

Amersham on the Hill Shopping Survey

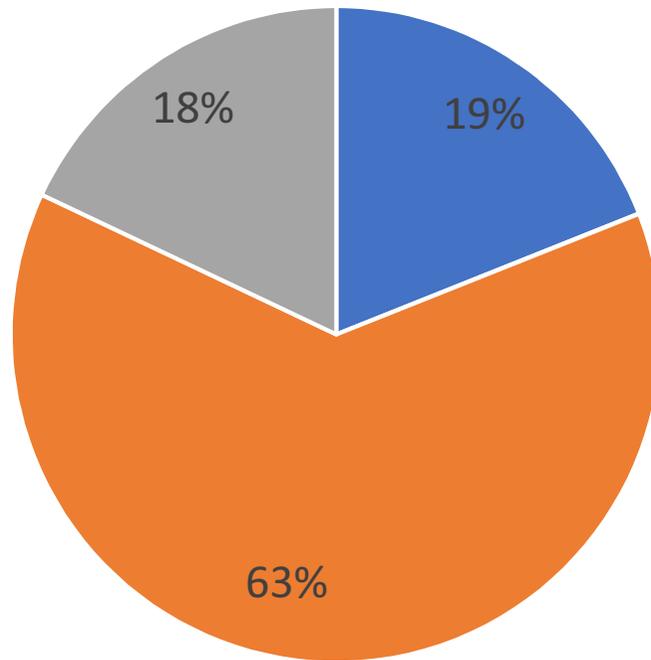
1164 respondents to the survey

In 2013 the adult population of the 4 Amersham Town Council wards was 13110.

The survey therefore achieved just over 10% response rate which is extraordinarily high for a public survey of this nature. This suggests that many residents are highly engaged by this topic.

Most questions were answered by more than 1000 respondents.

Age Ranges of Respondents



■ Under 40 ■ 41 - 70 ■ Over 70 ■

Likes and Dislikes of Amersham on the Hill

Significant likes of visiting AOTH in day time

EASE OF WALKING AROUND TOWN	77%
CHOICE OF SHOPS	60%
ACCESS TO SERVICES (financial/health/personal /other)	55%
CLEANLINESS	47%

Significant dislikes of visiting AOTH in daytime

CHOICE OF SHOPS	44%
CAR PARKING	27%
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	24%

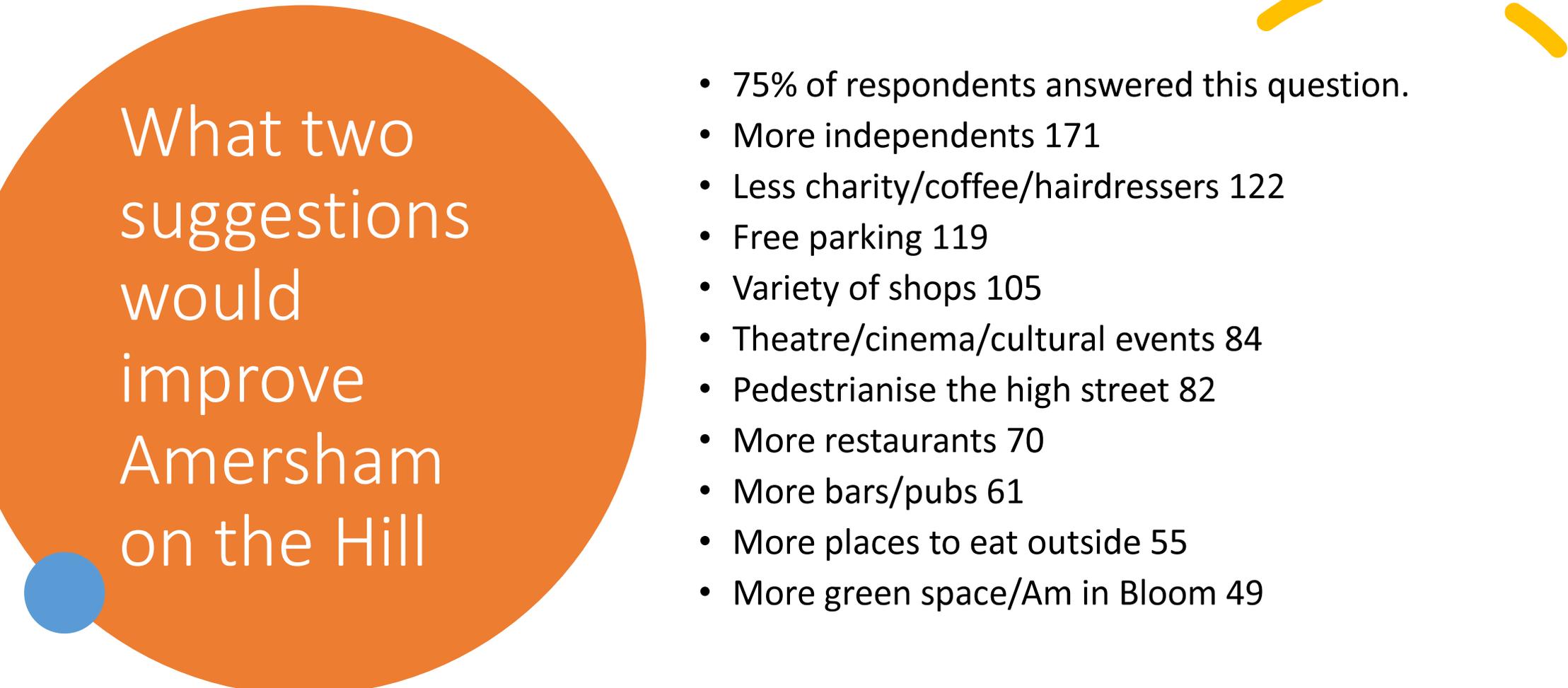
Likes and dislikes of Amersham on the Hill

