

Town & Parish Council Conference

**29 April 2014
Post Conference Report**

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you to all who were able to attend this conference. I was delighted to welcome over 110 delegates representing 53 parishes, and it was encouraging that so many of you engaged and participated despite some sensitive matters.

Before the presentations I told you about the new CBC mobile app which has been developed for the public to report on a range of highways issues including footway/carrage way surface defects, potholes, overgrown trees and faulty street lights. The advantage of using the new mobile technology is that by taking a photo on a device and locating the problem on a map (using GPS) updates can be tracked accurately through status reports. The app can be found online; please go to your app store and search for "Central Beds" or visit the following link for instructions:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/mobileapp

I also mentioned the new Roads and Street Works Act, which allows the Council to designate a street as "traffic-sensitive" if it meets certain criteria. When road works are carried out on these streets they are restricted to certain times to allow free traffic flow at peak times. This means that road works are often spread over several days in order to take place outside peak hours. For example, if road works are restricted to take place between the hours of 9.30am - 3.00pm then a job may be on site for two or more days; when it might have been completed in one day if the road works had taken place between 8.00am - 6.00pm. Therefore, it might be preferable to have one long day of disruption, rather than two shorter days.

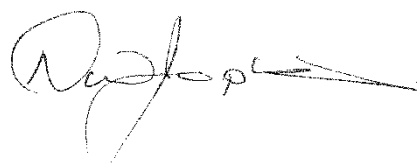
The Act allows us to relax some of these restrictions, so we are reviewing our process and exploring some sites to trial longer hours. By a quick show of hands, you indicated strongly that you thought that taking away some of the time restrictions was a good idea. If you have any further thoughts on this please let me have your feedback by sending an email to Peter Fraser.

Feedback about the conference was very positive. The next event is scheduled for 6.00-8.30pm on 3rd July and will focus on aspects of Planning. We make every effort to meet individual needs and should you have any specific requirements, for example dietary or hearing requirements, please let us know at the time of your booking for us enable us to address them appropriately.



Councillor David Hopkin

Deputy Executive Member for
Corporate Resources and
Lead Member for Localism,
Central Bedfordshire Council



PRESENTATIONS

There were four presentations, on the following subjects.

Your health in Bedfordshire, the future services review

John Rooke, Chief Operating Officer, Bedfordshire CCG and Dr Alvin Low, Local GP and locality chair, Bedfordshire CCG

Management of cemeteries and burial grounds

Justin Smith, Director, Cemetery Development Services Ltd

The use of community defibrillators

Martin Fagan, Community Heartbeat Trust

The implementation of digital traffic safety cameras

Paul Mason, Head of Highways and Paul Salmon, Senior Traffic and Safety Engineer

A summary of each of the presentations is contained in the next few pages. Links to all of the presentations are listed at the end of this report.

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG)

John Rooke and Alvin Low explained the role of BCCG, saying that the conference was a good opportunity to work with local communities during the review. BCCG is part of the reformed NHS and as a GP-led organisation is working to improve services.

The presentation covered the Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Healthcare Review and the challenges BCCG face in Bedfordshire. The aim of the review is to build a better and sustainable service based on clinical, patient and public opinion. The principles of the review and how Bedfordshire CCG and Milton Keynes CCG are working together were covered.

The review is enabling BCCG to gain information about what patients and the public think about health services currently provided, and what they would like to see improved or addressed. The review is on-going and BCCG has been collating feedback through hospitals, doctors, GP surgeries and a wide range of other engagement methods. A final report of the review is due to be published in the summer. The review will then lead on to a formal consultation phase which will be a huge and important task, in order to get the best outcome for public and patients.

The point was made that the NHS, which was set up 60 years ago, was originally designed to look after infectious diseases. When compared with today's health needs it is apparent that many more complex conditions now need to be addressed. Alongside greater life expectancy, this clearly needs to be reflected in new ways of thinking and working practices.

