

# FRESHWATER Parish Plan



**THE BRIGHT SIDE**



**OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT**

**Flag Design Competition Winner Luke Davis (15)**

**Freshwater Parish Plan 2006  
Published by Freshwater Parish  
Council**

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# Freshwater Parish Plan

From 2004 to 2006 the Freshwater Parish Council has researched and written a Parish Plan. This has enabled the population of Freshwater to work together to develop a vision of the future. This will inform the Isle of Wight Council's new development framework which will replace the Unitary Development Plan over the next five years.

## An Introduction to the Parish of Freshwater

The parish occupies the western peninsular of the Isle of Wight. It extends from the Parish of Totland in the west to the town of Yarmouth and the parishes of Thorley, Shalfleet and Brighstone in the east. It includes Freshwater, Compton and Colwell Bays, the western river Yar and most of the Yar estuary, Afton Down and part of the High Down.

Much of the area is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The coastline is classified as Heritage Coastline. The parish includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a RAMSAR site for breeding birds, a nature reserve and two country parks. The National Trust own about one sixth of the landscape.

Freshwater is among the oldest historic parishes on the Island probably dating back to the final conversion to Christianity following our incorporation into the Kingdom of Wessex from 686AD. Freshwater was one of the original seven Saxon Island parishes from which all the

current forty-six Church of England parishes are descended.

Freshwater spent most of its history as a quiet coastal agricultural backwater, sparsely populated. In 1635 it witnessed the birth of the greatest known Islander, Robert Hooke, one of the outstanding leaders of the Seventeenth Century "Scientific Revolution".

This self-made genius became a bitter rival to Isaac Newton who

outlived him and managed to bury Hooke's achievements until recent years.

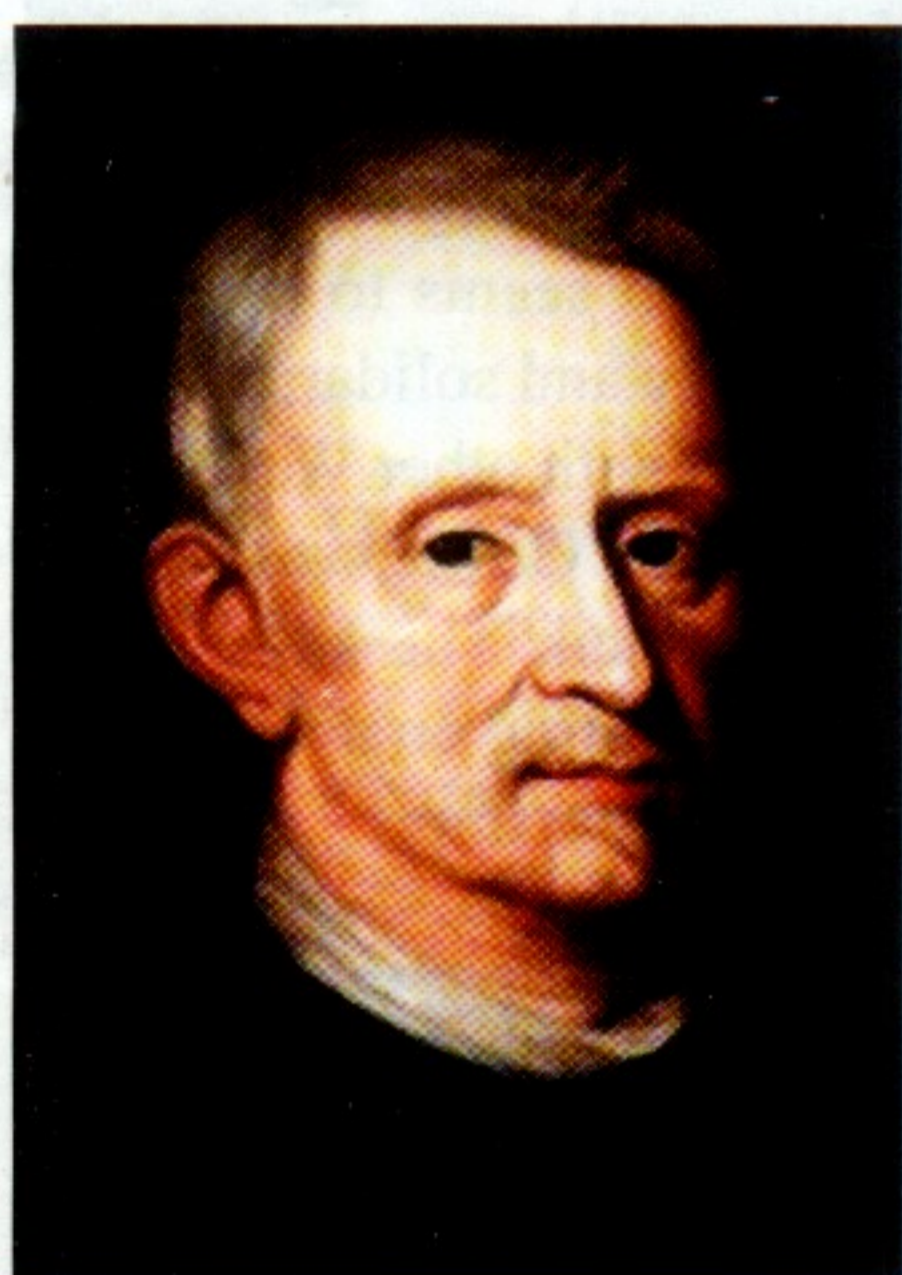
During the Nineteenth Century the parish became world famous as the home of the acclaimed Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson who purchased Farringford Estate in the 1850s. He invited some of the best of the Victorian artistic/intellectual world to visit. One who stayed was Julia Margaret Cameron, the celebrated pioneer photographer. The vast majority of her work was created at her home at Dimbola in Freshwater Bay.



Farringford, home of Tennyson

Tourism and a military garrison brought development, roads and infrastructure. With the arrival of the railway in the 1880s Freshwater developed an urban face. Freshwater Civil Parish was founded in 1895. In the Twentieth Century the trends of the Victorian period continued with more immigration, urbanisation and development. Freshwater village became "the largest village in England" with three roads connecting the village to the rest of the Island and the nearest port at Yarmouth.

In 1970 Freshwater witnessed the largest human gathering ever seen on the Island, the third Isle of Wight Pop Festival. Some 500,000 people came to the festival site on East Afton Farm.



Robert Hooke



## Freshwater in 2005

At the time of the 2001 census there were 5,360 people living in the parish of whom 4,514 were on the electoral roll. The parish is divided into two electoral wards, Freshwater Afton and Freshwater Norton, each returning a councillor to the Isle of Wight Council and a total of fourteen parish councillors to the Parish Council.

The parish is not only relatively isolated with a slightly poor economy and limited public and private services, it is also characterised by high levels of social deprivation and a high elderly population. Freshwater is among the top fifth of English rural areas suffering "multiple deprivation".

In 2004 unemployment on the Isle of Wight was 5.8% compared to a national average of 4.4%. The Gross Domestic Product per head of the Island is only 75% of the national average. Compared to a national average of 21% of the population aged over 65 the figure for Freshwater is 29%. Levels of educational attainment and wage levels are significantly below national averages.



Orchard Brothers Grocery established 1865

concert venue. There are a large number of clubs and associations, four churches and five hotel/pubs. There is a public respite facility for the elderly, a fire station and an independent inshore lifeboat. Both Social Services and the Ambulance have been withdrawn since 2001. There is now a First Responder in a car with ambulance back up. In the past the people have shown great ability to organise and develop services such as the volunteer fire and ambulance and lifeboat services and the efforts to develop cultural facilities such as the Memorial Hall, the West Wight Swimming Pool (later Sports Centre) and sporting and other interest clubs. West Wight charities and associations have also taken leading roles in fundraising for all-Island and wider causes. Relative isolation seems to provide a greater spirit of community activity and solidarity. There is a strong tradition of co-operation with other West Wight communities. For example the Sports Centre was built in Freshwater by Totland Parish Council. The seven West Wight parishes are currently co-operating on a £2 million bid for a West Wight Landscape Partnership.



Compton Downs towards Freshwater Bay

Economic change has seen a dramatic decline in traditional farming activity, industrial employment and tourism since these formed the economic base in the 1960s and 1970s. Active farming has now generally ceased in the western part of the parish. Engineering factories across the West Wight have closed as have the traditional holiday camps. The economic cycle and employment are seasonal with a long period of relative inactivity. A large part of the working population must travel to work outside the parish. The main remaining occupations are in social care, retail, labouring and self employment.

The commercial retail area of Freshwater is the principle one of the West Wight but is showing signs of decline. There are three supermarkets, four banks and three Post Offices.

There is a primary healthcare medical centre, a thriving Sports Centre, a library, an information centre, a primary school, middle school and a Youth and Community Centre. There are four community halls including the Memorial Hall which has the facilities of a theatre and



Freshwater Marsh

# Freshwater Parish Council – Chairman's Report

By Councillor Gill Kennett

The Parish Council are pleased to be involved with the Parish Plan as it has given us the opportunity to seek the views of residents of Freshwater of all ages

Freshwater Parish Council represents the two wards of Freshwater Norton and Freshwater Afton and there are 14 parish councillors elected to represent the two wards. It is the ambition of Freshwater Parish Council to attain Quality Council status.

Part of the requirements for becoming a quality council is to be able to demonstrate that the Parish Council consults with the community to determine their needs. To help us achieve this we have formed a partnership, Freshwater Community Initiative, to act as an advisory sub-committee to the Parish Council. The Community Initiative is made up from representatives of 8 local groups. The Rotary, Freshwater Horticultural Society and the West Wight

Business Association are among the members and the initiative would welcome representatives from further local organisations to ensure that a broad spectrum of opinion is available to inform the Parish Council. The Initiative's terms of reference state that they have a periodic consultation with the public and these events will be advertised in The West Wight Beacon, Village Talk and on the Freshwater Parish Council website. From consultation with the public the Initiative, together with the Parish Plan, can keep the Parish Council updated with ideas for the community from the residents of the village.

The Memorial Hall serves as the Parish office and archives and is a popular venue for local events. The hall is managed by a registered charity, the Memorial Hall Arts & Leisure Company. The directors of the Company are members of the parish councils of Freshwater and Totland.

The hall has three separate facilities. The Main Hall has seating capacity for up to . There are three dressing rooms, one with disabled access, lighting arrangements, sound system, deaf loop system and a Clavinova piano. The hall has excellent acoustics.

The Small Hall can seat approximately 30 people and has its own fully licensed bar making it the ideal venue for a family party or a get-together. The Tennyson Suite is located on the first floor. There is a lift for disabled access and it has its own refreshment facilities. The room seats up to 40 people. For more information telephone 752956 or visit [www.freshwatermemorialhall.hall.org.uk](http://www.freshwatermemorialhall.hall.org.uk)



Freshwater Memorial Hall

## How the Plan was made

By George Cameron

In 2000 The Government's Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside, the Future' suggested that all rural communities should develop Town, Village and Parish Plans to identify both problems and opportunities for rural services and to provide community input into the new planning system.

For us here in Freshwater, our Parish Plan is a statement of how we see our community and Freshwater itself developing over the next few years. It considers local, social economic and environmental issues affecting the community and suggests how you'd like to see it improved in the future. The results of consulting with the residents of Freshwater is in this Plan, together with an action plan suggesting how issues might be tackled and by whom.

In September 2003, Freshwater Parish Council decided to support a Parish Plan and agreed to setting up a Committee called Freshwater Parish Plan Committee, who called their first meeting at Sandpipers Hotel on 11th November 2003. Four members attended, but were not discouraged. A bid was put in to Awards For All, and a grant of £4000 was received to use towards putting the plan together.

An overview was drafted and soon, after a series of meetings and more people joined the committee, the questionnaire was out and the Parish Plan was the talk of Freshwater.

As you read through this Plan, you will be reminded of the tremendous amount of work that the people of Freshwater have contributed towards the end result. I thank the committee and all those that gave their time voluntarily to create this statement. All the schools participated and a competition was run for the best Flag design, followed by a very well attended presentation evening in February 2005.



