

# VISION FOR HIGHCLIFFE

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## ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

R Hills

M Mawbey

20<sup>th</sup> November 2015



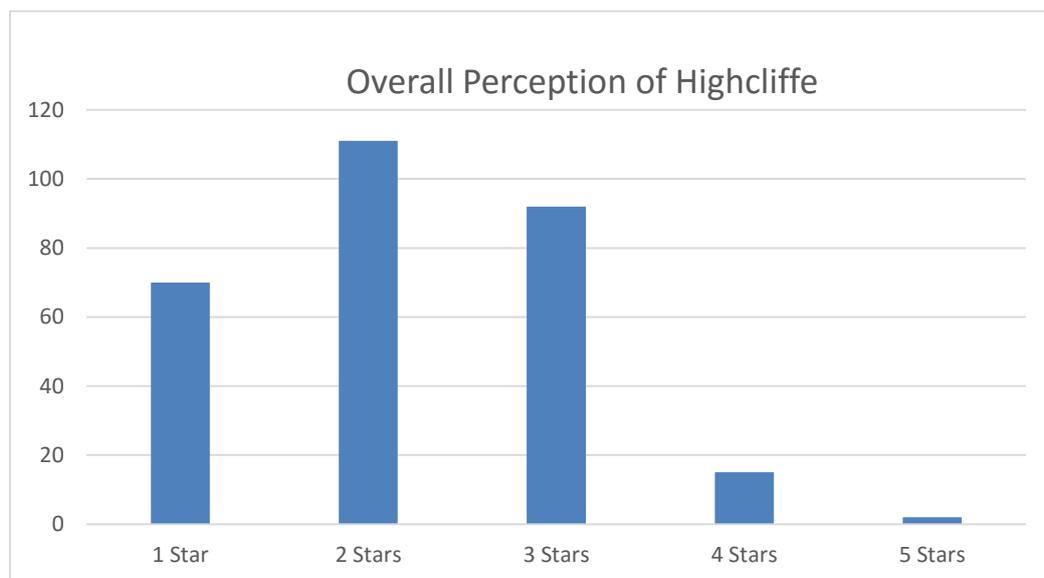
## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In order to establish what the Highcliffe residents think of their High street, the first task was to understand current perceptions, ideas, opinions and views on the future of Highcliffe. Highcliffe Centre Partnership conducted an online questionnaire to collect feedback. This was then discussed at an event held on the High street on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February. Overall 295 submissions were received. The driving force behind this initiative is to provide a series of recommendations which focus on the responses from people who live, work and shop in Highcliffe.

1.2 In addition to the on-line questionnaire visitors were encouraged to write down their comments on post-it notes. The summary of their inputs can found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

1.3 The questions and responses in the questionnaire are set out in excel document that can be found on <http://www.highcliffedorset.co.uk/centrepartnership.htm>. A summary of the responses is set out below.