Patient care is being accessed from all over the county, but most people access medical help through their local GP surgery and pharmacies. It is important that BCCG supports all people, but also recognises the challenges of differing needs. Alongside existing workforce and finance problems, 25% of current GPs are over 55 years old, with the nursing profession having similar age profiling.

BCCG recognises that Central Bedfordshire is facing significant challenges, with people over 65 who are living longer and professionals who are better at diagnosing conditions. BCCG is learning from national and international opportunities about how they can better support need through children and young people's plans, as well as adult and older people's plans and joint commissioning. A particular area which BCCG wants to address is early intervention.

BCCG reported that care from the NHS in this part of the country is technically outstanding, although things could be better. For example, the challenges facing A&E services which are operating under pressure and the struggle to equip them with trained staff to meet demands. Consistency of care needs to be considered, communication needs to be better, and use of technology needs to be addressed.

Following the presentation, delegates were asked to suggest groups that BCCG can talk to with particular consideration to harder to reach groups, for example younger people. Delegates were also asked to sign up to the BCCG newsletter (www.yourhealthinbedfordshire.co.uk) and reassured that any suggestions for the review would be welcomed.

A summary of the questions and answers following the presentation

John Rooke and Dr Low answered questions from delegates. A query centred on the use of Section 106 monies to provide new surgeries. This will be followed up with the appropriate colleagues outside of this report.

Concern was expressed about the future of A&E services at Bedford Hospital and John Rooke confirmed that as a result of review the hospital will continue to be there for many years to come. The CCG is commissioning services and looking at how they can do things differently; collaboration with out of hours services. Working more closely with partners, for example on Over 75 Care Plans, will better help to manage demand.

There was a request for more direct communication with town and parish councils and local residents, and also a comment on the importance of walk-in centres. Dr Low confirmed they are trying to coordinate these services and address extended hours of service for residents who cannot take time off work. It is hoped that this will be in place next year.

Following a query about poor road signage for those signposted for treatment in High Wycombe, John Rooke agreed to contact Buckinghamshire County Council.

There were a number of other questions and observations related to the cost of change and the NHS overall, and access to surgeries by ambulances. John Rooke confirmed all these issues would be incorporated into the review and consultation.

Management of cemeteries and burial grounds

Justin Smith, Director of Cemetery Development Services Ltd (CDS) gave a presentation on the management of cemeteries and burial grounds. The presentation focused on the economics of provision, whilst also appreciating the community service aspects. CDS are involved with the Environment Agency's feasibility studies, cemetery designs, planning applications and cemetery mapping. When a review of management of cemeteries takes place, CDS think in particular about the future impact of the approach being taken; for example it is harder to plan and build on greenbelt land now and is increasingly more expensive.

CDS's message is to 'create a legacy and not a liability' for future generations. Town and parish councils need to consider the ongoing maintenance costs of burial sites.

CDS suggested we are now reaching a critical shortage of burial space in the UK. There are approximately 40 cemetery/burial ground feasibility studies a year and its becoming more and more difficult to accommodate burials. Many cemeteries are becoming dilapidated and grass cutting around head stones and monuments is expensive. It is not just the older cemeteries that present this problem, as some newer cemeteries are already in a state of disrepair.

Although a very sensitive matter, town and parish councils were asked to consider these issues and their current charges. Cremation is now a more popular option, with 80% of people now opting for cremation.

Issues around the carbon footprint were also raised; for example imports of black headstones from abroad are contributing to this.

A summary of the questions and answers following the presentation

A number of questions were raised and responded to by Justin, including suggestions for alternative, sometimes radical, but none the less cheaper options for burial. Many parishes are very proud of their cemeteries and see it as a community service.

A specific query was made as to the obligation upon the parish council should the church close. Justin advised that if the churchyard is closed then it is the responsibility of the council. If the cemetery is consecrated the land goes to the diocese who will then have full power, but would not have liability over costs. Similarly there are situations where responsibility for the cemetery is unknown; Justin advised that technically if it closes and the diocese is not involved, it goes to Central Bedfordshire Council.