Freshwater Recycling Plant

## The Results of the Schools' Survey

On the positive aspects of the parish over 500 children said they used the West Wight Sports Centre. Over 400 use the beaches and 375 use the skatepark. Almost 300 use Stroud Playing Field. About 160 use the Memorial Hall for activities and about 140 use Moa Place for social gathering. About 80 use the library.

The Sports Centre was by far the most important facility the young people wish to keep among all schools and age groups. The other responses varied and included the Youth Club, shops, schools countryside and dog bins in addition to the facilities already mentioned.



Freshwater and Totland Carnival

Well over half the children belong to clubs and associations, primarily sports clubs. The Youth Club and uniformed clubs came about joint second.

Asked what they most dislike about Freshwater the young people complained most about the lack of appropriate shops. Twice as many mentioned this as any other problem.



West Wight Middle School

The second problem, mirroring the adult survey was great concern with anti-social behaviour. Close behind were complaints of the lack of enough to do and the volume and danger from traffic. They also complained of the cost of public transport. Other significant complaints were over the lack of outside sports facilities, the schools, too much house building and problems with the skatepark.



West Wight Middle School at Tennyson Memorial

### Freshwater Parish Council Local Members

#### Introduction to Parish Plan

##### Local Members:

Gill Kennett - Chairman Freshwater Parish Council  
Robin Day - Chairman Freshwater Community Initiative

Your local councillors, Andy Sutton and Gill Kennett are delighted to be invited to write a forward for the Parish Plan. The Isle of Wight Council strongly endorse the move to Quality Council status and the Council is supporting this with funding to enable parish councils to meet quality status because we believe that locally raised tax should be spent on things that local people want. The average quality council spends four times more on local projects than the money it raises through local precepts as they are empowered to raise funding from sources not available to non-quality status councils.

We would like to thank those people who gave their time to preparing the plan and more importantly to each and every one of you who have taken part. The challenge is now to work together to make sure our community's aspirations are met.

Gill Kennett CC  
Freshwater Afton  
Chairman Freshwater Parish Council



Andy Sutton CC  
Freshwater Norton  
Leader of the Isle of Wight Council



## The West Wight Business Association

The West Wight Business Association has been in existence for a hundred years. The Association is open to any person or firm carrying on a bona fide business or profession in Freshwater, Totland, Yarmouth or in the neighbourhood thereof.

Freshwater Parish is home to 40 Members of the Association. The Executive Committee is made up of twelve Members and is elected at the Annual General meeting. The Executive Committee meets on a monthly basis and has the power to call General and Special Meetings open to the whole membership as required.

The current challenges to Freshwater businesses are the same as any similar community in 2006. The competition raised by the larger supermarkets on the Island, and farther afield, has had an effect on both the customer base and the ability of local suppliers to compete, as has the introduction of electronic shopping, although some local businesses are competing with their own websites.

Families that have run successful businesses in Freshwater, for many generations in some instances, now find that their children are not prepared to work the long hours for a minimal reward when there are so many more lucrative careers open to them.

This has been compounded in recent times by the leases on many properties now coming to an end. Landlords would often prefer changing their premises into lucrative residential accommodation rather than refurbish small retail units.

The Association is aware of the above problems and makes many representations on behalf of Members. Recent challenges have been:-

- a. To ensure that the provision of parking in Freshwater is maintained and improved.
- b. To make the Council aware that it cannot close roads without realising the effect on local residents and business.
- c. To review the many "plans" for the local area, especially as to future government and transport infrastructures. Members of the Association sit on many of the Committees involved.
- d. To ensure that a clear message is given to our local community to use their local businesses or lose them. To make them aware that local friendly service is on their doorstep, and is offered by people who understand their customer's personal requirements, and are prepared to go the extra mile to achieve satisfaction.

## Freshwater Lifeboat

The Freshwater Inshore Lifeboat Unit was formed in 1972 following a directive from central government to all local authorities concerning beach safety and for the first three years worked without a boat! In 1975 two "D" class 16 foot inflatables were acquired and coverage of the back of the Wight became possible. With the increase in pleasure craft using the waters surrounding Freshwater Bay it became obvious that bigger more sophisticated craft would be required. In 1982 after fundraising by the voluntary crew and supporters a 6 mtr Avon Searider with two 70 horsepower outboard engines was acquired together with a new boathouse built adjacent to the original one. In 1991 "Spirit of the West Wight" a 7.4 mtr boat was launched by Countess Mountbatten of Burma and this in turn was replaced by the existing 8.8mtr "Barbarian" class boat. The unit became "The Freshwater Lifeboat" in 1996 after the patrol area was increased and the station is on call 24hours a day 365 days a year.

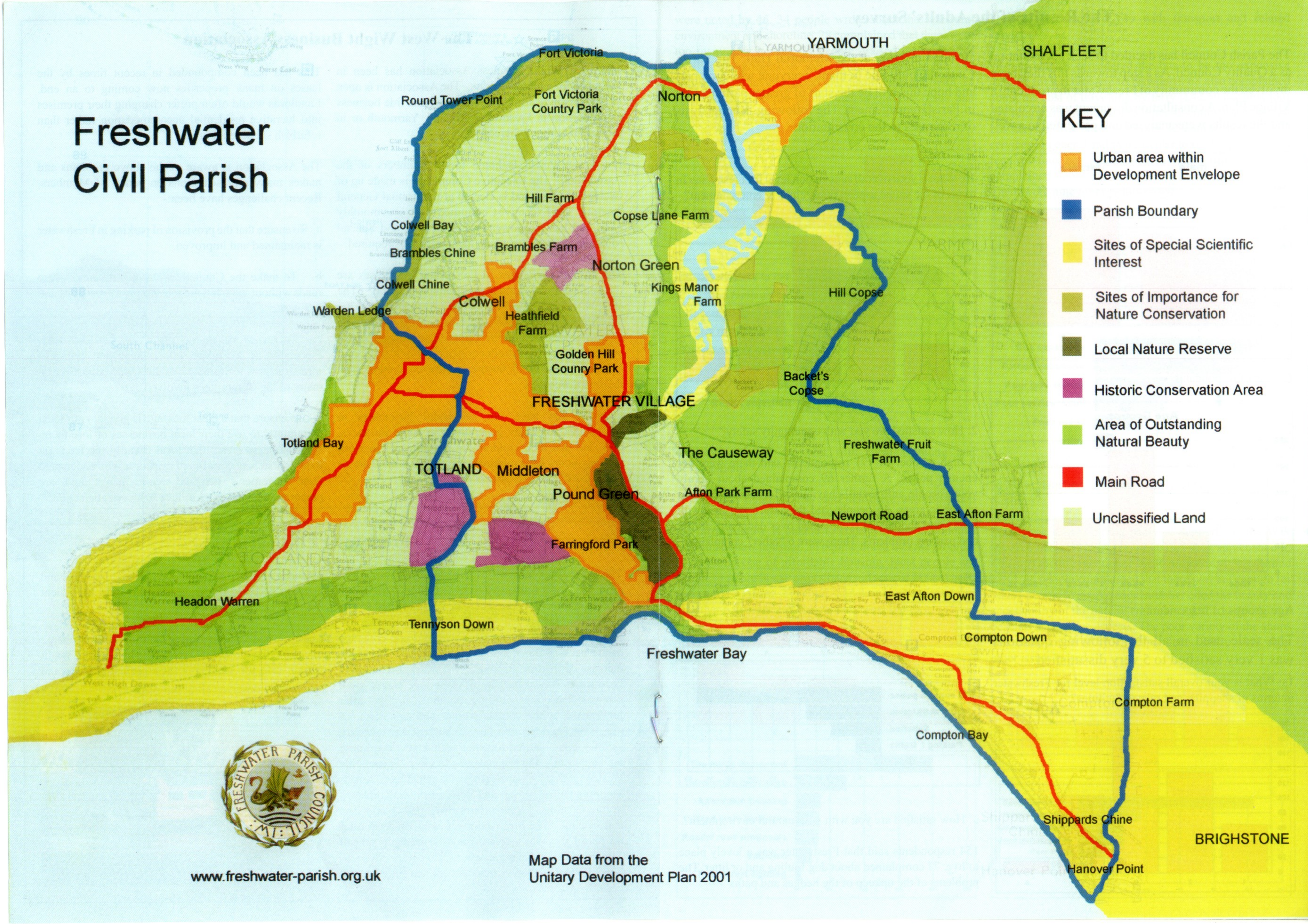
The Lifeboat Station is independent and relies on the

proceeds of the Gift Shop, Open Days, Flag Days and bequests to boost the grant received from the Solent Sea-Rescue Organisation.

The crew and volunteers give their time free of charge to ensure that the waters around the back of the Wight remain safe for seaman – their professionalism and seamanship deserves all of our respect.



# Freshwater Civil Parish



- KEY**
- Urban area within Development Envelope
  - Parish Boundary
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
  - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
  - Local Nature Reserve
  - Historic Conservation Area
  - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - Main Road
  - Unclassified Land



[www.freshwater-parish.org.uk](http://www.freshwater-parish.org.uk)