## 2. CURRENT PERCEPTION OF HIGHCLIFFE

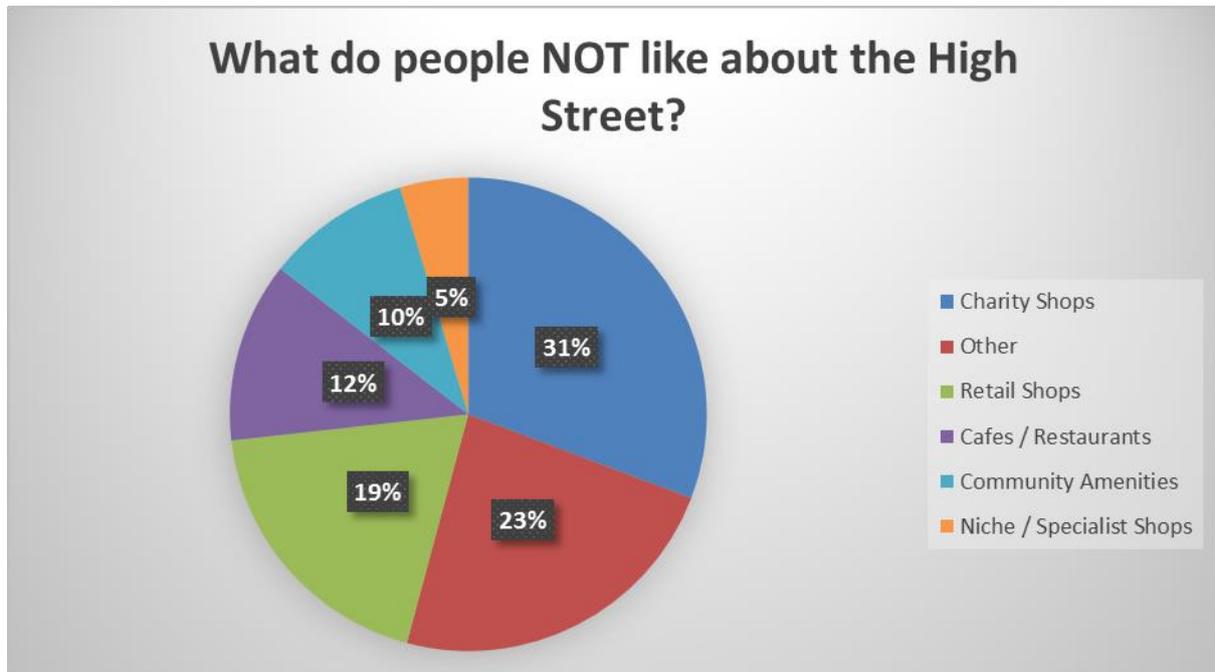


N=290 Average = 2.2 Stars

Although the current perception of Highcliffe centre is poor, there was frequent mention of the potential of the village.

### 3. VIEWS OF THE HIGH STREET

Many respondents consider that the number of charity shops, hairdressers and estate agents and the number of empty shops have an adverse effect. The pie chart below summarises their views.

