

VILLAGE VISION: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS

Top Ten Issues: Sorting is primarily by numbers returned noting big issue against the remaining categories, i.e. Small and No Issue combined.

The sample sizes varied between 468 and 480. The graphical representation is produced using percentage of the total sample in each category and absolute values are represented in the table below.

This representation gives priority to the Big Issue returns. The questionnaire does not go into any detail as to what the big issue might be and it must be recognised that different contributors may have very different viewpoints. The only way of researching these further would be a return to the topics in public consultation.

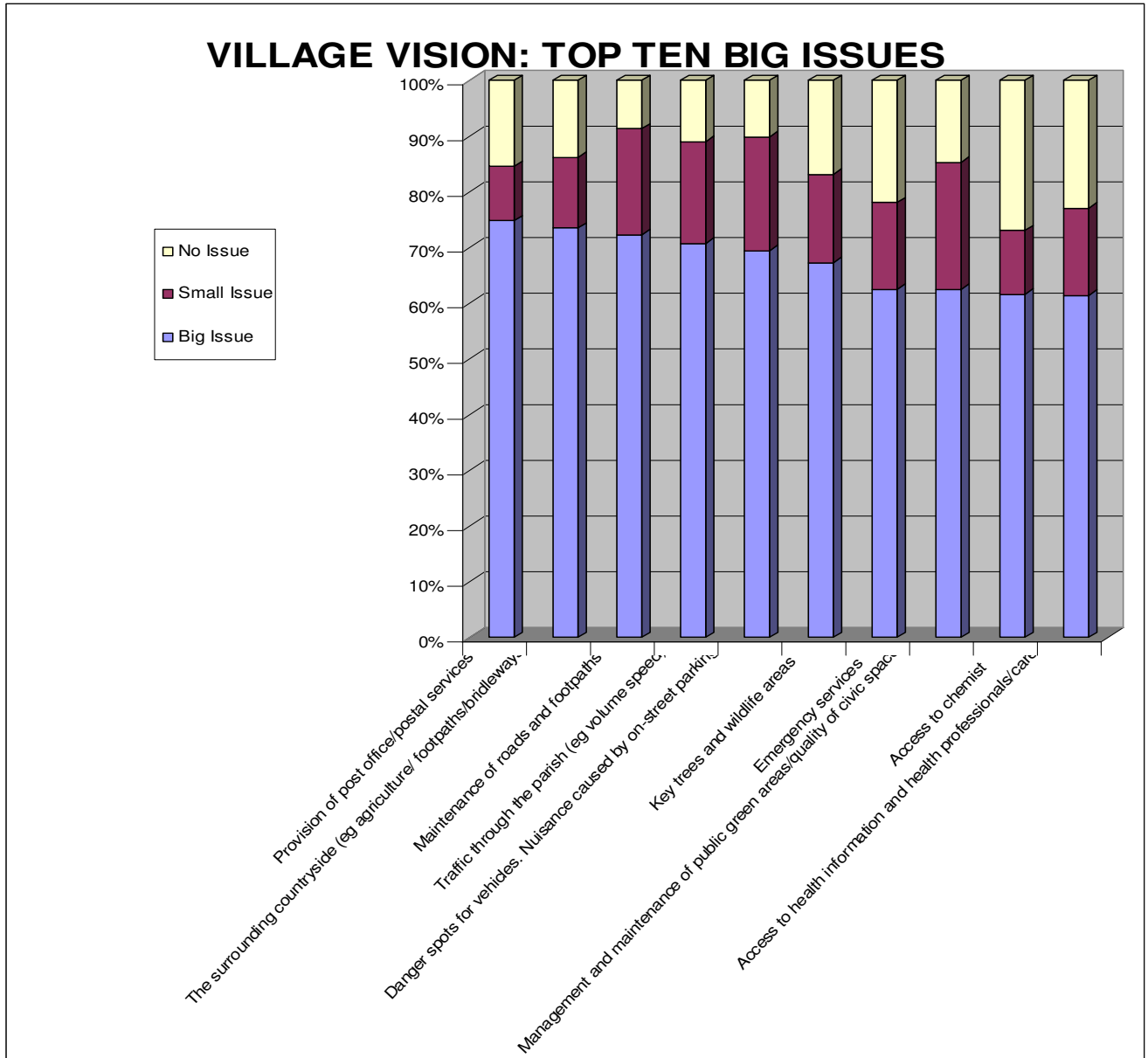
Table 1: Top 10 topics labelled as “Big Issue”

