
REPORT ON BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRES

INTRODUCTION

Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish covers some 323 Hectares with around 2800 households and a population of just under 7,000(6750 at 2011 census). Catshill village lies to the West of the A38 trunk Road with North Marlbrook lying to the East. The parish has a long history and was based around hand making of nails; some of the cottages used for this industry are still in existence. It has grown over the years with the addition of 'affordable' estates, then with considerable infill and latterly with mixed housing estates.

It is in a semi rural location being bounded by the M5 motorway to the North and West with the M42 motorway to the South. To the West and East is open countryside, to the North the Birmingham conurbation and approximately 4 kilometres to the South the centre of Bromsgrove Town.

Bromsgrove District (Summer 2013) published a baseline report on Green infrastructure. Green infrastructure (GI) is a strategic network of green spaces that provide a wide range of environmental benefits (ecosystem services) in both rural and urban areas. GI also provides habitats for wildlife and through the creation and enhancement of 'green corridors', should aid the natural migration of more species responding to the changing climate. Catshill is identified in this report as *Principal Settled Farmlands (Landscape Character Type)* and this Character Type should be protected and enhanced, e g conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows and tree cover along waterways.

The Parish benefits from three schools ('First', 'Middle' and 'Special Education'), a doctors' and dentists' surgery, four churches, several public houses and a range of shops and offices. An independent Bakery has recently closed and subsequently this shop has been let to a tanning salon. The main shopping area is located along Golden Cross Lane, with a small public car park situated at the beginning of this retail area. (travelling from Lower Catshill) There is limited parking on the road, along the frontage of the shops and offices. The schools and coach services are situated along Meadow Road, also with limited parking. There are a small number of shops and offices at the A38 intersection with Gibb Lane and Braces Lane, with a mini supermarket located in North Marlbrook.

25 Business Questionnaires have been completed which constitute the majority of businesses in the Parish and is the subject of this report.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRES

Q1. WHAT PREMISES DO YOU OCCUPY? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agricultural	0.0%	0
2	Office	16.0%	4
3	Shop	64.0%	16
4	Work from home	0.0%	0
5	Other (please specify):	20.0%	5

Other (please specify):