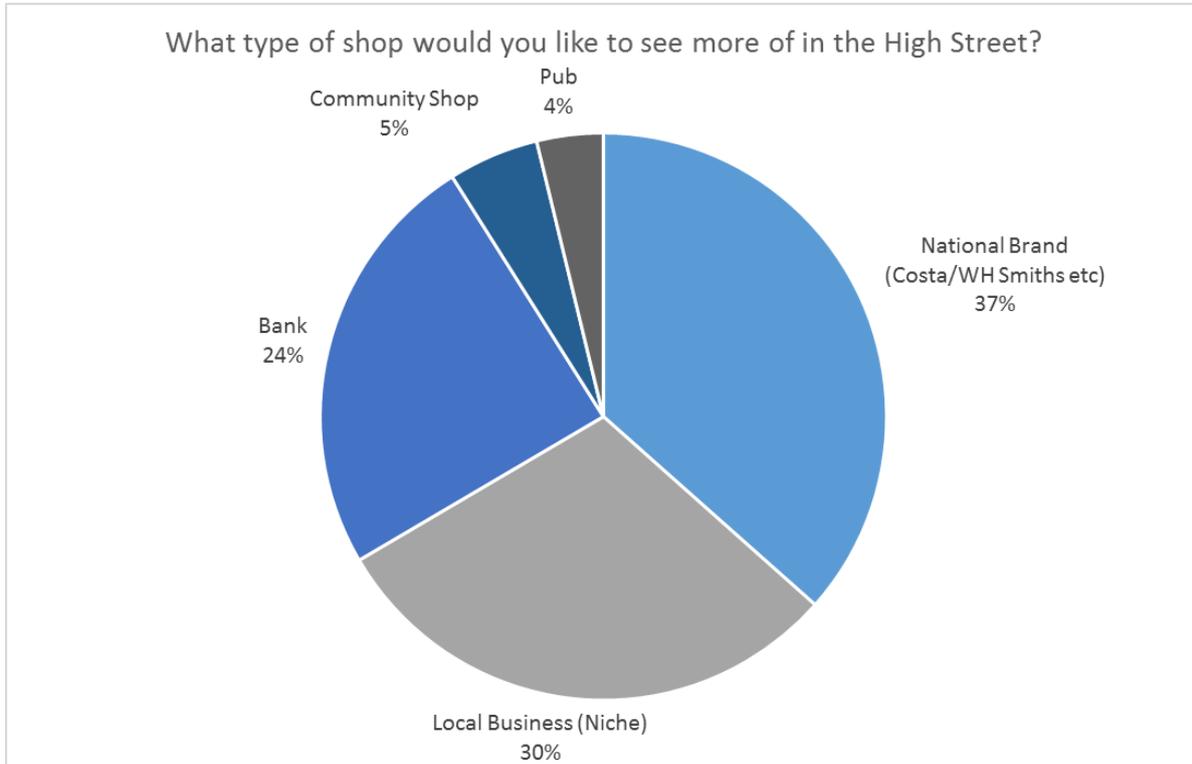


N=164

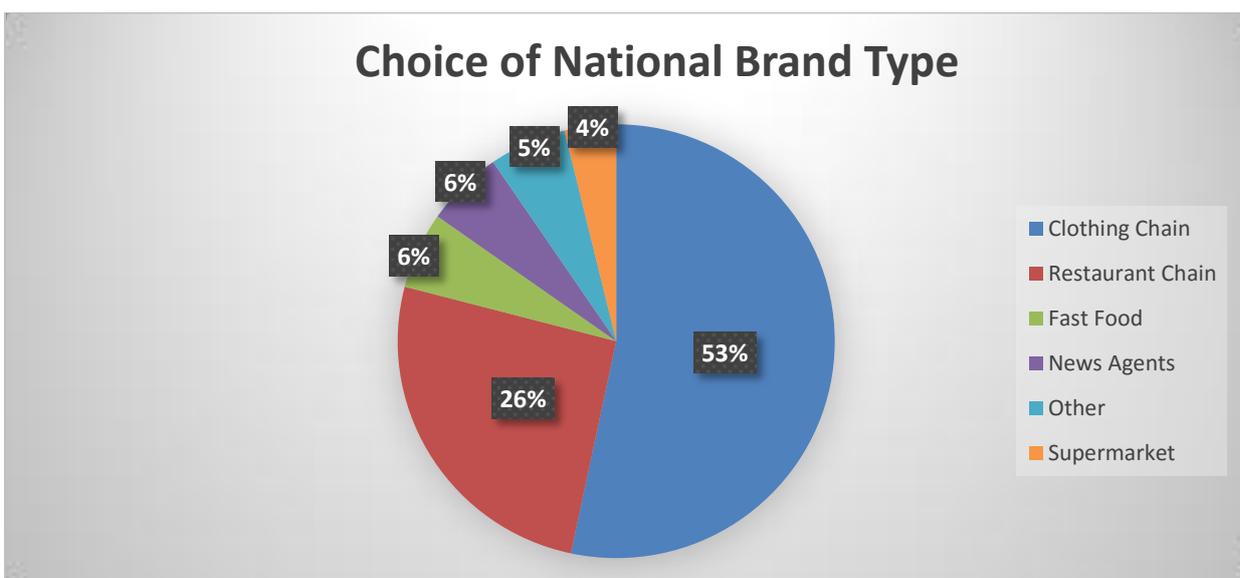
The recycling centre in Wortley Road car park was described, by various sources, as an eyesore which smelled.

#### 4. WHAT IS NEEDED

4.1 A “destination shop” was considered to be necessary. There were three key types of shop that the respondents would like introduced. Most popular was a brand that people would recognise, followed by more local run, niche establishments, and finally many suggested that a bank was needed (in spite of the services offered by the Post Office and the Nationwide). The summary is shown in the pie chart below.



Many saw the need for a national brand as summarised above. Over half of the opinion was for a clothing chain of some description.



N=105

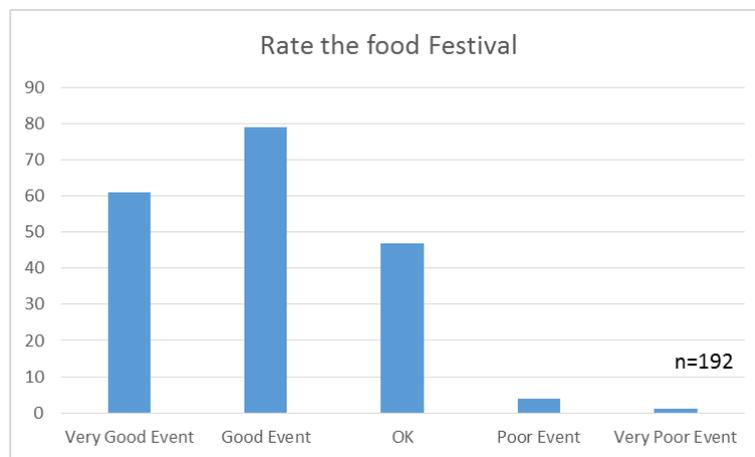
4.2 Additional commentary around the need to change the retail mix focused on the desire for a regular market and that the High street should reflect the needs of the younger residents more than at present. Some asserted that there should be more emphasis on the evening and night-time culture.

