



WOBURN SANDS TOWN COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP



— COMMUNITY SURVEY —

Global climate warming, driven by rising emissions of greenhouse gases, is causing more frequent and severe extremes of weather, affecting all life on Earth.

This survey seeks your views on how our community could reduce its carbon footprint and also promote a healthier local environment, both for people and for wildlife.

In January 2020 the Town Council supported the 'Declaration of a Climate Emergency' by Milton Keynes Council and set up an advisory Climate Change Group to propose solutions at a local level. The Town Council is keen to hear your views on the initiatives suggested so far in order to gauge the strength of support for their implementation, since many of them will require approval (and funding) from Milton Keynes Council and other authorities. In addition, with many new developments being proposed locally, this survey is a way to help shape the Town Council's response to them with the environment in mind.

Please answer the following questions by ticking your chosen responses in the boxes below each question. Use the comment box at the end of each section for any further comments or suggestions, citing the question number(s) to which they refer.

Instructions for returning the questionnaire are given at the end of this survey form.

Section A. TRAFFIC AND WOBURN SANDS' CARBON FOOTPRINT

Transport is the UK's most polluting sector and 58% of all car journeys in England have been found to be under 5 miles (National Travel Survey England 2018). Reducing local motor traffic by encouraging walking and cycling over short distances is key to reducing our carbon footprint.

As a 'Key Settlement' on the edge of Milton Keynes, Woburn Sands has a mixture of local, and through-traffic. Reducing motor traffic in general improves air quality, reduces noise pollution, improves road safety and creates an environment where residents choose to leave the car at home and walk or cycle over shorter journeys. This is the basis for the first part of this survey.

Question 1. Would you like to see Woburn Sands become a 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood'?

Why we are asking: Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are initiatives that aim to reduce 'rat-run' traffic through residential areas. Traffic heading into, or across MK should use grid roads, such as Brickhill Street (V10) and the A421, and be discouraged from going through residential streets in Bow Brickhill, Woburn Sands and Aspley Guise. Cycle lanes, bollards, planters, signs and lower speed limits are examples of measures that could make cutting through our town less convenient, so reducing the amount of traffic here overall. This would in turn improve conditions for residents and potentially make walking and cycling for local journeys more attractive. Bear in mind, though, that such restrictions would also tend to slow down local car journeys within Woburn Sands, which could be seen as a disadvantage.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 2. Would you support a uniform 20mph speed limit throughout Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: We currently have a confusing mix of 20mph and 30mph limits in Woburn Sands. The introduction of one clear uniform speed limit across the whole town would remind drivers that they are in a residential area and encourage a steadier style of driving, curbing noise and pollutants generated by acceleration and braking. The lower speed limit of 20mph could further improve road safety, so again encouraging more walking and cycling, and may further help to reduce through-traffic.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 3. Would you find more pedestrian crossings useful?

Why we are asking: Pedestrian crossings prioritise pedestrians, promoting walking and helping to calm traffic, improving road safety. However, it's very difficult to get approval for them from relevant authorities (statistical evidence is needed, and they're expensive), so we're interested to know if there's sufficient support for any additional crossing(s) that we could apply for.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

If in favour, state where you'd like to see any additional crossing(s) in Comments Box at end of section.

Question 4. Would you support some form of one-way system through Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: Parking is in short supply in Woburn Sands. Despite the inconvenience to some journeys within Woburn Sands, a one-way system in some streets could allow the width of the carriageway to be reduced, enabling diagonal parking and increasing the number of spaces outside homes for charging electric vehicles. Again, not easy to implement, but we'd like to gauge interest.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 5. Would you like to see the High Street become more pedestrian-friendly?

Why we are asking: Research has shown that narrower traffic lanes (of widths between 2.8 and 3.25 metres) are safer, especially when coupled with a lower speed limit. Reducing the width of the road along some parts of the High Street would allow extra room to widen the pavement. Crossing the road would be easier and a café culture could be fostered. There need be little or no loss of parking places.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 6. Would you support a campaign to discourage engine-idling in the town — specifically outside schools and at the railway crossing?

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 7. Would you support extending the MK Redway network within Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: Woburn Sands is already connected to the MK Redway network via the Newport Road; and new western links (e.g., via the Bow Brickhill Road) are in the SEMK plan. But would you like to see the network go further into the town, where there's space for both pedestrians and cyclists?

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 8. Would you like to see more cycle racks around the town?

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Add any further suggestions regarding traffic and Woburn Sands' carbon footprint here.

Section B. BIODIVERSITY

'Biodiversity' refers to the variety of animals and plants living in given areas or habitats. Increasing the connectedness of habitats can improve the resilience of biodiversity to climate change: and its recovery can in turn help us combat climate change by enhancing carbon burial and flood mitigation, for example. Creating a robust network of wildlife-rich places throughout Woburn Sands would not only help the natural world, but benefit residents as well, improving their mental and physical wellbeing and quality of life.