The use of community defibrillators

Peter Fraser introduced the next agenda item by informing delegates of Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) intention to launch a community defibrillator scheme. CBC had recently researched the implementation of community defibrillators following two queries from local residents.

CBC is proposing to provide up to £1,000 to roll out community defibrillators to town and parish councils. Details of how to participate with the scheme will be available shortly.

Martin Fagan from the Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) was introduced and gave an informative presentation. Martin talked about how time is critical when having a cardiac arrest episode – there is only 5 minutes to save a life.

Information about the Adopt a Kiosk Scheme agreement between CHT and British Telecom (BT) was given. In summary, the agreement allows the town and parish councils to adopt unused telephone boxes for a minimal fee with a view to housing a defibrillator. BT will provide the electricity for free for 7 years if the project is delivered through CHT.

Martin explained that the Ambulance Service is advised when a town or parish council has a community defibrillator and registers it on their system. To use the defibrillator, which can verbally instruct the user, a minimum of 2 people need to be present; one to give compressions to the patient and the other to fetch the defibrillator.

The Ambulance Service reviews the data recorded on each defibrillator and passes this on to the hospital. Martin emphasised it is vital that the right equipment is purchased and that all governance issues must be addressed. Not all Ambulance Services have the ability to download from every type of defibrillator available, therefore it's important to select ones they can support. After registration of the equipment, regular maintenance, training and awareness support is essential together with regular checks on the equipment and storage to make sure all information is recorded. Storage also has to meet specific requirements, including a special secure casing to keep the defibrillator above freezing conditions, that is dust proof and waterproof to IP65 level.

For more information on community defibrillators please visit the CHT website:

<http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/>

A summary of the questions and answers following the presentation

Martin responded to a number of questions and confirmed that if a defibrillator has been used, the pads will need to be replaced. It will also need to be fully cleaned and data stored on the WebNos system. A member of the community needs to be tasked with making sure it is ready for action again.

In response to the question about the ideal radius for locating a defibrillator Martin advised that the Ambulance Service recommend between 400m and 800m.

It is important that the patient receives chest compressions whilst the defibrillator is being retrieved. On that point another delegate urged the importance of first aid training to ensure skills are available to undertake chest compressions. Martin advised that basic life support First Aid courses in villages are a great idea and that this could be delivered by the CHT (for a charge). In addition, most schools are now teaching First Aid skills. Martin also confirmed that some but not all defibrillator equipment records all voices and sounds. All recorded data will be used by the Coroner if necessary.

The implementation of digital traffic safety cameras

Central Bedfordshire Council has secured funding of £750,000 for 2014/15 and the presentation outlined how this will be used:

There are 36 existing camera sites that contain wet film in Central Bedfordshire. These sites, and the associated traffic data, are currently being reviewed. It is anticipated that these sites will be upgraded to digital over the next few years. Central Bedfordshire Council has allocated £350,000 to this work in 2014/15, which will upgrade approximately 10 sites. The remaining sites will be the subject of a further capital bid in 2015/16 and beyond. It was emphasised that there is no town and parish council contribution required for these sites.

Central Bedfordshire Council has committed to provide 2 new camera sites and £150,000 has been allocated to this work.

The remaining £250,000 is for new sites.

The benefits of installing digital camera equipment were described, alongside the limitations of existing wet film cameras which are expensive to maintain.

Paul Salmon described the new technology known as “Static Bi-Directional Digital Cameras, which captures traffic both front and rear facing, covering both lanes. An advantage of the new equipment is that the cameras are portable which enables the camera to be moved between locations; though each location will need to be approved and calibrated.

