

WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

January 2014

Likes, Dislikes and Suggestions

There were 129 returned questionnaires. It is considered that the responses provided a very good range of views; but, not surprisingly, the respondents were skewed towards the upper age range. Some responses were not completed in full; others were full of viewpoints. In this section it is not possible to quantify precisely each comment as they frequently overlapped. E.g. One person would say "friendly community" and someone else's response would link "friendly" to the shopkeepers and "community" to the small-size market town with lovely architecture. In practice, "dislikes" overlapped in huge proportions with "suggestions". E.g. Comments about parking charges might be in "dislikes" or "suggestions" or both. Therefore in this report these two headings are treated as one.

Likes

Overwhelming the same few accolades appeared.

- Friendly people/community (in substantially more than half of responses).
- Traditional market town and its architecture
- The existence of independent shops which provided an excellent friendly service.

After these three most popular responses, the next concerned the services that exist, either as a whole or with individual ones mentioned – doctors, dentists, library, Wigton Hospital, Inglewood, Transport was sometimes singled out – for example, the local bus services, and (occasionally) the railway. Excellent schools were singled out at least ten times. Friendly and helpful council offices were highlighted several times (both Allerdale and Town). Sports facilities were praised by several. Innovia was featured by several who highlighted the importance of the factory for the economy as well as specifically for employment.

Another popular response concerned the environment. Some praised the easy access to the Lakes and the Scottish Borders; some praised the greenery and wildlife, including the parks. Floral displays were singled out for praise by at least 10 people. The refurbished railway station was also praised.

Another area of praise concerned community events – sometimes as a whole, and sometimes mentioning specific ones, such as the lights switch-on, the Carnival, Spring Fling, etc. – and the community spirit. A few really enthused about this! Several commented on the attractive window displays in the shops.

Some liked the idea that we haven't gained another large supermarket (others disagreed!).

Some liked the new road system at the monument (but more disagreed!). Some listed the existence of free disc parking as a bonus.

Two respondents singled out the availability of Real Ale!

Dislikes and suggestions

As stated above, these two categories overlapped and interlinked so much that they are being treated under one heading in this analysis of the survey.

There was a huge variety of responses, but, not surprisingly a few issues predominated.

- Car parking – Most people highlighted this somewhere in their responses. Many wanted free parking (which is not likely to be financially feasible). Many others wanted what they saw as a more sensible charging policy to encourage people to stop in the centre of Wigton to pick up a few things. E.g. free for the first half hour or hour, and free on Sunday.
- Also on transport, the second most popular complaint was illegal parking on double lines, on zig-zags at pedestrian crossings, and on pavements, forcing pedestrians to step out into the road. Many of these complaints were accompanied by a plea for the traffic restrictions to be enforced.
- And, thirdly, in order of volume of comments, requests for HGVs to be kept out of the centre of Wigton altogether or for the existing restrictions to be enforced. Some accompanied this with the hope that the High Street could be pedestrianised or made part of a one-way system.
- Not surprisingly with the current closure of Wigton Baths, swimming featured in many responses. Either a plea for the baths to be re-opened, or for them to be modernised in terms of the changing facilities, or for a totally new pool.
- Concerns about the fabric of buildings in the town centre – eyesores, with particular buildings frequently named. Some responses gave credit for the recent improvements on some facades, but commented that these sometimes did not reach above the ground floor level. Empty shops were also highlighted.
- Dog fouling! With requests for active under-cover agents to catch and punish the owners of the culprits.

These six were the most frequent dislikes and areas where positive suggestions were being made.

On transport, several other issues were aired :-

- The difficulty of crossing King Street near the top of Station Road, and several requests for a pedestrian crossing somewhere near this point.
- Stop parking on the Corn Market and Goose Market and develop these areas with seating and floral displays.
- The present one-way system round the Fountain was disliked by some (often without a reason being given).
- The provision of car parking near the railway station to encourage park and ride.
- Local control of car parks (rather than Allerdale).
- An improved (more reliable?) train service from Wigton.
- Parking problems on West Road, with several respondents asking for this to be stopped.
- Problems in Manor Court with residents having difficulty in finding a parking spot near their houses.

- Traffic problems 3-30 p.m. with too many cars trying to park in unsuitable places at the end of the school day.
- Speeding drivers; boy racers (not necessarily exactly the same people!)
- The provision of a bus shelter on Station Hill and in the town centre (presumably outside the Spotted Cow).
- A roundabout at Red Dial as a way of ending the hazards of this dangerous crossroads.
- The bus service (whilst often praised) to be better on Sunday mornings and the town service not to have a gap at lunch time.
- Encourage cycle lanes/routes.