	Provision of post office/postal services	The surrounding countryside (eg agriculture/ footpaths/oridleways)	Maintenance of roads and footpaths	Traffic through the parish (eg volume speed)	Danger spots for vehicles. Nuisance caused by on-street parking	Key trees and wildlife areas	Emergency services	Management and maintenance of public green areas/quality of civic spaces	Access to chemist	Access to health information and health professionals/care
Big Issue	359	346	340	333	325	316	299	293	290	289
Small Issue	47	60	89	86	96	75	74	107	54	73
No Issue	74	65	41	52	47	79	105	69	127	108
Sample	480	471	470	471	468	470	478	469	471	470

Another aspect of the questionnaire that should be considered is the sectors of the community who contributed. Overall polling showed a majority of early middle aged people with young children to be a significant group. Pensioners were another significant group. Younger teenagers were registered among the households but it is judged, although not known for certain, that the responses to the questionnaire could possibly have not fully considered their interests. Older teenagers were significantly lower in numbers recorded, a possible result of living away at

University or simply moving out to find work. The precise causes of the reduction is unknown from the available data.

What the questionnaire did not address was who's opinions were entered on the return. It would be easy to misinterpret results if assumptions were made in this area. There was no requirement in the questionnaire to include all members of the household in the completion of the questionnaire.



The above chart is ranked by the simplest assumption that the Big Issue alone is what matters. It could be considered over simplistic. Those who express themselves most are not necessarily the majority.

It is possible that contributors may be undecided as to whether to answer with "Small Issue" or "No Issue" if the topic was considered not to be significant. Assuming however that "No Issue"

means that the contributor considers the issue to be satisfactory, this could alter the order in which topics should be ranked. It has been decided to address the top ten first with possible returning to other lower ranked “Big Issues” at a later stage. From the overall absolute figures however it can be seen that the sample size of the top ten varies in absolute terms from 468 to 480 and within this returns of “Big Issue” status varied between 289 and 359 – not a strikingly significant spread of results. It is sufficiently closely grouped to warrant relatively equal attention to all in the spread of ten topics, especially when considering the proportion of the total village population represented.

If any reorganisation of the ranking is to be considered it could be by considering “No Issue” against the “Big Issue” returns as these are more likely to be the extreme views and those who judge matters to be satisfactory deserve some consideration. Those who consider any topic to be a “Small Issue” could be said to be less concerned than those making the more categorical response of “Big Issue”. They could also be seen to be leaning towards the satisfied group.