Map Data from the  
Unitary Development Plan 2001

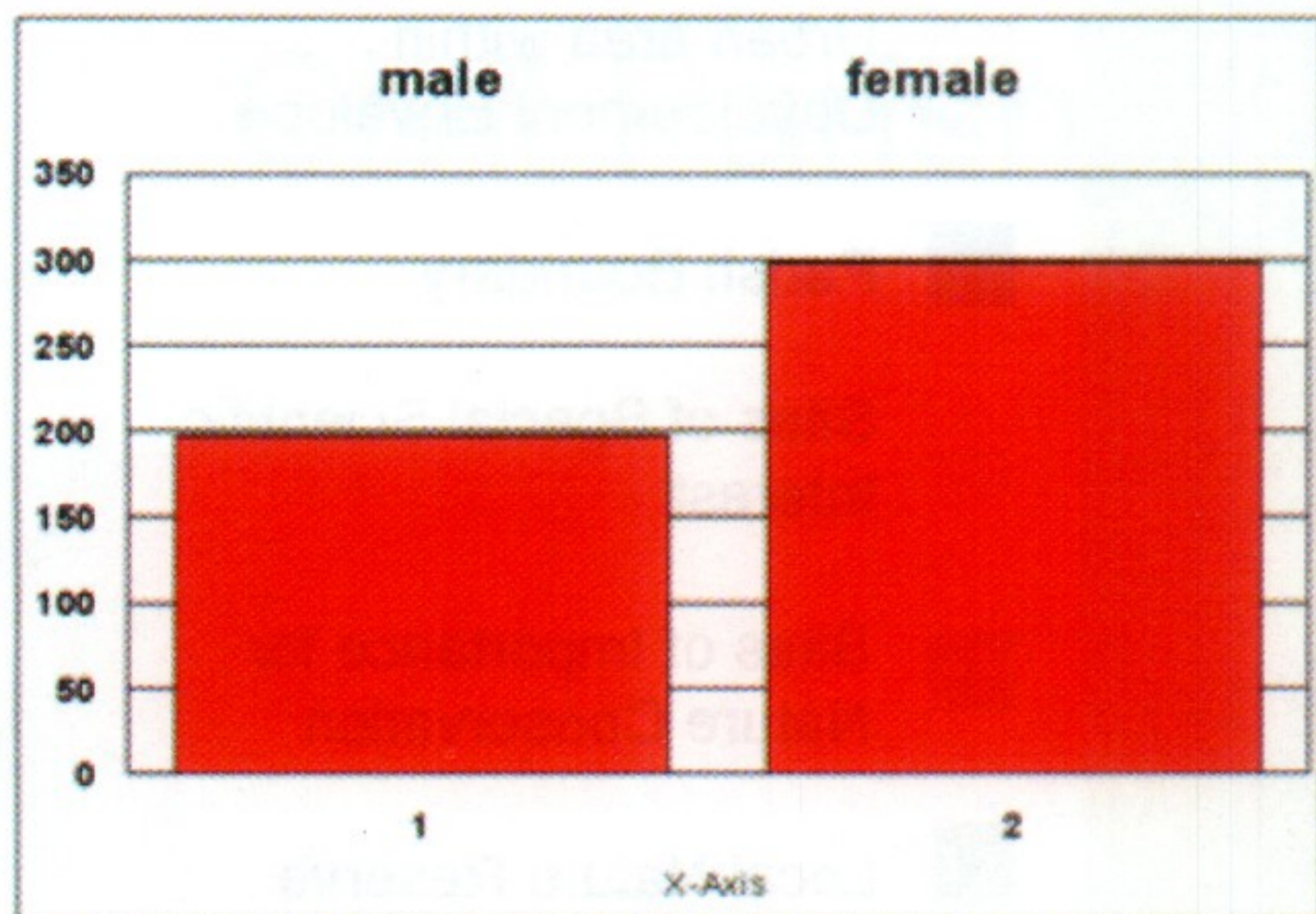
BRIGHSTONE



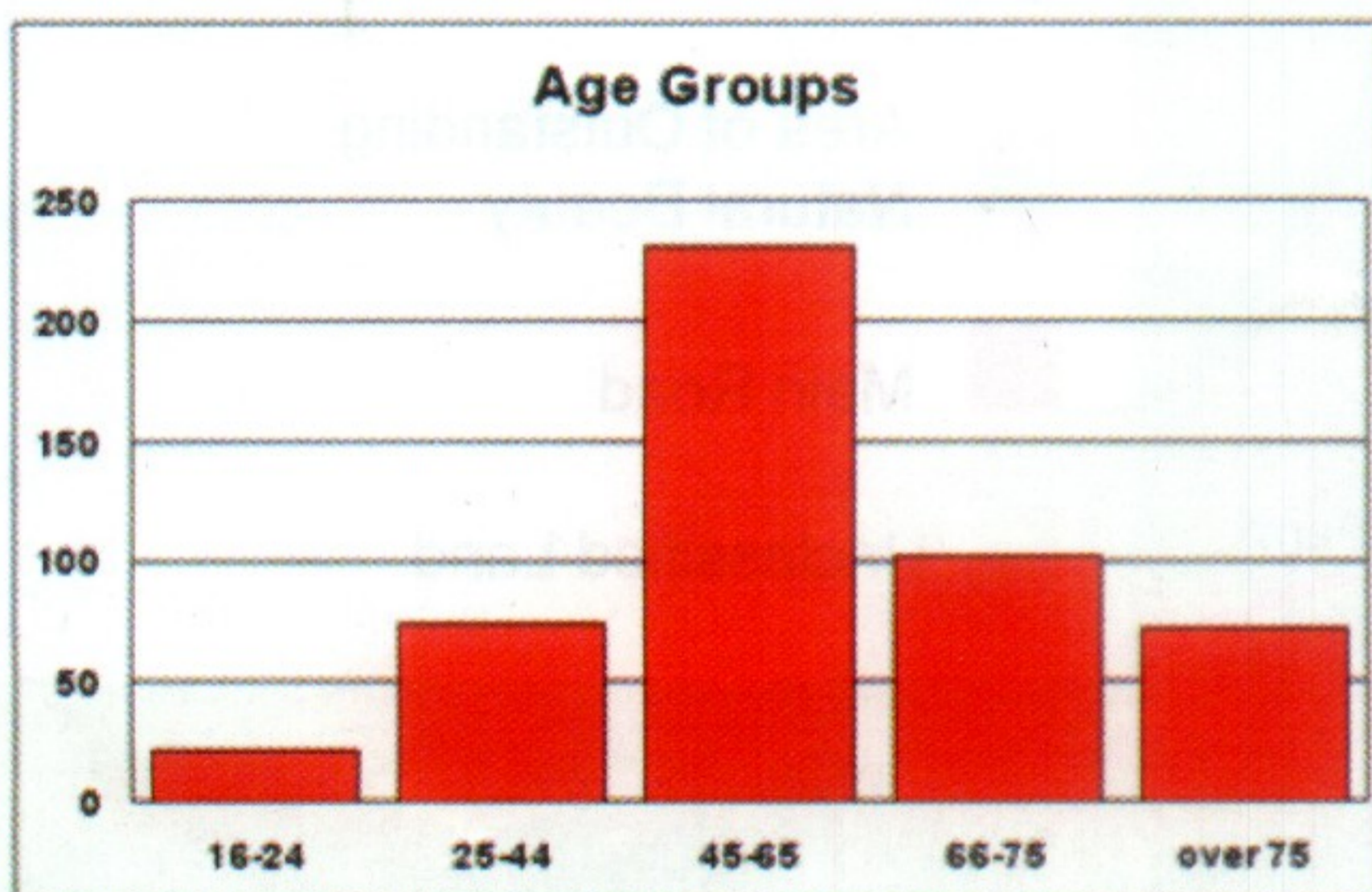
## The Results of the Adults' Survey

The Parish Council has decided to seek accreditation as a Quality Council. As a step towards this they have involved the community of Freshwater in producing a Village Plan. A consultation document was circulated and the results were analysed and presented to a well

attended meeting at the Memorial Hall. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who took part and hope this will be the start of greater participation in Parish management. The following is an analysis of responses to the consultation.



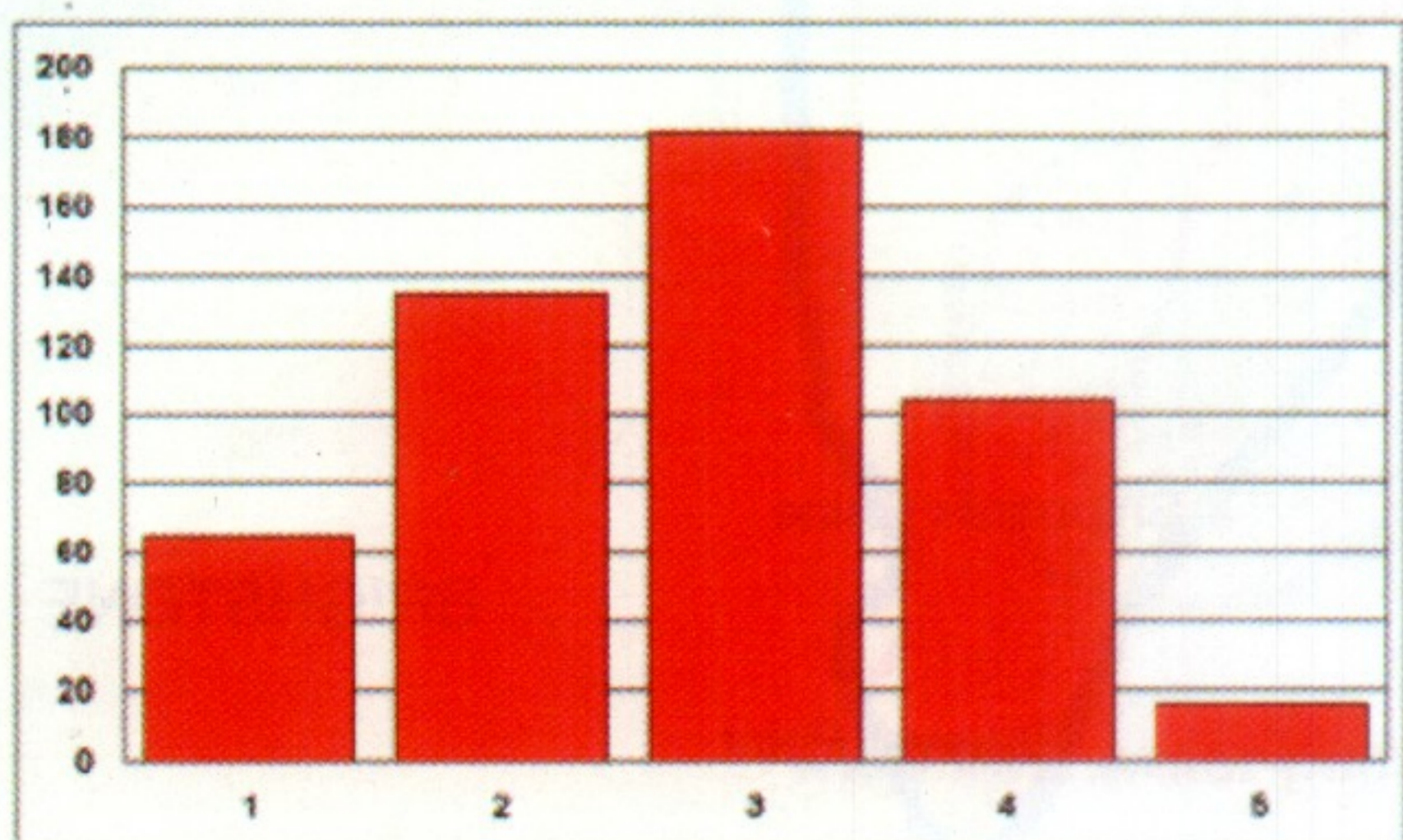
Gender of respondents



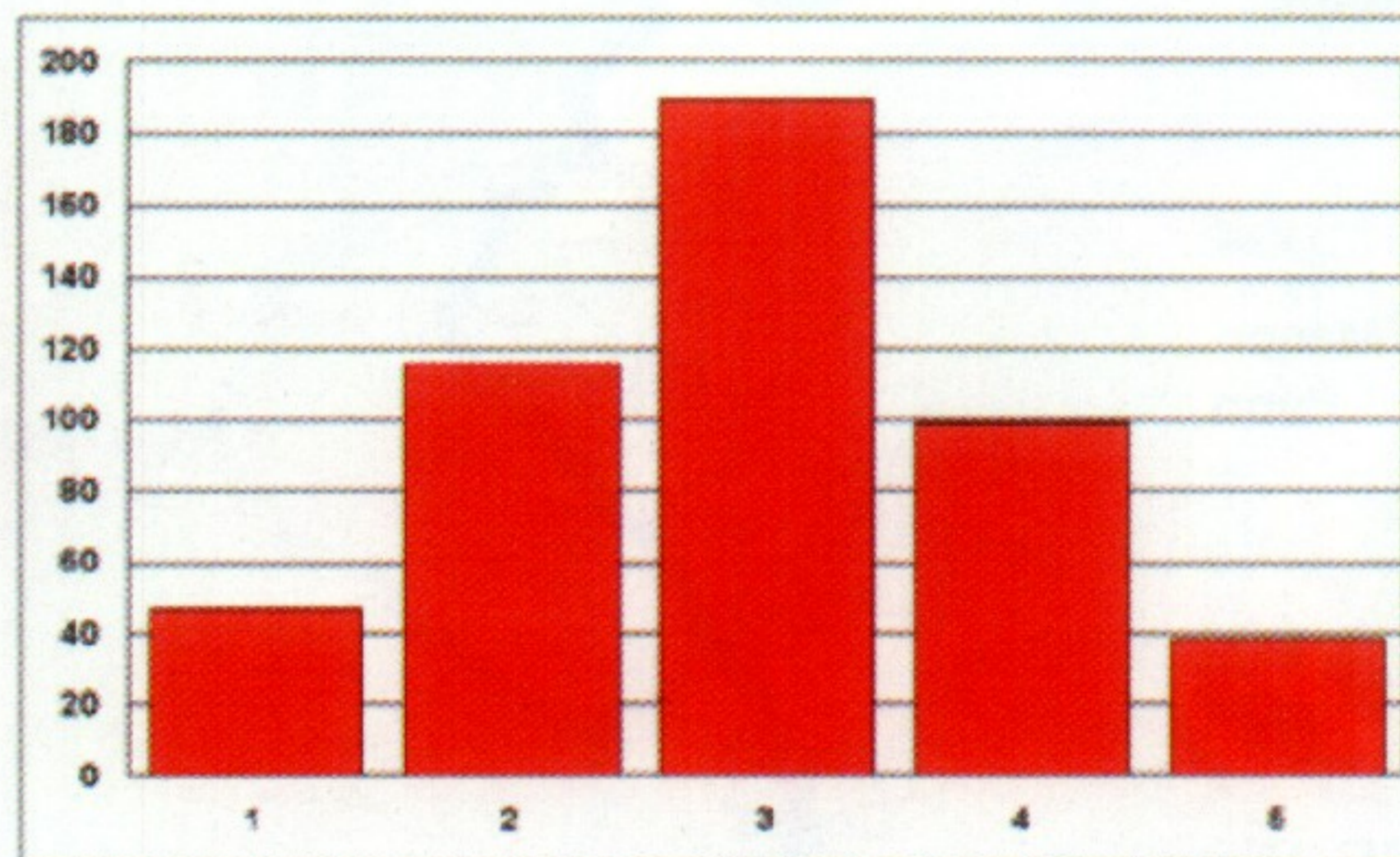
Age groups of respondents

The scale used in all the following questions was 1 very satisfied to 5 very dissatisfied.

