations.
- 19.9% of Chard residents are disabled which is 2.6% above the English average.
- 9.1% of the population provide 19 - 50+ hours of unpaid care per week.
- 57.7% of households have one or more dimensions of deprivation compared with the English average of 51.6 (dimensions are Education, Employment, Health and Housing)

## Key Findings

As well as the findings within each themed area the team also recognised that there were some issues that threaded through several themes. Communication and publicity seem to be critical. There is a huge amount of community activity going on in Chard that a lot of people are unaware of. Effort needs to go into helping people to understand what is available to them and how to access it. Transport, or lack of it, also influenced people's views about the arts, sports, entertainment and other cultural events. Consideration needs to be given to whether specific facilities need to be established in Chard or whether the need could be met by having designated community transport to and from venues and events.

## Methodology

Chard Town Council worked with Smart Communities to develop a survey, to consult the residents of the town and find out how they would like to see the town develop over the next few years.

Smart Communities, who have experience of working with communities throughout the country on similar surveys, provided a 'long list' of questions for consideration by the steering group. These questions were considered in respect of existing local services and facilities in the town and condensed to the final thirty-two which were the most relevant to Chard.

The survey was advertised on Facebook and around the town before going live online. Consideration was given to a postal survey to each household but the lack of administrative capacity to analyse the results meant this was not feasible.

Smart Communities analysed the responses and the steering committee have considered their findings and provided the commentary in the final report.



The community engagement events held over 2 days (9 and 10 June 2023) were a real success, actively enhancing the community feel in the High Street and providing an outlet for an additional 75 people to have their say. These findings have been set out in Appendix 1 and will be considered by working groups moving actions forward.



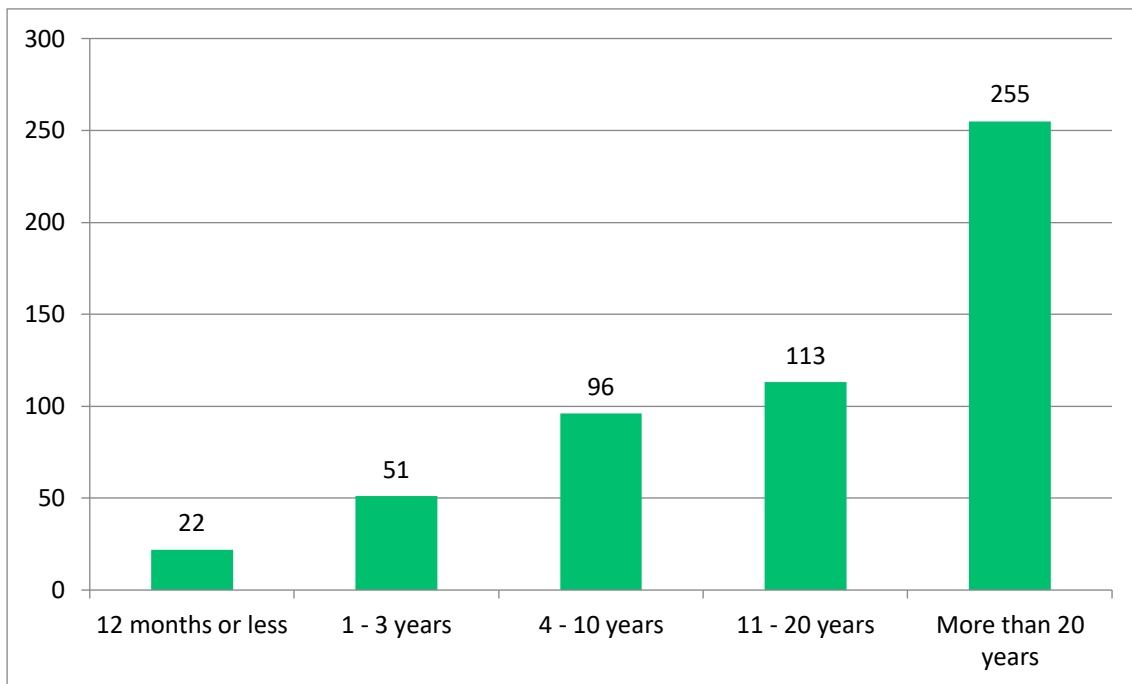
## Demographics

An introduction to who has completed the survey, including some basic background questions about age, household size and how long they have lived in the area. Please note that Census 2021 data is now available at <https://census.gov.uk/census-2021-results>

### Q1 How long have you lived in Chard?

Answered: 537

Skipped: 2



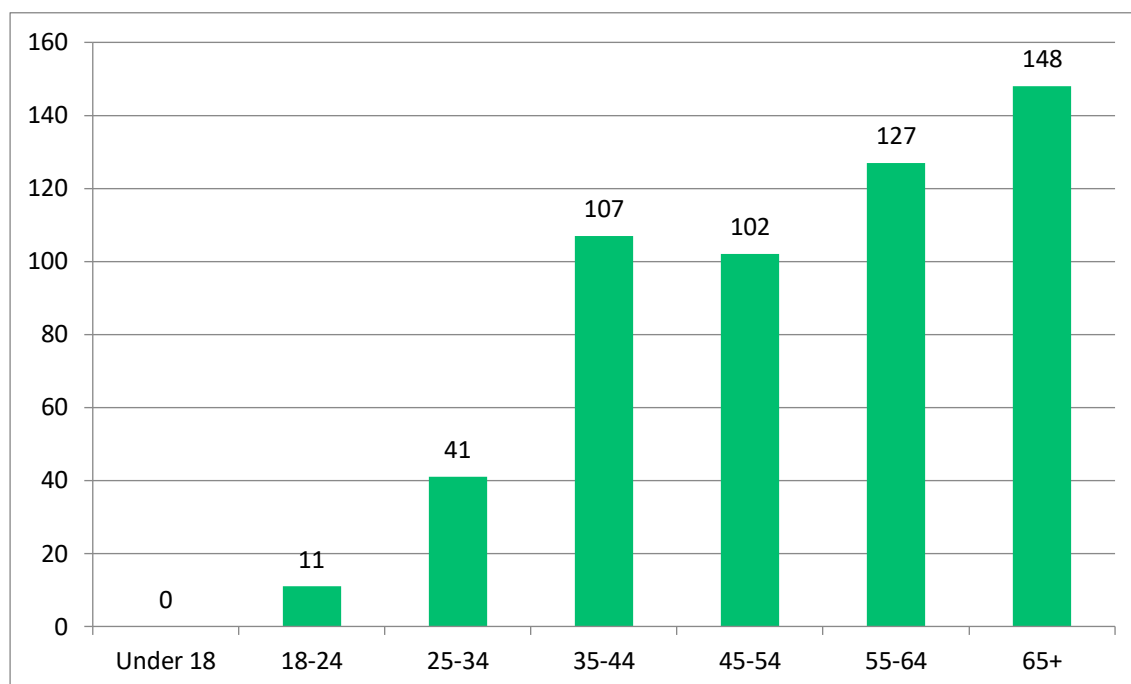
Of the 537 responses to this question, 368 responders have lived in Chard for over eleven years, nearly half of respondents to this question have lived in Chard for more than 20 years and 83 have only lived in Chard for under three years.

*Image right: Chard Guildhall*



## Q2 How old are you?

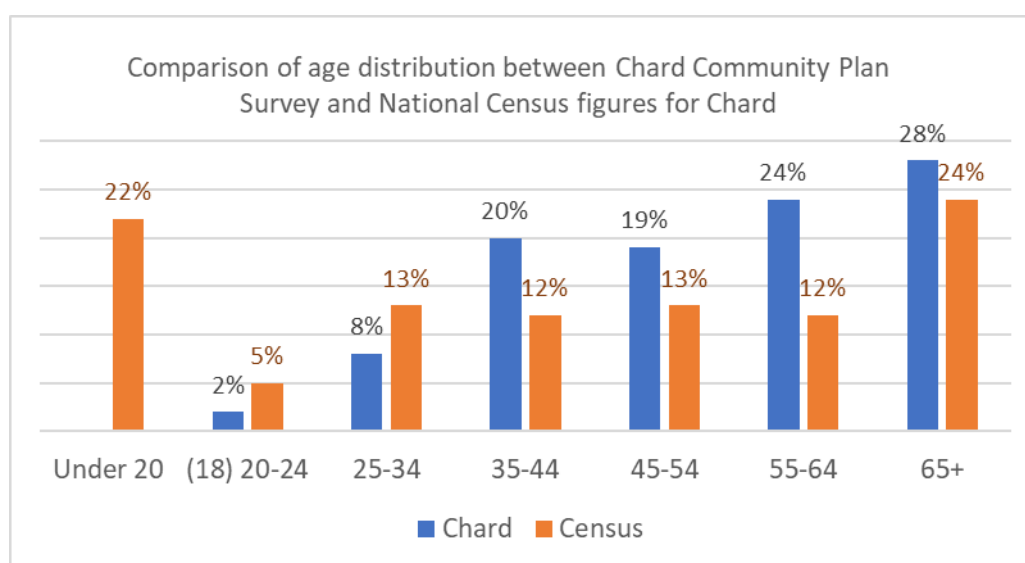
Answered: 536 Skipped: 3



Of the 536 responders 51 responders were under 34, 209 responders were between the ages of 35 and 55, leaving the over half of the responders, 275 in the over 55 age brackets. Meaning that most of the responders were representing the older sections of Chard community.

As there were no responses from people under 18 the demographic profile of those respondents compares with the census figures for Chard are skewed in favour of older age groups particularly from 35 upwards. One reason for the lack of under 18s response maybe because the prize draw was only open to those over 18.

This chart compares the Census 2021 data for Chard Parish with our survey respondents:

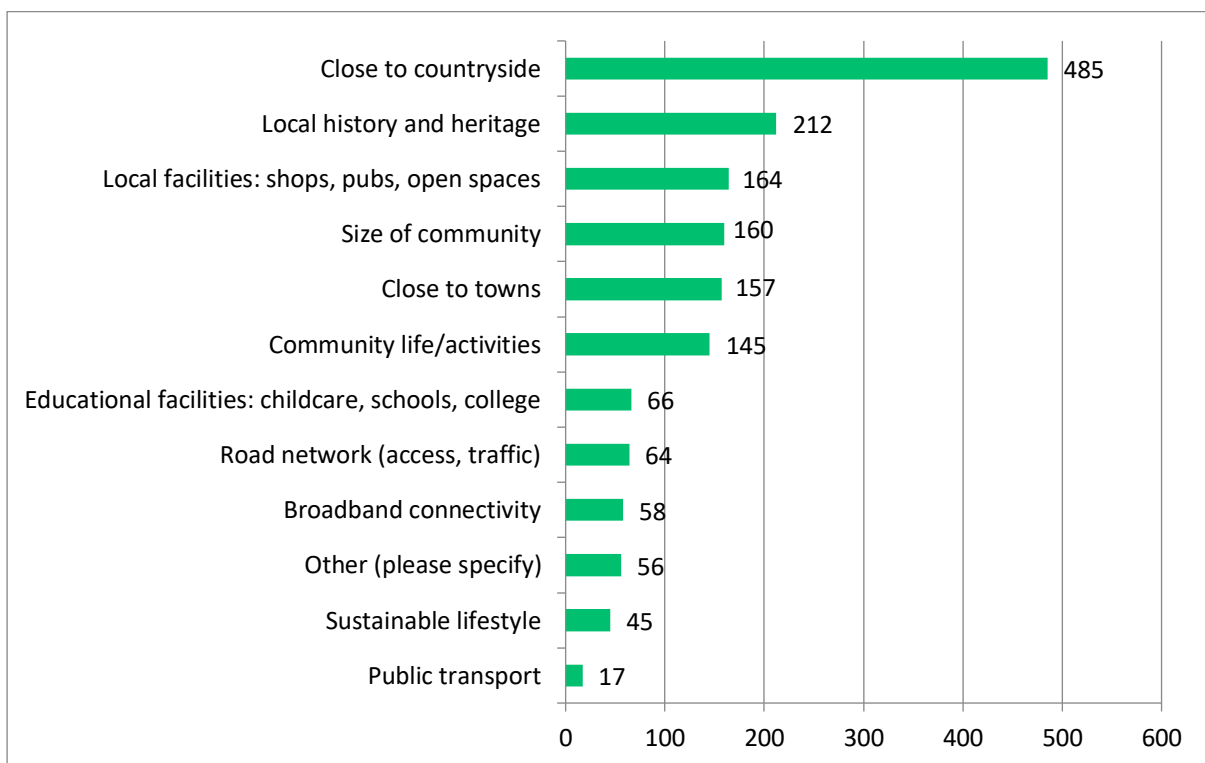


Your views on living in Chard and a snapshot of what aspects of the town you like and don't like.

Questions 3 and 4 were included in the survey as a means of taking a snapshot of views in 2023. We will be able to use this information to compare and assess what has been achieved or changed by asking the same question in five or ten years' time. A number of respondents answered Q3 and Q4 and nothing else, but we felt it was valid to capture this response in light of capturing a baseline of opinion without skewing the rest of the data.

### Q3 What do you like most about living in Chard? (please tick all that apply)

Answered: 545 Skipped: 9



The highest number of respondents (485) to this question listed 'like being close to the countryside', as their reason for liking to live in Chard followed by 212 respondents listing local history and heritage. The least popular response to this question was public transport (echoed in other topics throughout the survey).

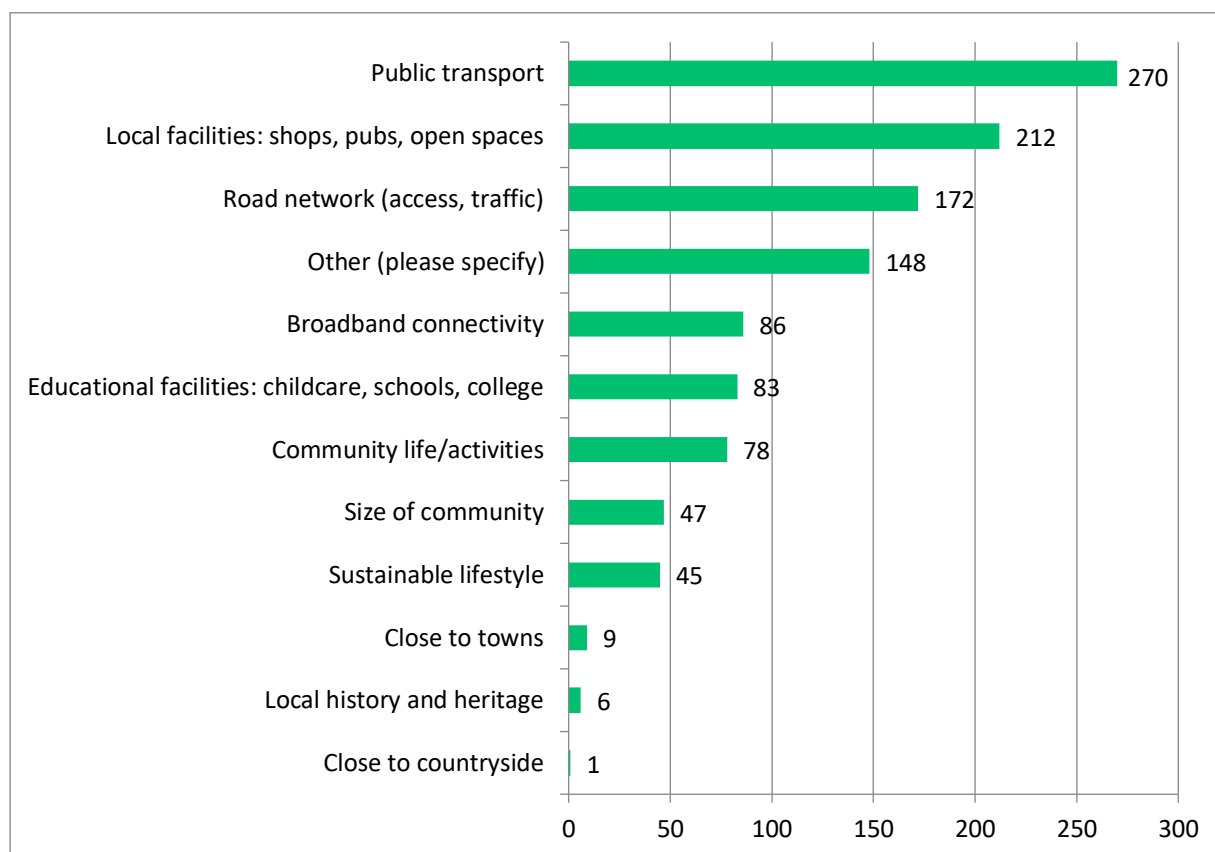
"Other" comments valued Chard's position close to the coast, and the people and community spirit. Several explained that they were only living in Chard because of the affordable house prices which allowed them to get on the housing ladder, but they would soon be moving out of the area.