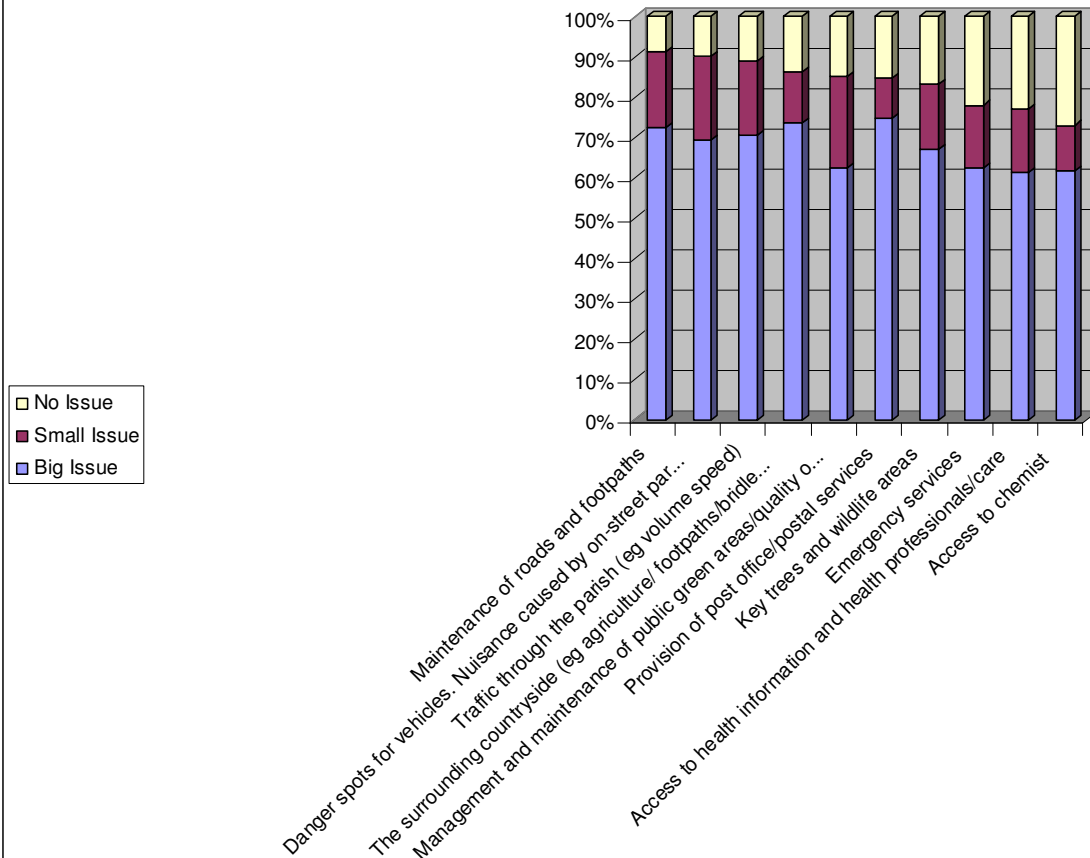
Results of sorting in this latter fashion are included below. It will be seen that the order of priority changes very slightly, although it is again stressed that the differential spread for the group of ten topics was very small. Of course the converse to this could be another assumption that those failing to make a return might be insufficiently interested in any topic to consider it worthy of comment, in effect returning a “No Issue” result. Such assumptions cannot be made however. They can merely be borne in mind in taking matters further.

A form of representation is possible that still takes the “Big Issue” items as the primary consideration but ranks them by “No Issue” i.e. Headings with least “No Issue” first thereby making the coarse assumption that they are the Big Issues that are least opposed.

Table 2: Top 10 “Big Issues” by “No Issue”

	Maintenance of roads and footpaths	Danger spots for vehicles. Nuisance caused by on-street parking	Traffic through the parish (eg volume speed)	The surrounding countryside (eg agriculture/ footpaths/bridleways)	Management and maintenance of public green areas/quality of civic spaces	Provision of post office/postal services	Key trees and wildlife areas	Emergency services	Access to health information and health professionals/care	Access to chemist
Big Issue	340	325	333	346	293	359	316	299	289	290
Small Issue	89	96	86	60	107	47	75	74	73	54
No Issue	41	47	52	65	69	74	79	105	108	127
Sample	470	468	471	471	469	480	470	478	470	471

VILLAGE VISION: TOP TEN BIG ISSUES (By NO ISSUE)



The chart above makes an assumption suggested earlier, which is that the topics that are returned as “No Issue” indicate an acceptance of the status quo as satisfactory. Taking this further the maintenance of roads and footpaths becomes the “Big Issue” with the least number of “No Issue” returns, whereas the largest number of “Big Issue” returns, namely the Provision of post office/postal service is relegated to 6th place. It is repeated however that the absolute numbers show a very small spread in this section of the results.