4.3 One reaction to the number of empty shops was that some should be replaced with residential premises thereby resulting in a smaller High Street.

## 5. EVENTS

### 5.1 Previous Festivals

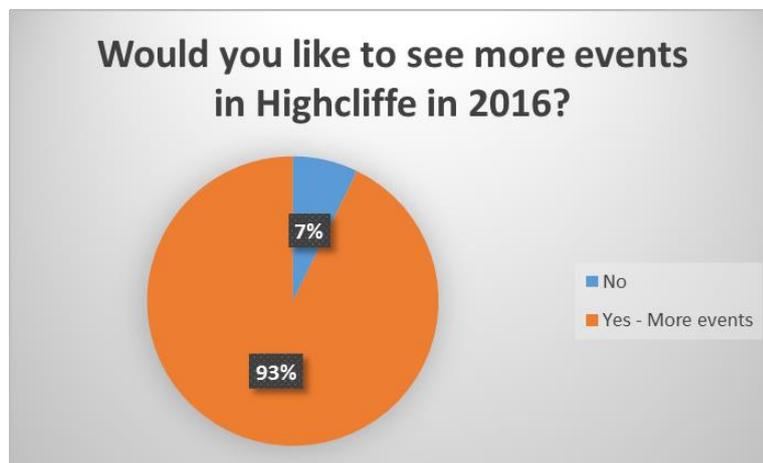
5.1.1 The Revival food festival was particularly successful with 97% of people whom attended rating it OK to Very Good.



N=289

5.1.2 Encouragingly for the community and the 2016 event, 88% of people whom attended will go to this year's event.

### 5.2 Future Events



5.2.1 93% of people would like to see more events in Highcliffe High street in 2016. Of the 268 that replied the themes mentioned with the percentage that supported them were as follows:

- Food Festival 73%
- Music 71%
- Street Opening 65%
- Carnival 53%
- Unspecified 23%

## **6. ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT**

6.1 In response to the question “What would your recommendation be to improve the High Street?” there were many comments and these have been summarised below against the following headings.

- Environment
- Traffic Management
- Public Transport
- Pavements
- Car parking charges

### **6.2 Environment**

6.2.1 It was proposed that the shopping centre should rebrand itself as part of a seaside village with brighter colours; Southwold, Milford-on-Sea and the Cornish villages were suggested as models. Many commented on the need to improve the shop frontages and to redecorate some of them which have been neglected. This particularly applied to the empty premises which looked uncared for. It was suggested that these should be improved by having interesting displays or by using them as pop-up shops.

6.2.2 Respondents would welcome more floral displays in hanging baskets, planters and window boxes; trees were also seen as improving the appearance of the High street. Although no particular site was identified, some wanted there to be a square or village green as a focus.

6.2.3 Comments were received about the street furniture; specifically, the poor condition of the number of damaged seats. It was suggested that the bollards and lampposts should be painted to reflect the seaside theme. The use of colourful banners was suggested and some suggested that bunting should traverse across the High Street. A plea was made for improved Christmas decorations.

### **6.3 Traffic Management**

6.3.1 10% of people, leaving general comments about the Highstreet, suggested that heavy goods vehicles should be banned with suggestions such as a weight restriction combined with diversions along the A35 and Ringwood Road or along the Wharnccliffe Road. Some respondents considered that the shopping area or a section of it should be pedestrianised which would require a bypass for all traffic. A more radical idea was to extend Wortley Road across the recreation ground and link it back to the Lymington Road at a new roundabout. Alternative suggestions were that a one way system should be set up using the Lymington Road, Waterford Road and Wharnccliffe Road. An even

more radical proposal was to move the shopping area onto the recreation ground with the units located around a central green.

6.3.2 It was proposed that some or all of the on-street parking should be removed to make the traffic flow easier through the shopping centre. Some felt that this would require traffic calming to be imposed and a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph or 10mph. More pedestrian crossings were suggested which would also have traffic-calming effects. Removal of the on-street parking would allow widening of some stretches of pavement.