Partnership working with local communities is essential to help identify new sites that meet the following criteria:

- a. Written support from the T&PC and ward member
- b. Evidence of a traffic speed or casualty problem – e.g. data collected about those killed/seriously injured, casualty sites, causality black spots etc, or a evidence that significant percentage of vehicles are speeding above the ACPO limit (a benchmark will be set - 35% is a likely level.)
- c. Support from the police, Home Office approval
- d. Suitable location – e.g. with a power supply
- e. Suitable 3G mobile network services in the vicinity, or a secure ASDL line
- f. A financial contribution from the T&PC

There are also other essential conditions and considerations when installing cameras, such as legal constraints, protection, annual calibration and certification.

Should camera criteria not be met or achievable, other options will be considered, for example portable Variable Message Signs.

In conclusion it was highlighted that CBC, town and parish councils and Police are working together in partnership to address speeding issues across the local authority area. CBC is listening to ensure we fully understand where the most challenging speed issues are. CBC

is also looking at more widespread partnership activity where Education Training & Publicity messages can help engage the majority who probably speed more habitually.

In order to keep the costs to a minimum it is anticipated that town and parish councils may collaborate to identify locations that can share a camera. Each site would have an intelligent flash so it would behave in the same way with or without the camera thereby achieving the speed reduction for the least cost. Data on traffic speeding will be recorded on a memory card that can be downloaded and analysed.

A timetable of dates was shown, highlighting an estimated final delivery date for the new technology of 31 March 2015 (see presentation slides for more information).

Interest in a new camera site from town and parish councils should be registered with Paul Mason (paul.mason@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). Please provide details of any locations that you would like considered together with the evidence requested in the criteria above, by **30 June 2014**.

A summary of the questions and answers following the presentation

A number of questions sought clarification on aspects of the proposal to install digital safety cameras. Paul Mason confirmed the letter recently sent to town and parish Councils would be revised and reissued to provide greater clarity. Paul also confirmed that a business case for digital safety cameras has been signed off by Members, but that it does not specify sites.

Paul Salmon confirmed that over time and subject to funding, the council is looking to replace all wet film cameras with digital cameras. The collaboration with town and parishes is for new sites and new digital cameras, not in replacing existing wet film cameras. Approved locations would be dependent on data evidence, and such surveys need to be undertaken by the Police to be valid.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vehicles are used to identify illegal or unsafe parking and cannot be used to monitor speeding.

Cllr Hopkin closed the conference, thanked the delegates for coming and requested that any further questions should be submitted via the questionnaire/feedback sheet in the delegates' packs. Future Town and Parish Council Conference dates are as follows;

3rd July – Planning

18th November – subject to be advised.

SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Cllr Jean Peall, Lidlington Parish Council

Q: Health Service Review. We run a village care scheme in Lidlington primarily for people to get to GP appointments. We have next to no transport links for local GPs. Those who attend Marston surgery often have to wait about 2 hours at the surgery during open appointment times, which means we leave the person there and collect them later. There is no surgery within our catchment on the rail service which runs hourly.

Without care scheme help, how do people reach GP services? What is in place for Marston Moretaine surgery with increasing population? (450 new dwellings at Marston Park).

A: Access to GP surgeries is an important issue and should be picked up as part of the Review of Healthcare Services in Bedfordshire. Please see the following link to [BCCG's webpage](#) which is dedicated to the review and how to get involved.

Cllr Jo Green, Brogborough Parish Council

Q: Re BCCG:

- (1) How are people who live in Bedfordshire but whose GP is in Milton Keynes affected seeing as Milton Keynes is part of North London Commissioning Group (MKCCG). Tend to fall between 2 stools.
- (2) Where do PC's fit into the consultation process re rural services? I am not aware that Brogborough PC has been part of consultation process so far.