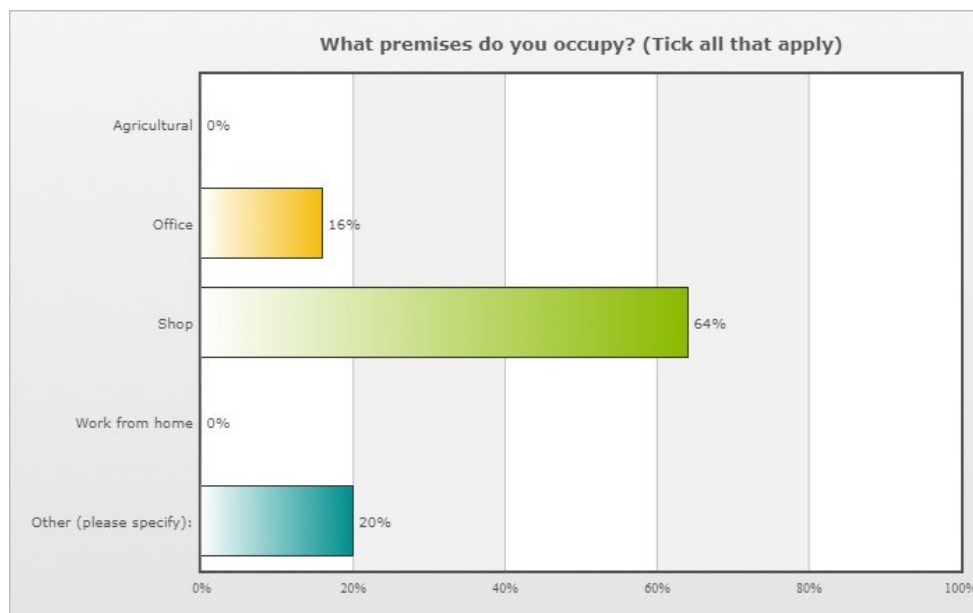
Dental surgery

Cafe

Restaurant

Public House

Coach Garage

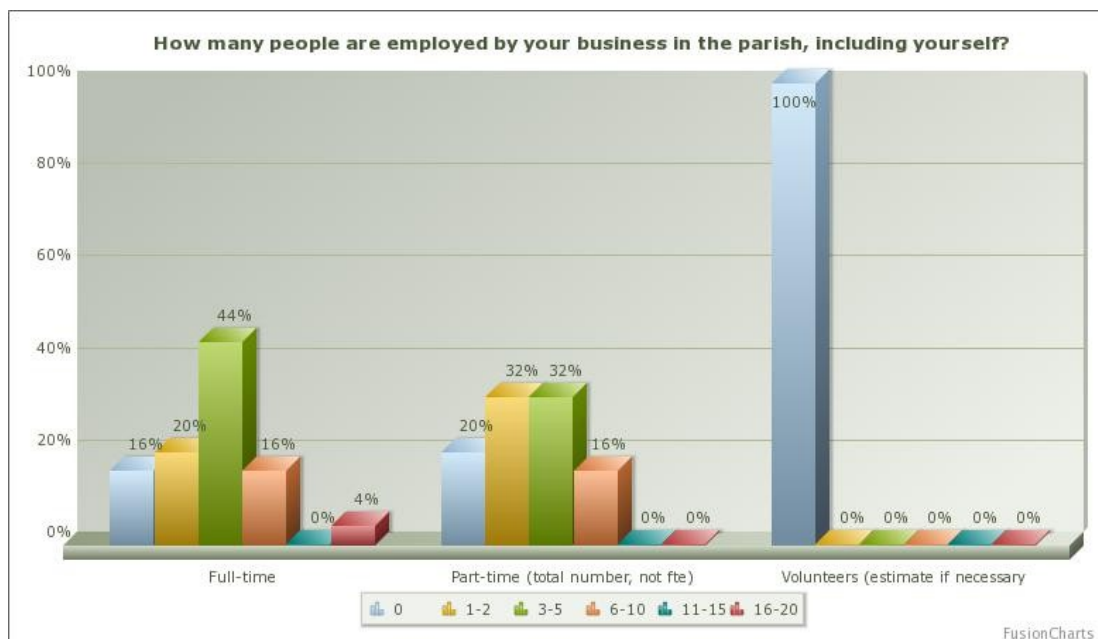


Q2. DOES YOUR BUSINESS ALSO OPERATE FROM OTHER PREMISES OUTSIDE THE PARISH?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	No	72.0%	18
2	Yes	28.0%	7

Q3. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED BY YOUR BUSINESS IN THE PARISH, INCLUDING YOURSELF?

Answer Choice		0	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Response Total
1	Full-time	4	5	11	4	0	1	25
2	Part-time (total number, not fte)	5	8	8	4	0	0	25
3	Volunteers (estimate if necessary)	25	0	0	0	0	0	25



Q4. WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH? (TICK ONE)

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Agriculture, horticulture & landscaping	4.2%	1
2	Building and construction	0.0%	0
3	Computing	4.0%	1
4	Healthcare or social work	0.0%	0
5	Manufacturing and engineering	0.0%	0
6	Motor trade	0.0%	0
7	Professional services	8.0%	2
8	Retail sales to the public	32.0%	8
9	Catering (café, pub, food sales etc.)	16.0%	4

10	Sales to other businesses	0.0%	0
11	Storage	0.0%	0
12	Transport	0.0%	0
13	Personal services (hairdressing, chiropody etc.)	12.0%	3
14	Other (please specify):	24.0%	6
answered			25