1a: What is your overall satisfaction level for Freshwater in terms of shopping and related facilities?

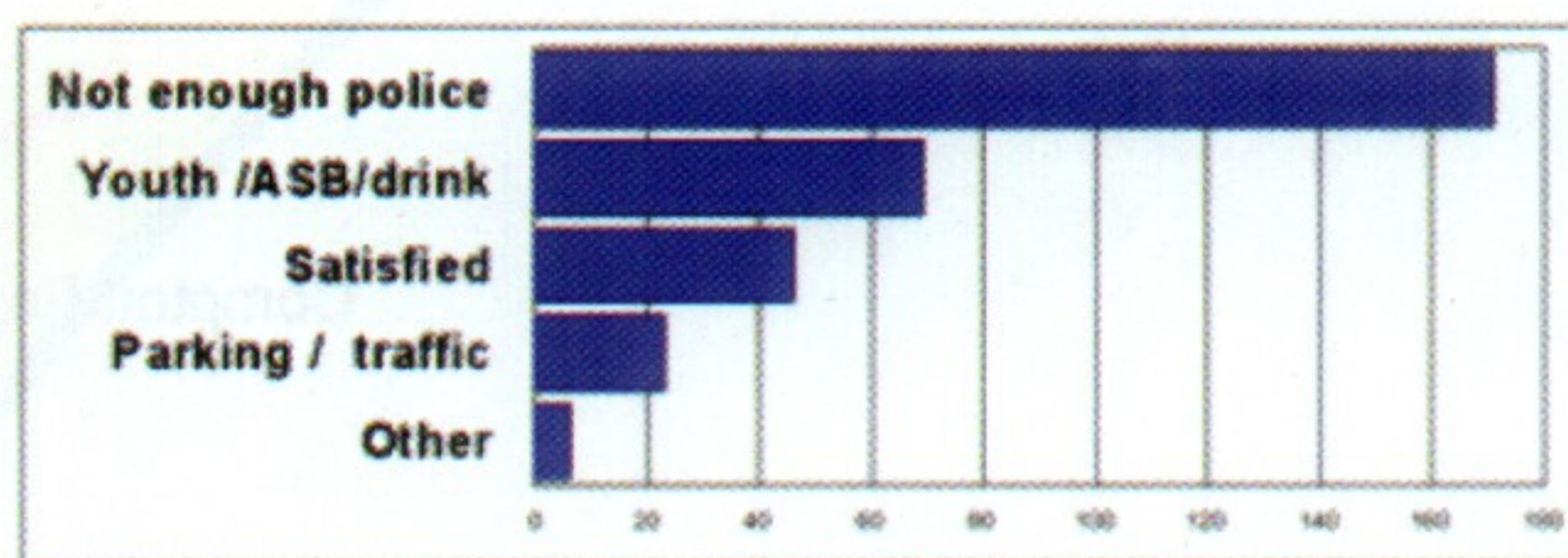
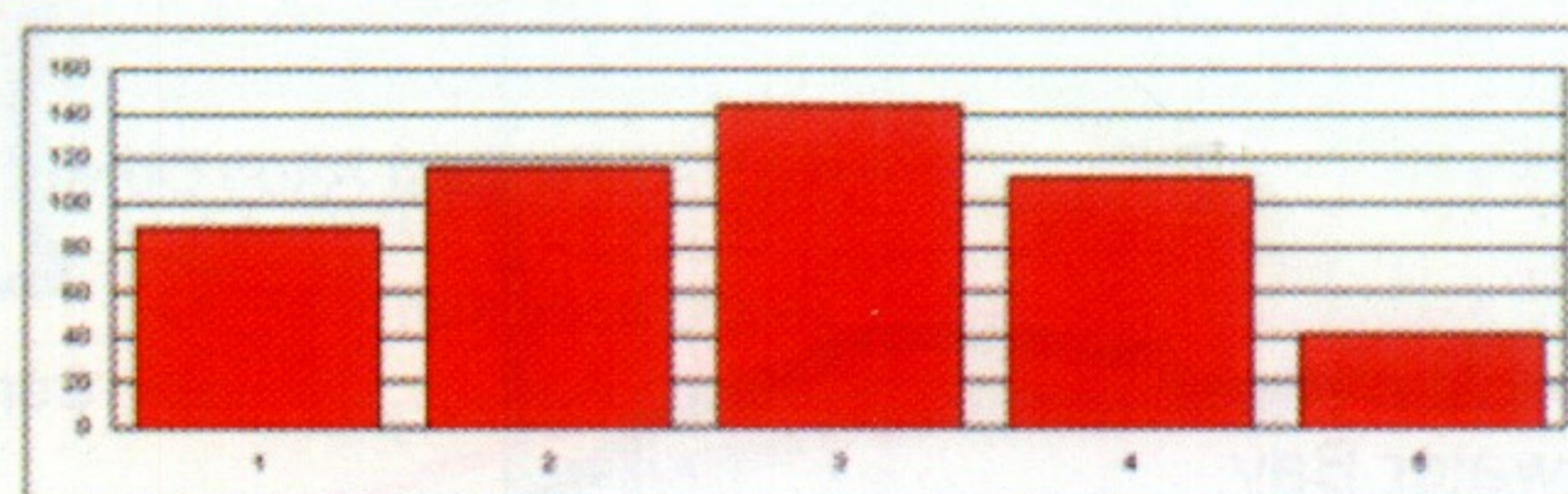


1b: What is your overall satisfaction level for Freshwater in terms of the social aspect, pubs, clubs & entertainment?



2: How satisfied are you with community safety?

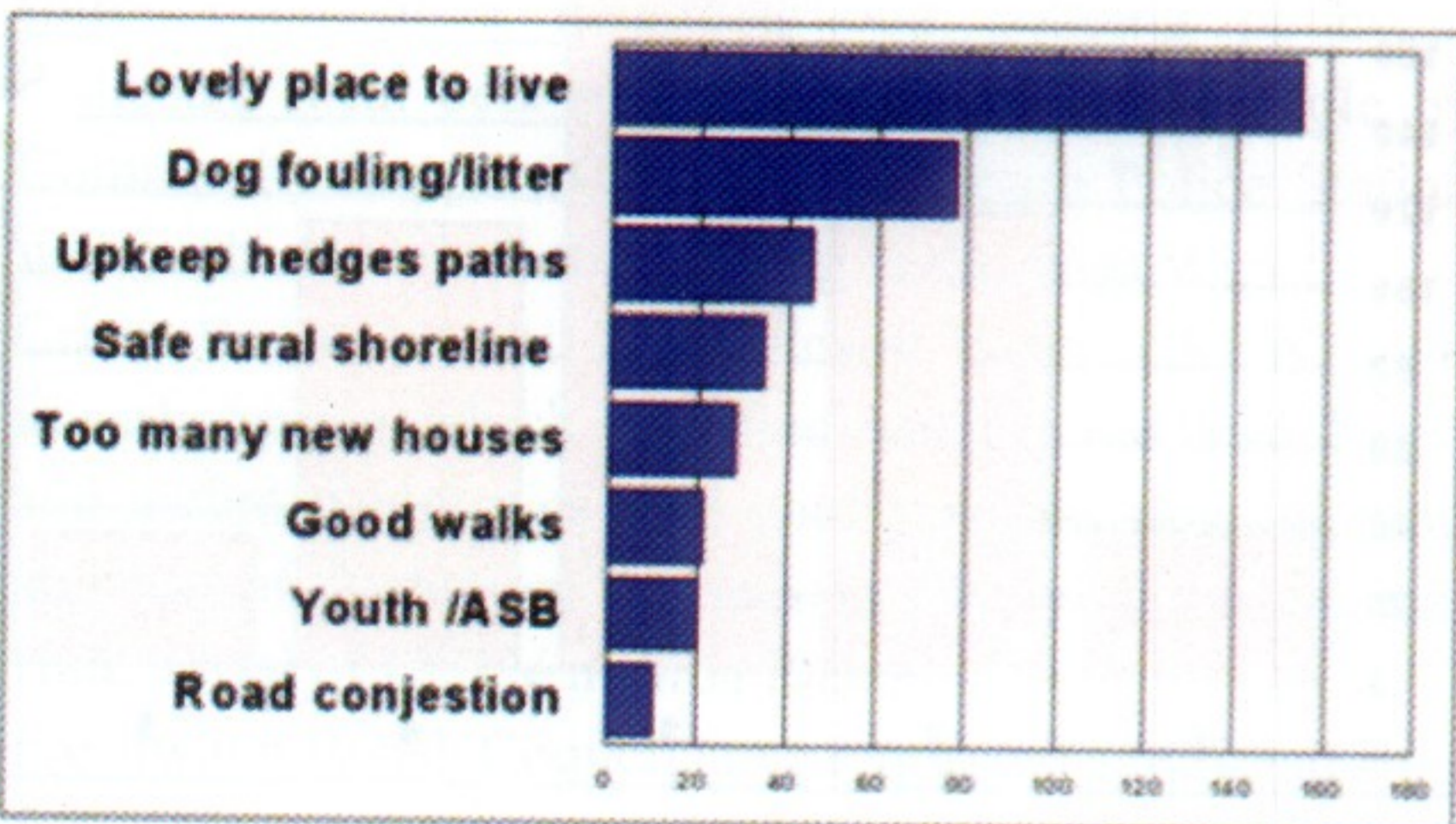
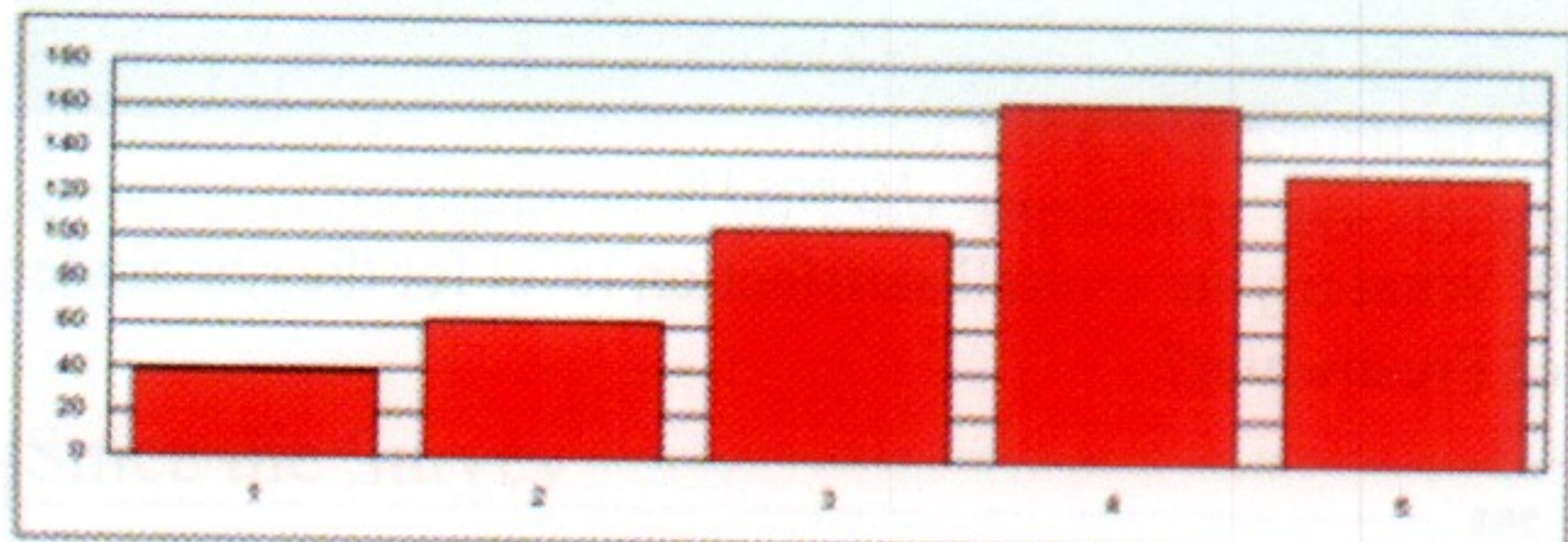
A high number of 171 respondents said there were not enough police. A further 69 complained about unruly young people, anti-social behaviour and drunken behaviour in public areas. 46 people said they were satisfied with safety and another 23 complained over dangerous traffic and parking problems. There were 6 "other" complaints.