A:

- (1) The Healthcare Review is being undertaken jointly by Bedfordshire CCG and Milton Keynes CCG. People are welcome to provide their views to both CCGs. For Bedfordshire, you will find all the details on www.yourhealthinbedfordshire.co.uk and for Milton Keynes, visit www.shapingMKhealth.co.uk.
- (2) The consultation hasn't started yet, so there is plenty of opportunity for Brogborough to get involved. This conference was an opportunity to inform Town and Parish Councils that the consultation is coming up. The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) has been carrying out pre-consultation work across Central Bedfordshire and has arranged Stakeholder Forums, Public Meetings and visited local groups and supermarkets to raise awareness and gather views on the Review. The full public consultation on the Review of Healthcare Services in Bedfordshire is expected to be launched in July 2014. Please see the following link to [BCCG's webpage](#) which is dedicated to the review and how to get involved. If Brogborough Parish Council has any views at this pre-consultation stage, BCCG would be pleased to hear them.

Cllr Robin Barratt, Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Parish Council

Q: If CBC are responsible for closed churchyards, why do Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Parish Council maintain the churchyard at St Peter's Wrestlingworth?

A: Please use the link below to access 'a brief practical guide for parishes' regarding responsibility for closed churchyards:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/town-parish-councils.aspx>

Cllr T Ellis, Heath and Reach Parish Council

Q: We have no 'spare' cash in this year's budget for safety concerns. If we wish to progress the scheme can we pay our contribution from future year's precept?

A:The proposal is to work in partnership with Town and Parish Councils. Whilst we would not be able to offer a loan facility we would seek to establish payment arrangements that are appropriate to the specific needs of the Town or Parish Council.

Cllr Ian Clements, Potton Town Council

Q: The issue is that CBC want parish and town councils to pay c£13,000 for the installation of cameras. Those drivers who exceed the speed limit will need to pay a fine;

(1) Who gets the fine money?

(2) If it is not the town or parish, why should we pay this amount, £13000, for other's to profit?

A:(1)&(2): Current arrangements require drivers who exceed the speed limit and whom are required to pay a fine to make payment to Bedfordshire Police. The proposal is to work in partnership with Town and Parish Councils to invest in improving road safety and easing congestion through the use of new digital technology. This includes identifying new areas to position a camera. More detailed exploration, however, might identify an alternative solution is more appropriate to resolve a local speeding problem, but it is better for a parish council to register interest than not.