**Other (please
specify):**

Dentistry

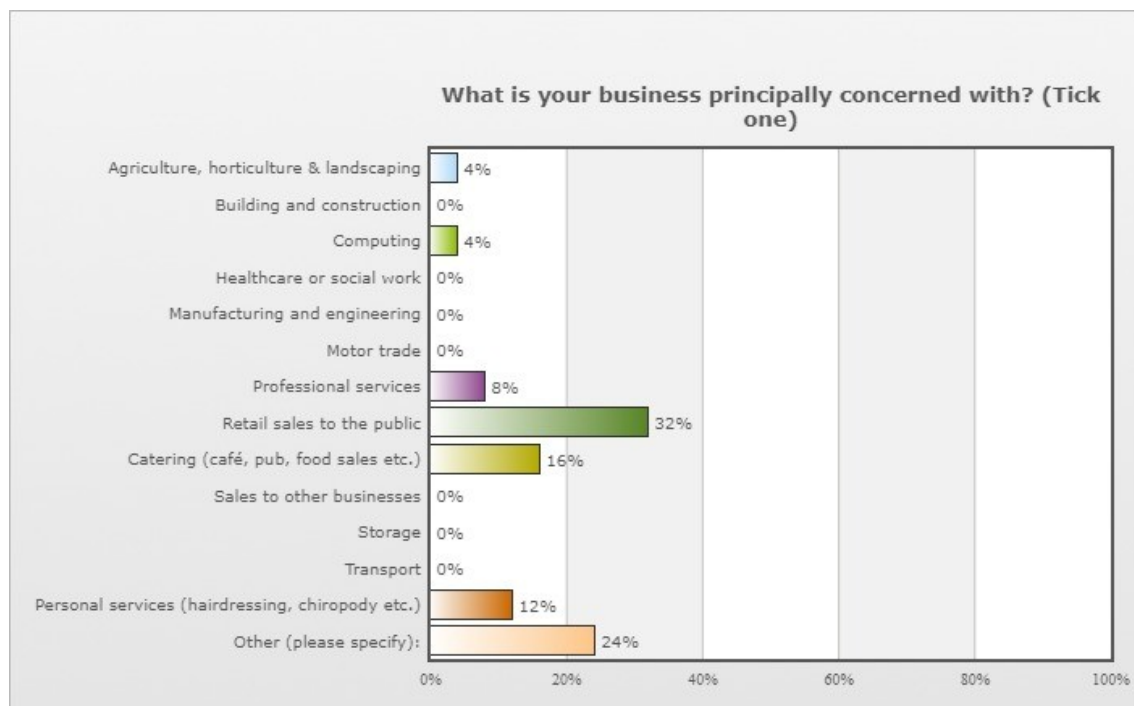
Pharmacy

Tattoo Studio

Financial Services

Tanning Salon

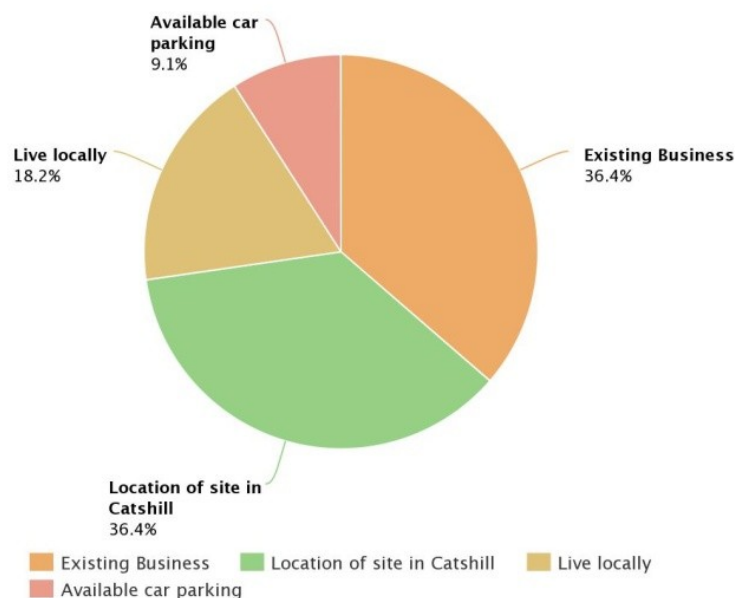
Coach Travel



Q5. WHAT WERE THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR SELECTING YOUR CURRENT SITE WITHIN THE PARISH FOR THE SITE OF YOUR BUSINESS?