In terms of the infrastructure of Wigton, various disparate comments were made. E.g.

- More toilets to be provided and/or the toilets open for more hours.
- Too many charity shops and fast-food shops featured quite a few times.
- The need for more specialist shops (specialisms not identified).
- Some wished for a supermarket in addition to the Co-op and Lidl. (Others specifically did not!)
- Encourage more industry in Wigton in addition to Innovia (in spite of its occasional smells!)
- This was often linked to creating more jobs and more opportunities for the young, as part of a Development Plan for the town.
- Entertainment facilities needed a boost- e.g. theatre, cinema, and clubs for the young.
- Lack of co-ordinated sports provision; Barton Laws needing an upgrade of its changing facilities; the provision of a 9 hole golf course;
- Lack of “night-life”. E.g. No “decent” pubs; few indoor eating opportunities; youths hanging about. + Smokers outside pubs on narrow pavements; chewing gum on pavements.
- Drug and alcohol abuse in the town.
- Drunkenness on the streets.
- Some thought that youngsters were well-provided for, and that there should be more emphasis on helping the elderly and lonely. e.g. The provision of more day classes (rather than evening classes) for brain-using subjects. (not specified!).
- Criticisms of the “new” Market Hall and what it can and can’t provide
- No active police station, and often no police presence visible in the town.
- Complaints about removing the recycling bins from Water Street car park.
- Providing more seating in town.
- More litter-picking on grass verges on the town’s approaches.
- No overnight accommodation in town (apart from Royal Oak).
- Lack of open cafes on Sundays.
- The disappointing number of stall-holders at the Friday market. (More to be encouraged by reducing rents??). No real market in a market town. A farmers’ market?
- Flooding of various areas in the last few years.

Some comments and suggestions were concerned with promoting Wigton and the villages around – for shopping, as a commercial centre, and for tourism. One person highlighted the site of Old Carlisle. One suggestion was the promotion of a local magazine which would help businesses to be known. Another suggestion was the revision and re-publication of “Walks around Wigton” in order

to promote the town's history and architectural glories. There was a mention of a "Melvyn Bragg Centre"; of a museum to promote the richness of the town's history; of electronic marketing boards on the pedestrian approaches to Water Street car park; and even of turning the whole town round so that the shops faced on to a pedestrianised area on what is now Water Street car park.

Some comments related to local government, though not all the respondents understood the complexity of the three tiers of town, district and county. Several respondents wanted Wigton Town Council to gain more responsibility in the town for more activities (and not just car parks!). Allerdale was criticised for being remote and not being sufficiently interested in the town. Cumbria C.C. was also criticised for taking decisions without consulting the town e.g. the imposed one-way system round the Fountain and over where yellow lines appeared.

In conclusion, most of the suggestions were extremely positive and constructive in nature, reflecting the "likes" that were articulated at the beginning of the survey. One person aptly stated that he hated people slagging the town off! This is perhaps an excellent point at which to start discussions on establishing priorities on what needs to be done to enhance further the future of Wigton.

QUESTION ANALYSIS

QUESTION 1 - Where do you live?

Residents of Wigton	85
Working in Wigton	30
Visitor to Wigton	3
Live in village near Wigton	32

QUESTION 2 - How far away from your home do you work?

Many respondents are retired. Others –

Under 1 mile	26
1 – 5 miles	10
6 – 10 miles	10
11-20 miles	10
20-50 miles	6
Work at home	7

QUESTION 3 Travel to work

Train	5	Walk	31	
Car	39	Cycle	5	(Some responded to this question when they had
Bus	4			ticked "retired" in question 2).

QUESTION 4 Leisure and eating facilities used regularly in Wigton

Gyms	16	Takeaway food	54	Sports pitches	15
Theatre	26	Cafes/bistros	55	Wigton baths	33
Restaurants	27	Library	31	Market Hall	31
Pubs	27	Parks/playgrounds	41	Clubs	28
Other (squash)	1				

QUESTION 5 Are sports and leisure facilities adequate?

Yes	26	No	50	Don't know	39
-----	----	----	----	------------	----

QUESTION 6 Additional facilities you would like to have

New pool, old pool improved, more use of Market Hall, more use of Barton Laws, more football pitches, cinema, duck pond, children's fun day, museum, golf course, table tennis, skate park.