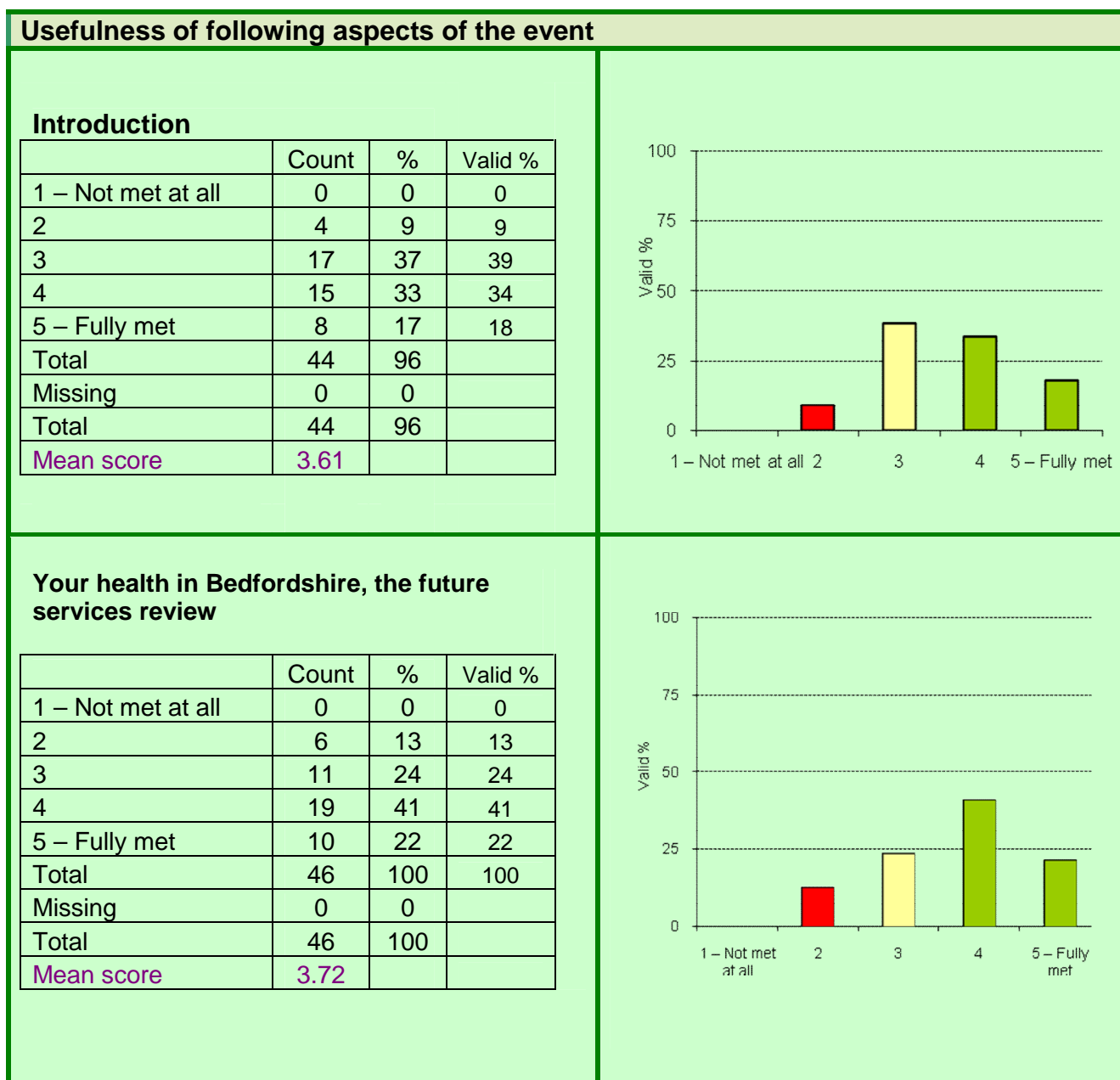
Cllr Sally Stapleton, Shillington Parish Council

Q: If new digital cameras are so clever why can't it do infra-red at night to save extra costs of more lighting?

A:The current technology which has been approved by the Home Office (which can take up to 2years) means 'fixed' cameras work using an auxiliary flash and digital cameras require upgraded lighting. Technology is improving all the time and it maybe possible in the future to incorporate infra red, this will need to be approved by the Home Office.

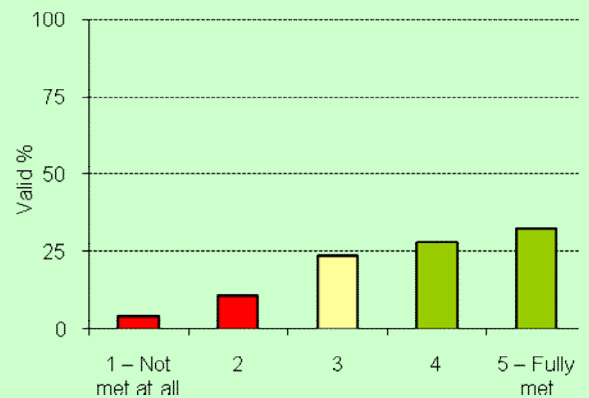
FEEDBACK ON THE CONFERENCE

A conference feedback form was provided in the delegate packs, and the results are shown below.