Shop attached to home
To be part of the community
Central to Catshill village & close to schools
Close to other shops
Access to motorways
Close to Catshill GP Surgery (<i>Pharmacy</i>)
New business opportunity
Built up area with no local barbers (no competition)
Closeness to customers, no competition
Near home
Shop well sited for customers
Location and car parking facilities
The premises has always been a butcher's shop
Live in village
Central location in village
Existing business
Convenient location
Business located here for over 90 years.

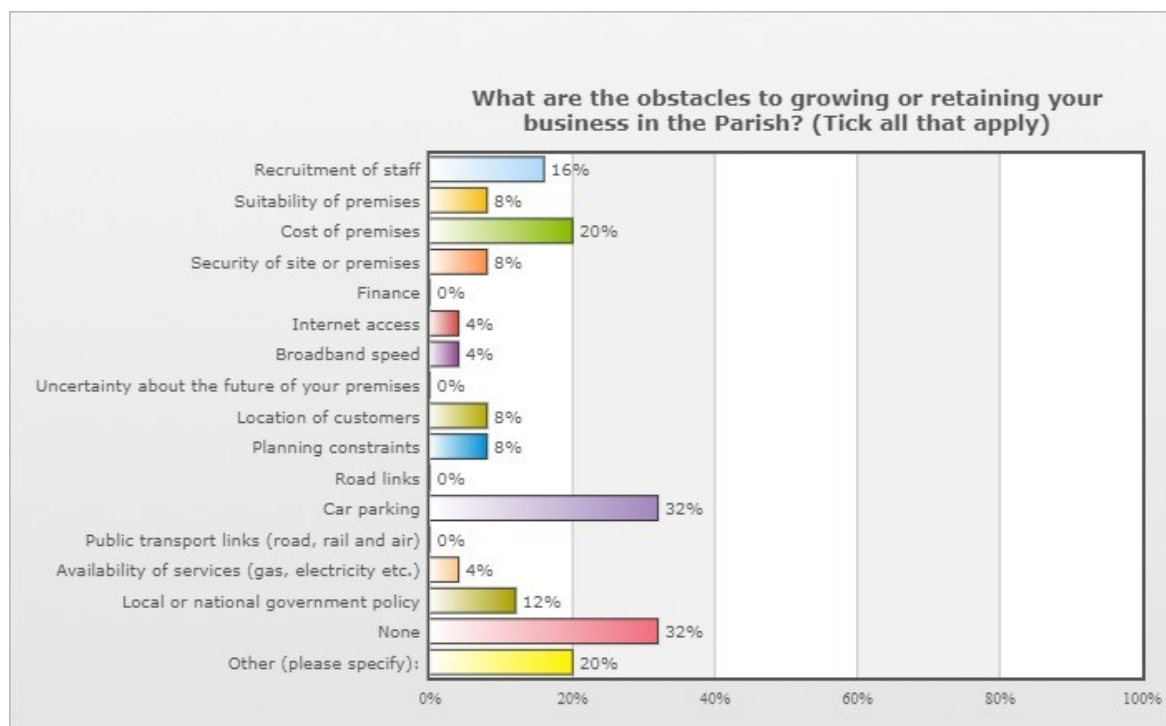
What were the principal reasons for selecting your current site within the Parish for the site of your business? (text analysis);