- *The friendliness of the town*
- *The kindness of the residents!*
- *The people, they are so friendly and helpful.*



#### Q4 What do you like least about living in Chard? (please tick all that apply)

Answered: 517 Skipped: 37



Of the 517 responses, 270 responders ticked public transport as what they liked least about living in Chard. Public transport is consistent across Q3 and Q4 as the least popular aspect of living in Chard and is a topic we will see come up again and again throughout the survey findings (in environment, health & wellbeing).

There were more “other” comments to this question, with specific concerns over crime and safety, lack of doctors and dentists, development of new housing without adequate infrastructure and facilities. All these concerns are found again across other survey topics. Other examples:

- *Crime rate, lack of early years provision, lack of joined up thinking around services in the town e.g.: food banks, anti-social behaviour prevalence.*
- *Flooding. House expansion.*
- *Lack of sports pitches. Chard should have a 3g/4g facility.*
- *Love the local history but we need to highlight it more and make it generate income for the town*

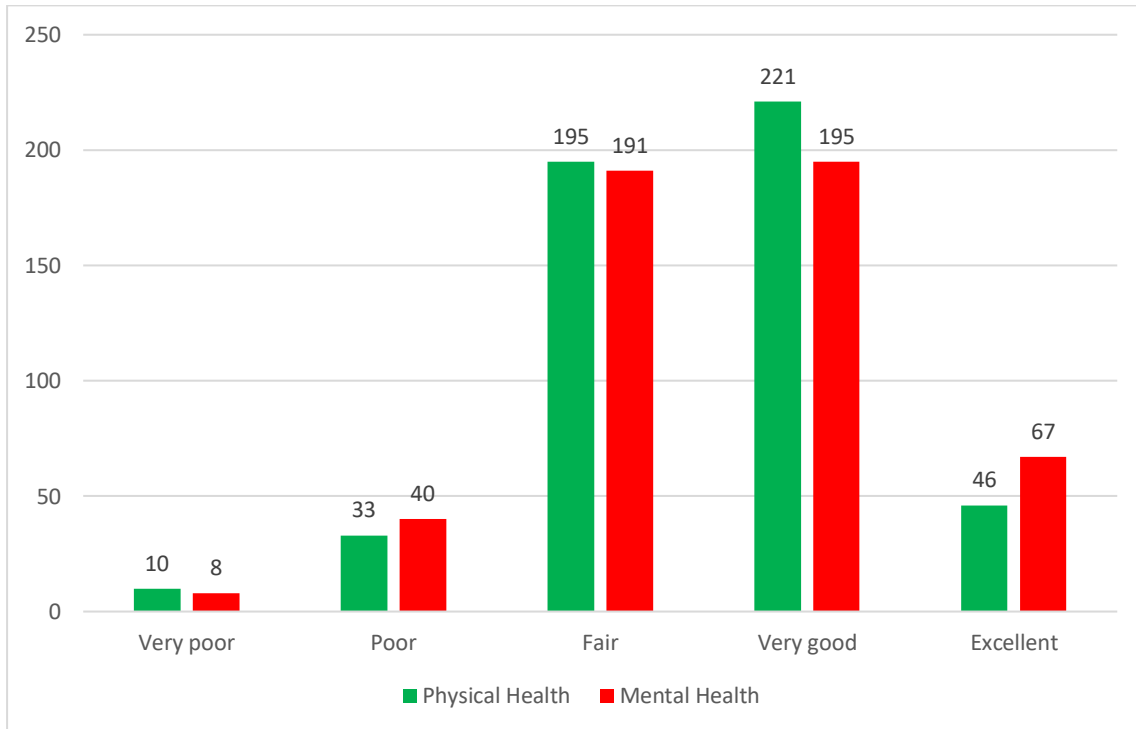


## Health and Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing is one of the priority topics for consultation in this Community Review process. You'll find that many of the other topics covered in this questionnaire will affect our health in some way too (Traffic & transport; Climate Emergency; Cost of Living Crisis; Covid recovery).

### Q5 How do you rate your general health and wellbeing?

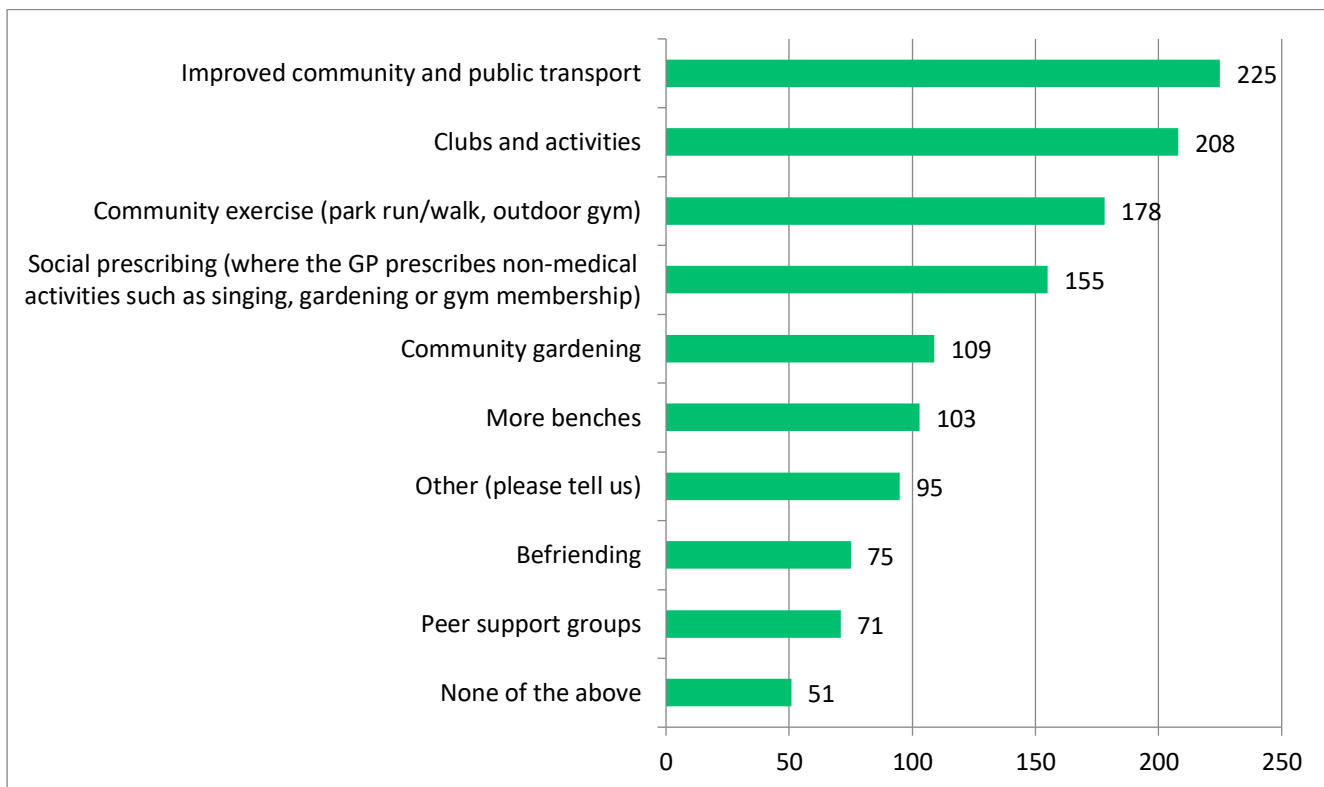
Answered: 506 Skipped: 33



The health of our community is generally very good. Of the 506 responses most, 453 responders feel they have fair/very good/excellent mental health, and 462 responders feel they have fair/very good/excellent physical health. Only 43 responders reported they had poor/very poor physical health and 48 responders stated poor/very poor mental health.

**Q6 What could be offered in your community to help improve your health and wellbeing needs, including reducing isolation? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 495 Skipped: 44



Of the 495 responses to this question, 225 feel that improved community and public transport would improve their health and wellbeing needs. This reflects the findings to Q4 where public transport is the least favoured aspect of living in Chard. Clubs and activities are also rated as important (208 responses).

Given the number of existing clubs and sport provision and activity there is in Chard, this suggests that improved communications – another repeating theme - about what is available could reach more participants and therefore have a greater impact.

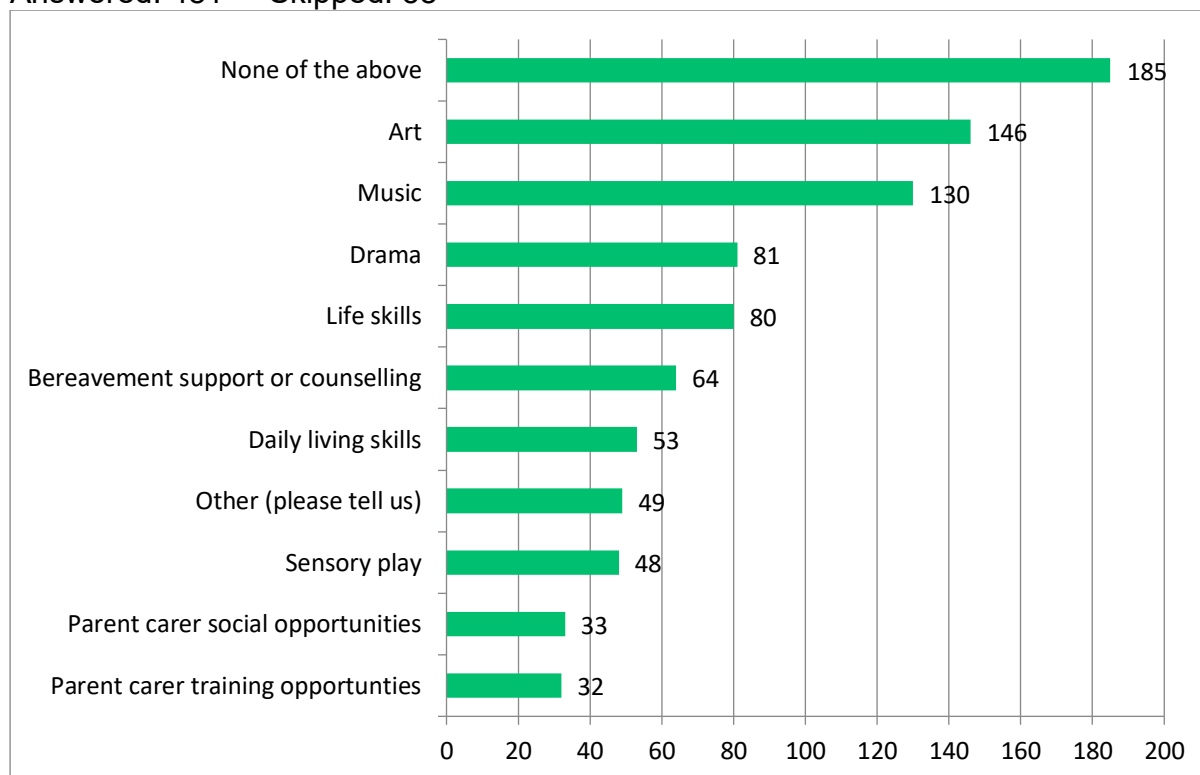
*Image left: local bus at Boden Street bus stop, taken May 2023*

Other comments were themed around:

- *Need for better access to health provision, including mental health workers*
- *Better disabled access to parking and facilities including the swimming pool*
- *More open spaces*
- *Better public transport*

**Q7 Would you, someone in your household or someone you care for, use or attend any of the following health and well-being inclusive activities or therapies?**

Answered: 481 Skipped: 58



These responses fall into 3 main areas: The Arts (art, music, drama), Personal support (life skills, bereavement support, daily living skills) & Parenting Support (sensory play, parent carer social opportunities, parent carer training opportunities).

Of the 481 responses, 185 wouldn't use any of the listed support activities. 357 ticked arts-based therapy activities which suggests these would be more popular among respondents than Personal Support, with 197 responses. This might be because life skills are offered elsewhere in the town, or because there are less creative/arts-based opportunities currently. There were lots of individual comments for this question including requests for more opportunities for board games, yoga, adult education, parking and public toilets. There was also a concern for elderly people living on their own.