QUESTION 7 Facilities that need upgrading

BMX park	Improved changing rooms and toilets at Barton Laws
Tennis courts	Disabled access everywhere.
Picnic area (Phoenix park)	
Indoor bowling	

QUESTION 8 How often do you buy from town centre shops?

Everyday	55	Less often	1
Every few days	50	Never	1
Every week	18		
Every fortnight	2		

QUESTION 9 Are shops adequate for your needs?

Yes 87

No 38 - Need Tesco; too limited choice; too many charity shops; not enough free parking.

QUESTION 10. Would you like to see a regular market in Wigton?

Yes 111 No 4

If yes, what type and frequency? Mixed; weekly; more clothes and fabrics; farmers' market.

QUESTION 11 Would you like to see an additional supermarket in Wigton?

Yes 45 No 71

Reasons for "yes" – more jobs; coop too expensive; more choice; bring more people into town.

"no" – adequate already; keep things local, supporting local traders.

QUESTION 12 What types of service provision do you use regularly in Wigton?

Dental 74 Doctors 91

Hospital 24 Church 26

Social service 10

QUESTION 13 Has Wigton traffic problems?

Yes 100 No 16 Don't know 5

(Comments made about what could be done to improve the traffic situation have all been incorporated into the analysis of dislikes/suggestions above.

QUESTION 14 Do you use public transport in and around Wigton?

Yes 53 No 73

For "yes", most popular is 300 route from Whitehaven to Carlisle (20), Town Service (16), Cockermouth (2) and Caldbeck (1).

QUESTION 15 Is public transport adequate?

Yes 58 No 25

QUESTION 16 Improvements needed

More integration of transport timetables, seeing Wigton as hub; operators should work more together; more punctuality; timetables on bus stops.

More late night buses in town and from Carlisle; more rural services; easier disabled access.

More trains through Wigton and connecting better at Carlisle; more car parking at rail station.

Bus shelters at Christies and outside Huntingdon's garage site.

QUESTION 17 Happy with educational provision?

Yes 71 No 4 Don't know 26

QUESTION 18 Green spaces that need to be protected.

Wigton Park; Barton Laws to Stubbs Bridge; Land around Highmoor; West Road from Bowling Club to Barton Laws; Millennium Walk at Speet Gill; Phoenix Park; land opposite industrial site in Syke Road.

All green spaces; sports fields. Etc.

QUESTION 19 Are there any locations for new housing?

Yes 69 No 28

Many suggestions, but the only two to attract more than 4 mentions are

Old Hope's Auction Site (23) and old Huntingdon's Garage site (11).

QUESTION 20 Types of housing needed in Wigton

Detached	21	Privately owned	38
Semi-detached	29	Affordable	66
Terraced	21	Social	30
Bungalows	37	Sheltered	42
Flats	27	Care homes	36 (More will be needed in future!)

QUESTION 21 Important for new housing to be in keeping with style of surrounding houses.

Yes 95 No 19

QUESTION 22 Trades and services in Wigton adequate?

Yes 85 No 19

Ones that people would like to see more plumbers and electricians (5), another supermarket (3), more variety of shops (3) etc (Most of ideas here already incorporated in analysis of dislikes/suggestions detailed above).

QUESTION 23 Are employment opportunities adequate?

Yes 31 No 50

Suggestions included:- More jobs for local people (19); create/encourage more businesses (7); more apprenticeships (6); very dependent on Innovia (4); some jobs not advertised, just word of mouth(3)

QUESTION 24 Are start-up and self-employment opportunities adequate?

Not surprisingly, not many responses or comments.

QUESTION 25 How do you find out what is happening in Wigton?

Local newspaper	78	Wigton Town Council website	6
Notice boards	50	Allerdale Coucil Website	4
Leaflets/flyers	61	Cumbria C C website	5
Word of mouth	95	Local councillor	8
Local radio	34	Social media	18

QUESTION 26 Gender

Male 42 Female 83 Prefer not to say 4

QUESTION 27 Age-groups

Under 16	2	35-44	11	65+	46
16-24	2	45-54	24	Prefer not to say	7
25-34	8	55-64	23		

QUESTION 28 Ethnicity

White British 104; V=Caucasian 1; European 1; Prefer not to answer 4.

QUESTION 29 Disability

Yes 13 No 105

QUESTION 30 Postcodes

5 were CA5. All others were CA7. In most of these the 7 was followed by 8 or 9.