3: How satisfied are you with your natural environment?

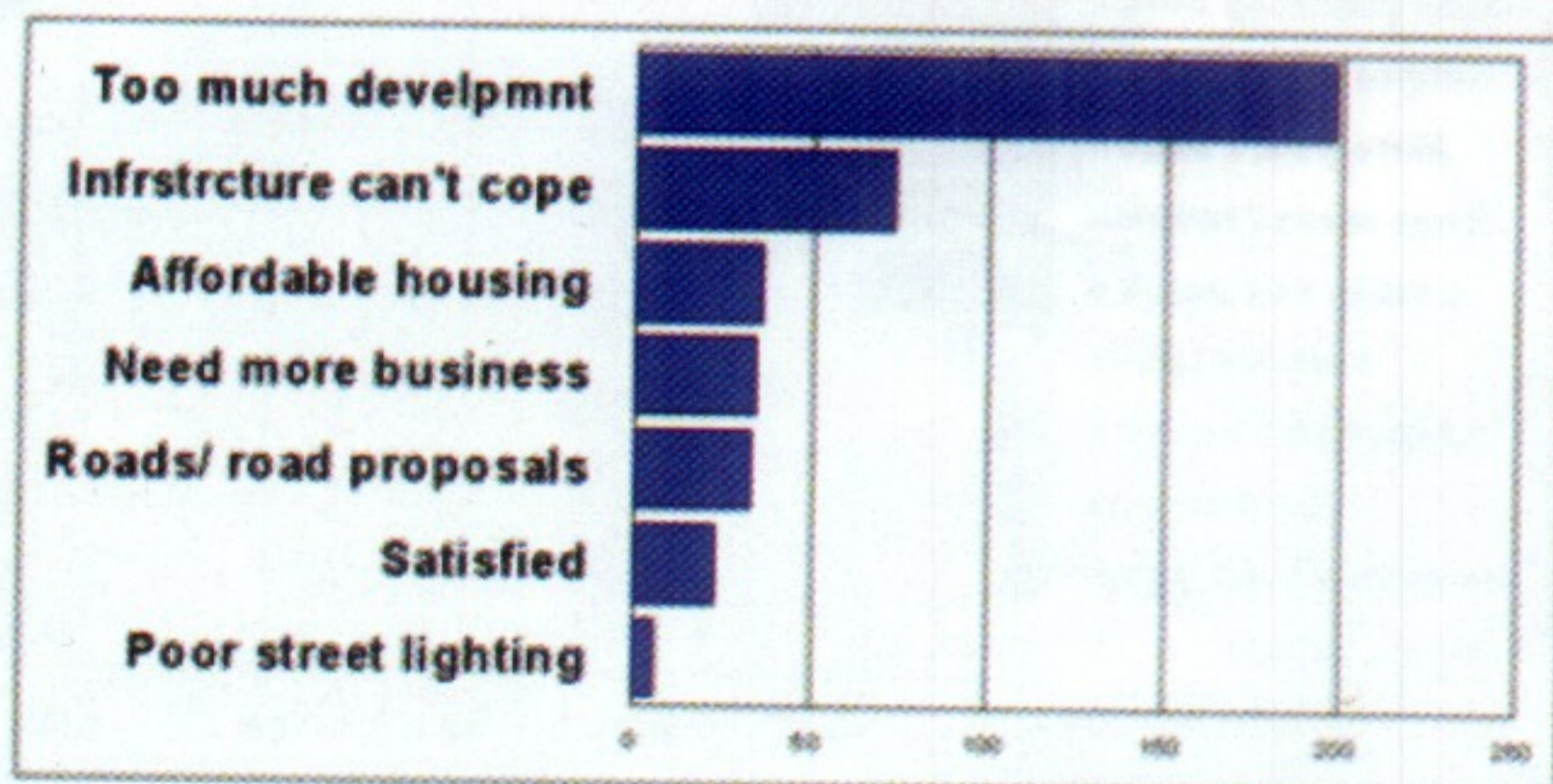
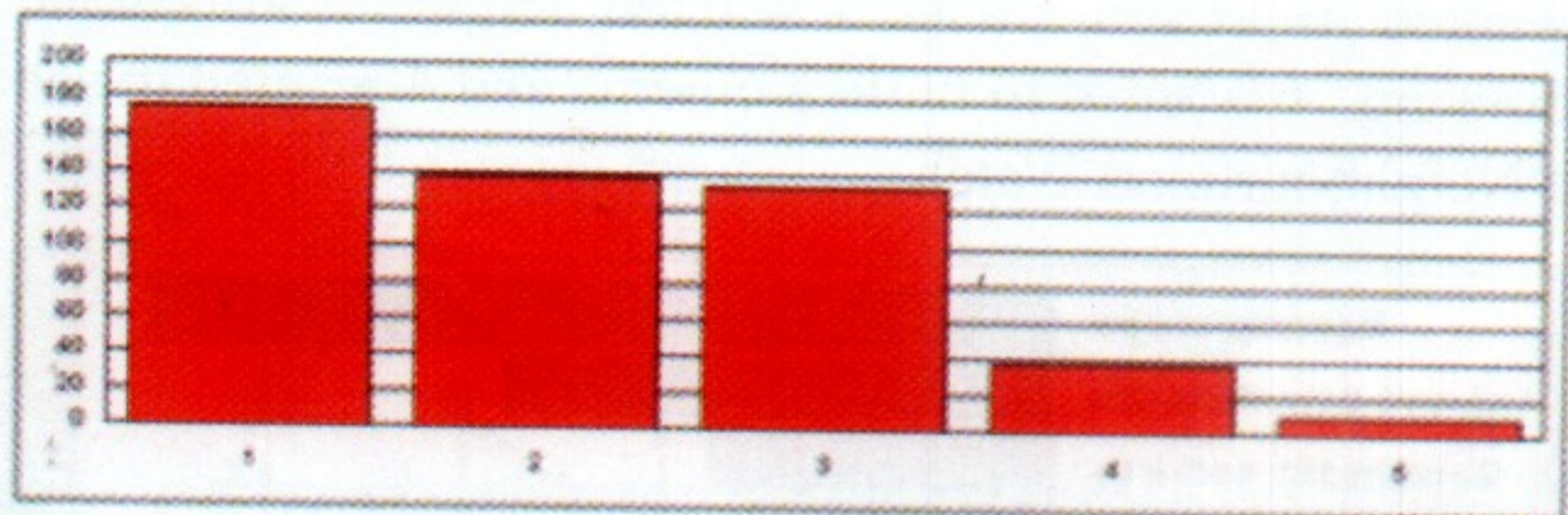
154 respondents said that Freshwater was a lovely place to live. 77 complained about dog fouling and or litter. The problems of the upkeep of the hedges and paths

were noted by 45. 34 people wrote about the safe rural environment and shoreline. 28 complained that there were too many new houses. 21 people praised the quality of local walking/rights of way. Problems with youth and anti-social behaviour behaviour again emerged with 20 responses. 10 people complained about the roads and congestion.



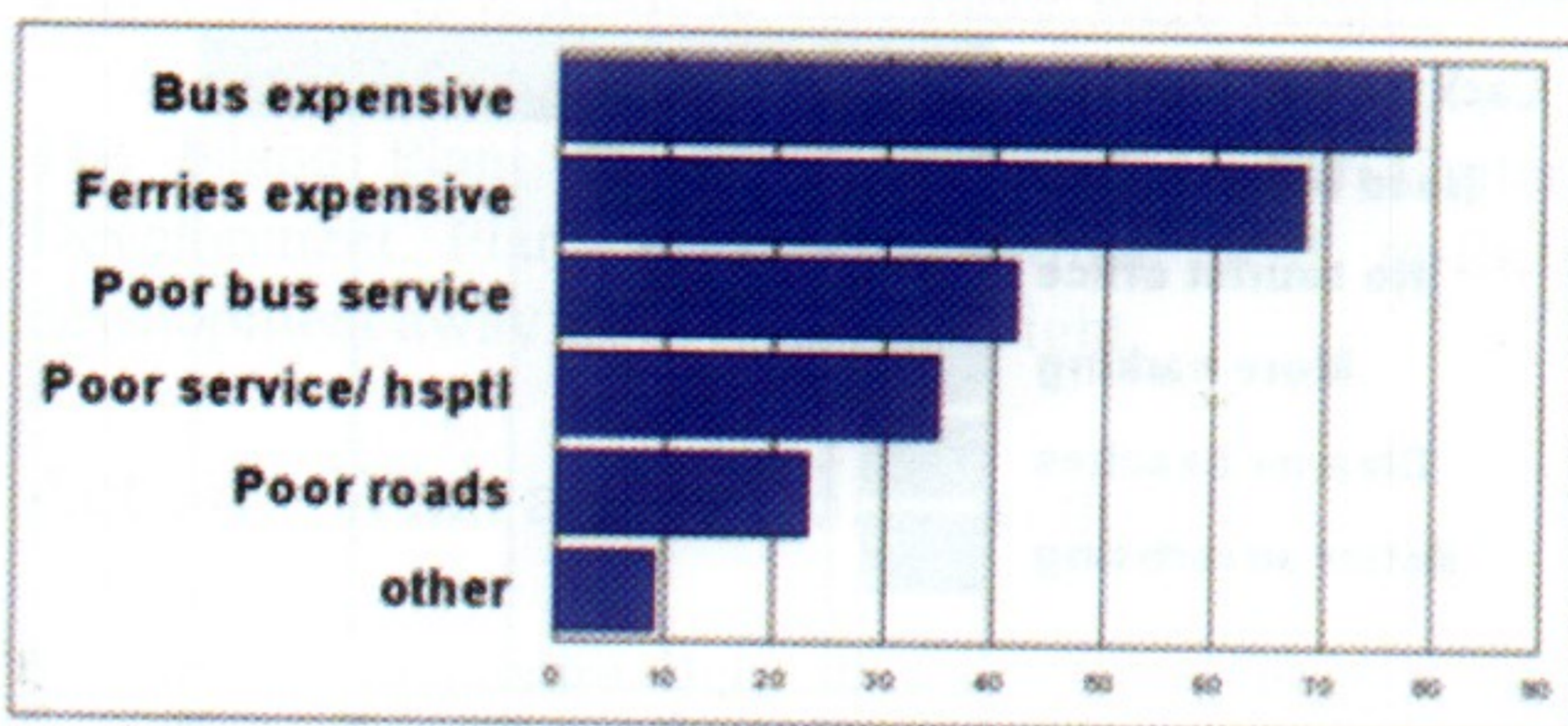
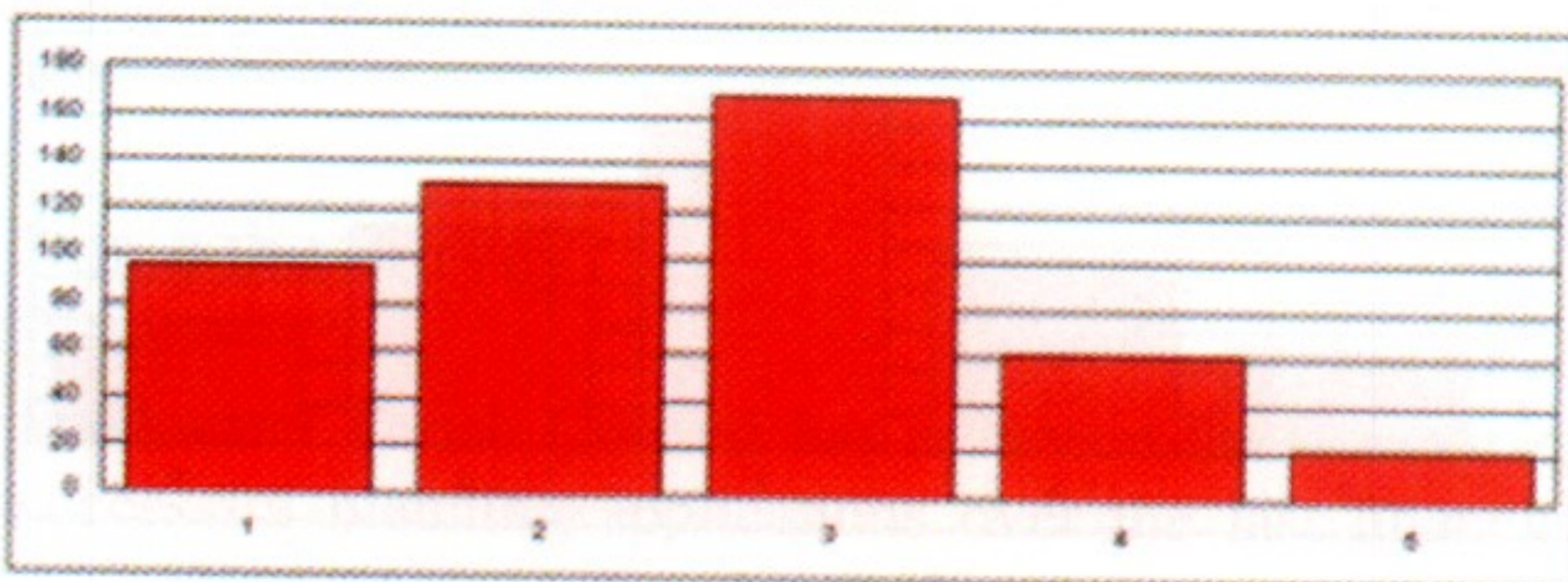
4: How satisfied are you with local planning and development?