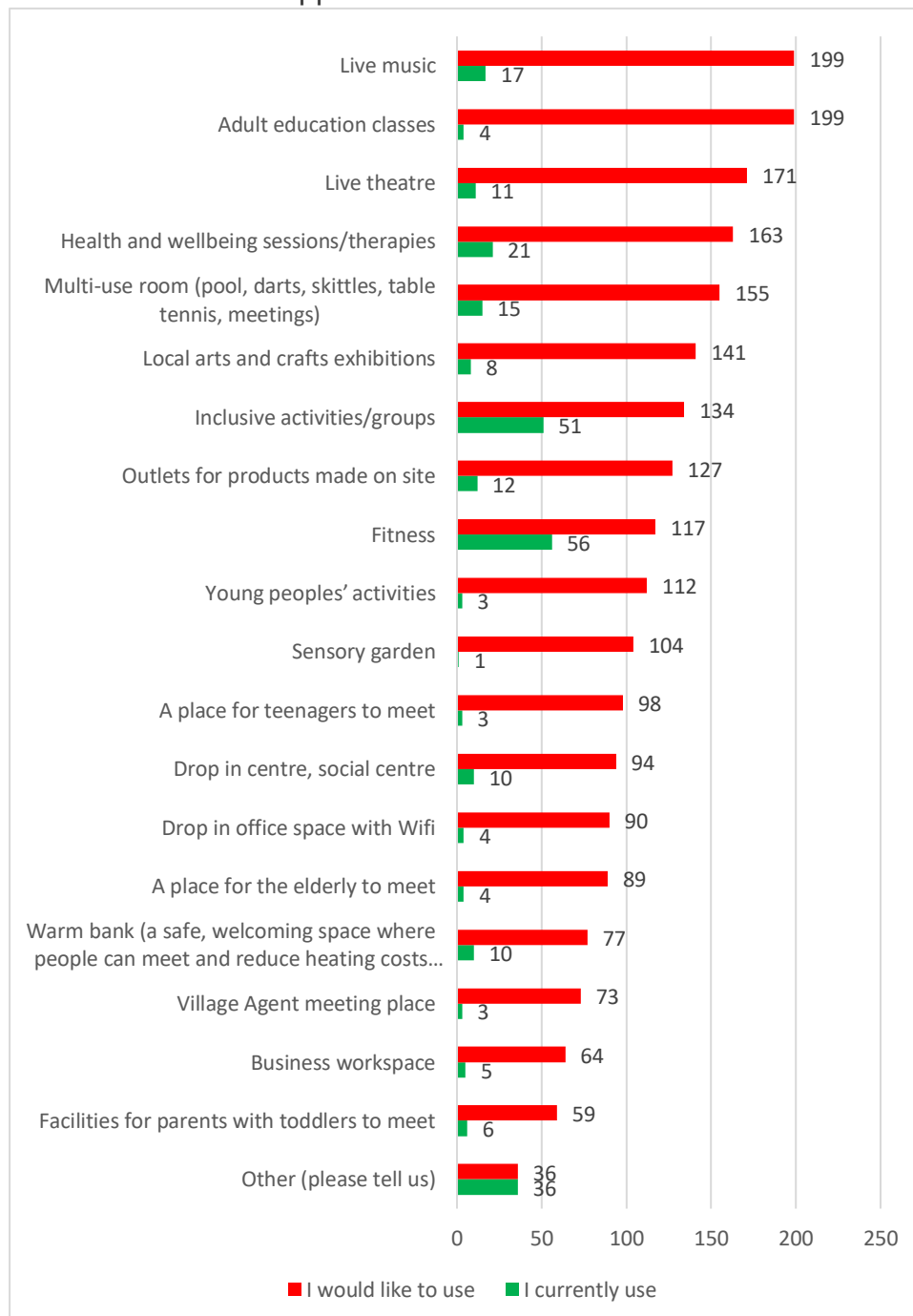


## Community facilities and services

We have several community facilities in the town, by which we mean buildings, equipment for recreation and places to assemble for meetings, events and social gatherings. These questions have helped us understand whether the facilities are suitable for the community, where improvements are needed or if new facilities are needed.

**Q8 Which of the following do you already use - or would you like to use - the Community Hub for? Some of these activities are not possible in the current site but may be available in future sites. (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 394 Skipped: 145



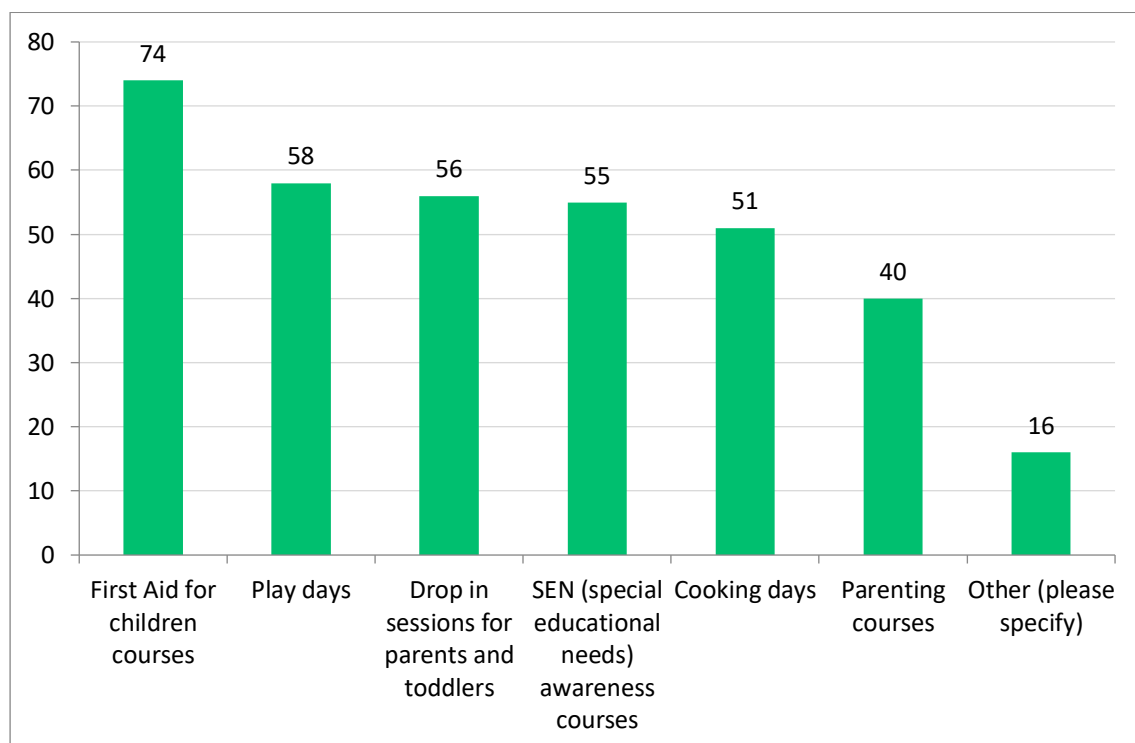
We asked what the community **currently use** the Hub for, and what they **would like to use it** for. The green column shows that the numbers of participants currently using the facilities are small, and in some cases these facilities are not currently being provided. Of the 394 responses to this question, the Arts once again emerged as a strong theme of what people would like to use the venue for, with live music (199) and live theatre (171) in the top three of desired activities, alongside adult education classes (199) and inclusive activities (134).

Interesting to note that 'fitness' has a high level of 'currently use' (56) but an even higher level of 'would like to use' (117). Only 6 respondents said they used the facilities for parents to meet and 59 participants who said they would like to use it for this service.

Some of the comments left in 'Other' were around creative uses for The Community Hub, a few comments about extending hours and the need for jobs. One person was not sure who the Village Agent was, so again the theme of communication coming through, and people do not know what is currently available to them.

**Q9 There are discussions taking place for the Community Hub to deliver better early years provision for children aged 0 - 5. If you care for pre-school children, please tell us what provision you would find useful (please tick all that apply)**

Answered: 131 Skipped: 408





*Image above: art activities provided for families and young children in Chard Guildhall for Jubilee Celebrations 2022.*

131 responded to what pre-school provision would be most useful. First Aid for children courses had the most (74) responses, followed by play days (58) and drop in sessions (56). Parenting courses were the least popular response (40).

The 'other' comments suggested that there needs to be more groups for Primary aged children or that there are already childcare groups in town.

*Image below: planting with Snowdon House residents*

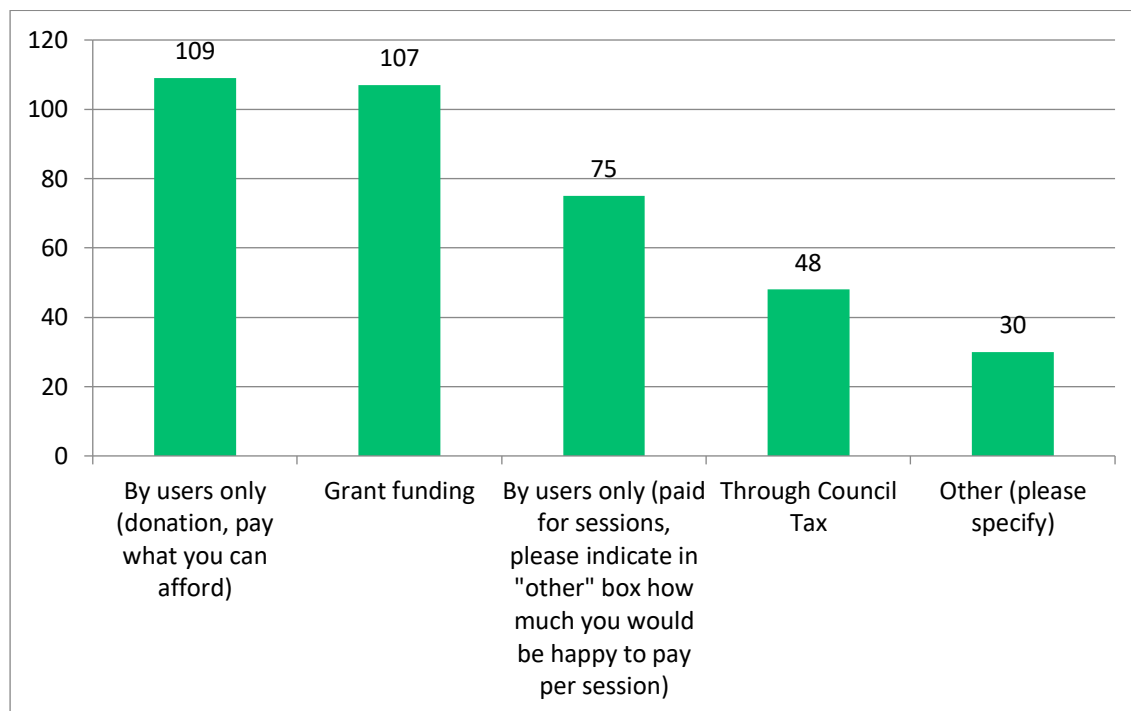




**Q10 How should this early year's provision be paid for? (please tick all that apply)**

Answered: 225

Skipped: 314



Of the 225 responses to this question, most responses supported donations (109), grant funding (107) or earned income (75) for the early years provision rather than through Council Tax (48). The 'other' comments were a mix of examples of why the Government should pay and others stating quite the opposite. One comment pointed out, 'You may exclude those who really need extra support if you charge'.

*Image: Upper Henson Park Opening*

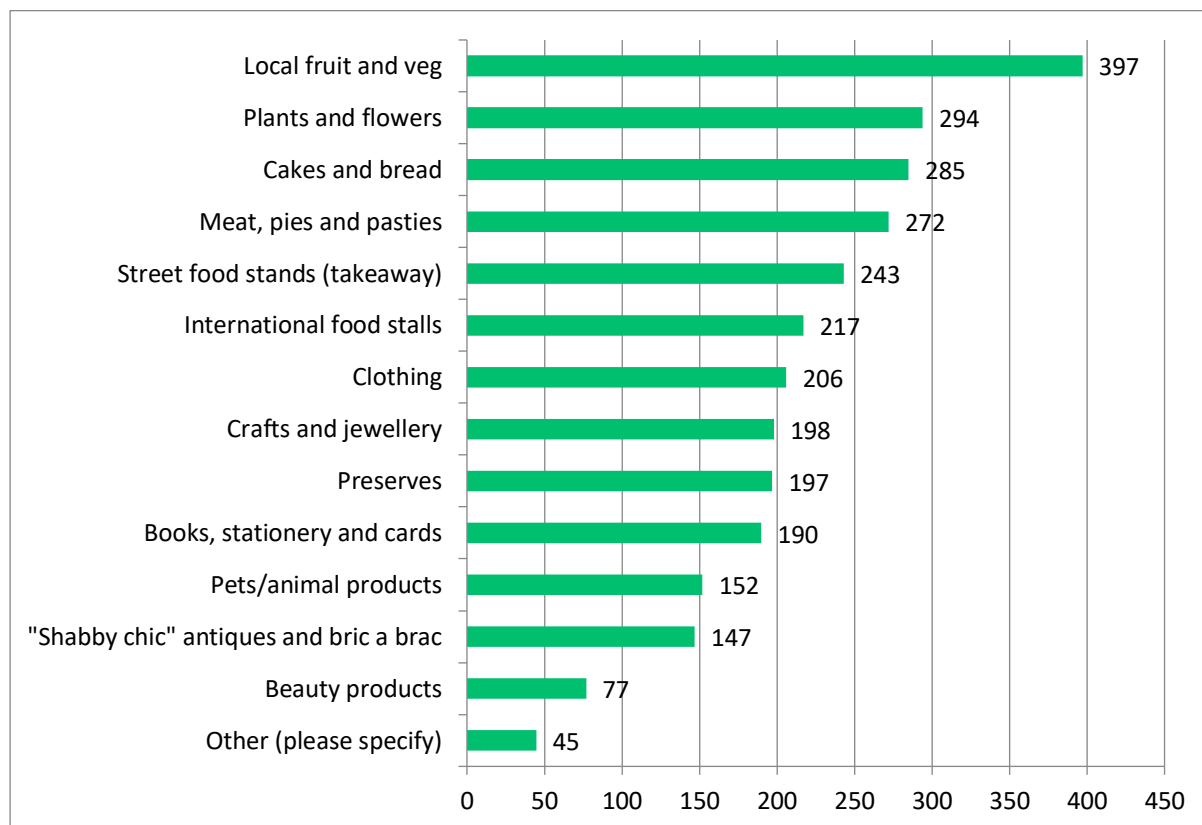




**Q11 We would like to develop the existing Saturday street market because a regular street market offers local produce, supports small businesses and retailers benefit from the increased number of people visiting the town centre when the market is busy. Tell us what you would like to see in Chard's street market (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 431

Skipped: 108



With 431 responses, the survey results show interest and support for expansion of the market offer. Food was the most popular (total 1197 responses across 4 options), and this comes through in other topics as well – growing food, food distribution, food pantry, local farm foods etc.

There was a high number of respondents commenting on the 'Other' box with ideas on how to make the market better, making sure it would not be selling something that is already on offer within the town, suggesting road closures and free parking, promoting local community group stalls. Additionally, respondents were commenting with suggestions on which other markets to go and look at (Axminster, Honiton, further afield to Horsham and London's Portobello Road). Many comments were made on selling tools and local produce made locally and unique to Chard.



