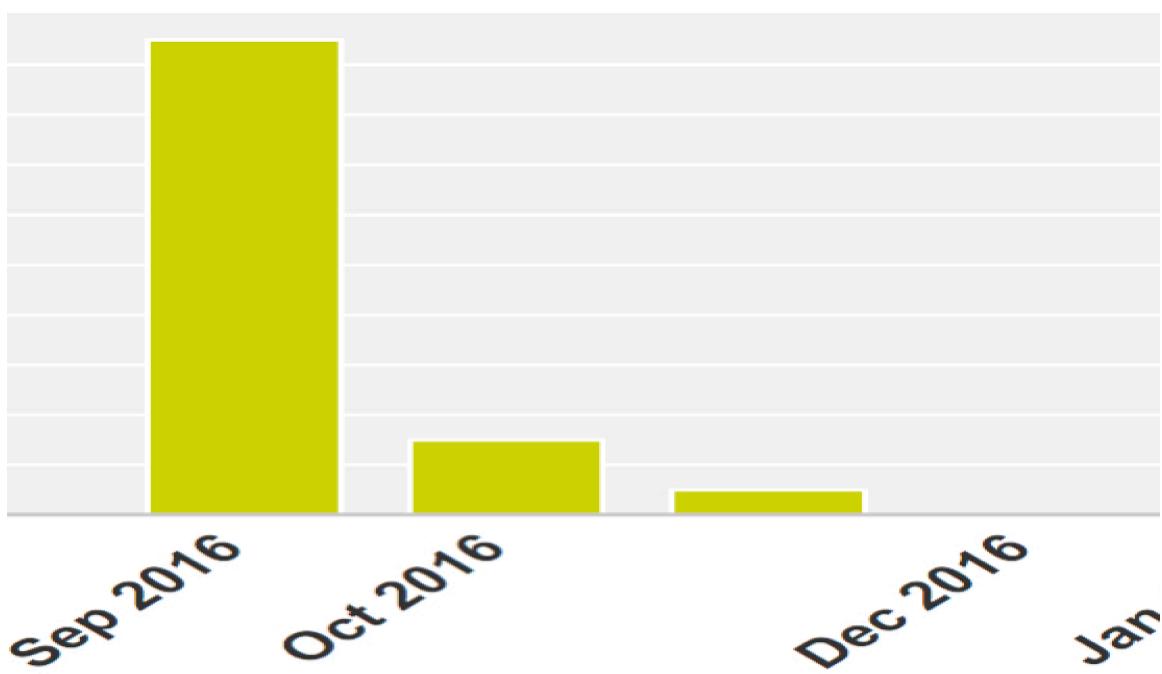


# Into the Looking Glass

*A Picture of Who We Are & a Map of Where We are Going*

This survey was conducted in the autumn of 2016. Two hundred and fifty online and 250 paper questionnaires were distributed to households in the community. Thirty online surveys were completed and twenty were returned on paper. Most returnees were aged 40-60 years with a significant number in their 20s. While the survey did not ask for gender or socio economic information, their answers suggested that there was a balance of men and women and most were either working outside of the village and / or raising children.

The survey was open for responses for three months, from September 15 until 15 December 2016. Most of the online forms were completed in the first few weeks of the survey going online.

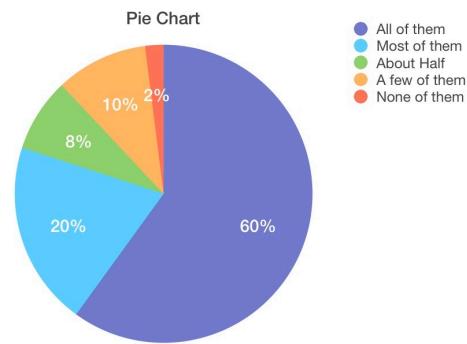
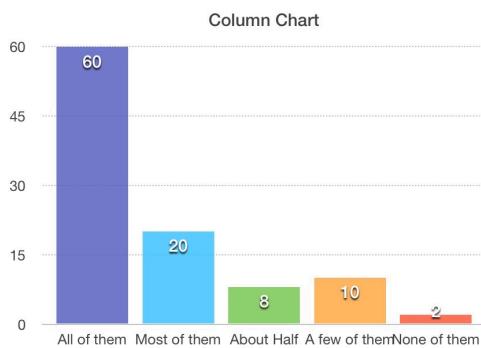


## Are we Neighbourly?

The first question concerned neighbourliness and how well we know each other and feel connected to those around us. On the whole we feel well connected to our near neighbours with 80% of us knowing all or most of our near neighbours:

### How well do we know each other?

Our Neighbourliness	
HOW MANY OF YOUR NEAR NEIGHBOURS DO YOU KNOW?	
All of them	60
Most of them	20
About Half	8
A few of them	10
None of them	2



## What we Like Most

When asked, what do you like most about living in Newcastle, it seems that what we all most like is both the natural and built environments. Our love of our natural surroundings centred around the sea and the mountains, Birdwatch and the beach. We like the peace and quiet and rural feel to this area.