A very high figure of 198 said that there was too much development in the area. Another 73 had the opinion that the infrastructure is unable to cope with the continuous addition of new housing. 36 people noted that the problem is primarily one of affordable housing, local people are unable to afford house prices here and special houses need to be built for them. 23 people said they were satisfied and a further 6 complained about poor street lighting.



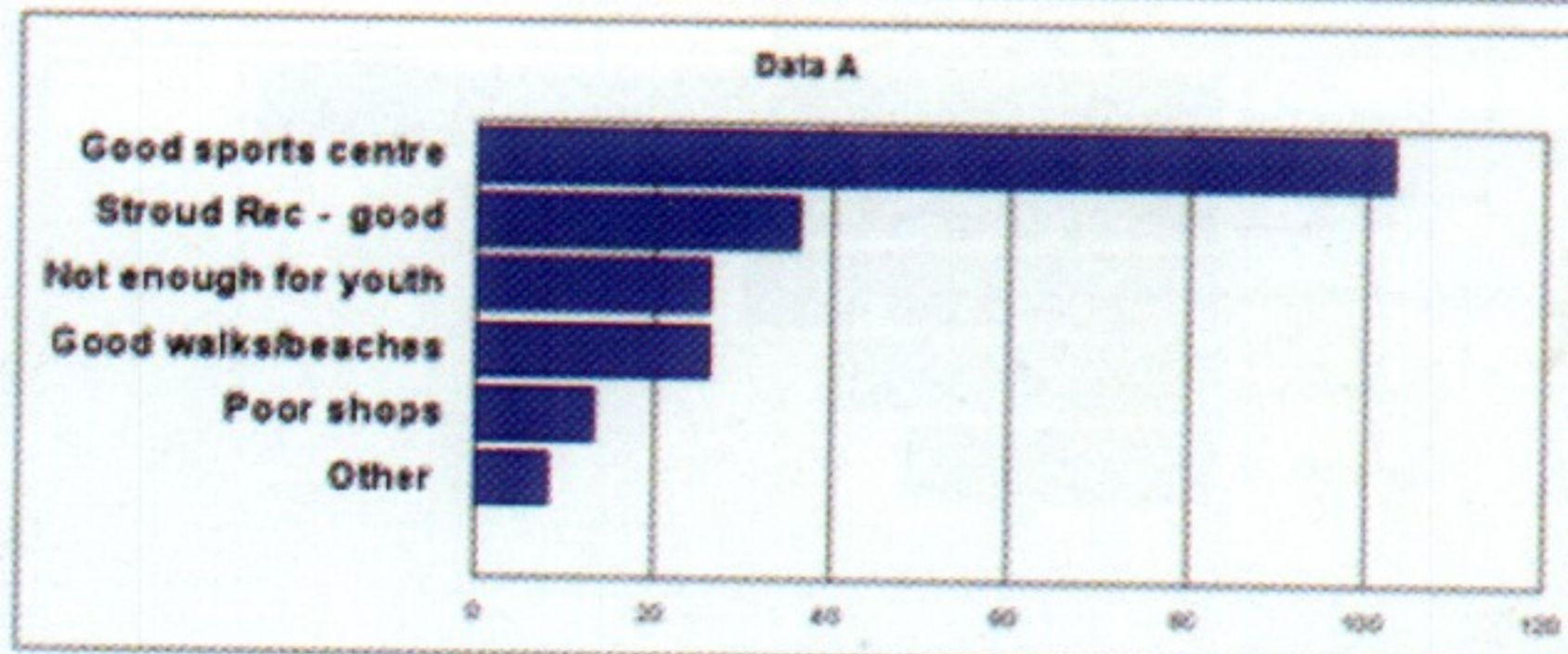
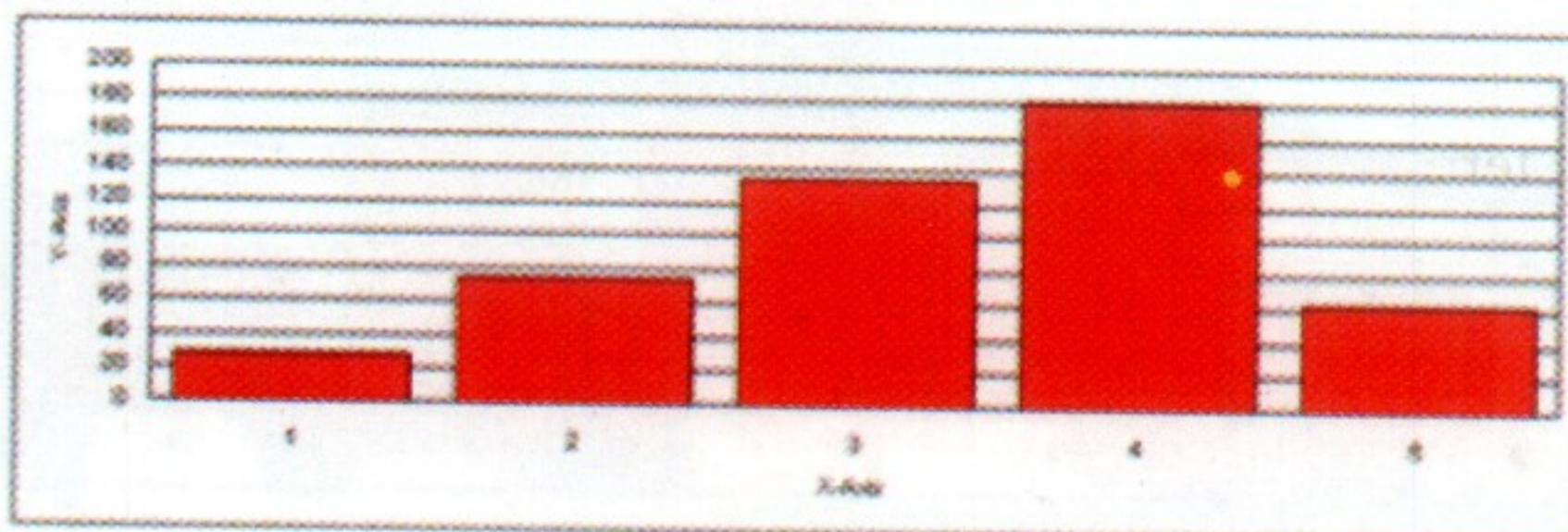
5: How satisfied are you with transport and related services?

78 respondents considered the bus to be too expensive (e.g. £7 for a return trip to Newport). 68 also complained about the cost of travelling by ferry (£42.50 car plus four day return to Lymington). Another 42 complained that the bus service was poor. A further 32 complained of poor services in general and in particular to the hospital, which requires four bus journeys for a return trip. 23 people complained about the state of our disintegrating roads. There were nine other points raised.



6: How satisfied are you with recreation and leisure facilities?

There was a very strong show of support for the WW Sports Centre. 103 people wrote that they appreciated it. The next facility mentioned by 36 respondents was Stroud Field. 26 people complained that there was not enough for young people to do. An equal number cited the beauty and accessibility of the natural environment, the footpaths and beaches as positive aspects. The poor variety of the shops was complained of by 13 respondents. There were eight other issues raised.

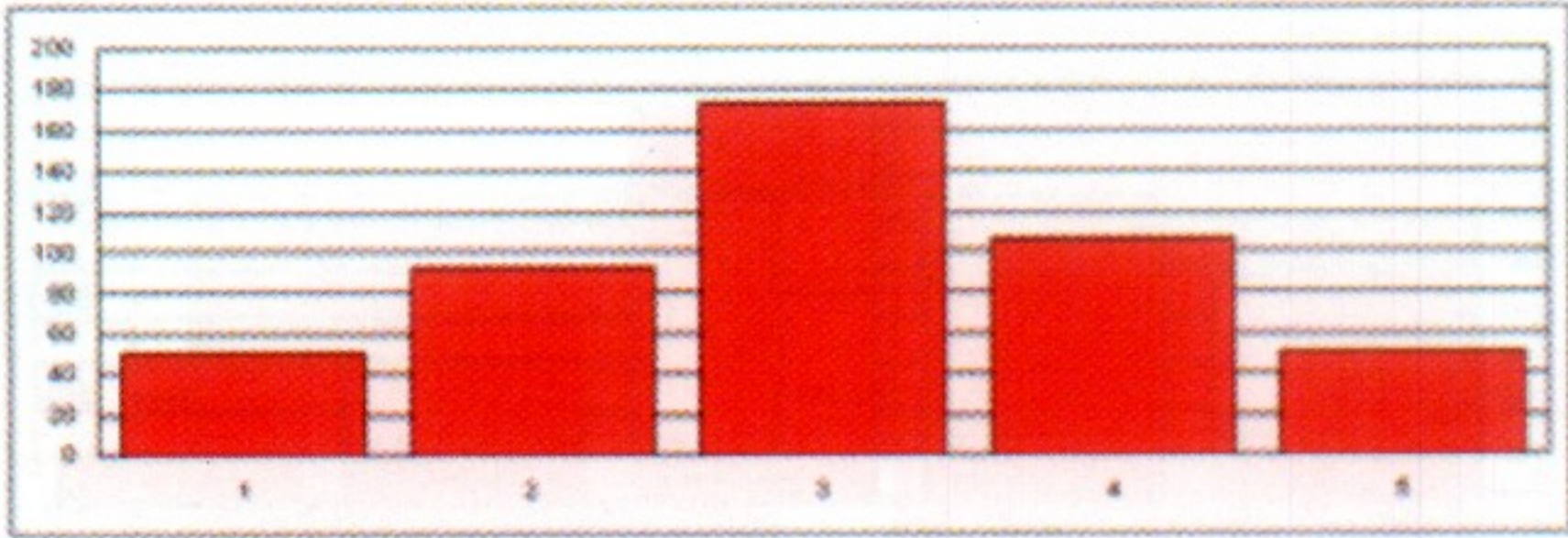


7: How satisfied are you with the local level of tourism?