6.3.3 The access to the Tesco Express site was highlighted as presenting safety issues and difficulties during deliveries to the store. Deliveries to other Lymington Road premises resulted in congestion and greater controls on their timing were proposed.

#### **6.4 Public Transport**

6.4.1 A comment was made about the Wilts and Dorset X1/X2 service and the suggestion was made that Yellow Buses should extend their route from Sainsburys to Highcliffe.

#### **6.5 Pavements**

6.5.1 5% of people specifically commented on the condition of the pavements and drew attention to their unevenness and that puddles formed when it rained. This was highlighted as a problem and dangerous for the less mobile. Some drew attention to the weeds and that the standard of cleaning was patchy. It was suggested that clutter from items on the private forecourts spilled over onto the public areas.

#### **6.6 Car Parking Charges**

All those that commented on the Wortley Road car parking thought that it should be free; they differed in the duration of the free parking from between just the first hour being free to it being completely free all the time. Many saw the need to eliminate parking in the Lymington Road which could result in more drivers using the car parks.

### **7. PROJECTS**

7.1 Listed below are the projects which were suggested or implied by the responses to "Do You Have Any Ideas For What Projects Should Be Focussed On For The Improvement Of Highcliffe?"

- Improving the slope to the beach
- Beach huts
- Support for HELP with more floral displays/ Planting trees
- Youth Attraction – Skate Board / BMX track, Youth Centre
- Arena / Musical performance area/band stage

7.2 There were two further suggestions: a pier and a slipway

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

### 8.1 Overall

8.1.1 A review of the responses to the questions highlights the common feeling that there is a need for change. This is the one theme which links the responses which cover a number of aspects of the High Street.

### 8.2 Problem Areas

8.2.1 From the responses, the problem areas which have caused concern are tabulated below; those highlighted with "\*" are derived from "white board" responses.

| Theme                                               | Problem Area                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Character of the High street                        | Filling Empty Shops                                              |
|                                                     | Attracting destination shops                                     |
|                                                     | Establishing a market                                            |
|                                                     |                                                                  |
| Environment                                         | Cleaning up the High Street forecourts                           |
|                                                     | Improving shop frontages                                         |
|                                                     | Extending use of bunting                                         |
|                                                     | Improving Street Furniture                                       |
|                                                     | Increasing floral displays                                       |
|                                                     | Planting trees                                                   |
|                                                     | Providing more litter bins on the beach and its approaches*      |
|                                                     | Updating Public Toilets & or decorating to a theme*              |
|                                                     | Cleaning up Beach vegetation - clearing it before it takes hold* |
|                                                     |                                                                  |
| Traffic Management                                  | Restricting HGVs                                                 |
|                                                     | Setting Width restriction                                        |
|                                                     | Setting Weight restriction                                       |
|                                                     | Establishing a By-Pass                                           |
|                                                     | Establishing a HGV Ban                                           |
|                                                     | Improving Traffic Flow                                           |
|                                                     | Restricting High Street Parking                                  |
|                                                     | Resurface Road*                                                  |
|                                                     | Stop signs on the corner of Waterford Road*                      |
|                                                     | Checking traffic lights timing*                                  |
| Coach parking bay in Walkford road or near village* |                                                                  |
|                                                     |                                                                  |
| Pavements                                           | Improving Maintenance                                            |
|                                                     | Increasing width of pavements                                    |
|                                                     |                                                                  |
| Car Parking                                         | Achieving Free Parking                                           |
|                                                     | Improving Signage                                                |

### **8.3 Projects**

8.3.1 A number of projects have been suggested but the level of support for each of them is unclear.

### **8.4 Events**

8.4.1 There is support for the current events (Food Festival and Carnival) and interest in there being a Music Festival and Street Opening events.

### **8.5 Housing and young people**

8.5.1 "The White Board" comments on this topic are outside the remit of HCP and should be highlighted to the DCC and CBC Councillors.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **9.1 Problem Areas**

9.1.1 Based on this questionnaire and the one undertaken in 2014 [1], HGV traffic through the High Street is of significant concern to residents; HCP should initiate action to make and present the case for a ban to DCC.