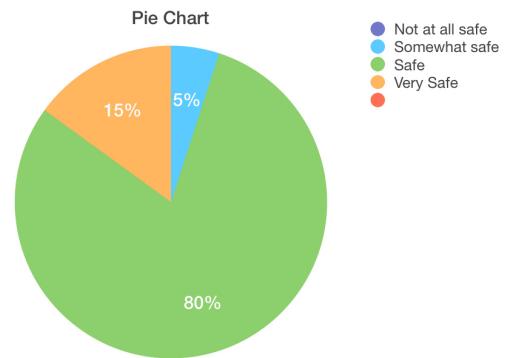
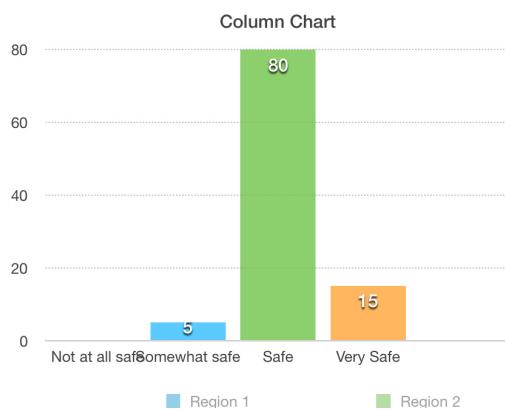
In our built environment we appreciate the good road network, DART and bus services, as well as our basic amenities in a village that has escaped the ravages of extended housing developments of our neighbouring villages.

We also value highly our social environment and our sense of belonging in the village with a vibrant community spirit. One respondent noted that we have *"amenities, a shop, a place to eat if I need to at night, and it is close Dublin and has a quite good bus service."*

We also asked about how safe we feel in our community and how strong is the community spirit. One person commented that while the community spirit was strong, it was only among "a small percentage".

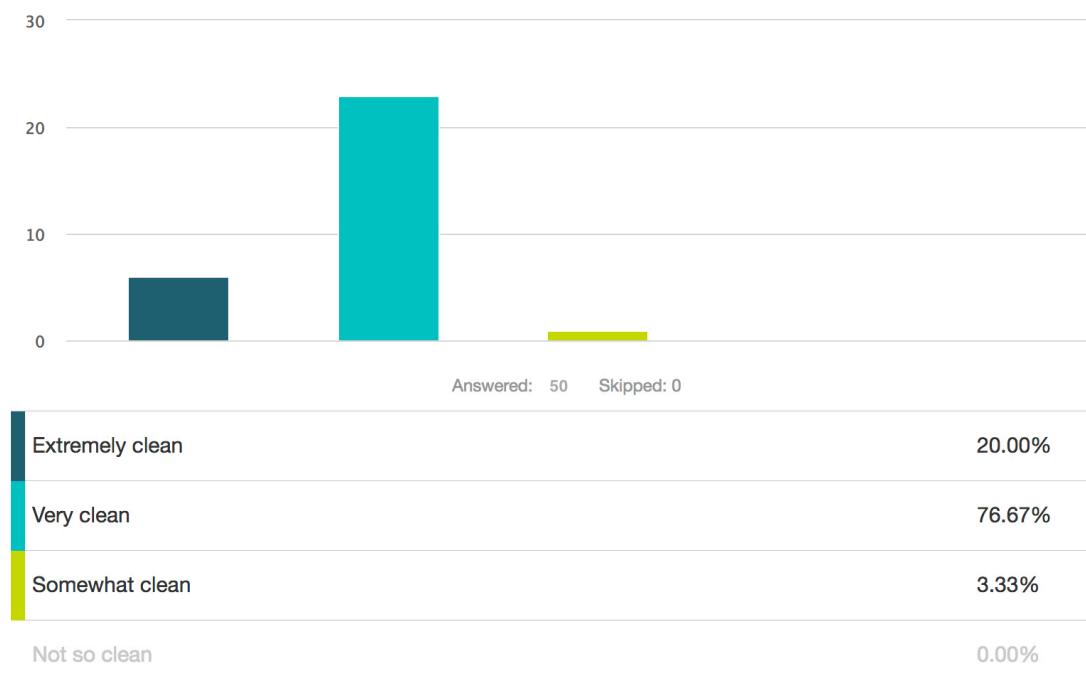
## How Safe do you feel in this community?

HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN THIS COMMUNITY?	
Not at all safe	
Somewhat safe	5
Safe	80
Very Safe	15



On the whole we feel safe or very safe, with one in twenty of us feeling only "somewhat safe" and the problem of drugs and anti-social behaviour is seen as an issue for some. We also asked how clean is our village and most people considered that Newcastle is very clean indeed (76%).

## 2. Overall, how clean is Newcastle?



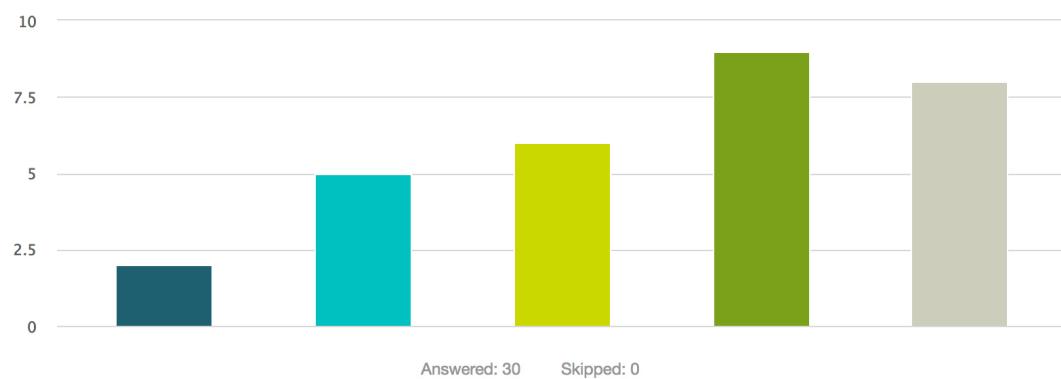
**We asked the question, if you do not participate in activities in the village, why not?**

On the whole, the vast majority (80%) of the people living in Newcastle do not participate in local events and activities. Two big issues emerged : "time poverty" and the challenges of raising children, some of whom are not / cannot be schooled here. One person commented that "*In the past didn't hear about them until they were over - like the food fairs because there was no publicity. I have on occasions felt left out, but less so in recent times because of email newsletter*".

Another asked the startling question, "**Is there any need for voluntary help anymore given the part time staff now employed who does great work?**"

---

**1. How often do you participate in activities in organised here?**



Extremely often	6.67%	2
Very often	16.67%	5
Somewhat often	20.00%	6
Not so often	30.00%	9
Not at all often	26.67%	8

## Issues and Concerns

### What do you like least about living here?

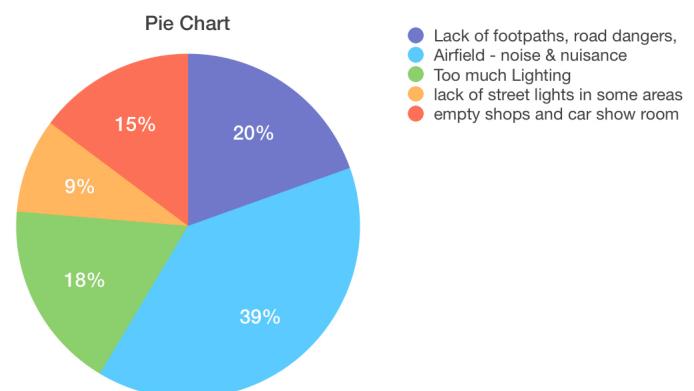
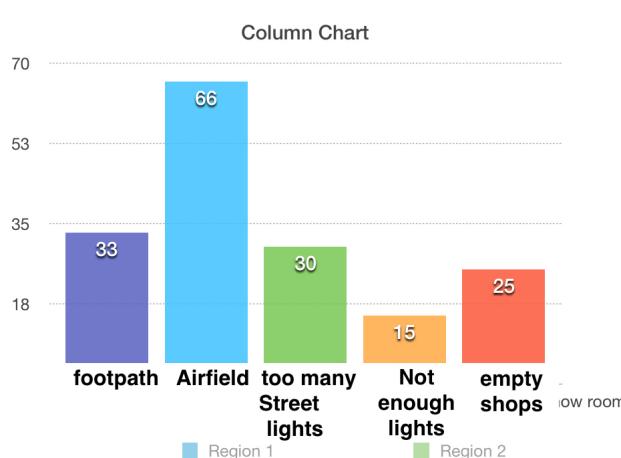
In terms of what people least liked about living in Newcastle, public transportation and the challenges of commuting were mentioned. While dangerous roads for walking figured very high on people's concerns as well as the noise and nuisance from the airfield.