To take the considerations further still, could it be that some issues outside the top ten by “Big Issue” significance, could be of interest if taking “No Issue” into account? Put another way, where the two categories approach parity, is there a need for closer analysis, as this could indicate disagreement by different sectors of the population? The danger of favouring a minority group over what could be the majority must be considered. The “No Issue” could be saying the same thing as the sector who declined to respond in the questionnaire, i.e. there is “No Issue”, why answer a questionnaire? Where this view ends and apathy begins remains an unknown, but the contents are likely to be more than the “No Issue” count. The satisfied sector is likely to be larger than recorded, whereas the more categorical “Big Issue” is less likely to have support outside the

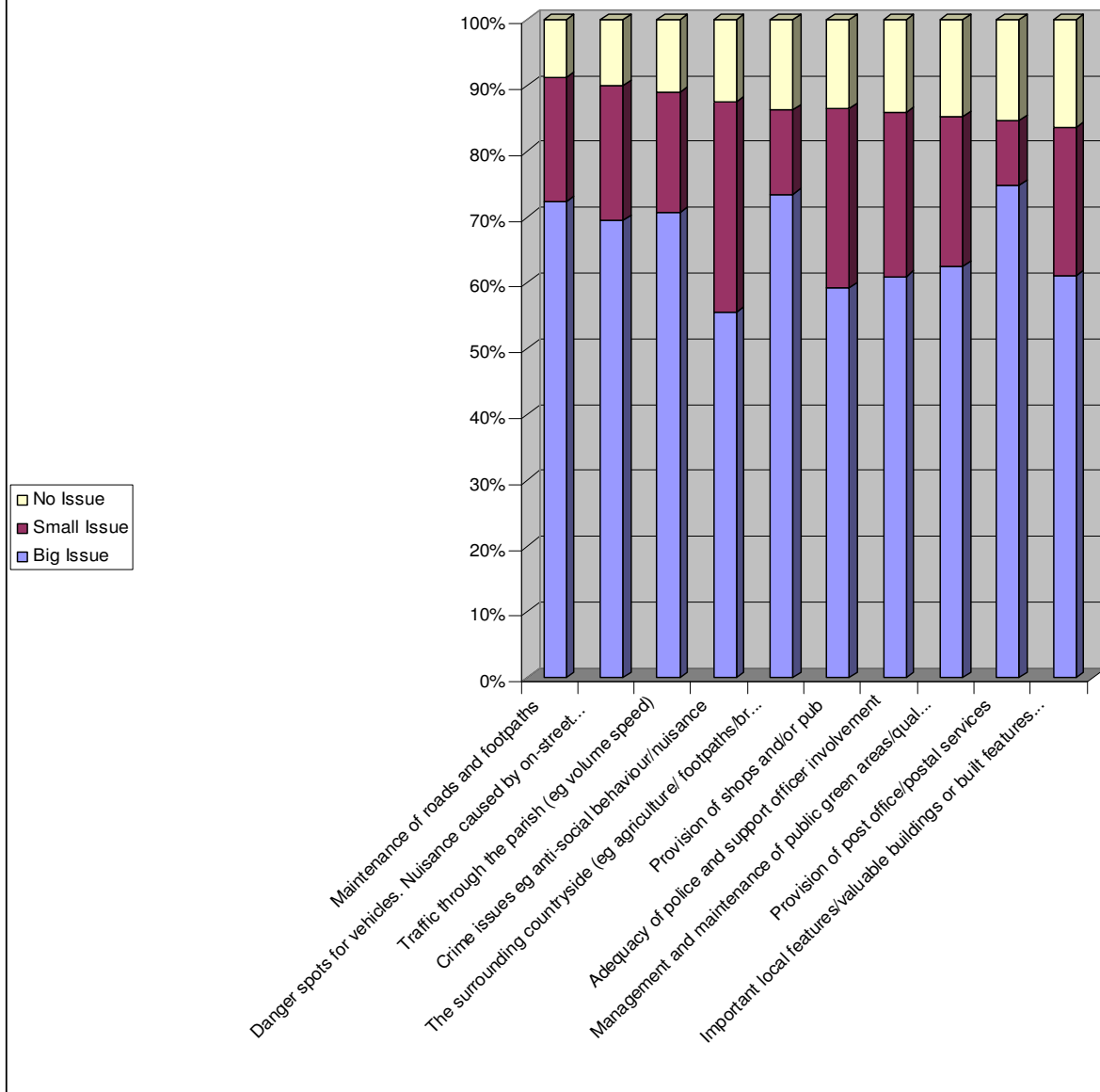
returned results, if members of the local community were sufficiently interested it is assumed they would take the trouble to respond. A few may have been prevented from doing so by circumstances but generally it is judged this will be a lesser cause of failure to respond than lack of interest.