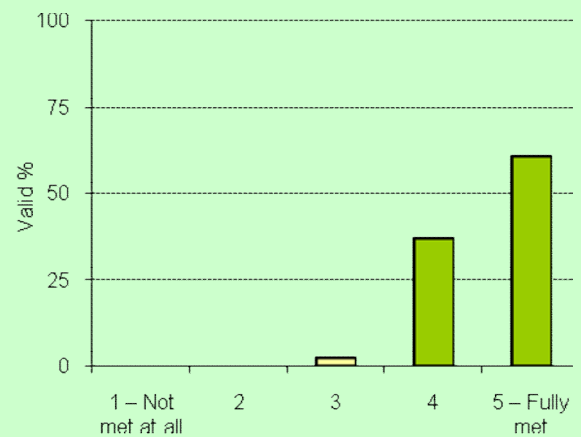
Management of cemeteries and burial grounds

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	2	4	4
2	5	11	11
3	11	24	24
4	13	28	28
5 – Fully met	15	33	33
Total	46	100	100
Missing	0	0	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	3.74		



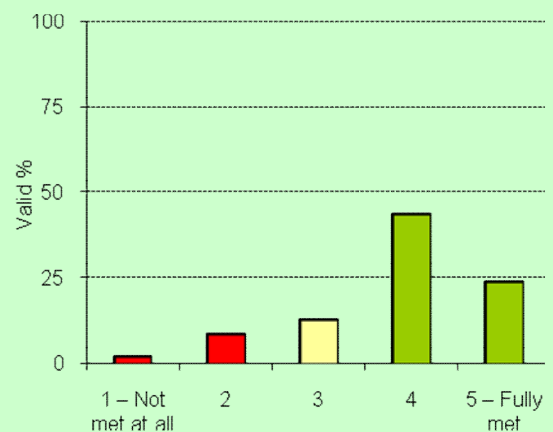
The use of community defibrillators

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	1	2	2
4	17	37	37
5 – Fully met	28	61	61
Total	46	100	100
Missing	0	0	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	4.59		



Implementation of digital traffic safety cameras

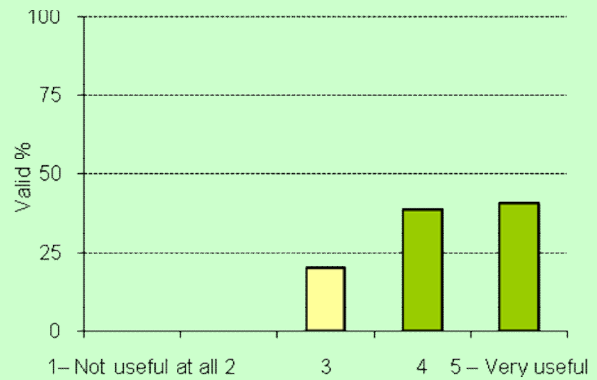
	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	1	2	2
2	4	9	9
3	6	13	13
4	20	43	43
5 – Fully met	11	24	24
Total	42	91	91
Missing	4	9	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	3.86		



Organisation of the event

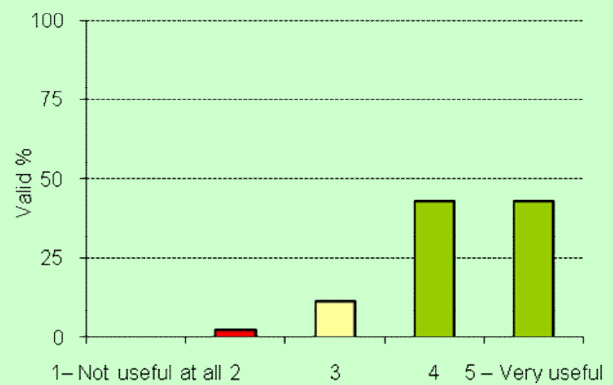
Organisation

	Count	%	Valid %
1- Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	9	20	20
4	17	37	39
5 - Very useful	18	39	41
Total	44	96	100
Missing	2	4	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	4.20		