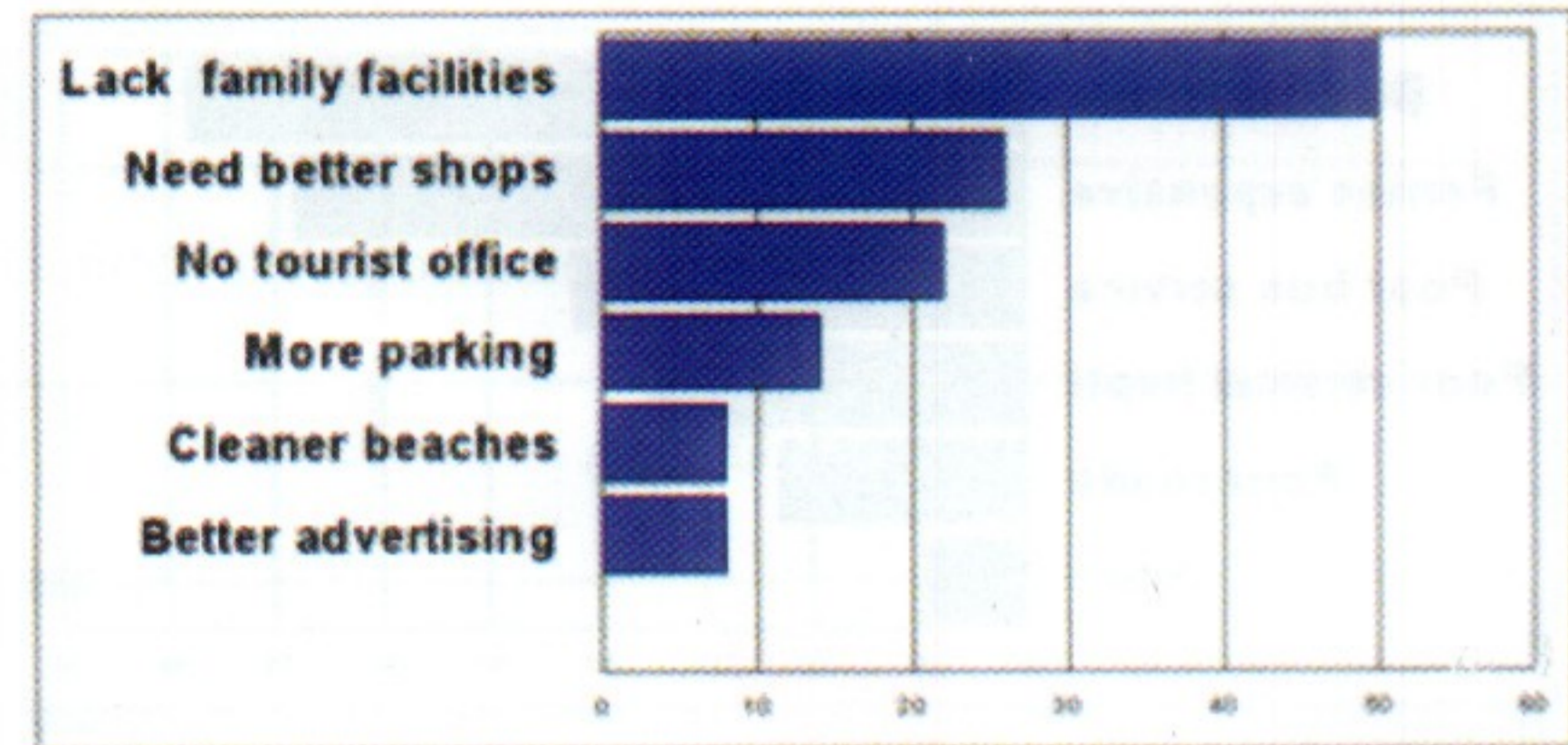
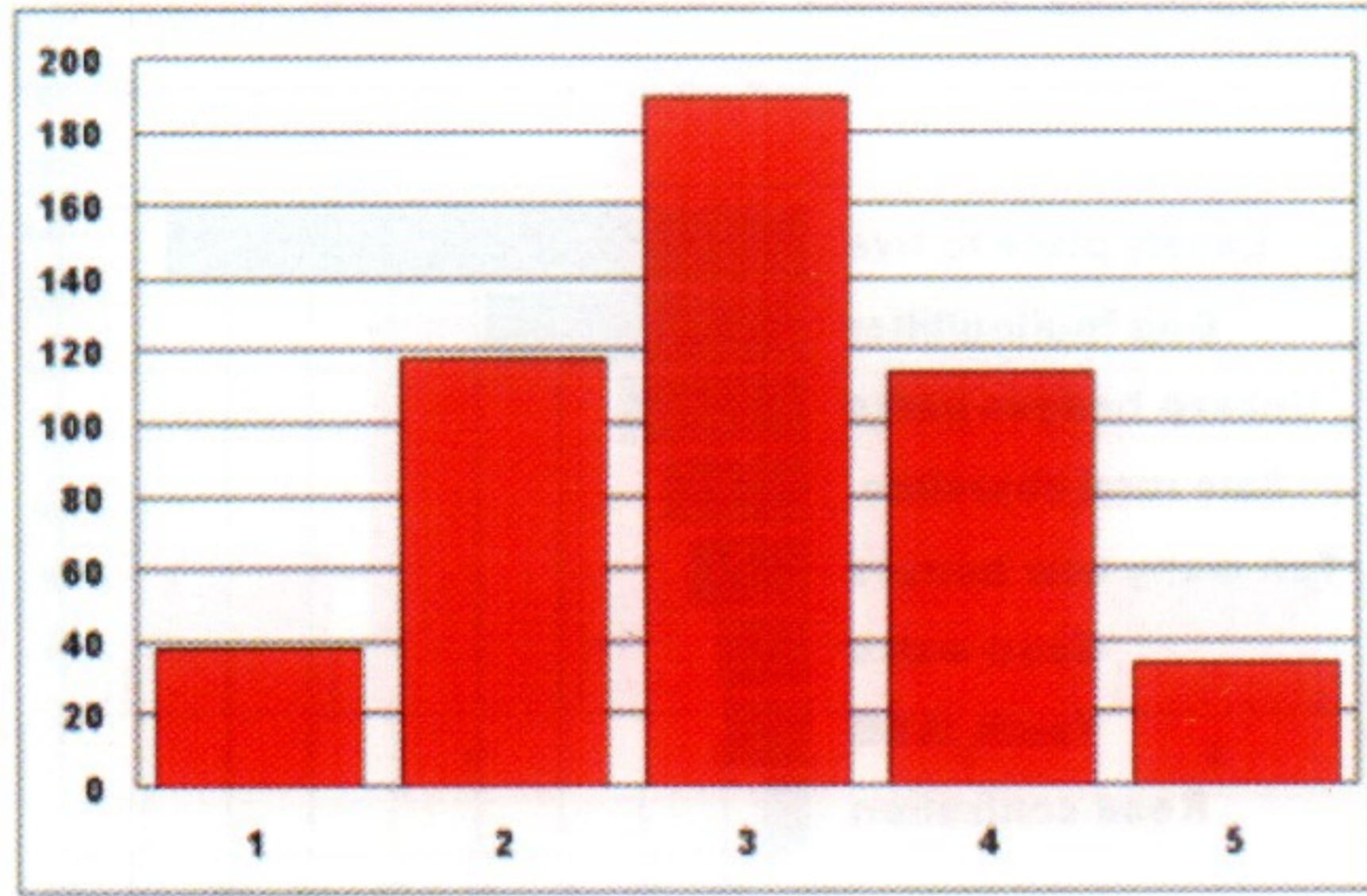
50 people wrote that there was a lack of facilities for tourists in Freshwater, despite the natural beauty. There needs to be more all family services. Freshwater's shops were again criticized for failing to provide a sufficient standard for the tourists. 22 complained that there is no tourist office in the village. 14 people complained about the lack of parking for the tourists. Eight people complained about the beaches being dirty. Another 8 asserted that the village needs better advertising.



Moons Hill



9: What is your overall satisfaction level for the remainder of Freshwater?

