



Avon Dassett Communications Survey Results

December 2023

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Alex Jackson and Sarah Richardson, the project co-ordinators, would like to thank all those who completed the survey, village groups and organisations and the Parish Council.

SUMMARY

The Parish Plan of May 2022 suggested a number of improvements to communications which were taken up in an action plan and augmented during the Parish Plan Update at the Annual Parish Assembly in May 2023.

These highlighted the following:

- There is no ONE preferred method of communication, so village organisations and groups wishing to reach as many local residents as possible should use a variety of methods (both electronic and face to face).
- In person/hard copy communications are still valued by and essential for a significant group in the village. These communication methods include word of mouth, fliers, noticeboards and the *Compton Chronicle* which is published ten times per year.
- A need was identified to explore online communications, and thus a survey was sent out to residents and made available to those not based in the village. Interviews were also held with village groups over the summer of 2023.

The recommendations following the research produced by the parish plan and the survey of online communications are:

- The development of a communications strategy;
- The creation of a communications checklist for village groups and others;
- The creation of an online Directory which includes local businesses, taxi firms, takeaways, farmers etc;
- Alert systems for important issues such as PO closures;
- Support for residents once landline communications are phased out
- The maintenance of two separate websites one for parish council business and one for the wider community with clearer demarcation between them;
- Creation of an infographic for noticeboards/fliers/welcome packs etc which gives an overview of the location of information on the two websites.

RESULTS OF COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

Overall there were 36 responses (including 4 externals) which is around one-third of the village and a reasonable response rate for a survey. **The Parish Council would like to thank all of those who took the time to complete and return the survey for their thoughtful responses.**

Access to the Community and Parish Council websites was high with only 6 respondents reporting that they had never accessed the Community site and only 8 that they had never accessed the Parish Council website.

Other popular websites used to gain information included (ranked in order of most mentioned):

- Stratford District Council website
- Warwickshire County Council website
- Avon Dassett Community Benefit website
- Banbury Guardian
- Muddy Stilettos
- Google
- Yell.com
- Open Table
- The Yew Tree website
- Morrisons
- Other parish council websites

Other online apps/sources of information included (ranked in order of most mentioned):

- WhatsApp groups
- Facebook
- Nextdoor.co.uk
- Instagram
- Twitter (X)
- SDC Waste Collection App

More than two-thirds of respondents found it easy to find information about the village online and only one said they could never find information.

A wider range of suggestions were made to improve online communications:

- Some would like there to be just one village website – factors mentioned were ease of use and value for money
- There were suggestions to improve the layout and usability of the websites (for example, fewer click throughs and fewer menu headings) and/or links to other sites

- There were suggestions where information needed to be updated on both websites
- There was some discontent about the quantity and type of messages on the village WhatsApp group and suggestions to split these
- There was a split about whether the village Facebook page should be an open site with some commenting on the amount of spam, advertising and scams on other local open sites. Those who wanted an open page also mentioned they did not want advertising.

Suggestions for information not available online mentioned areas where the information was already available (for example bus timetables, bin calendar, planning applications) suggesting that better navigation was needed on the websites. Other suggestions included:

- Information about activities in the Reading Room
- Local farmer contacts for when sheep get out
- Taxi companies
- Local tradesman suppliers
- All clubs and events
- When post office is not opening

When asked about information that did not need to be online, suggestions were gossip! and transient information that could be on Facebook or Instagram but not on a website.

Respondents were asked to rank factors they looked for in a village website, but these were not particularly conclusive and many said all were equally important.

A further question asked about the 'ideal online village presence'. Many mentioned a single, easy to use and regularly updated website whilst others thought existing arrangements were good. Ease of navigation was mentioned which one resident suggesting sites should be modelled on those used by prominent online retailers. The village Facebook and WhatsApp groups were praised.

Other comments focused on the need to retain hard copy communications such as fliers for those without mobile phones or the internet and the value of chatting in person.

Those maintaining the various village communications would particularly like to thank the resident who made this comment:

Thank you for all the hard work that goes into village communications

RESULTS OF CONSULATATIONS WITH VILLAGE GROUPS

Twelve village groups and societies were consulted about their online presence and the other means by which they communicate. The project leader would like to thank all representatives of village groups and organisations for being so generous with their time and for their valuable contributions.

- Coffee Morning
- Community Benefit Society
- Dassett Country Show
- Gardening Club
- Local History Group
- Men's Club
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Open Gardens
- Parish Council
- Soapbox Derby
- Village Charities
- Walking Group

All groups were generally satisfied with their online presence and made few suggestions for changes to content.

There are a wide variety of ways which the different groups use to communicate their activities. The Dassett Country Show and Soapbox Derby are unsurprisingly the largest users of social media, the local press and advertising in other villages. Other methods of communication that were mentioned included:

- Direct contact by email or phone
- Village mailing lists
- Posters on noticeboards
- *Compton Chronicle*
- WhatsApp
- Nextdoor
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Community Benefit Society Newsletter
- National Garden Scheme website

Some groups actively did not want an online presence or to advertise activities more widely because of capacity issues in local venues.

Other suggestions were made to improve communications including:

- Roadside noticeboards at either end of the village and the main road where village groups could advertise their activities

- A weekly events bulletin as used in other villages
- Online feeds to Community Website
- Separate WhatsApp groups for particular organisations