The process is imperfect but to begin any greater addressing of the issues raised a start must be made and the top sector of “Big Issues” must logically be that starting place.

Table 3: Top 20 by “Big Issue” against “No Issue”

Telephone services																				
Broadband provision																				
Access to chemist																				
Utility services (eg gas/electric/sewerage)																				
The identity and setting of the parish?																				
Access to health information and health professionals/care																				
Emergency services																				
Pedestrian issues alongside roads																				
Key trees and wildlife areas																				
Need for recycling facilities																				
Important local features/valuable buildings or built features (eg pond monument The need for building																				
Provision of post office/postal services																				
Management and maintenance of public green areas/quality of civic spaces																				
Adequacy of police and support officer involvement																				
Provision of shops and/or pub																				
The surrounding countryside (eg agriculture/footpaths/bridleways)																				
Crime issues eg anti-social behaviour/nuisance																				
Traffic through the parish (eg volume speed)																				
Danger spots for vehicles. Nuisance caused by on-street parking																				
Maintenance of roads and footpaths																				
Big Issue	340	325	333	261	346	283	286	293	359	287	273	316	242	299	289	250	274	290	244	256
Small Issue	89	96	86	150	60	130	117	107	47	106	119	75	143	74	73	103	89	54	101	89
No Issue	41	47	52	59	65	65	66	69	74	77	78	79	86	105	108	110	116	127	128	133
Sample	470	468	471	470	471	478	469	469	480	470	470	470	471	478	470	463	479	471	473	478