9.1.2 HCP should review the areas identified, prioritise them and develop an action plan. Where necessary they should seek the views of the Residents' Consultative Group made up of those who have responded to the on-line questionnaire to inform the priority. Our intention is to create another questionnaire to prioritise the actions from this report.

9.1.3 HCP should aim to strengthen the HELP team

### **9.2 Projects**

9.2.1 HCP should review and make a preliminary assessment of the costs and priority of each project. It should be noted that trees could only be planted in the High Street with the support of the owners of the private forecourts.

### **9.3 Future Events**

9.3.1 HCP should look into the possibility of holding a Musical Festival or Street Opening Event in the latter half of 2016 and seek support from appropriate persons and organisations to run them.

### References

1. "Residents Shopping Questionnaire 2014" M Mawbey, Highcliffe Centre Partnership September 2014

## APPENDIX 1

### WHITE BOARD ANALYSIS

#### A1.1 Introduction

The visitors to the Vision for Highcliffe event were invited to write down their comments on post-it notes which were attached to the white board under a series of headings. Many visitors went on to respond to the questionnaire when in some cases they made similar comments to those listed below. Where appropriate comments have been grouped together under:

- Environment
- Traffic Management
- Car Parking Charges
- Events
- Housing and Young People
- Other

For each comment the number of respondents has been listed. Comments that have not been mentioned in the responses to the questionnaire have been highlighted with a “\*”; all of the comments on housing and young people were only made on the white board slips.

#### A1.2 Environment

| COMMENT                                                                 | NUMBER |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Make it Eco-Friendly                                                    | 1      |
| Make it colourful                                                       | 1      |
| Plant trees along high street                                           | 2      |
| Get rid of the recycle banks                                            | 2      |
| Gateway entrance at Sea Corner - remove ugly Laundrette building.*      | 1      |
| No Café furniture on pavements                                          | 1      |
| Improve shop fronts - replace dated/tatty shop signs                    | 3      |
| Public Toilets need updating & or decoration to a theme*                | 1      |
| More litter bins on the beach and its approaches*                       | 1      |
| Improve Pavements                                                       | 6      |
| Beach vegetation clean up before it takes hold*                         | 1      |
| Don't spoil the beach - No Pier - No Huts. Lift good, Transport - Great | 1      |

### A1.3 Traffic Management and Transport

| COMMENT                                                                | NUMBER |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Pedestrianise the Shopping Centre                                      | 1      |
| Partly pedestrianise                                                   | 2      |
| Provide a Bypass                                                       | 4      |
| HGV Ban                                                                | 15     |
| Restrict HGV Delivery Times                                            | 1      |
| Introduce One way system                                               | 1      |
| Remove all on-street parking                                           | 3      |
| Remove on-street parking on north side                                 | 1      |
| Introduce Cycle Ways and racks                                         | 3      |
| Introduce new pedestrian crossings                                     | 1      |
| Lower speed limit                                                      | 1      |
| Resurface Road*                                                        | 1      |
| Stop signs on the corner of Waterford Road*                            | 1      |
| Traffic lights change far too quickly for OAPs*                        | 1      |
| Better Public transport & Later at night                               | 1      |
| Better bus services - Yellow bus from Christchurch to Highcliffe       | 1      |
| Coach parking bay in Walkford road or near village*                    | 1      |
| At the Hinton Railway station - a sign saying "For Highcliffe-on-Sea"* | 1      |

### A1.4 Wortley Road Car Parking Charges

| COMMENT      | NUMBER |
|--------------|--------|
| 1 Hour free  | 6      |
| 3 Hours free | 1      |
| Always free  | 11     |

### A1.5 Events

| COMMENT                                                   | NUMBER |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Food Festival - Keep it going                             | 1      |
| Monthly Market                                            | 1      |
| Reintroduce a market maybe on cliff top                   | 1      |
| More Markets and events - reasons to come to the High St  | 1      |
| Music Festival on the Rec or in the grounds of the castle | 1      |