Significant likes of visiting AOTH in the evening

Cafes/restaurants	86%
Pubs/Bars	46%
Street Lighting	29%
Personal Safety	28%

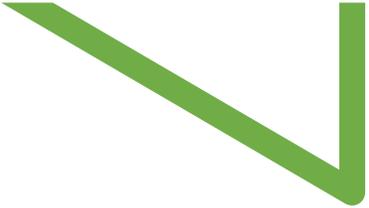
Significant dislikes of visiting AOTH in the evening

Other (not enough choice/fast food/lack of things to do)	29%
Cultural events- lack of	26%
Pubs/Bars	25%

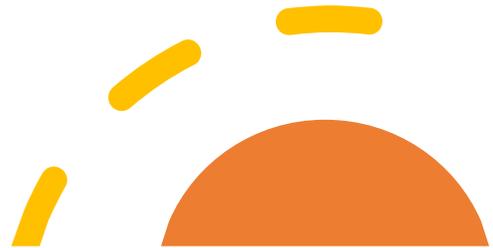


What two suggestions would improve Amersham on the Hill

- 75% of respondents answered this question.
- More independents 171
- Less charity/coffee/hairdressers 122
- Free parking 119
- Variety of shops 105
- Theatre/cinema/cultural events 84
- Pedestrianise the high street 82
- More restaurants 70
- More bars/pubs 61
- More places to eat outside 55
- More green space/Am in Bloom 49



What factors
would influence
you to shop
locally rather
than online

- Wanting to support local business 83%
 - Cost 61%
 - Speed of delivery 54%
 - Environmental considerations 53%
 - Delivery costs 50%
 - Click and collect options and convenient delivery times both less than 50%
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Comments



A quarter of respondents also offered a final comment. A selection of these are shown in the next slides on specific topics



While a small minority were happy with AOTH many respondents expressed frustration – they felt that Amersham had many of the possibilities for a vibrant high street but these were not being realised – they welcomed active measures to improve the situation.



There were conflicting views about parking but consensus about the need to balance housing with shopping on the high street.



There was concern and a desire to understand more about the barriers to independent shops with a focus on business rates and shop rents. Several suggestions were made about the integration of the new lifestyle centre with the high street.

General Comments



- “I think there has been too much attention given to making it a social hub and none given to keeping it a centre for shopping. It no longer appeals to me.”
- “Amersham on the Hill is quite good as a utilitarian centre serving the needs of day to day requirements.”
- “There is nothing there to draw people to browse or spend time and money... What is needed, is to entice shoppers to stay longer and enjoy the ‘experience’.”
- “It's currently quite a soulless, drab place to go.”
- “Amersham could have so much potential. There are many vacant shops and consumers are crying out for more choice.”