Q6. WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES TO GROWING OR RETAINING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE PARISH? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Recruitment of staff	16.0%	4
2	Suitability of premises	8.0%	2
3	Cost of premises	20.0%	5
4	Security of site or premises	8.0%	2
5	Finance	0	0
6	Internet access	4.0%	1
7	Broadband speed	4.0%	1
8	Uncertainty about the future of your premises	0	0
9	Location of customers	8.0%	2
10	Planning constraints	8.0%	2
11	Road links	0.0%	0
12	Car parking	32.0%	8
13	Public transport links (road, rail and air)	0.0%	0
14	Availability of services (gas, electricity etc.)	4.0%	1
15	Local or national government policy	12.0%	3
16	None	32.0%	8
17	Other (please specify):	20.0%	5
		answered	25

Other (please specify):
Obtaining extra NHS Funding (<i>Dentist</i>)
Falling number of customers due to number of fast food outlets open outside normal operating hours.
Not enough passing trade
Competition from Coop
Competition from supermarkets



Q7. IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS IS IT MOST LIKELY YOUR BUSINESS WILL ...

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Expand	28.0%	7
2	Stay the same	68.0%	17
3	Reduce	4.0%	1
4	Close	0.0%	0
answered			25

Q8. ARE YOU LIKELY TO HAVE A NEED TO MOVE YOUR BUSINESS INTO NEW PREMISES IN THE PARISH, IF AVAILABLE, IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	4.0%	1
2	No	76.0%	19
3	Don't know	20.0%	5
4	If Yes, why?	0.0%	0
answered			25

Q9. ARE YOU LIKELY TO MOVE YOUR BUSINESS OUT OF THE PARISH IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	0.0%	0
2	No	72.0%	18
3	Don't know	28.0%	7
4	If Yes, why?	0.0%	0
		answered	25

Q10. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WILL HELP TO DETERMINE WHERE ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE IN THE PARISH AND WHAT FORM IT MIGHT TAKE. (TICK ALL THAT APPLY) PLEASE SAY WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE, AND WHERE:

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Retail	36.0%	9
2	Warehousing	0	0
3	Office	16.0%	4
4	Light industry	0	0
5	Service industry	8.0%	2
6	Residential – houses	28.0%	7
7	Residential – apartments	20.0%	5
8	Residential – sheltered or care home	4.0%	1
9	I would not like to see any new development	40.0%	10
10	Other (give details):	8.0%	2
		answered	25

Other (give details):

Parking facilities & pedestrian crossings

Comments:

Affordable homes for first time buyers

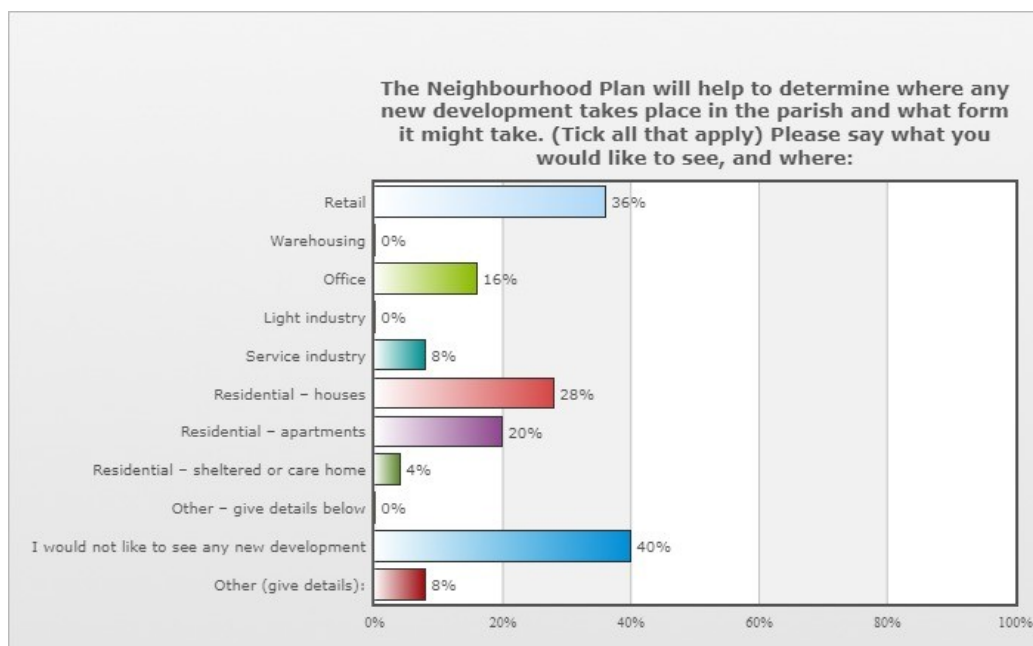
As long as developments lead to more trade