TOP 10 of 20 by Big Issue and No Issue

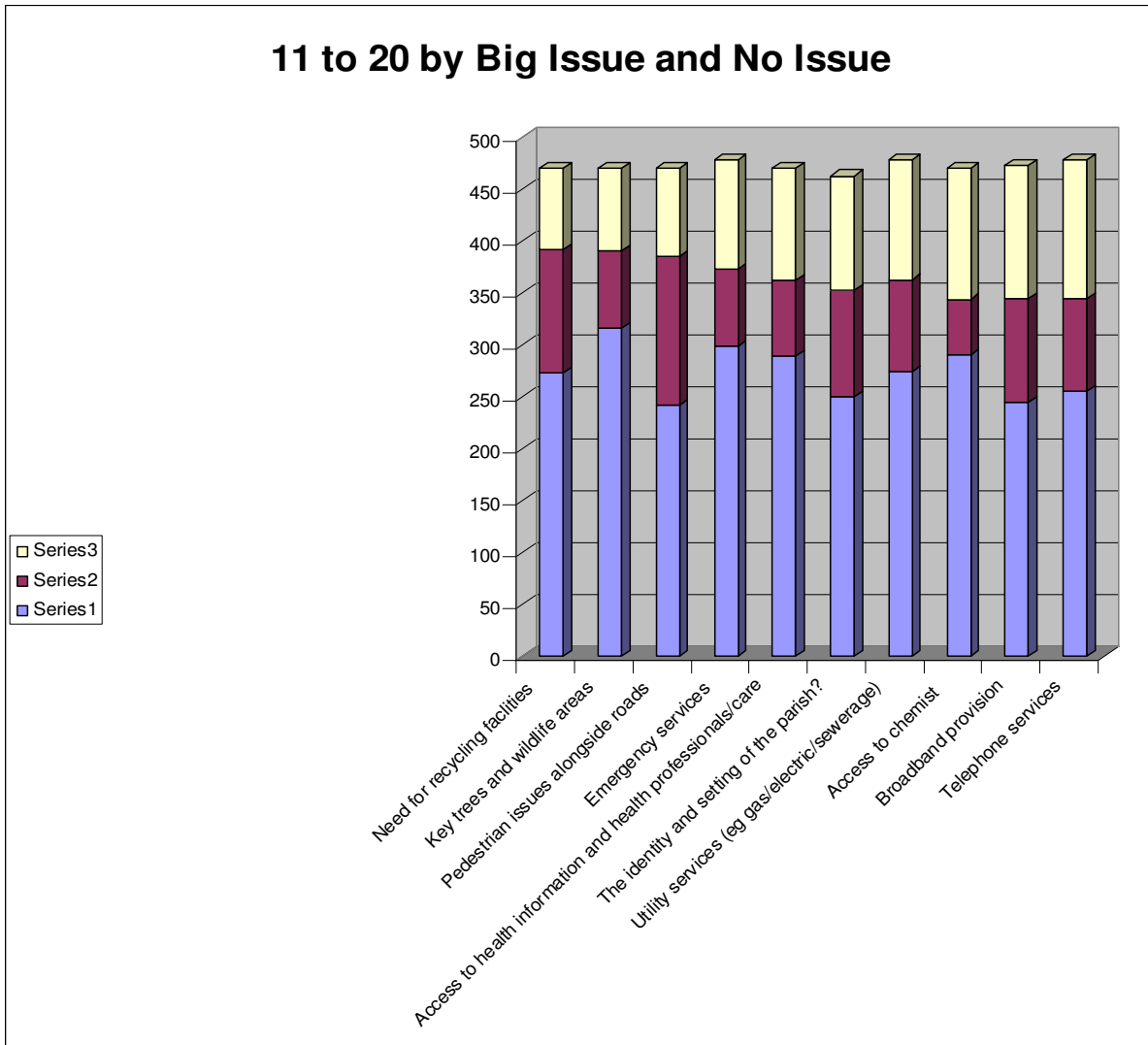


The above chart is derived using the larger Top 20 sample but showing only the top ten after including the "No Issue" returns.

The result is not very different from the earlier chart but one category where possible disagreement exists, namely Crime issues, enters the table in fourth position with 261 "Big Issue" responses opposed by 59 for "No Issue". Perhaps significantly however 150 responded with "Small Issue", so there is concern but there is also disagreement. Provision of Shops and a Pub, as well as Policing issues enter in 6th and 7th position before the list reverts to its original order. Again those identifying an issue are more divided between the 283 and 286 "Big Issue" and the less convinced 130 and 117 "Small Issue" respondents but they are also apposed by the 65 and 66 "No Issue" returns indicating some disagreement for the respective Provision of Shops and Policing issues.

It could be that these three entries indicate areas of discontent but they could also equally indicate disagreement about the significance of the topics. If such disagreements do exist they could be a cause for disharmony.

The tenth ranked heading is a conservation issue – Built Features, Valuable Buildings, Pond and Memorials. In being included here using the apparent disagreement formula it relegates certain other issues to positions outside the top ten (see chart below). Some of these have obvious significance as indicated by the number of “Big Issue” responses. They should therefore continue to be considered in any follow-up to the questionnaire.



Dennis Barber. Village Vision. 16.11.09.