Shop distribution

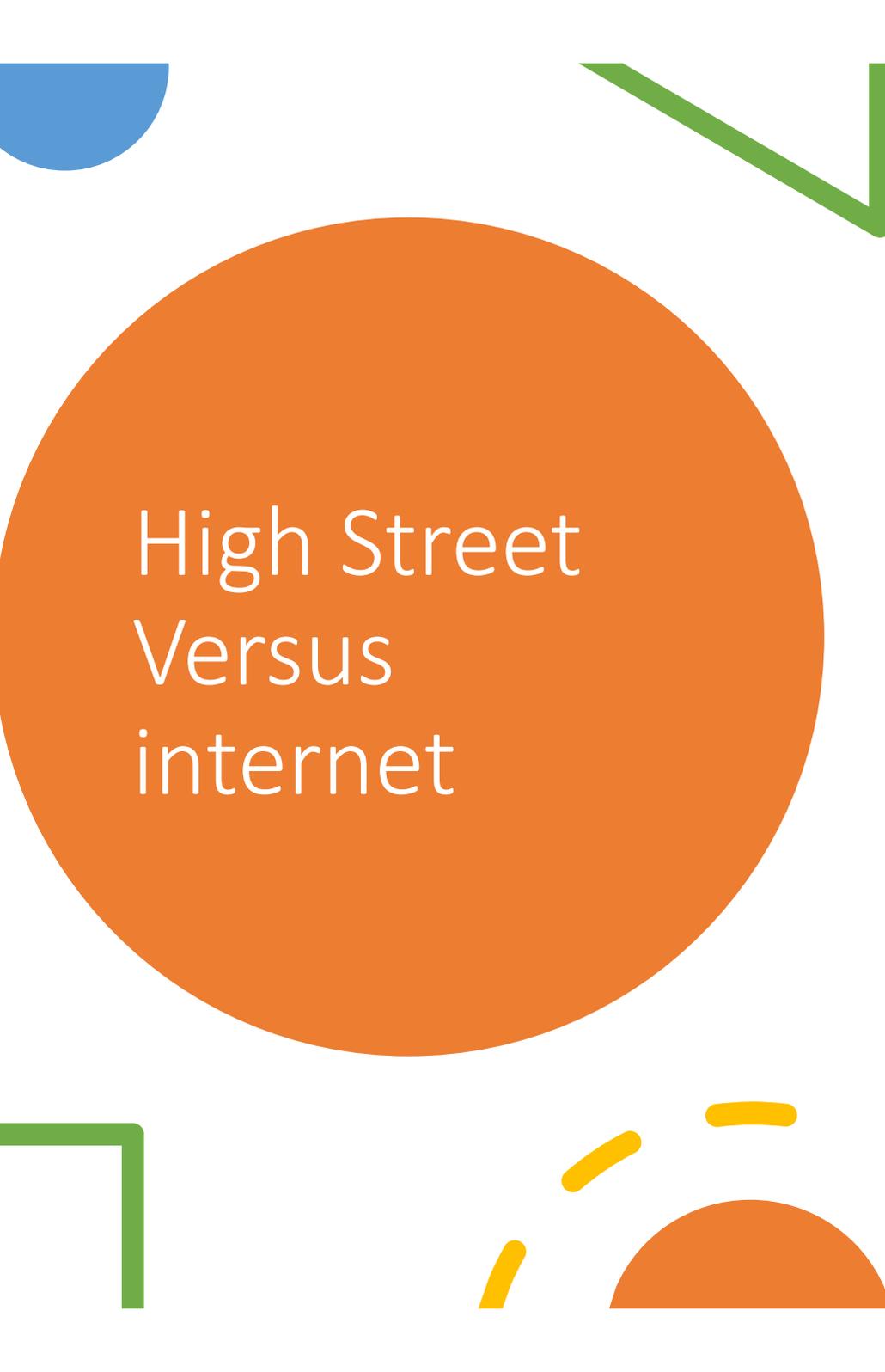
“Do not let AotH get overrun by cheap take aways like pizza, burger and fried chicken type shops.”

“Not enough reasonably price food shops available since Iceland closed.”

“For an area with an affluent population the high street should really encourage independent retailers to come and establish themselves to make Amersham a destination.”

“Be great to have a decent bakery/deli/ greengrocer..... The market could also be extended to a Saturday morning with more artisan and food stalls....”

“The hill needs something for all ages.”



High Street Versus internet

- “Shops have to offer things that online cannot do well (independent and quirky).”
- “It is important for the High Streets to reinvent themselves to counter the online retailers.”
- “ We cannot dictate where people shop, but we can help to introduce new and alternative uses and services that High Streets can offer to meet the demands of this new world.”
- “More Amersham Less Amazon.”
- “The high street shouldn’t try to compete head on with Amazon etc. The high street’s strength is service, being able to see the products, easy returns, availability, niche products etc.”

Shops versus flats

“I am concerned at the number of planning applications there are for flats. Without the high street being vibrant, there will be no shops for the residents to use and they will go elsewhere.”

“Growing Amersham is good but not to the detriment of the high street.”

“The town needs to be rebalanced, and with sky-high rents, and ridiculous property taxes being based on area rather than turnover, the future looks bleak.”

“If we continue to lose shops to be replaced by ridiculously expensive housing no locals can afford we are killing the town and removing any sense of community!”

“We need decent local shops and housing our kids can actually afford! If they see no future here why would they respect the area now? It needs to be relevant and accessible. Not just for the more well off!”

“Landlords must rethink their rental strategy and allow smaller independent retailers to fill empty shops to make a living at a lower rent. Same goes for the council charging tax.”

What next?

We need a long term vision for Amersham, rather than just short term plans.

We need to be proactive as opposed to reactive.

What about the Local Plan?

We need to engage all parties: Council, Landlords, Retailers , Public.