*Image above: Monthly community litter pick*

**Q12 Which leisure activities and recreation facilities do you currently use in Chard? (tick any that apply)**

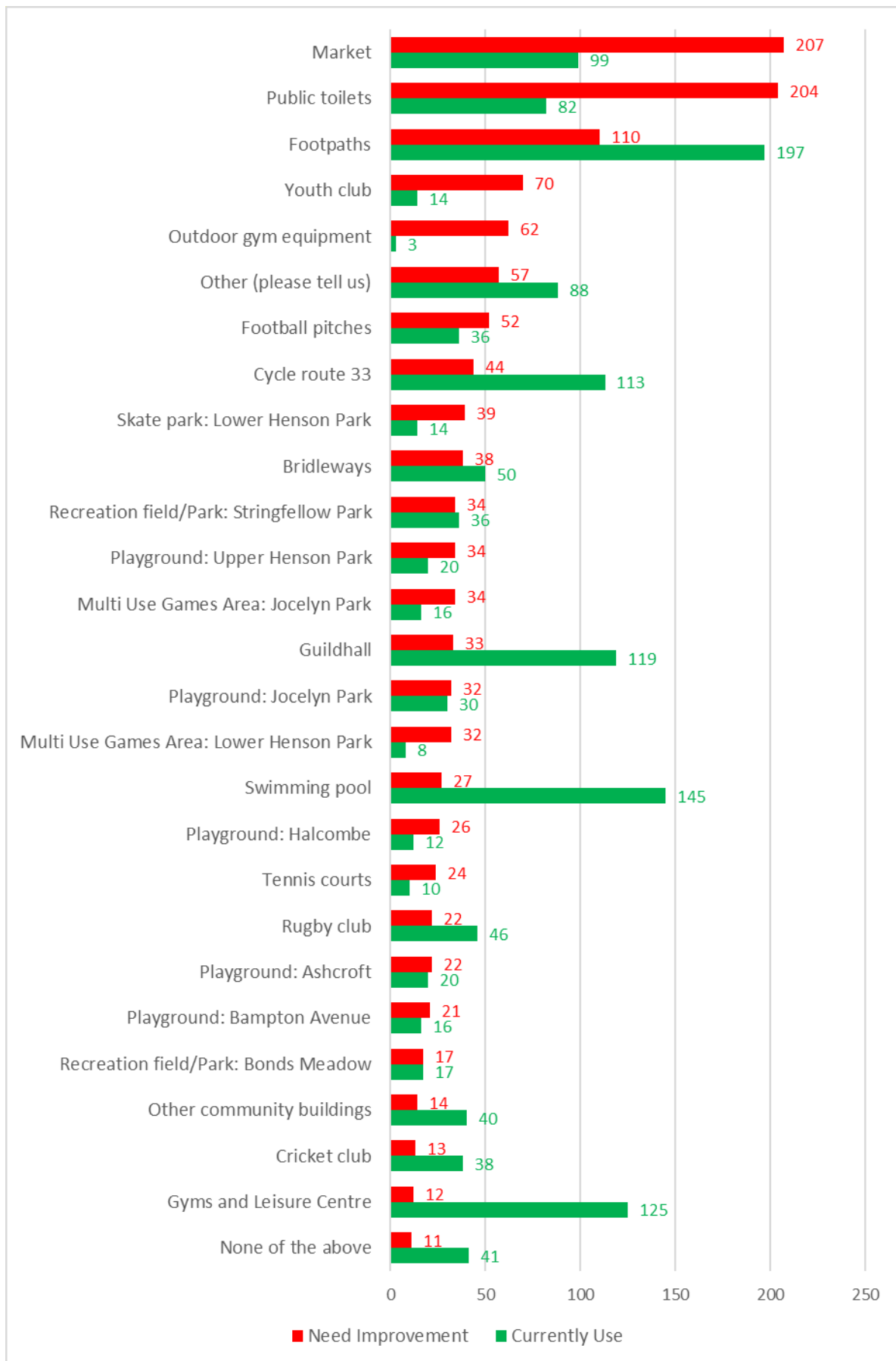
Answered: 425

Skipped: 114

**Q13 Which leisure activities and recreation facilities in Chard need improvement? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 394

Skipped: 145





Of the 425 responses (what facilities do you currently use in Chard), almost half (197) of the respondents of this questionnaire said they currently use footpaths and 207 respondents have listed footpaths as in need of improvements. Chard has recently opened a new Leisure Centre with indoor swimming pool, so it is positive to see these are listed next as the most used facility in Chard (145) and pleasing to see they do not score highly on needing improvements (27).

Of the 394 responses (what facilities need improvement), 207 of respondents stated the market needs to be improved, closely followed by the public toilets (204). The Youth Club was used by only 14 respondents to this question (perhaps not surprising given that no one under 18 completed the questionnaire) but featured highly as a facility needing improvement (70).

Some examples of comments are:

- *Baby changing facilities in public areas*
- *I would like to cycle more, as I did in Ilminster when I lived there, but feel unsafe on many of the routes around Chard (I'm 65) so would prefer routes with no traffic*
- *More equipment for people with disabilities*
- *We need a sports centre for indoor sports. Open all year not just in between exams and holidays*

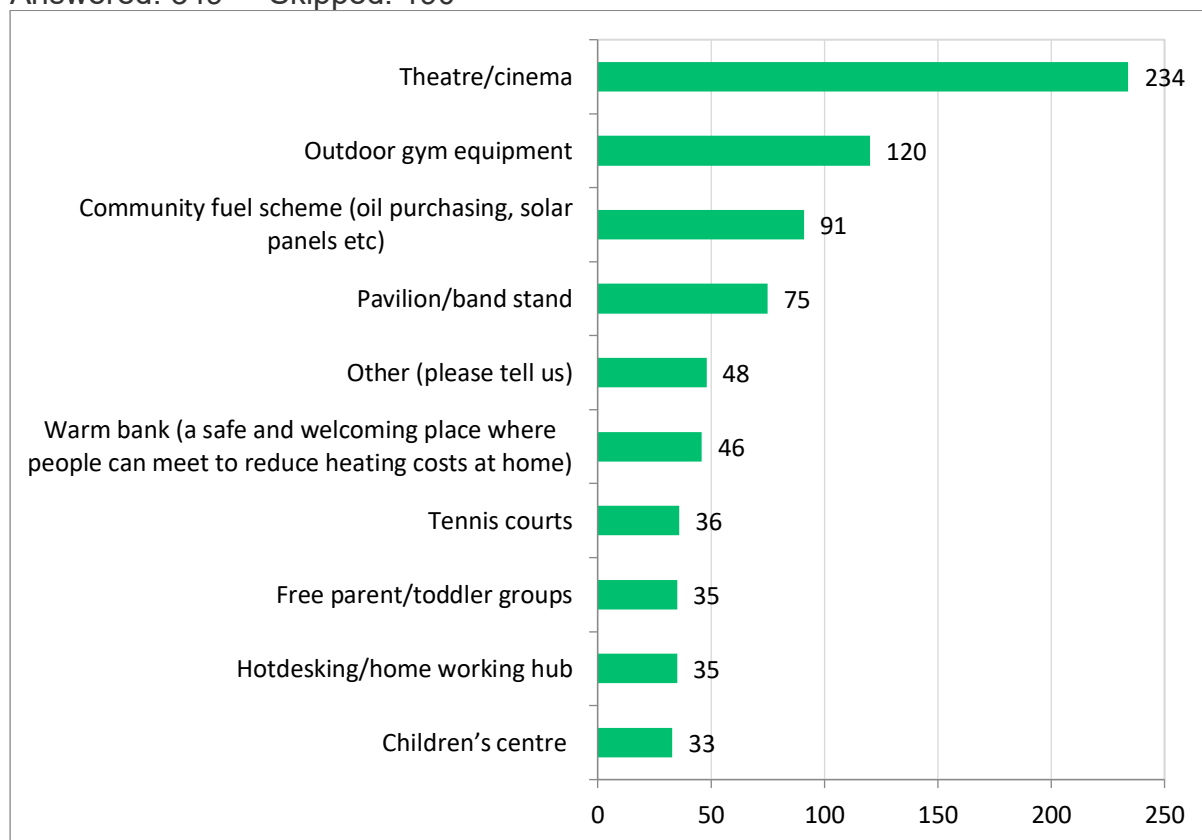


*Image above: Upper Henson Park Opening*



**Q14 Which facilities would you like to use if they were available in Chard? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 349 Skipped: 190



Of the 349 responses, the most popular option, ticked by over half, 234 respondents, says they would use a theatre or cinema if it was in Chard. Later in the survey, we see that cinema is the most popular facility outside of Chard for young people (see Q28). Outdoor gym equipment is the next most popular option, with 120 responses, followed closely by a community fuel scheme, with 91 responses.

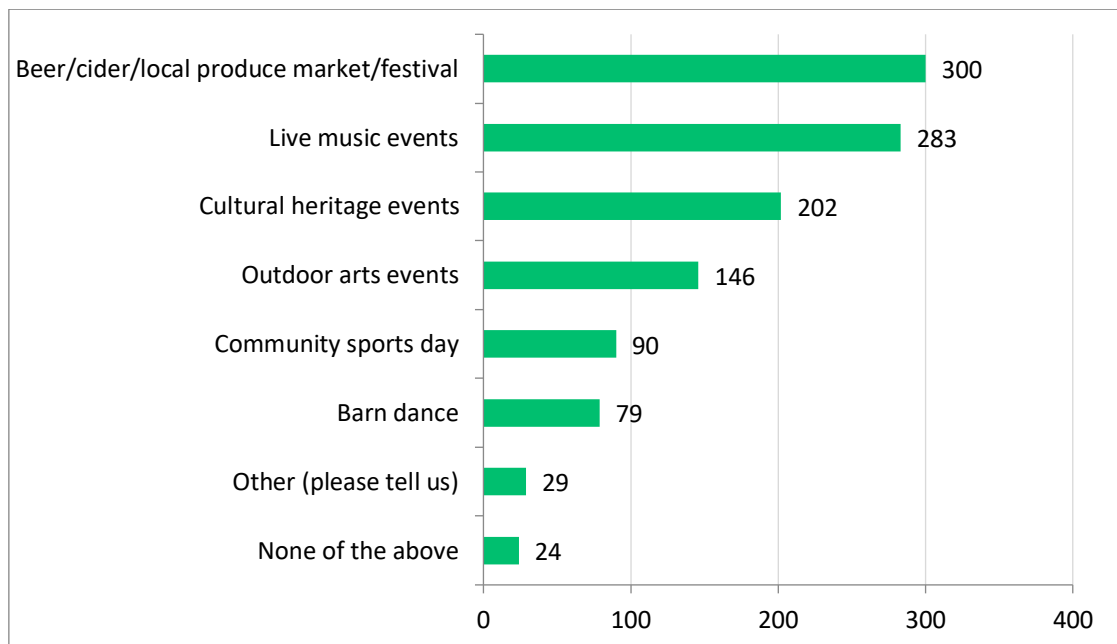
Other comments included:

- *Community sports hall, including badminton, squash and tennis courts*
- *MacDonalds and bowling alley*
- *NHS Dentist' (raised in Health & Wellbeing)*
- *Improve market please (as previously)*
- *Better public toilet facilities, including changing places toilet (mentioned previously)*
- *Art Gallery and Art Centre for the Community*
- *An area with trees, an outdoor cafe in town centre, a revival of decent quality shops, a local produce co-operative*
- *After school 'teaclub' childcare*
- *Could Chard have something similar to the community Waffle House in Axminster?*
- *Active Travel routes*
- *Weekly 5k park run*

**Q15 What community events would you like to see take place in Chard? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 411

Skipped: 128



Out of 411 responses, 300 indicated support for beer/cider and local produce festivals for suggested community events. The next three most popular answers are again talking around art projects (live music: 283; cultural heritage events: 202; outdoor arts events: 146).

Many of the comments also echoed the top four answers as well as a 'Fun Run', pet shows and other outdoor creative events. The strength in arts responses evidences the strong feeling within the respondents to engage in more arts events.



Image above: Chard Together, March 2023



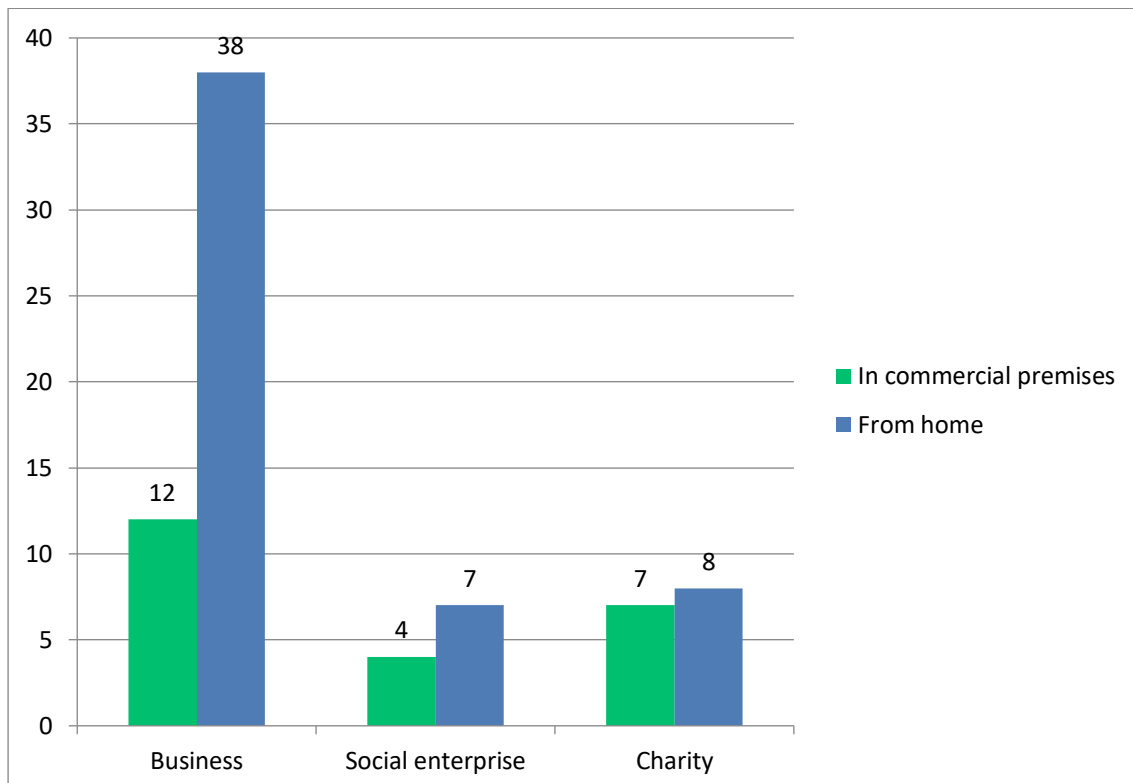
## Businesses

Business has changed over the last couple of years and how and where it takes place has been particularly affected by Covid. These results will encourage a thriving business community that is supported and maintained in the town.