Question 1. Would you like to see more trees planted in streets across Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife, as well as capturing carbon dioxide. They also help to reduce air pollution, noise levels and wind speeds. They give protection from summer temperatures, ultraviolet (UV) radiation and flooding, too. Their presence improves mental and physical wellbeing and can help to calm traffic. Please consider if you'd like to see trees planted along your street, if they are not already there. Note, however, that shedding of leaves and root growth can create problems for pedestrians, drains and pavements, necessitating careful planting and maintenance.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 2. Would you like to see blossom trees planted around Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: The National Trust is planting blossom trees on many of its estates. They are beautiful in the spring and provide the natural world with food and habitat all year round. Suggested locations around Woburn Sands might be in selected parts of Edgewick Farm and the footpath along the southern border of Parklands, as well as the green buffer zones proposed for the SEMK development.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 3. Would you support street lighting being switched off for a few hours during the night, in the 'small hours' when few, if any, people are up and about?

Why we are asking: Earth's predictable rhythms of day and night affect all life and govern behaviours such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep and protection from predators. Artificial light turns night into day with deadly effects on many nocturnal creatures as well as plants. For instance, up to a third of all flying insects attracted to artificial lighting are estimated to die as a result of the encounter. The decline of insect populations threatens all life that relies on them for food, pollination and other benefits. We may feel safer in the light, but we are also negatively impacted by light pollution, which can upset our natural rhythms and disrupt sleep patterns, damaging health and quality of life. Light pollution also deprives us all of the beauty of the night skies. The damage that artificial light is doing to the natural world is only slowly being appreciated. But it is a problem that is relatively easy and cheap to fix by switching off lights when there is little or no need for them (this applies to domestic outside lighting, too).

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 4. Would you support the 're-wilding' of some grass verges in Woburn Sands?

Why we are asking: Over 97% of British flower-rich meadows have been destroyed since the 1930s with a consequent massive decline in the numbers of pollinators (such as bees, hoverflies, moths and butterflies), which rely on their nectar, as well as other plant-feeding insects. The charity 'Plantlife' is campaigning to restore grassland verges up and down the country and Highways England is now working to do the same. Managing the grass verges to encourage the growth of wild flowers would also mean a reduction in grass-cutting frequency, with a reduced carbon footprint, though maybe producing a less 'neat' appearance. Cosmetic tidying of green spaces is too often achieved at a terrible cost to nature!

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 5. Would you support *completely* ending the use of herbicides by the Town Council's grounds maintenance contractors?

Why we are asking: The Town Council already has a policy of *minimal* herbicide use, essentially only for boundary edges (such as beneath fences) that are inaccessible to mowers and strimmers. But recent research has shown that even such minimal use has wider impacts on wildlife than is claimed by manufacturers. It also suppresses the local growth of wildflowers that, though often regarded as 'weeds', are important food sources for many insects. Stopping the use of herbicides would help maintain rich insect populations, themselves an important food source for many garden birds. Many councils have already gone herbicide-free, while France banned the non-agricultural use of pesticides in 2020.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 6. Would you support a more natural planting regime around the library and in the town's planters and hanging baskets?

Why we are asking: Records show that climate change is altering both flowering times and the appearance of insects that feed on their nectar. Moreover, these timings have become increasingly disconnected in recent years, with harmful consequences. Plants could be selected for longer flowering seasons and the variety of insects they attract, in turn benefiting the garden birds that feed on them.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Question 7. Would you support the installation of nesting boxes for birds and bats on the town's trees and WSTC buildings?

Why we are asking: Many birds (e.g., house martins, swallows and swifts) as well as bats have suffered major declines in recent years. Increasing opportunities for them to nest can help their recovery.

Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Opposed	Strongly opposed

Lastly, please let us know if you'd be interested in any of the following by ticking one or more of the boxes (*if so, please leave your contact details in the Comments Box below*):

- Getting involved with developing a community wildflower garden.
- Joining a network of local Gardeners for Wildlife.
- Hearing from the Woburn Sands Climate Change Group

Add any further suggestions for promoting biodiversity in and around Woburn Sands here.

Please return your completed survey: *either to Woburn Sands Town Council, Memorial Hall, 4 High Street, Woburn Sands MK17 8RH (either by post or via the letter box on the front door of the Memorial Hall), or to the library, The Institute, High Street, by 28/02/2022.*

If you are interested in discussion of future plans, events or volunteer activities in these areas, please look out for notices on the Town Council website < <http://www.woburnsands.org.uk/> >

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!