### A1.6 Housing and Young People\*

| COMMENT                                                                                                                                                       | NUMBER |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Encourage more family housing - minimise new retirement homes                                                                                                 | 1      |
| Affordable homes for young                                                                                                                                    | 1      |
| More affordable housing for young people                                                                                                                      | 1      |
| To encourage younger people to stay here - for every retirement place built it should be compulsory for one to be built that younger people can afford to buy | 1      |
| More Housing for young people more facilities for their children                                                                                              | 1      |
| More provision for younger people there is too much for old people - it is not an elephants' graveyard                                                        | 1      |
| Where are young people supposed to afford to live?                                                                                                            | 1      |
| More affordable housing                                                                                                                                       | 1      |
| Encourage more young people to live here - too many old folk and facilities for the old                                                                       | 1      |
| No more retirement developments - More affordable housing for younger people                                                                                  | 1      |
| There are too many commercial landlords buying up our lower priced homes. First time buyers should be given a chance.                                         | 1      |
| Youth count much higher than thought - "Bussed out" to Bournemouth Grammar & Private schools                                                                  | 1      |
| Youth Club for Teenagers                                                                                                                                      | 1      |

### A1.7 Other

| COMMENT                                                                      | NUMBER |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Reinvent the High Street                                                     | 1      |
| Positive Slogan - not age /negative - keep it simple                         | 1      |
| Have a real vision that moves us on                                          | 1      |
| Website or community Board listing activities & group events*                | 1      |
| Provide local business information to new residents*                         | 1      |
| Keep the momentum going - Keep Highcliffe village feel                       | 1      |
| Do not let Christchurch join Poole and Bournemouth – it's alright on its own | 1      |
| Please can we have a Community Centre                                        | 1      |
| We have a community centre - Greystones                                      | 1      |
| Take a tip - how to do it from Bury near Manchester - Brilliant              | 1      |

## APPENDIX 2

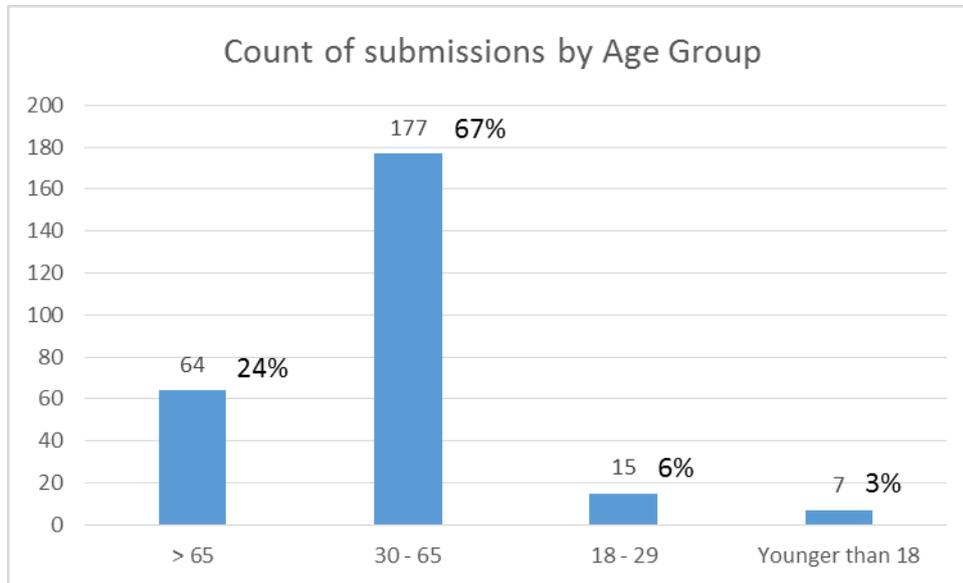
### THE ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire provided by REACTN went live at the beginning of October; 290 responses had been received by the 11<sup>th</sup> November. 22% of the responses were received on the two event days.

