

Honeystreet sawmill site – Parish Survey

This survey was carried out in the Parish of Alton in January, 2016. The aim was to gain an early indication of the initial views of residents as to the future of the site, which has been a sawmill and timber yard for more than a century. With the owner of the business retiring, a change has been proposed from industrial use to housing, together with a number of work units.

The questions were drafted, submitted to the Steering Group overseeing the Honeystreet Neighbourhood Development Order, amended and approved. A newsletter to accompany the questionnaire, explaining the purpose and background of the survey, was also approved.

One copy of each document was delivered to every household in the parish¹. Publicity on the parish website and elsewhere encouraged residents to complete the questionnaire. Completed copies were collected some two weeks later.

Responses: In all, 76 questionnaires were completed and collected, 31 from Alton Barnes, 22 from Alton Priors, and 21 from Honeystreet. This represents a response rate of approximately 65%. (Barnes 58%, Honeystreet 72%, Priors 73%)

Before looking at the results, at least one caution should be stressed. The survey was deliberately carried out at an early stage as a first step in what is intended to be a substantial and sustained consultation. That inevitably meant that detailed information about the available options for the site was lacking. Once more information becomes available about the development plans, views are certain to be refined and might possibly change.

That said, two main messages do seem to emerge.

The first is a clear preference for housing, or some form of mixed development, over continued industrial use. Across the parish, housing / mixed development was favoured by 50 respondents, against 21 for industrial. In Honeystreet, where the proposed development would actually be, the preference was even stronger – 18 for housing / mixed and just two in favour of industrial (+ 1 no-choice).

The second indicated what people are most anxious not to see on the site: “overdevelopment” on one hand; and “dereliction” on the other (questions 2 and 4).

Detailed figures are given below, followed by some of the points raised by individual respondents.

¹ Total number of dwellings in the parish: 117 approx – Alton Barnes 57/8, Alton Priors 30, Honeystreet 29

Survey Q 1

The choice for the Honeystreet Sawmill site is to continue in some form of industrial use or a change of use to housing. Would you, on balance, prefer

A. Housing []

B. Industrial []

Responses (H = Honeystreet, B Barnes, P Priors):

	H	B	P	TOTAL
Industrial	2	13	6	21
Housing	11	15	12	38
Mixed	7	4	1	12

Survey Q 2

Below are some possible industrial uses for the site (note, these are *examples only*, there is at this stage no proposal). Alternatively, the site could be left unused. Please give your views by circling a number for each, where 5 is strongly in favour and 1 is strongly against

Storage depot	1	2	3	4	5
Design studio	1	2	3	4	5
Repair works	1	2	3	4	5
Site left unused	1	2	3	4	5

Responses

	1 strongly against	2 against	3 neutral	4 for	5 strongly for
Storage depot	20	15	17	11	3
Design studio	6	3	15	14	28
Repair works	21	11	14	8	7
Site left unused	51	4	3	4	2

Perhaps worth noting that, except for the design studio, the votes “against” and “strongly against” each option heavily outnumber those “for” or “strongly for”: storage depot 35 to 14; repair works 32 to 15; site left unused 55 to 6.

Survey Q 3

What is the maximum number of houses you would be ready to accept on the site?

Responses (H = Honeystreet, B Barnes, P Priors):

	H	B	P	TOTAL
0	1	3	5	9
1-5	1	7	0	8
5-10	4	5	1	10
10-15	6	5	2	13
15-20	7	9	4	20
20-25	2	1	1	4

25-30	0	1	0	1
30+	0	2	1	3

Survey Q 4

What are your main concerns about any development on this site. Please number in your order of importance, so if traffic is your main worry put a 1 in that box; if a local shop is your second priority put a 2 in that box, and so on. Mark as many or as few as you like.

- Changes the character of the villages []
- Dereliction (site left unused) []
- Impact on environment and wildlife []
- Lack of local facilities eg schools, shops []
- Need for affordable housing []
- Need for jobs []
- Noise and / or light pollution []
- Overdevelopment []
- Traffic []
- Transport links []

Priority: **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***

Character of villages	12	8	5	7	7	6	2	4	2	1	14
Dereliction	8	11	4	10	5	5	5	3	3	2	15
Environment impact	5	2	2	7	10	5	4	4	9	10	23
Lack of facilities	4	11	6	6	5	6	4	6	5	0	13
Affordable housing	5	4	10	6	5	3	2	1	6	3	20
Jobs	0	6	5	1	5	2	5	5	6	6	23
Noise/light pollution	3	7	6	2	5	8	5	3	5	1	25
Overdevelopment	20	15	13	5	3	1	2	3	0	3	4
Traffic	18	9	13	11	3	3	2	0	0	0	8
Transport links	0	2	5	5	5	3	6	7	1	7	29

**Did not enter as a priority*

Survey Q 4 (continued)

Taking issues listed by residents as their top two priorities (1 and 2) together, the results in order are as follows:

Overdevelopment	35
Traffic	27
Character of the villages	20
Dereliction	19
Lack of facilities	15
Noise/light pollution	10
Affordable housing	9
Environmental impact	7
Jobs	6
Transport links	2

Points raised

General –

Two residents argued more information is needed before any conclusive views can be given. (Agreed, and to be addressed, if appropriate, in a further survey)

One resident criticised the methodology and approach of the questionnaire. Two others wrote brief comments welcoming early consultation.

Specific –

Five residents urged that developments on both sides of the canal (the Sawmill and the Wharf sites) be considered together. This was “crucial” ... “will dominate the village” ... they should be “sympathetic to each other.”

Seven made comments about overdevelopment (whether industrial or housing) and / or problems of access: “If used for industrial purposes the roads are not large enough for large lorries to be coming and going” ... “Increased pressure on inadequate infrastructure and services” ... “The HAB plan adds nothing to the village except people and traffic density and the pollution that comes with it: noise, light etc”

Six residents favoured a village shop (and post office).

Five stressed the need for close attention to the design and appearance of a housing development, including concern over loss of trees. "...building design should reflect the character of the village."

Four made comments about noise and light pollution "...street lighting, traffic lights etc which would without doubt alter the character of Honeystreet irrevocably."

Four urged starter homes "Homes for first-time buyers, not holiday homes" ... "I have lived in the village all my life and would love to be able to afford to buy a house" ... "There is room for expansion in the village."

Four favoured a public open space on the site (and one wanted homes with gardens).

Two stressed the need for assisted housing for the elderly. "Retirement village a very practical solution for Honeystreet, local employment, no heavy industry, light traffic."

Two urged greater effort to retain the sawmill.

One emphasised slow internet.

And on dereliction, one commented: "I would not wish to see a derelict site (as with Dallas etc) which has been a blight and a waste for years."