### Q16 Do you run a business, social enterprise or charity in Chard?

Answered: 62

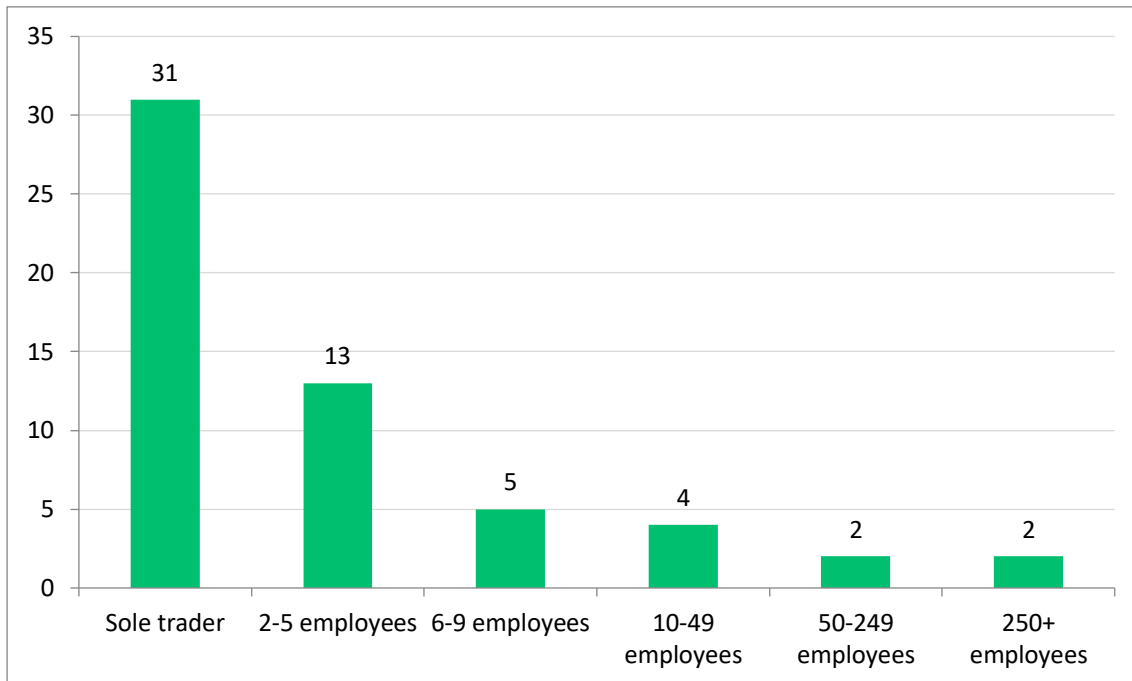
Skipped: 477



Of the 62 responses to this question, 38 respondents are running businesses from home, 12 in commercial premises. Then lower numbers are linked to social enterprises and charities: together 15 responses from people running those from home and 11 from commercial premises.

### Q17 If yes, what size is your business?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 482



Of the 57 responses 31, over half, are listed as sole traders and on the other end of the scale, only 2 are listed as large business with over 250 employees. There has been a loss of large industry in the town over recent years with now only one or two big businesses left. Most business/social enterprise/charity in the town is SME (Small, medium sized enterprise - less than 250 employees) scale.

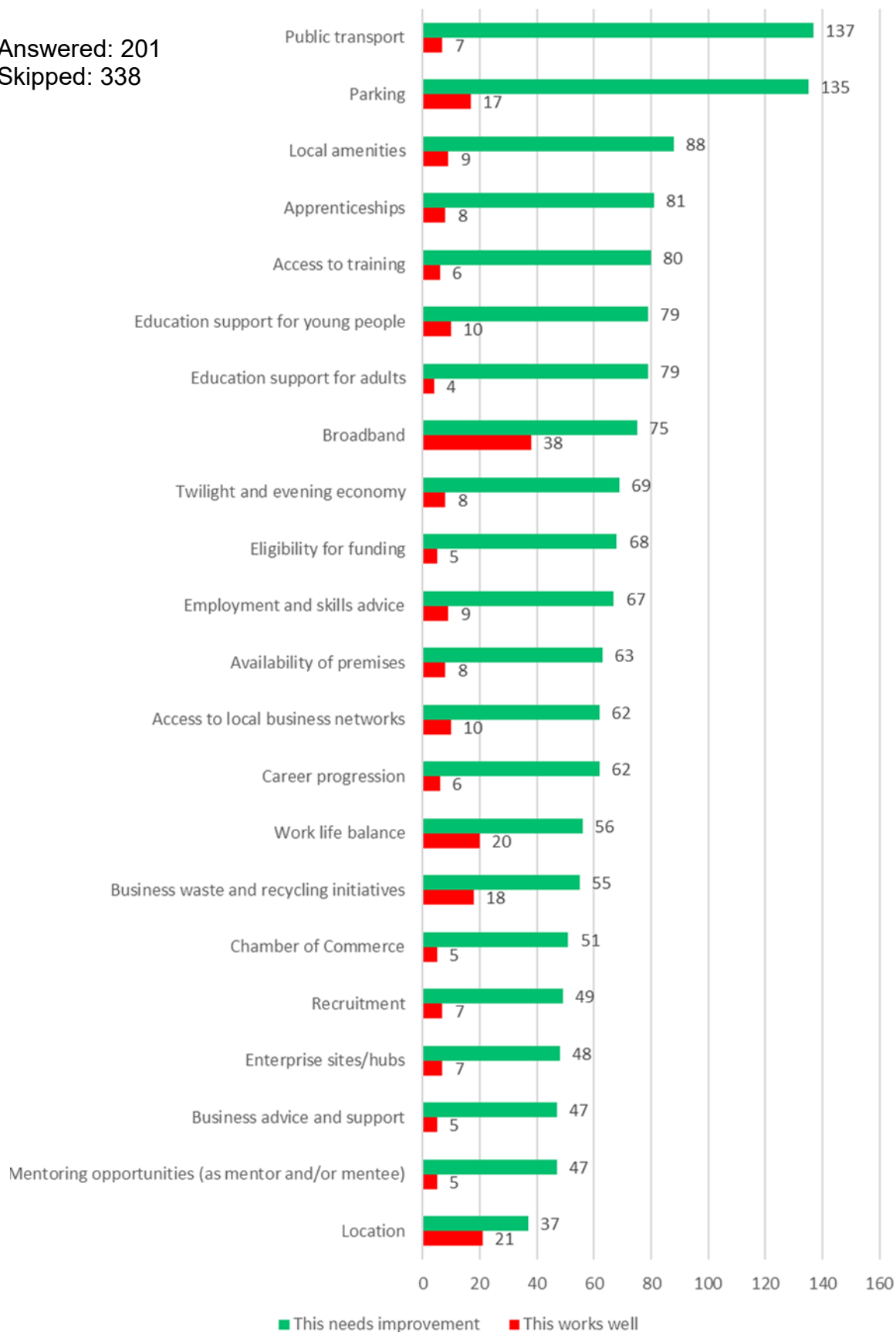
Image below: Howard's Row, Chard





**Q18 What works well and what can be improved for business, employment, training and education in Chard? (please tick all that apply)**

Answered: 201  
Skipped: 338



Of the 201 responses to this question, 137 listing Public Transport as their biggest area for improvement and 135 listing parking as an area to improve. Following these are local amenities (88), apprenticeships (81) and access to training (80).

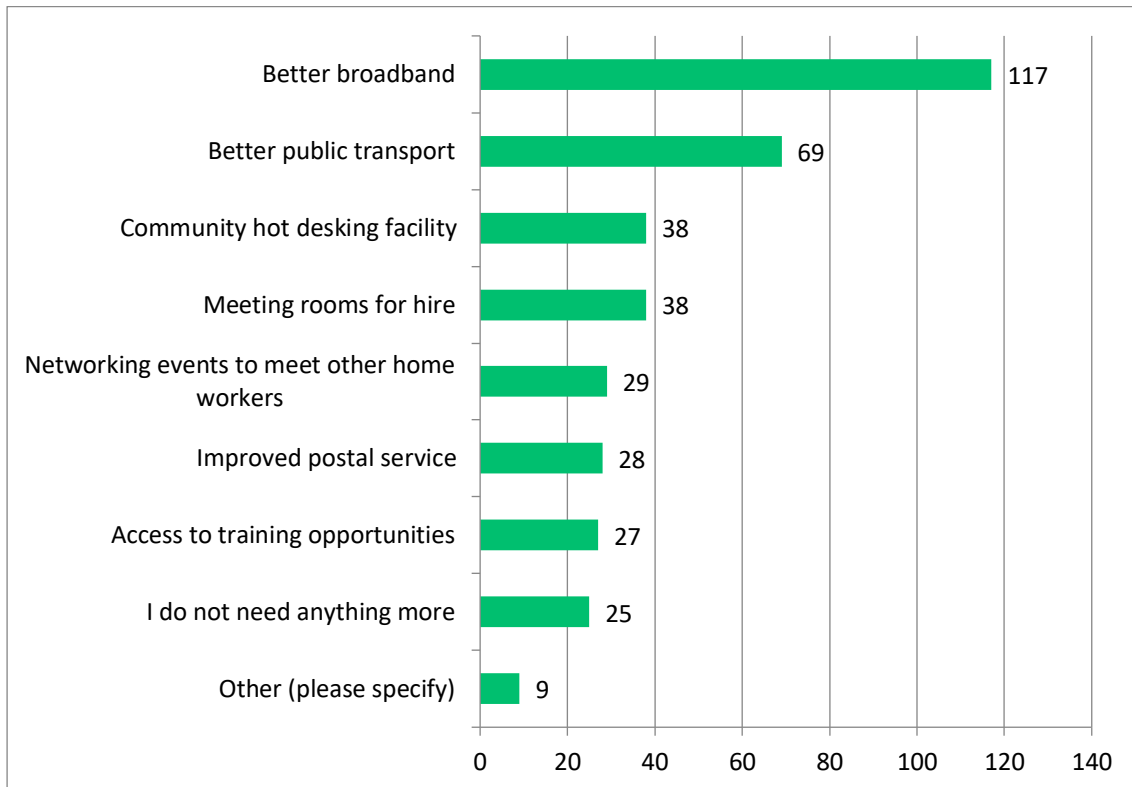
Of the 201 responses to this question, only 38 believe the broadband is working well, 21 believe the location is good and 20 feel they have a good work life balance. The question of broadband quality is echoed in the next question with the highest response to improve working from home.



*Image above: Bus partnership community awareness stall*

**Q19 If anyone in your household works from home what would help improve this experience? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 193 Skipped: 346



Out of the 193 responses, 117 (well over half) felt broadband could be better, followed closely by public transport (69). The number of respondents was low and further research will be needed in this area. A common theme is emerging from other parts of the survey, broadband and public transport appear to be the main concerns.

Other comments included:

- *Bring back Cresta evening school provision*
- *Parking for out-of-town shoppers has been reduced by building leisure centre on carpark. Chard is now more difficult to access*
- *Fix East Street / Fore Street / Furnham Road junction or bypass it to allow traffic to get from north to south Chard and avoid this bottleneck.*

*Image below: Fore Street with sculpture by Neville Gabie*





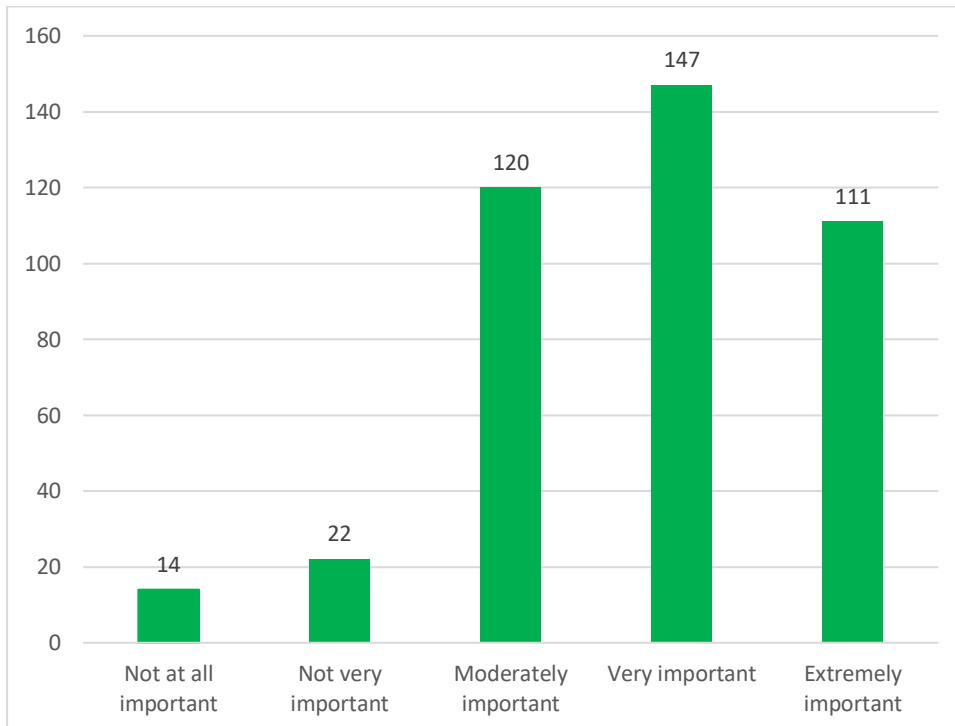
## Climate emergency/Environmental issues

The challenges of the Climate and Nature Emergency are serious concerns for the future. To address this, it is going to require positive changes to all our lifestyles. The information gathered from our residents, businesses and other key groups in the parish will highlight what we can all do as a community to help achieve the goal of being carbon-neutral by 2030.

### Q20 How important is the climate and nature emergency to you?

Answered: 414

Skipped: 125



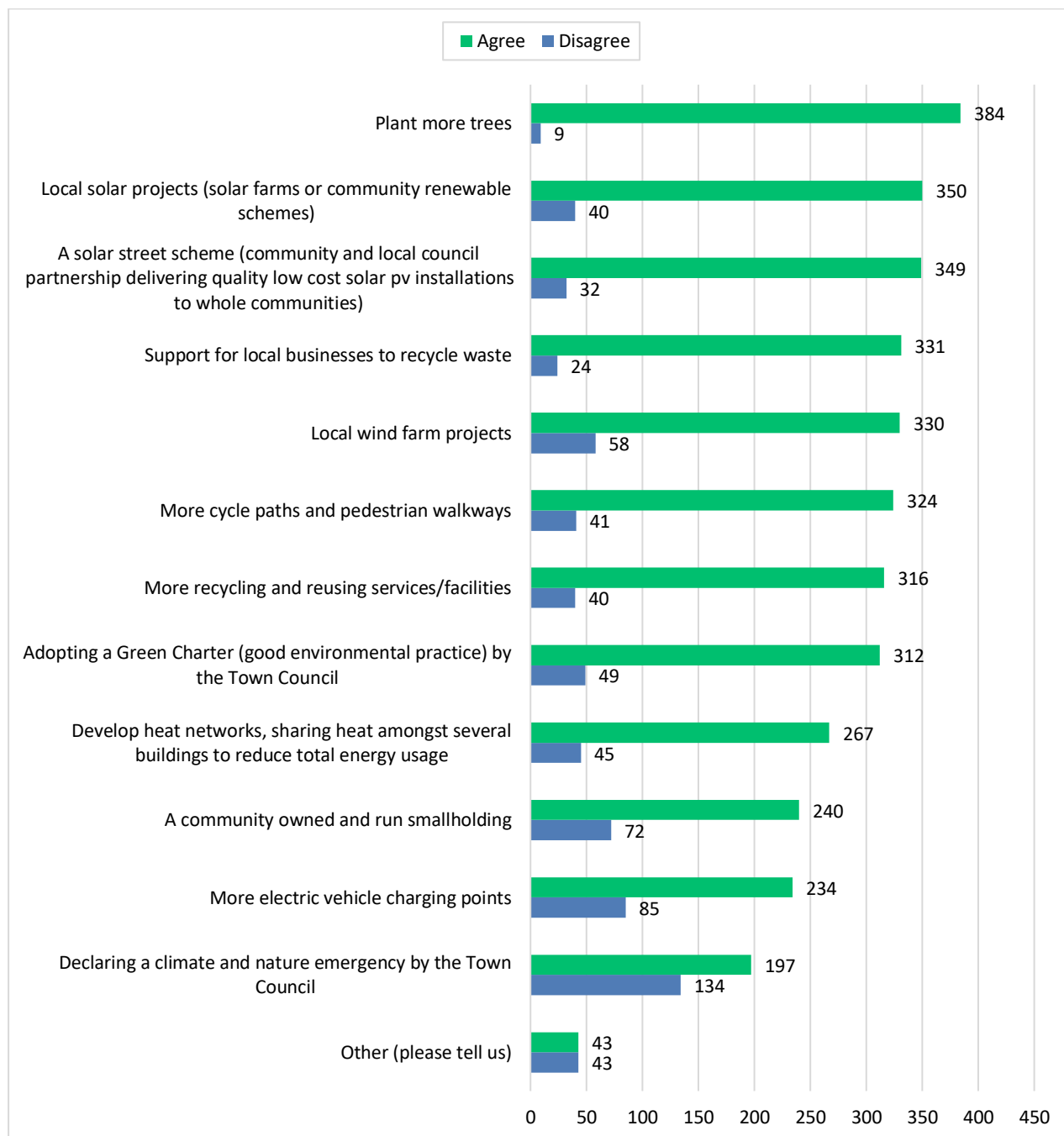
It is clear that climate change and environmental issues are important to the respondents with 378 of 414 rating them moderately to extremely important. Over half, 258 responses feel that climate change and environmental issues are either very or extremely important, with only 14 listed as not at all important to them.