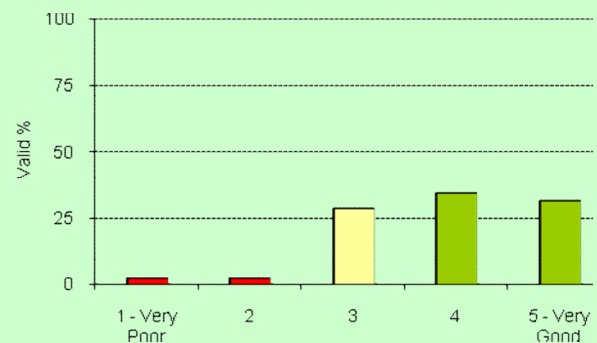
Venue

	Count	%	Valid %
1- Very poor	0	0	0
2	1	2	2
3	5	11	11
4	19	41	43
5 - Very good	19	41	43
Total	44	96	100
Missing	2	4	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	4.27		



Catering

	Count	%	Valid %
1 - Very Poor	1	2	3
2	1	2	3
3	11	24	29
4	13	28	34
5 - Very Good	12	26	32
Total	38	83	100
Missing	8	17	
Total	46	100	
Mean score	3.89		



Views of the event overall

Did you find this conference useful?

	Count	Yes%
Yes	46	100
No	0	0
Total	46	100

Would you recommend attendance at future conferences?

	Count	Yes %
Yes	46	100
No	0	0
Total	46	100

Feedback from delegates

What topics would you like addressed at future events?

Traffic management – speeding – excluding HGVs from ‘B’ roads.

More about highways.

Broadband roll out.

Broadband. CCTV.

School issues. Broadband. Playing fields.

How to encourage new councillors to join parish councils.

Policing – can we have some?

Rural broadband!!

Much will depend on issues at the time, but probably; budgets/highways/ planning.

Planning. Public transport services.

Provision of “social housing”.

Bottle banks. Village support scheme. Funding.

Waste disposal issues. Funding for projects (N/plans/management/play/sport).

Parking enforcement.

Highways/condition of highways.

What other individuals, groups or organisations would you like to see at future events?

Police.

Chief Constable – explain why local policing not evident.

Private house building developer (house building design etc).

Continuing updates from CCG.

Any other comments

Cemetery: on the subject of closed churchyards, please could clarification be given on who's responsibility the churchyard is? If it is taken up by the principal authority will they recharge the costs back to the parish council?

The speed camera is far too expensive for parish and town councils.

I was very impressed with the speakers at tonight's event. I also think the seating/table worked well.

Catering – no vegan options (for me). Also I didn't see any allergy warnings.

I didn't find the 2nd topic – cemeteries – at all relevant. No cemeteries in my ward. Other areas – more useful and relevant.

I preferred this style of meeting to the one where everyone walked into various rooms – they were too overcrowded.

Very useful evening.

More time to network with others.

Does the data collected by Speedwatch go towards the data required for this safety cameras in Central Beds?

Why APCO speed limits? – these are discretionary.

Better PA system in future please. Cater for hard of hearing.

Poor presentation of digital cameras:

- (1) Presentation done no relationship (clear) with letter sent out 22.04.14 on same issue.
- (2) Tended to pick up on negatives/anomalies (eg 20 mph diversionary cause) rather than positives. Was this to put parish councils off even considering the proposition?

Concerned at the management of cemeteries and burial grounds – seemed to say parishes were wrong in paying money towards upkeep of burial grounds to the detriment of parishioners. Not informative or useful.

Overall thought it was a very good event, the topics were extremely interesting and varied.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Your participation and cooperation at these events is much appreciated Overall, your feedback indicated that you found the Conference content and format very useful.

Your list of suggested topics for future events is also very encouraging and I look forward to putting together a programme for our November event that meets your requirements.

We will contact you as soon as possible with details of the July event which will focus on aspects of Planning. In the meantime, please contact either myself or Peter Fraser peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk if you have any further comments or suggestions for future events.

Councillor David Hopkin

Deputy Executive Member for
Corporate Resources and
Lead Member for Localism,
Central Bedfordshire Council

A full copy of this report and the workshop presentations can be found on the Council's website: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/town-parish-councils.aspx>