Develop to provide more job opportunities for young and cut travelling

High quality independent retailers such as bakers, fruit and veg

More houses means more customers

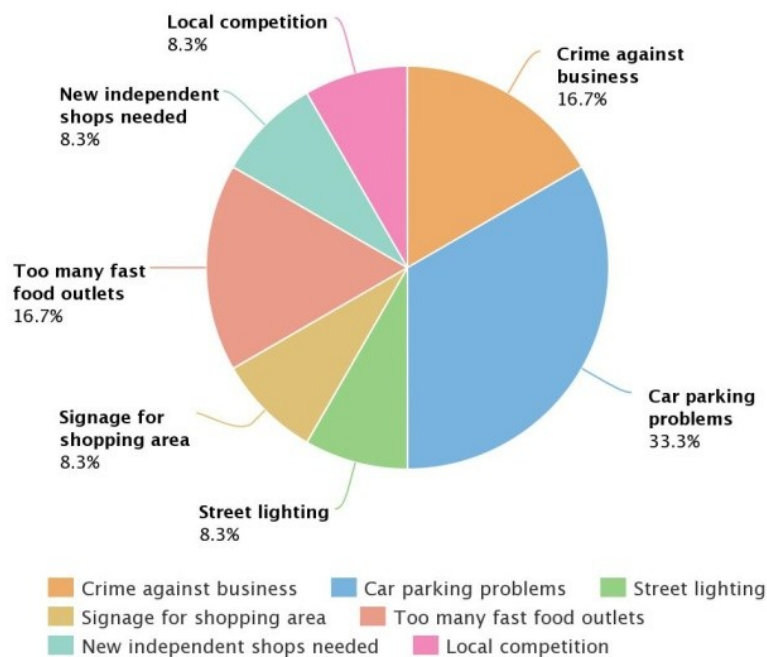
Catshill has enough fast food outlets



Q11. FINALLY, PLEASE DETAIL ANYTHING ADDITIONAL BELOW

Expansion of business dependent on whether more hair dressers open - there are already 6 hair salons within the parish.
More community policing to tackle crime in the area
New shops and businesses such as vets, deli, sun beds, flower shop, car wash to bring new customers to village.
People leaving their vehicles overnight outside the shopping area, impeding access to the shops.
Parking is inadequate, due to numbers working in Compass office, which puts off customers. 7 units in Golden Cross Lane are takeaways which brings nothing to the village during normal working hours.
More signage from main road to publicise retail area in village (Golden Cross Lane)
Lack of adequate parking and lighting
Too many takeaways in village. Don't want village to change.(Other than reducing number of takeaways)
Parking along Meadow Road a major problem, cannot access our premises at school collection times.(Coach Company)
Feel strongly about the increase in crime. Additional costs incurred in securing shop front, as had 5 brek ins in last 5 years. (Fish and chip shop)

Please detail anything additional or that you feel strongly about below (text analysis);



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Type and size of businesses in Catshill

The businesses in Catshill are mostly based in shops and offices, providing retail, personal and professional services, with an average of 6 staff (including full time and part time staff). The employers with the highest staff numbers are the Essential Marketeer (Golden Cross Lane) with 21 staff and the Garden Centre (Stourbridge Road) with 18 staff. Incidentally both these businesses intend to expand over the next 5 years. In total there are in the order of 160 jobs identified from this sample and therefore the total jobs available in the village is likely to be less than 200.