#### A2.1 Content of the questionnaire

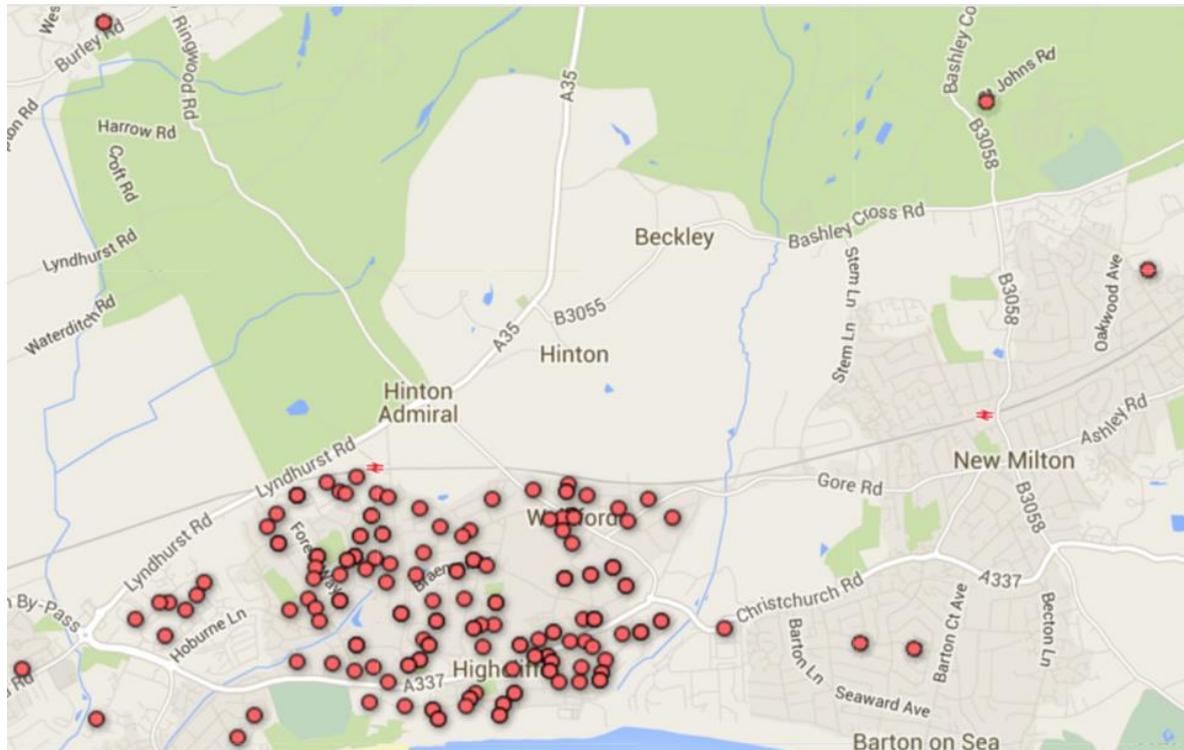
1. Overall Perception Rating
2. What would your recommendation be to improve the High Street?
3. What three words would you use to describe Highcliffe?
4. What type of shop would you like to see more of in the Village?
5. Choice of National Brand Type
6. Slogan Vote
  1. Loving life beside the sea
  2. Loving life by the sea
  3. Quality resort besides the sea
  4. So much more beside the sea
  5. Quality beside the sea
7. Ideas for a Slogan
8. There were two main events on the High Street in 2015. The Highcliffe Revival Food Festival and the Highcliffe Carnival. There were seen as very successful, however we would like your views on what can be done to improve for next year. Which event did you attend?
9. Would you like to see more events run in Highcliffe in 2016?
10. What type of events would you like to see more of?
11. What other recommendations do you have for the events in Highcliffe?
- 12 Finally, do you have any ideas for what projects should be focused on for the improvement of Highcliffe?
13. What is your Age Group?
14. Please can you indicate which areas you dislike about the High-street?
15. Comments on Events
  - Food Festival Meeting Expectations
  - Food Festival Quality of the event
  - Food Festival Return to the event
  - Carnival Expectations
  - Quality of the event
  - Return to the event
16. Profile data

## A2.2 Age Distribution of Residents Responding



This breakdown suggests that the on-line questionnaire was more effective in obtaining responses from the under 65 age group compared with the 2014 HCP questionnaire [A2.1] in which only 32% of the responses were from this group.

### A2.3 Post Code Analysis



The post code analysis shows that the residents taking part in the questionnaire were nearly all from Highcliffe; they were spread fairly well over that area. However there were some patches from where there no responses were recorded. This can be explained partly by the fact that those patches include Hoburne caravan park, Nea Meadows and Chewton Common

### References

A2.1. "Residents Shopping Questionnaire 2014" M Mawbey, Highcliffe Centre Partnership  
September 2014

<http://www.highcliffedorset.co.uk/HCP/Residents%20Shopping%20Questionnaire%202014.pdf>