## Q21 Some of the future climate change actions are likely to involve the town changing. Do you agree or disagree with the following changes?

Answered: 419

Skipped: 120



Of the 419 responses to this question of agreeing to changes as part of the Climate Emergency, the largest number at 384 responses agreed the importance of planting more trees, with only 9 disagreeing. Along with support for solar schemes at 350 responses and 40 disagreeing, the responses were very strongly in agreement with future climate change actions. At the lower end, 234 (still a high number) agreeing with more electric car chargers and 134 disagreeing, which was the largest number of responses that disagreed.

Other comments were themed around growing/food/agriculture, renewable energy, travel and transport included:

- *Access to more local produce, community garden project, wildflower verges, no boxing day hunt through chard, rewilding/meadow in parts of local parks, rickshaw scheme*
- *Help to buy solar panels/wind turbines for local homes.*
- *Land should be used for crops, don't believe there is a climate emergency but good environmental practices are important.*
- *Recommended / supported local Solar provider so we don't get scammed and obtain good advice.*
- *No more housing development on green field sites. No Chard Bypass or Road Building*
- *More pedestrian paths into the surrounding countryside or for bikes which are dangerous to children and dogs.*

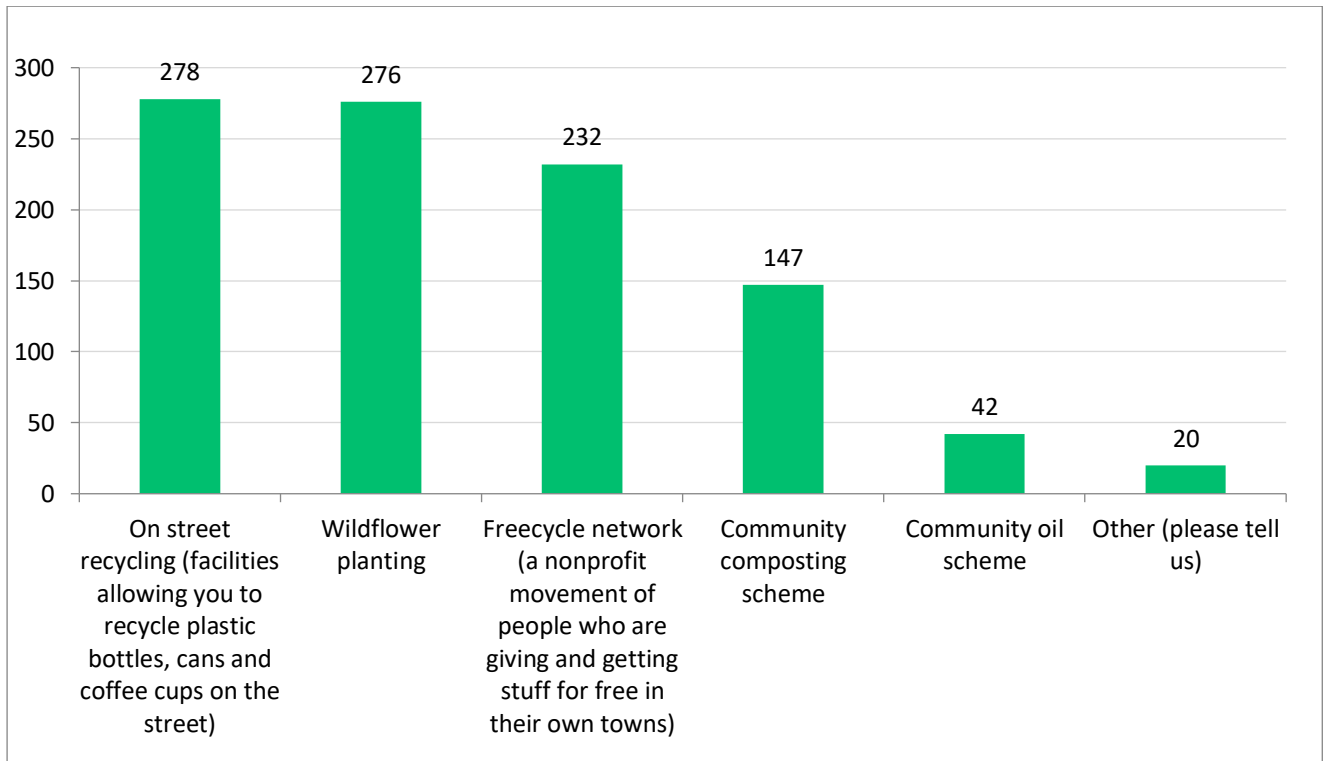


*Image above: community tree planting, 2021*

**Q22 What services or facilities would you use or would like to see in Chard if they were available? (tick any that apply)**

**Answered: 374**

**Skipped: 165**



Of the 374 responses, 278 ticked more on improved street recycling. There are recycling initiatives in the town but there is support for these to be extended. 276 responses supported wildflower planting and 232 the freecycle network.

*Image left: Chard Town Council recycling bins outside The Guildhall, May 2023*

From the positive response rate, it would definitely be worth exploring further community schemes.

'Other' comments yielded the following suggestions:

- *Library of things*
- *Swap currency jobs*
- *Adult education*

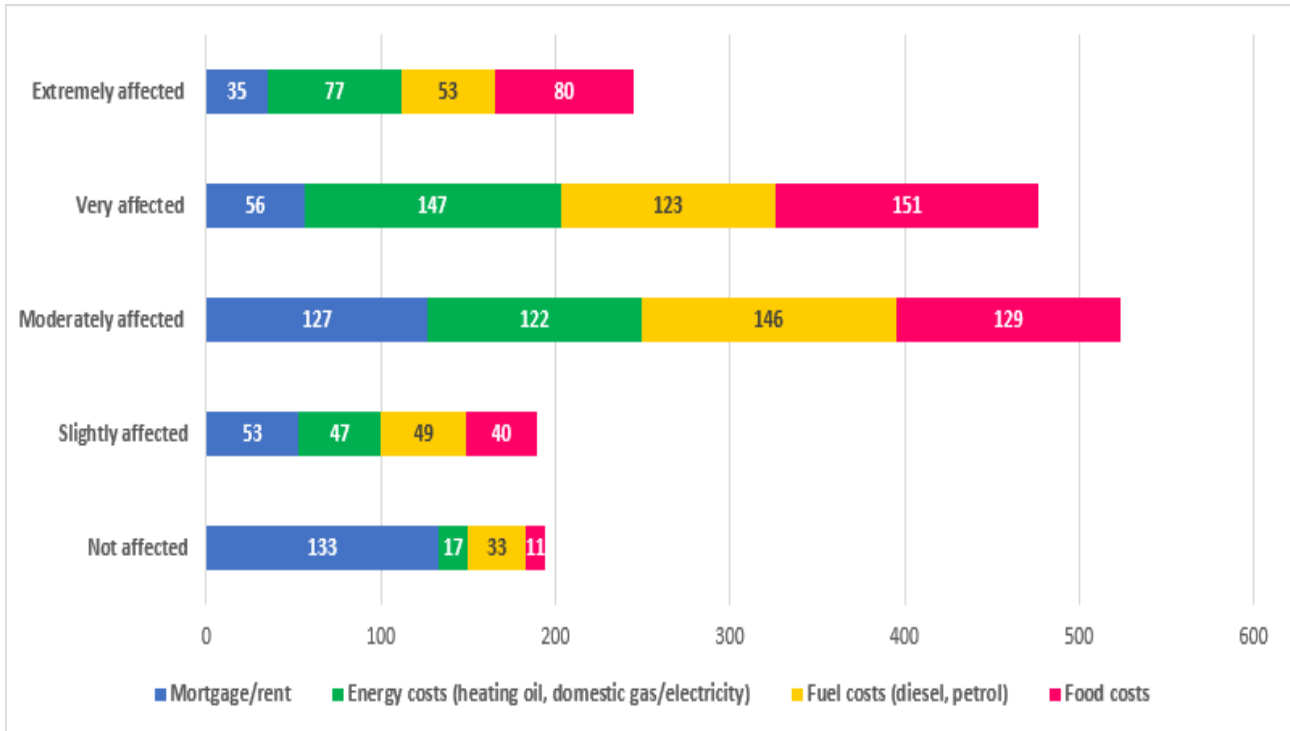


## Cost of living crisis

The prices of food, fuel and other goods and services are spiralling. We wanted to find out how the Cost of Living Crisis is impacting our community and what services and resources we could put in place to help.

### Q23 How is the cost-of-living crisis affecting your household? (tick any that apply)

Answered: 411 Skipped: 128



411 respondents to the survey answered this question. Of these, 231 were 'extremely' or 'very affected' by food costs, 224 responders were 'extremely' or 'very affected' by energy costs and 176 responders were extremely or very affected by fuel costs. 91 responders were 'extremely' or 'very affected' by Mortgage/rent.

The majority of the comments for this question all mention the increase in household costs with specific reference to the individual situation; e.g. 'Coeliac in our household. Medically have to have gluten free food and the cost is astronomical.'

In addition the 'Other' comments show the spectrum of affect:

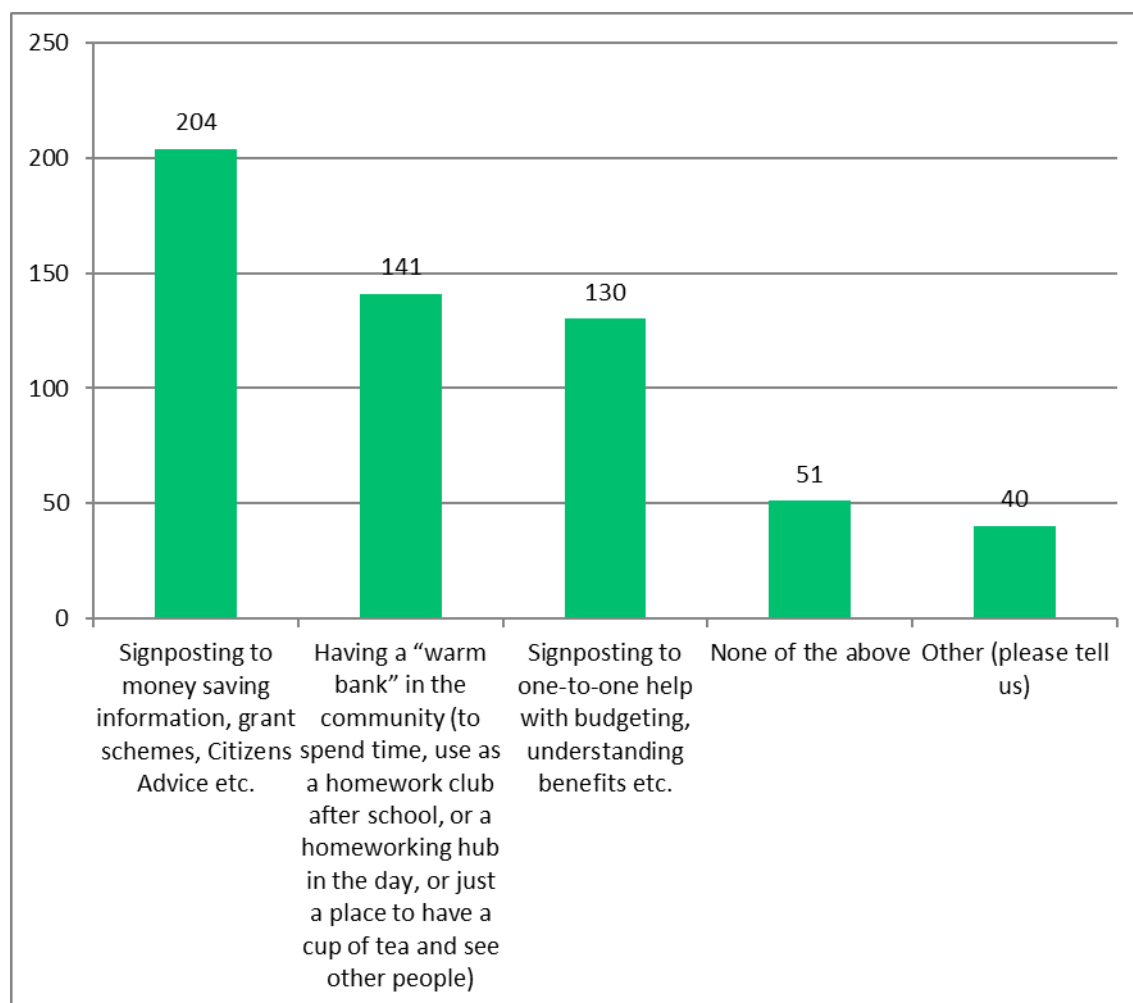
- *These are only minimal due to our household income. I'm aware of the devastating impact on others.*
- *I think I will die*



## Q24 How can the town council help? (tick any that apply)

Answered: 322

Skipped: 217



Of the 322 responses to this question around cost of living, 204 responses want Chard Town Council to work with other agencies to help signpost to money saving information. 141 responses support having warm banks or warm spaces in Chard. There were several warm spaces across Chard during the winter months, so once again it feels like communication for these facilities across town need some work, so people are more aware what is already happening in Chard.