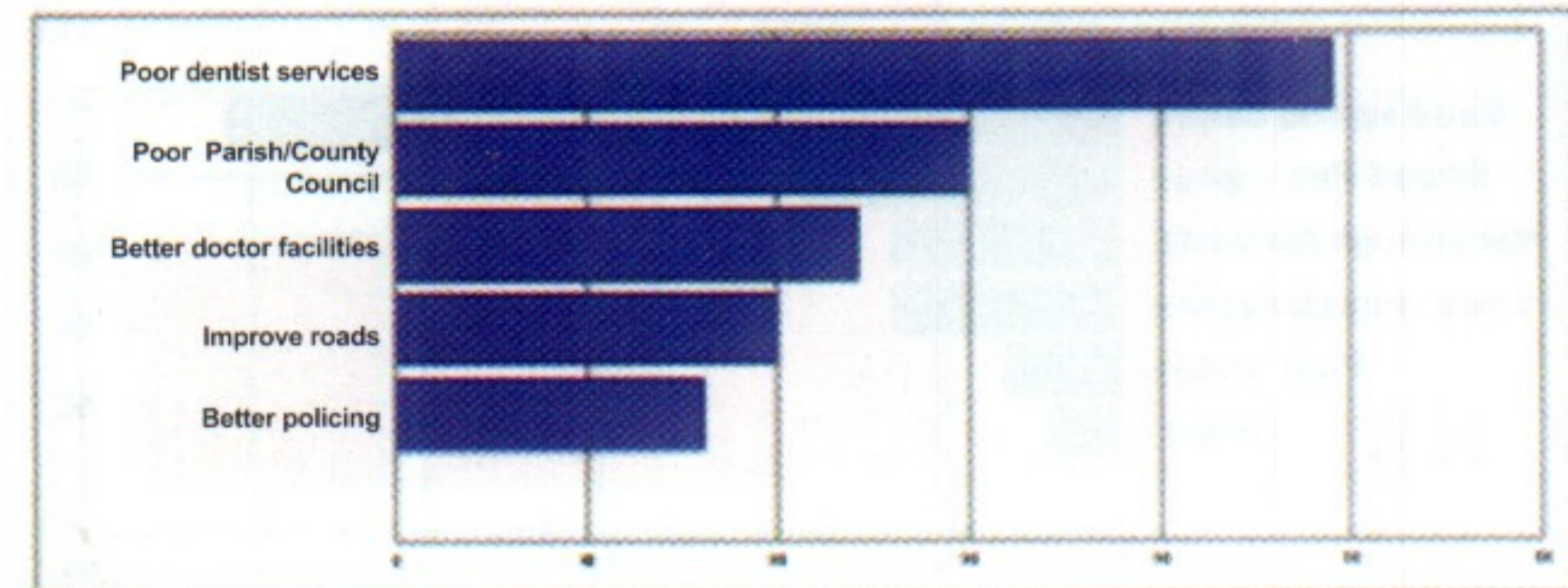
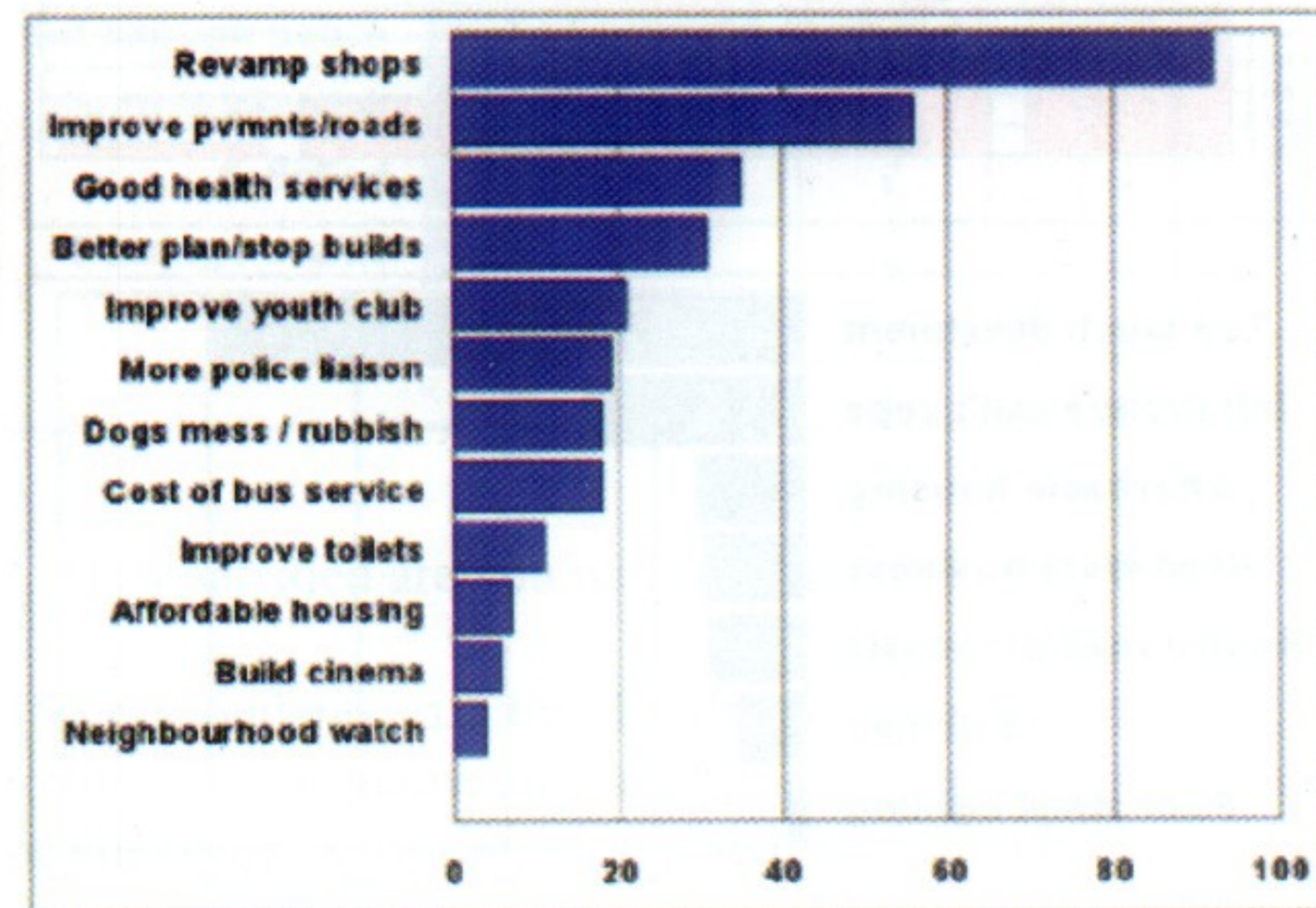
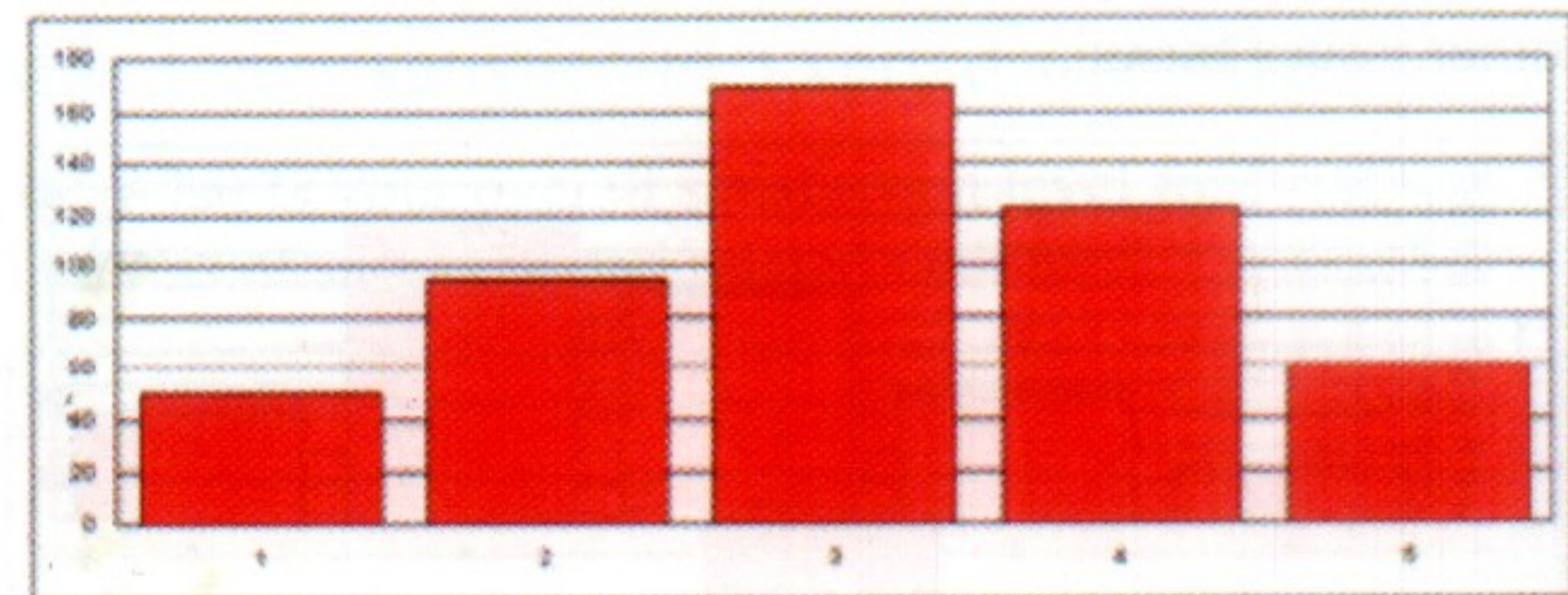


10: If there was one thing you could change or improve in the parish of Freshwater – what would it be?

8: How satisfied are you with council and health services?

Dental services were described as inadequate by 49 respondents. 30 people complained about the IW and Freshwater Parish councils. Doctors' services were complained about by 24 respondents. 20 people complained about the state of the roads. Finally 16 people asked for better levels of policing.

There was a strong result of 92 respondents who thought that the shops of the village should be revitalised. 56 respondents wanted to see repairs to the pavements and roads. Another 35 wanted to improve the health services. A significant number of 31 respondents wanted to see a stop on new buildings or improved planning decisions. 21 wanted to see improvements at the Youth Centre. 19 wanted to see more contact with the police. 18 wanted to see improvements in controlling dog mess and littering. 18 wanted action on the cost of the bus service. 11 wanted improved toilets. 7 wanted action on affordable housing. 6 wanted to build a cinema and 4 wanted to see a Neighbourhood Watch.



## Summary and Action Plan

### Community Safety

Whilst the majority of people indicated that they felt reasonably safe, a larger proportion of older people felt that there was not enough visible policing especially at night and felt threatened by anti-social behaviour by some young people. A smaller number were concerned about safety by inconsiderate parking especially on double yellow lines.

#### Since the Survey

Introduction of a neighbourhood policing policy – dedicated local beat officers supported in their role by Community Support Officers. Yarmouth Police Station will be the local hub for policing in the West Wight.

Crime Reduction and Environment Week (CREW) held in early Spring, which identified issues in the West Wight and included activities with young people, dog chipping and use of Probation Services to repaint the Memorial Hall, a trial of CCTV in Moya Place

Freshwater Parish Council have requested additional sites for CCTV.

#### Action – what are we going to do

Freshwater Parish Council has arranged a meeting between local organisations and the new Neighbourhood Police Officers to discuss local issues.

Lobby for permanent CCTV at Moya Place.

Investigate the possibility of banning on-street drinking.  
Review street lighting.

### Planning and Development Issues

This was a major issue for respondents participating in the Parish Plan. People were concerned about the level of building, firstly the amount and nature of development and secondly the lack of affordable housing particularly for first time buyers and single people including young men.

#### Since the Survey

Freshwater Parish Council has reviewed the amount of successful planning applications over the last financial year (2005/06) and found that there were considerably fewer applications passed than in the previous year.

The Island Plan will eventually replace the Unitary Development Plan in 2007/08 which will re-focus development away from the West Wight.

#### Action – What are we going to do

Endeavour to ensure that all new affordable housing benefits local residents, particularly first time buyers.

Encourage part buy schemes to enable first time buyers to get onto the property ladder.

Encourage local participation in meetings on significant planning applications to ensure that the applications meet local need.



Encourage architects and developers to produce attractive designs for affordable housing developments, and mixed tenure developments.

## Transport and Related Services

Overall the results from our survey showed that respondents said that buses “were expensive, not enough of them – and did not go directly to where they wanted to go, particularly the hospital”. This theme was echoed in exactly the same terms (except for the hospital!) from the survey of young people.

Equally people said that the ferries were too expensive – the highest cost per mile in the world! – which made a visit to or from relatives and friends on the mainland a rare outing. Other respondents complained about the poor state of the roads and a lack of respect for double yellow lines.

### Since the Survey

Introduction of free bus travel for senior citizens.  
Introduction of 50p fare for children up to 19 years old.  
A national motion for free ferry fares in the UK for senior citizens has been taken to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.  
Decriminalisation of parking offences, i.e. the council receives the money from the fines.

### Actions - what are we going to do

Lobby the IWC and Southern Vectis for an adult flat fare.  
Discuss with Southern Vectis about a more regular bus service to and from Freshwater, particularly from Freshwater to the Hospital.

St Agnes Church Freshwater Bay



School Green Road

## Shopping, The Village Centre and Local Amenities

Responders to the Parish Plan questionnaire felt that there had been a steady decline in both the appearance and nature of the shopping facilities in the village centre. Young people felt that there were insufficient shops targeting their age group. A major issue of concern was lack of NHS Dentists.

### Since the Survey

Freshwater Partnership Initiative and the IWC have cleared the area behind School Green and the ditch.  
The trees on Black Hut Green have been pollarded and the fencing repaired  
A further decline in the shopping area with more empty shops.

### Actions – what are we going to do

Implement a planting programme for School Green.  
Improve the appearance of the centre of Village working in partnership with local people and organisations. Instilling civic pride back into our Village.  
Seek advice and opportunities to help shop owners refurbish their properties.  
Seek advice from the IW Primary Care Trust about raising awareness of the Personal Dental Service for dental emergencies.

## Facilities for Young People

Both the adults’ and young people’s survey raised concern about a lack of facilities for young people particularly in the evenings. Whilst the Sports Centre and Stroud Field were highly thought of by the respondents, attitudes to

the Skateboard Park were mixed, older children enjoyed the facility but younger children saw it as a threat.

### Since the Survey

To the delight of many young people goal posts have now been erected on Stroud Field – nets to follow.

Freshwater Community Initiative has plans to create a five a side pitch on Stroud.

A bid has been put forward to create a Multi Use Games Area on the disused tennis court.

### Action – what are we going to do

From the survey it was obvious that the Youth Club is well regarded by young people in the village but the feeling was that it was not open enough or at the right times like school holidays. Staffing resources are the problem – we must find a way within the community of increasing the staffing levels so that our young people's expectations can be met.

## Stakeholders in Implementing the Parish Plan

Residents of Freshwater  
Freshwater Parish Council  
Freshwater Partnership Initiative  
West Wight Business Association  
West Wight Sports Centre  
Our local schools  
The Youth Service  
Local Churches  
Brookside Health Centre and the IW Primary Care Trust  
Police  
Safer Communities Partnership  
Isle of Wight Council

Finally we will be revisiting the objectives of the plan annually and publishing updates in the Beacon.

Sunset over Stroud Playing Field