The drugs problem and anti-social behaviour was cited and it was felt that "*young people in the village need something to do with their nights at the weekend.*" A few people suggested that we were too self-contained and inward looking. "*If you are not involved in the school or the church opposite it feels very much being on the outside.*" While another said that "*two community centres is racist and economically stupid*".

Another commented that we "*can be a bit insular (sorry). Those not from the area or not in the parish church can feel like outsiders.*"

## Issues for Newcastle Dwellers

WHAT DO YOU LEAST LIKE IN NEWCASTLE?	
Lack of footpaths, road dangers,	33
Airfield - noise & nuisance	66
Too much Lighting	30
lack of street lights in some areas	15
empty shops and car show room	25



- Lack of footpaths, road dangers, 33
- Airfield - noise & nuisance, 66
- Too much Lighting, 30
- lack of street lights in some areas, 15
- empty shops and car show room, 25

## How We See the Future

In the main, in answer to the question as to how people might envisage Newcastle developing in 20 years time, most felt they would like to see the village its charm and identity and hopefully not become just a suburb of Dublin or Greystones or the population "exploding".

The mood is a desire for "*organic growth from families . . . with current vacant housing being redeveloped.*"

Growth of a different kind was envisaged by a Birdwatch enthusiast who expected that the East Coast Nature Reserve would get more funding and "*I can see a Centre being built and attracting more visitors*".

Another bright spark suggested that we could have a community led energy initiative using local power such as a wind turbine. A district heating scheme based on a combination of low carbon heat generation methods was also mentioned.

Another person commented that unless the drugs issue is addressed "*the outlook will be grim in 20 years time.*" Yet another saw a different kind of drugs facility in the future, and hoped for a chemist in the village.

**On what changes would most improve this village the consensus seemed to centre on regenerating the centre of the village with more housing for young couples alongside the refurbishment of the community centre, and flood protection measures.**

A low cost facelift to community centre was suggested with "*a residents' subscription model used for funding.*" Another correspondent suggested "*starter housing suitable for couples. Small affordable places. . . Similar to the townhouses next to the pub.*"

A further suggestion was "*co-ordination between community groups . . . a form of council or co-ordinating group*" was mooted. A few people mentioned a "*village*

*design statement", while another suggested that "including the young people in the village upkeep activities, may deter them from undoing the good work."*

Priority for others centred on flood control measures as flooding events increase; *"The focus needs to be on the bridges beside the pub and downstream. The Breaches requires a permanent solution to avoid a massive flooding event."*

On the topic of concerns that you would like addressed dog dirt and dealing with the distress of aeroplanes were top of the list. *"The Bird Sanctuary and constant flyover from the private airfield appear not compatible. The birds all seem to have left. If there is a causal connection restrictions on time and direction of flights ought to be restricted."*

Dog fouling is a major problem in on the beach and in the village.

Dog owners should be educated on the danger of dog faeces and it was suggested that more dog foul bins are needed in the village . . . *"Could the Residents' Association not provide bags?"*, another inquired.

#### **Other suggestions for improvement included:**

- To involve ourselves in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan as promoted on [www.BiodiversityIreland.ie](http://www.BiodiversityIreland.ie)
- Create a communal supply of stuff to borrow such as steam cleaners, power hoses, ladders etc.
- Adult Gym (outdoor)
- Finding a suitable business to take over the car showrooms etc. would re-energise that area.
- Day time cafe in the middle of the village.
- Collection of donations to support Residents' Assoc & Tidy Towns

#### *For Young People*

Upgrade and expand the children's playground areas with more facilities for older children.

#### *Linkages*

Safe cycle and walking routes linking villages of Newtown and Kilcoole and Wicklow town

Public Transport route to Wicklow town

Having the 84 bus timed to connect with the DART service

New footpath from N.S. to New Rectory is dangerous. Same road needs widening & paving up to the roundabout.

*Development of walking paths*

- From village to sea across fields
- From village to Five Mile Point along the fields (inside hedges)
- access to Ballyvolan woods.
- Boardwalk way on the beach to stop erosion.
- Safe walks within the village.

*On Isolation of in our community:*

Connect with the Bray based Home Support Service, HomeLink, a facility for older and vulnerable people that helps them to stay in their own homes. The service includes a daily telephone call, weekly social events, small repairs and home maintenance and pendant alarms and security devices.

Lastly, the questionnaire included a space for comments and you were full of encouragement to keep going:

*Keep up the good work. The Tidy Town team is especially good.*

*This questionnaire is a great idea, well done*

*You guys are doing a really impressive job*

*Though I can't be more active, I think the Residents Assoc. is doing a fine job.*

*Well done on all the hard work done to date*

*I wish to compliment all the hard workers I see (and don't see but know that are there) for keeping our village so clean and attractive. I know it is a thankless job and realise the time commitment required.*

*Well done to all.*