'Other' comments were themed around food, benefits, Council Tax:

- *Better support of front gardens being habitats for wildlife growing foodstuff especially new builds*
- *Community kitchen, nearly out of date food etc*
- *Making public transport reliable and good value.*
- *School meals for all, not just people on benefits*
- *more mental health facilities*
- *Council tax MUST be reduced it's ridiculous*



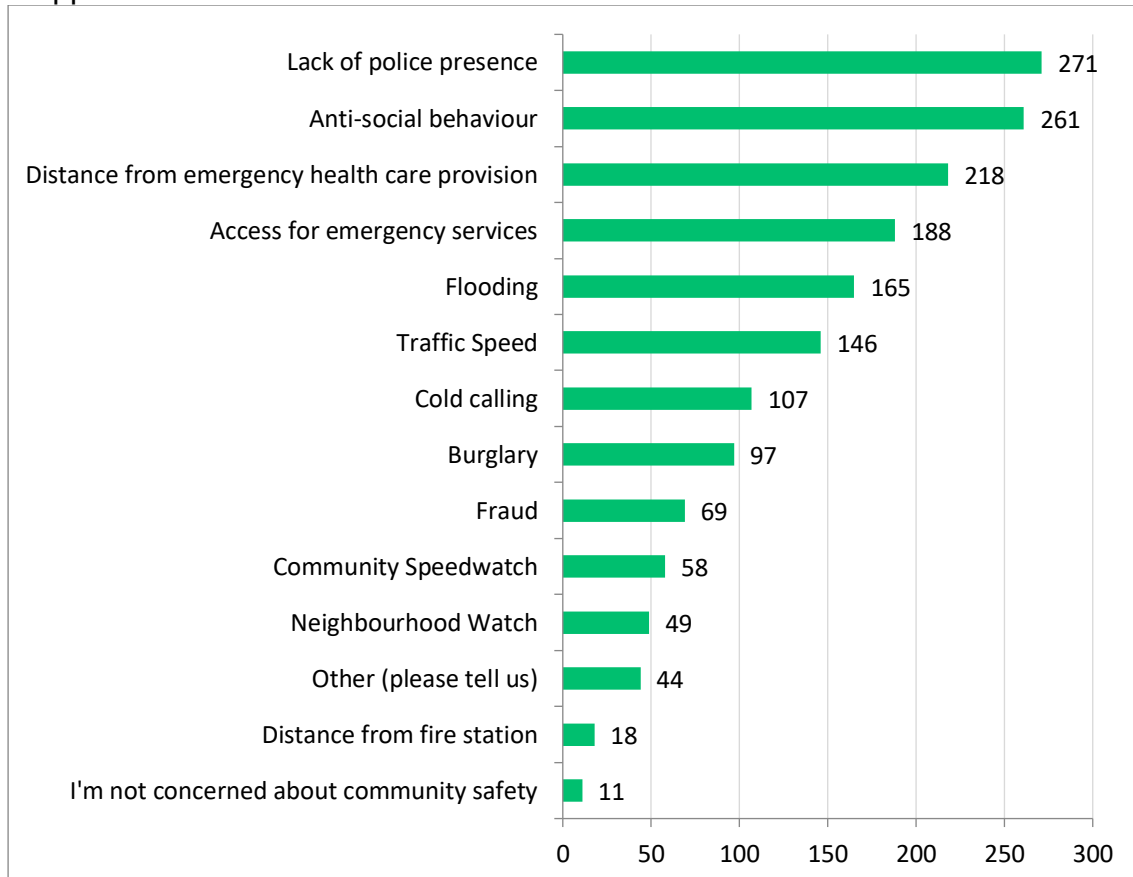
## Community Safety

Which aspects of Community Safety are important in your community?  
With a more detailed understanding of the issues, we can suggest what solutions are available to address them.

### Q25 Are you concerned about any of the following aspects of community safety? (tick any that apply)

Answered: 403

Skipped: 136

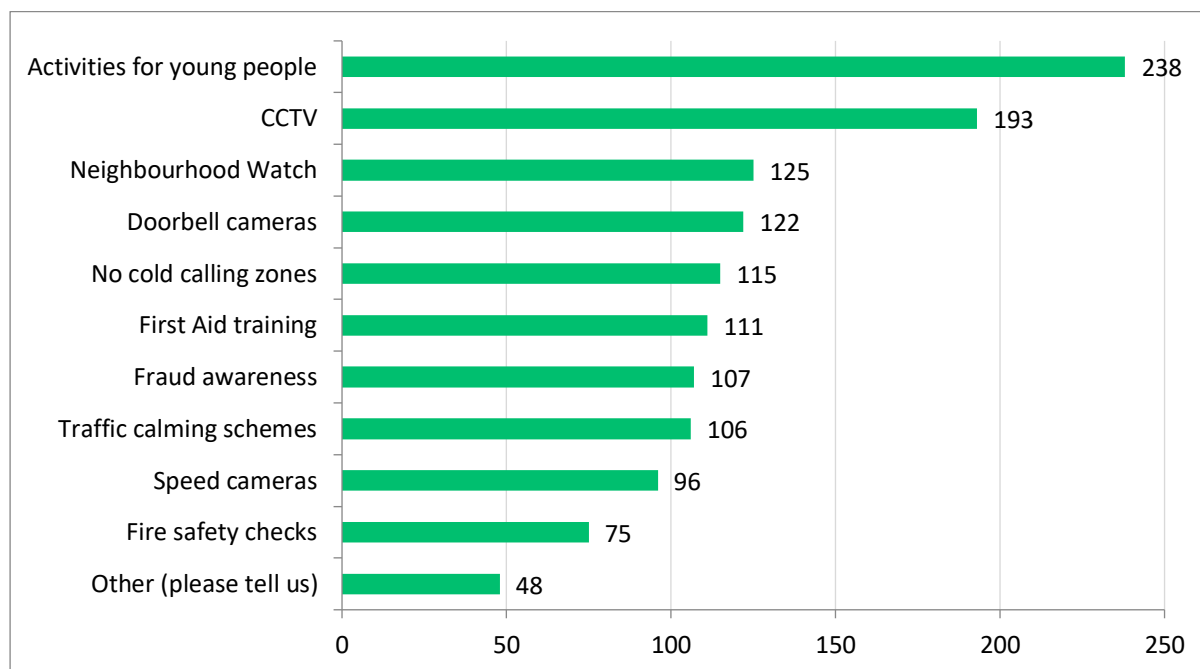


Of the 539 responders to the survey, 403 completed this question with the top three responses being 'Lack of police presence' (271), 'Antisocial behaviour' (261) and 'Distance from emergency health care provision' (218), 'Flooding' (165) after two large flooding events over the past few years.

Themes in the "other" comments included access to GP, dental services and MIU provision at the hospital; drug use and county lines; "rat run" traffic, speeding and parking; fly tipping.

**Q26 If you consider community safety is an issue in Chard, how could this be improved? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 363 Skipped: 176



Of the 363 responses to this question, 238 people felt activities for young people would improve community safety. CCTV (193), Neighbourhood Watch (125) and Doorbell cameras (122) were the next highest. At the lower end, 96 responses were made wanted more 'speed cameras' which chimes with some of the "other" comments received around traffic calming.

Note, there were no under 18's completing the questionnaire and they have been listed as one of the main reasons for concerns around community safety.

Other comments were themed around increasing police presence, traffic calming schemes, access to health and emergency services, parking:

- *fire service to check older people's homes*
- *no more cameras, reduced cameras*
- *More zebra crossings along Furnham Road.*
- *Greater thought given to off-street parking when planning new developments; review parking on main routes around Chard eg Forton Road, Crimchard, Millfield.....*



## Young People and Children

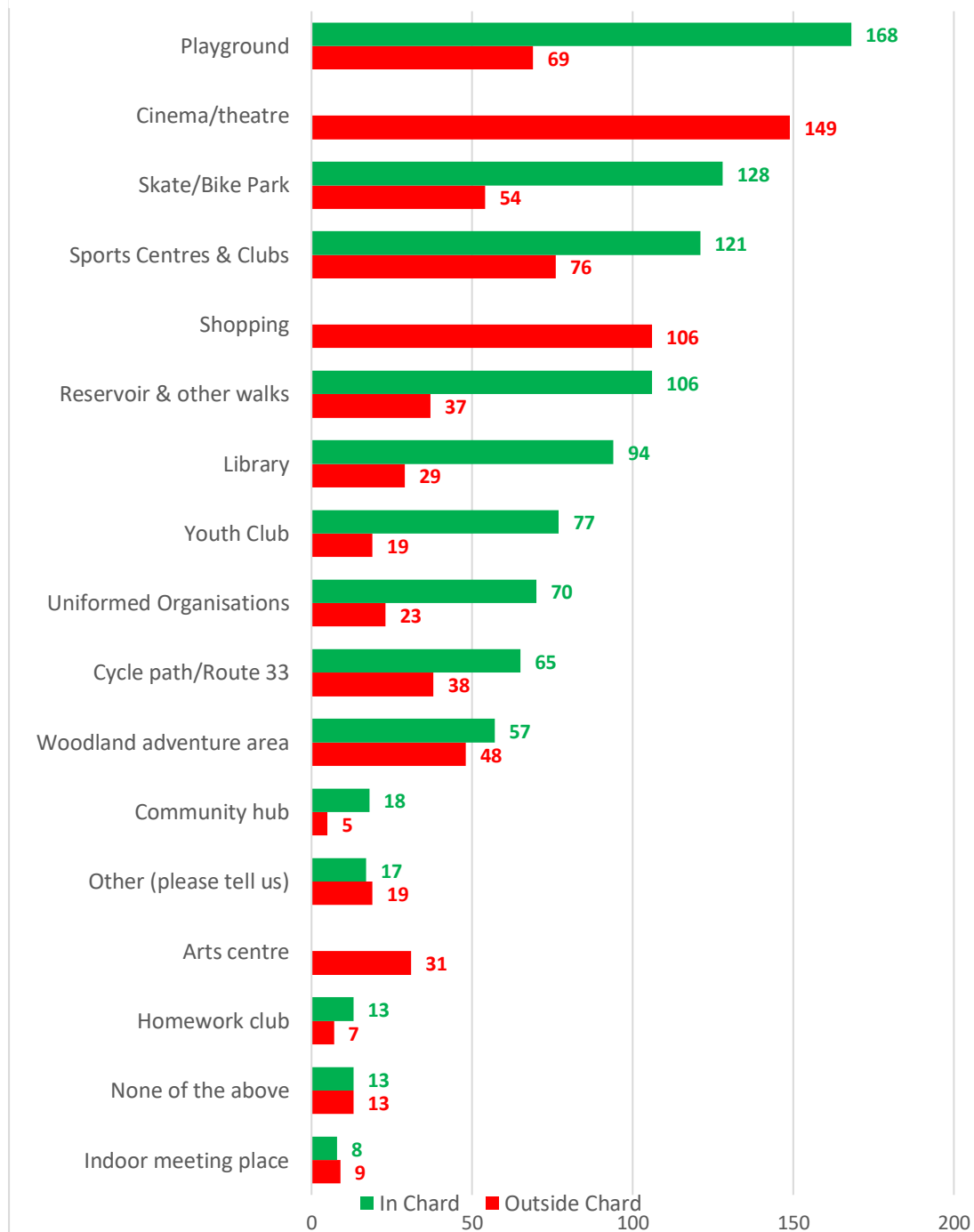
We want to offer children and young people in the town or who visit the town the best possible services so we can provide families with an enriching experience. Having your opinions on current services and facilities now enables us to plan future services for children and young people.

### Q27 Which of these facilities do children and young people use in Chard?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 300

### Q28 Which of these facilities do children and young people use outside Chard?

Answered: 215 Skipped: 324





We know that none of the responders to these questions were under 18.

The Playgrounds were the most used facility inside Chard (168) with the most used facility outside of Chard being the cinema (149). There were no responses to support shopping in Chard.

Two comments related to anti-social behaviour:

- *Sainsbury car park for drug deals*
- *The bus shelters and benches to be antisocial*

Others included:

- *Would like a better skate park, better facilities for youth club, where is the woodland adventure area?*
- *Youth club is about to close down due to funding.*
- *If the bike park is kept with the skate park. Not on the other side of chard. Why?*

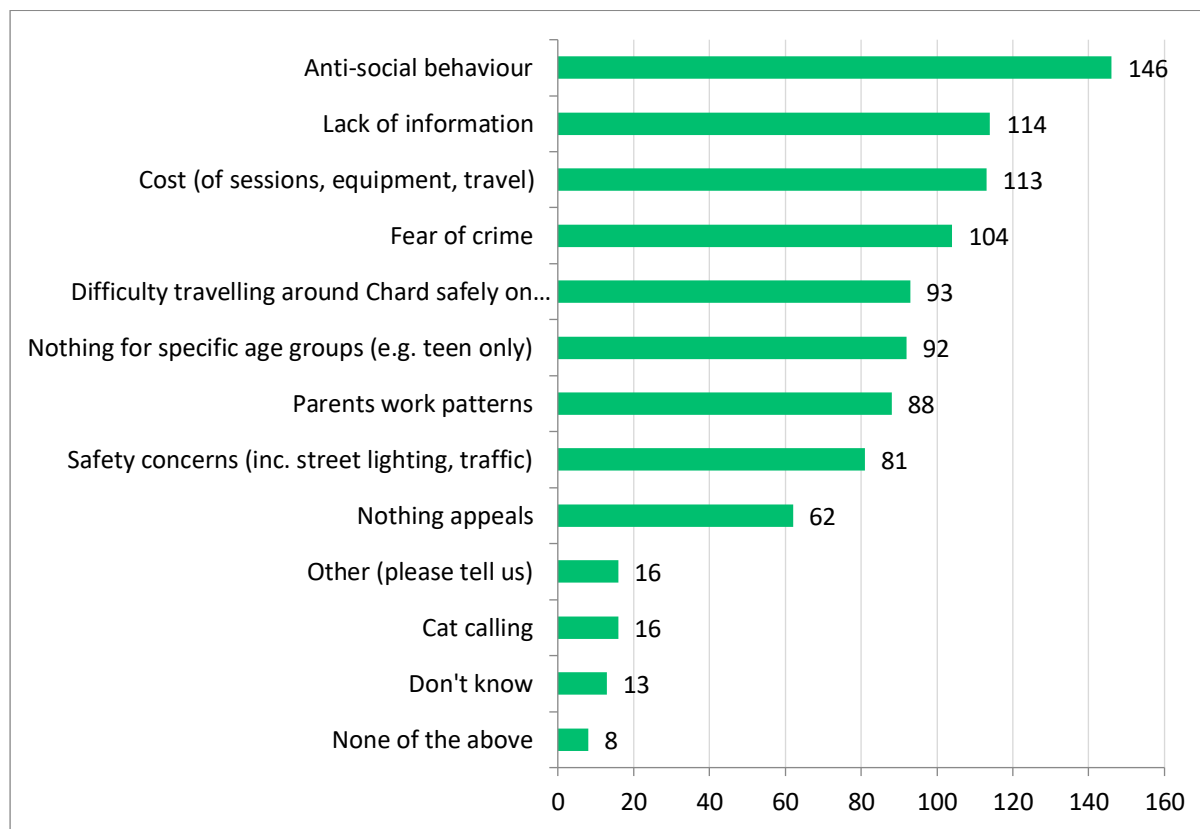
Image below: Jocelyn Park



**Q29 Is there anything that prevents children/young people from engaging in activities more generally? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 256

Skipped: 283



‘Anti-social behaviour’ was perceived by survey respondents as the most common cause for preventing children from engaging in activities more generally, with 146 responses (anti-social behaviour also occurs as the dominant response in Question 25 ‘concerns related to community safety’). Lack of information is the second highest response (114), again this lack of knowledge of what is available recurs throughout the survey.