Businesses have been purchased/leased predominantly because of their location in the village and are mainly existing businesses not new businesses. A significant number were acquired because the business owner lived locally. The majority of businesses are either located on Golden Cross Lane or within 800 metres of this shopping area. Exceptions are the mini supermarket located in North Marlbrook and the Garden Centre.

Over the last few years independent retail traders have closed down, such as the bakery and fruit and vegetable shop and the number of fast food outlets have increased mainly along Golden Cross Lane. This shift of business type has led to reduced customer footfall during the day.

Future business plans and obstacles to growth

From the sample results, car parking (32%) was seen as the largest obstacle to business growth; however another third of the businesses did not identify any obstacles to growing their businesses. Other main reasons for impeding business growth included retail competition within Catshill (over capacity?), inadequate passing trade during normal working hours, recruitment of staff and cost of premises. Internet access and broadband were not seen as major obstacles to business growth.

The majority of businesses were planning to remain the same size over the coming 5 years, but 30% were looking to expand including the two largest employers in Catshill. Most of the businesses were not looking to move out of the parish but a significant minority (20%) were unsure of their future plans.

As the majority of businesses are located in and close to Golden Cross Lane any expansion of businesses and therefore increased numbers of staff will exacerbate the car parking problem in this area.

Concerns about Catshill as a business and trading area

Future development of retail services and housing was supported by businesses, which would lead to more trade and local job opportunities, although a significant number (40%) would not wish to see any new developments in the village. New independent retail shops were supported, opening during normal working hours, to improve trade for all but more fast food outlets and restaurants ought to be discouraged. This mix of businesses, some opening during the day and others during the evening were considered to lead to insufficient passing trade during the day. In the view of the respondents, this balance needs to be redressed to make the shops opened during the day more viable.

Concerns about levels of crime in the area were highlighted and in particular break-ins to shops - the local fish and chip had been broken into 5 times over the last 5 years. The Recently opened Coop store was subject to a raid by armed men.

The most pressing issue, according to the survey results, is car parking, particularly in Golden Cross Lane and also Meadow Road, where there are 3 schools located together with 2 coach service companies. Impeded access to shops and the travel companies deters potential customers. Passing customers in cars have difficulty seeing the shop fronts, which are set back from the road, when cars are parked nose to tail along this front area. This problem of market exposure is exacerbated by a lack of signage on the main routes through Catshill to let people know about the shopping area and the retail services available.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the businesses in the village are shops located in the Golden Cross Lane. There are seven takeaway and fast food outlets which open predominantly in the evenings and weekends, reducing the trading opportunities for other shops during normal working hours. There are also six hair salons in the Parish. Residents of North Marlbrook need to travel a significant distance for essential services like GP surgery and pharmacy.

The majority of businesses employ less than 5 full time staff and 1-2 part time staff. The largest employer is the Compass Offices located in Golden Cross Lane, taking up significant number of parking spaces.

The locations of businesses have been decided in the main by the proximity to their customers, with access to the motorway network another important consideration. The pharmacy's location was chosen due to its proximity to the GP Surgery.

The main obstacle to growing the businesses is car parking and related issues.. The Dental Practice has a special obstacle to growth as they need to obtain extra NHS funding, although they have the accommodation to expand. However, a third of businesses said there were no obstacles to growing or retaining their businesses.

Over the next 5 years, the majority of businesses said they would not leave the Parish or move into new premises within the Parish, with their businesses remaining the same size. However the two main employers would be providing new job opportunities during this period.

A third of businesses would support retail and residential housing developments in the village, as long as these developments led to increased customers and trade. However another third of the businesses did not wish to see any new developments at all.

There was a general view that the retail area suffered many inadequacies, including insufficient parking, lighting and signage, lack of access to premises and a need for quality, independent new shops and businesses open during normal working hours such as vets, deli, fruit and vegetable and flower shops to attract new customers to the village.