Comments under ‘Other’ show three prevailing themes of antisocial behaviour (county lines, bullying, fly tipping), lack of public transport and lack of facilities:

- *I think the current facilities are used but not by independant peer groups, rather adult pre organized activity. There is a lack of youth-oriented space or activity.*
- *Affordable transport (either public or private) to other towns to visit cinema, flip out etc*
- *Facilities not the same level as neighbouring towns*

To reiterate a previous point, all three of these questions are based on children and young people and no young people filled this in, so more work is needed to expand this and find out more information about these results and young people’s opinions on these subjects.

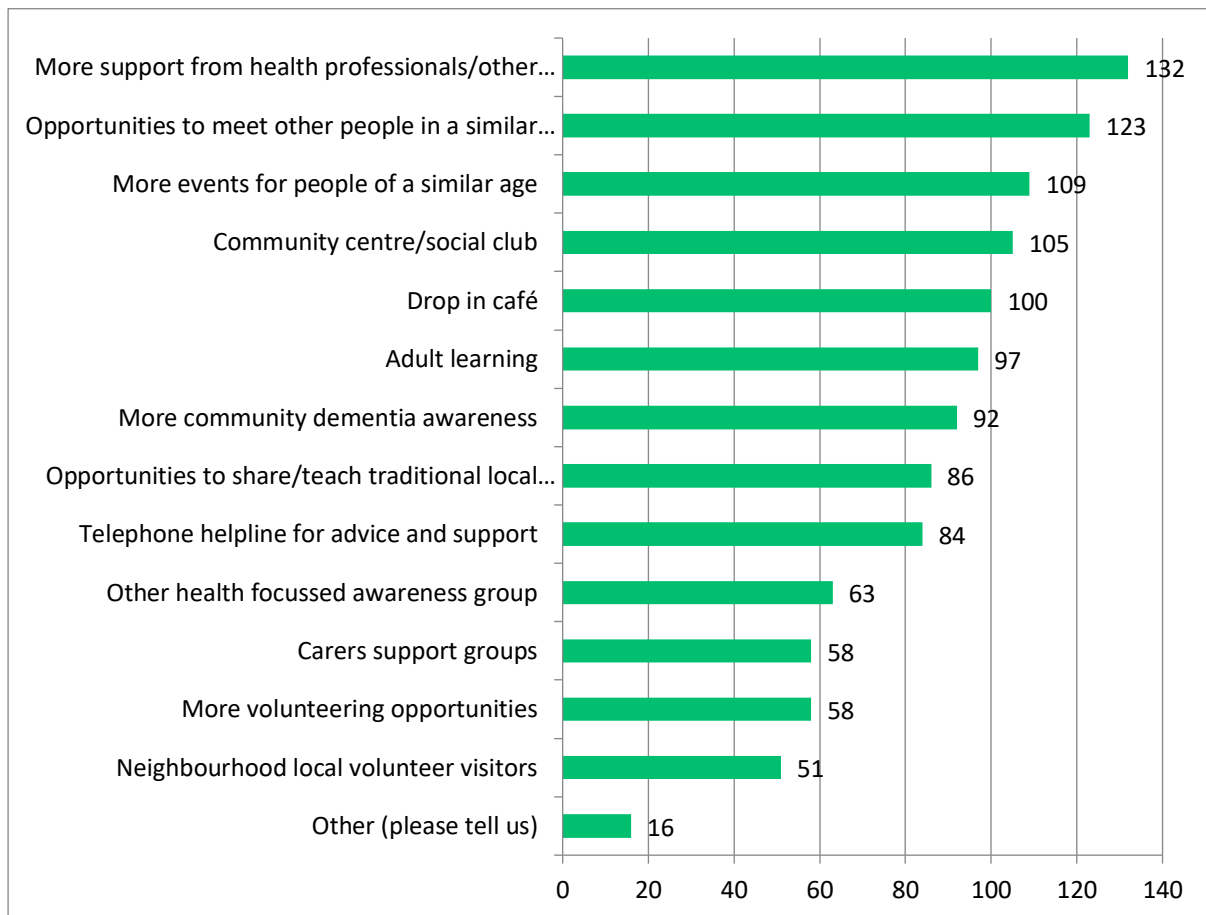


## Retired and Older People

Many people post-retirement are often very active in their community and provide a valuable resource for action. However, we must acknowledge the challenges Somerset's ageing population will present to health, social care and housing providers.

### Q30 What could the community or other professionals provide to give you more support in your physical and mental wellbeing? (tick any that apply)

Answered: 249 Skipped: 290



Of the 249 responses to this question, 132 identified 'more support from health professionals/Village Agent'. The Chard Village Agent has a weekly clinic in The Guildhall, so again this could be awareness to the support that is currently available.

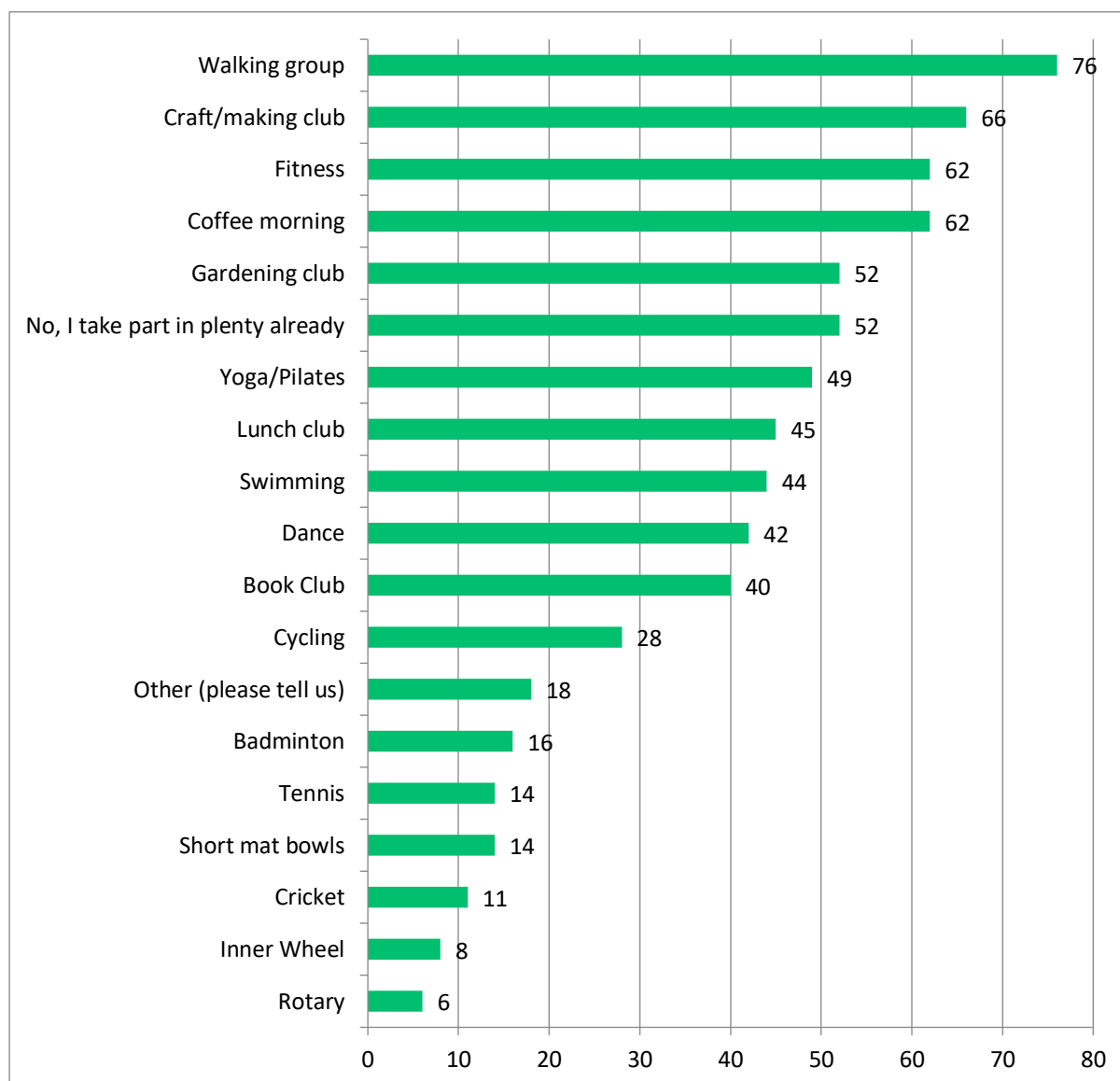
The next 4 most popular responses were all focused on social outcomes: 'opportunities to meet other people in a similar situation' (123); 'more events for people of a similar age' (109); 'Community centre' (105); 'Drop in cafe' (100). Again, there are many different groups already meeting in Chard and this may well be a communication issue, with lack of awareness of the groups on offer.

In the 'Other' box, comments reflected the need for accessible health and dental care. Safety was also an issue:

- *Make the Streets safer from Drug dealers*
- *Access to toilet and a café at the reservoir*
- *Transport, more volunteering opportunities*

### Q31 Would you like to take part in more social and sporting activities within the town? (tick any that apply)

Answered: 244 Skipped: 295



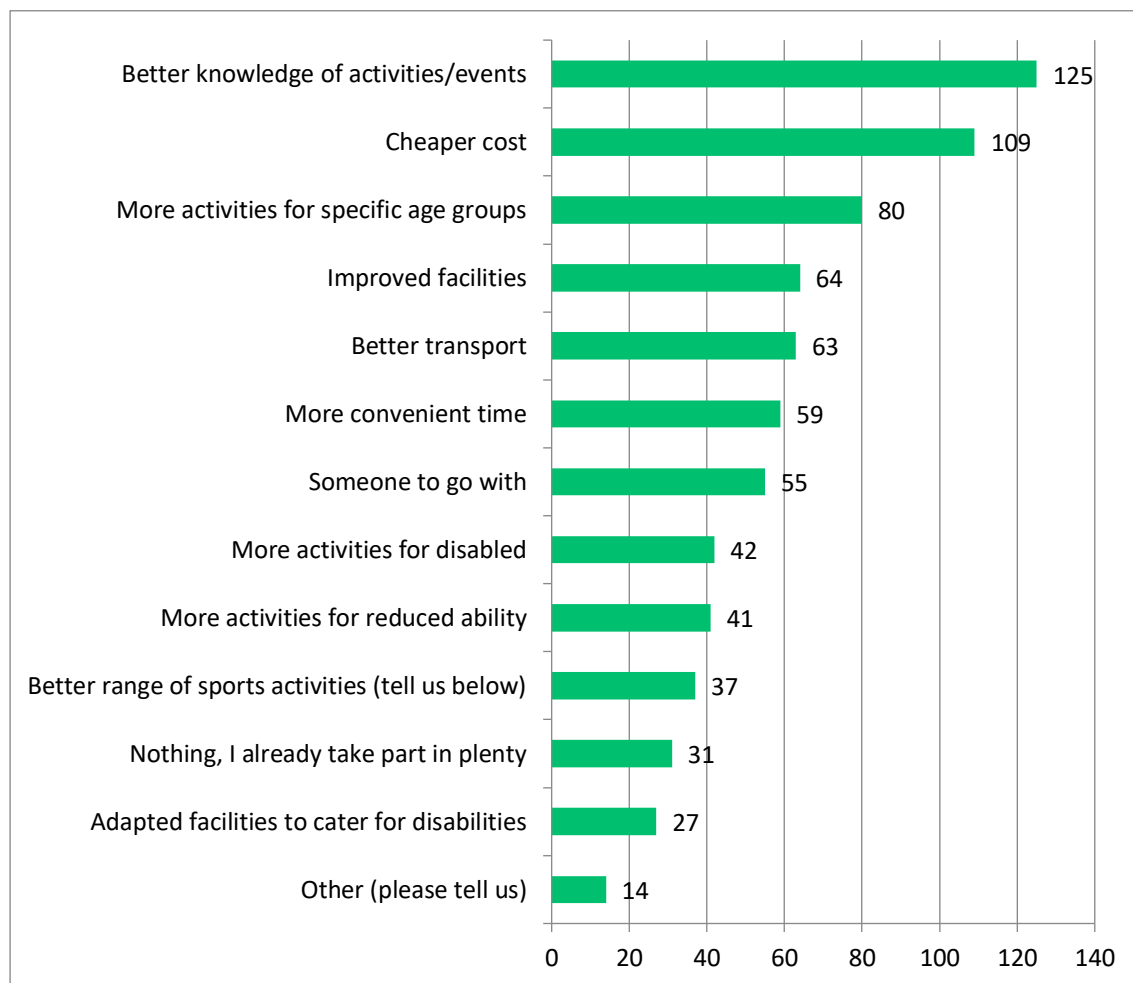
Of the 244 responses to Q31, the walking group is most popular with 76 responses. Some of these activities are already available in Chard, so the theme of communication and information sharing within the community to enable people to access the clubs that already exist continues.

Other comments included reference to team sports and music/drama activities as well as:

- *Mens Shed*
- *Active travel route: Why not turn the drift into a cycle path. It's a beautiful walk and would easily extend the cycle path. Link it to the town centre too and bring cyclists to chard to spend money.*
- *Outdoor gym and tai chi*

**Q32 What would help you to take part in more sport or physical activities? (tick any that apply)**

Answered: 253 Skipped: 286



The response for “better knowledge of activities/events” had the highest responses (125). The need for improved communication and publicity is a theme throughout the survey: **people do not know what is happening in Chard**. It is an indication of the need to better support people to access the range of activities that Chard has on offer.



Image above: Arts & craft group at Chard Community Hub, March 2023

Other comments included:

- Support from GP surgeries promoting active lifestyle
- lack of fitness activities for older people
- leisure centre has stopped all of the fitness classes that I was attending and the pool is cold
- Park



## Privacy Statement

Analysis was conducted by Smart Communities Ltd part of Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Group. Data was captured for legitimate and contractual purposes. Information was collected and analysed in accordance with Smart Communities Ltd role as a Data Controller and Data Processor.

Chard Town Council Community Plan Group offered support clinics to anyone who wished to complete the survey but needed help with access to a computer or didn't have the capacity to complete the survey independently. All group members signed a non-disclosure agreement to protect your personal data.

Digital copies are retained for 12 months and deleted after this period. Any personal data that is captured is anonymised with the report and held securely for the purposes of analysis.

No data will be published which can identify an individual without their consent. If you entered your details to take part in the prize draw and you won, your data is shared with Chard Town Council Community Plan Group.

If you would like to find out more about how we use your data or want to see a copy of information about you that we hold, please contact [info@somersetcc.org.uk](mailto:info@somersetcc.org.uk) or call 01823 331222. Protecting your Personal Data is important and we fully comply and adhere to the Principles of Data Protection set out in our Data Protection / Privacy Policy visit: [ccslovesomerset.org/smart-communities-ltd-policies/](https://ccslovesomerset.org/smart-communities-ltd-policies/).

# Community *Review*

Your future plan

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