

Affordable Housing - Middleton Avenue

Parish Council Survey Feb/March 2009

Questionnaires were sent to households on Middleton Avenue, Gray Drive, Thompson Close, Ward Crescent and Hannah Road. One hundred and five questionnaires were sent and thirty five were returned. This is a response rate of 33.33%.

The results are as follows (comments for each question are listed separately):

Question 1

Do you agree that there is a need for affordable housing in Swanton Morley?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	22	63%
NO	9	25%
Unsure	2	6%
No Answer	2	6%

Question 2a

Are you supportive of Scheme 1 (3no. affordable bungalows on land behind housing at Middleton avenue/Ward Crescent/Gray Drive)?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	9	26%
NO	26	74%

Question 3a

Do you think that the area between the garages at the bottom of Gray Drive would be more suitable for Scheme 1 (3no. affordable bungalows)?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	9	26%
NO	24	68%
Unsure	2	6%

Question 3a

Are you supportive of Scheme 2 (4no. affordable starter houses on the land between Middleton Avenue and Hoe Road East, to the west of the Cemetery)?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	21	60%
NO	13	37%
Unsure	1	3%

Question 4a

Do you think that refurbished garages on Middleton Avenue and/or an equipped play area is fair investment for these two schemes to go ahead?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	12	34%
NO	19	54%
Play Area Only	3	9%
Unsure	1	3%

Question 5

Would you be supportive of these schemes if the Parish Council could guarantee that the homes were allocated to people who have a connection with the village?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	15	42%
NO	14	40%
Unsure	3	9%
No Answer	3	9%

Question 6

Do you feel that there are any other appropriate areas of land in the village that could be purchased at low cost so as to provide affordable housing?

Response	Number of Suggestions
Greengate (H.Harris land)	3
LDF Land	3
Ask Landowners to Donate	1
Land Near Village Hall	1
Land Next to Papermakers	1
Land on Hoe Rd East	1
Land On Manns Lane	2
Gooseberry Hill	1

Question 7

It has been suggested that the street lighting between Thompson Close and Middleton Avenue is not sufficient. Would you support increased street lighting in this area?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	27	77%
NO	5	14%
Unsure	2	6%
No Answer	1	3%

Question 8

Do you think that parking provision is sufficient along Middleton Avenue?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
YES	5	14%
NO	27	77%
Unsure	2	6%
No Answer	1	3%

Comments

Comments Regarding Scheme 1 (3no. affordable bungalows on land behind housing at Middleton Avenue/Ward Crescent/Gray Drive)

In Support:

- Our property backs onto this piece of land and we would be very supportive of this plan as at the moment the green is being used, especially in the summer, by children as a football pitch and has caused continuous damage to our fences. We would prefer that some access, either pedestrian or vehicle is made available to our rear gate, and that any construction is completed in the quickest amount of time with the minimum disturbance.
- It is a grassed area that is not in use so it may as well be used for bungalows as it sits in the middle of housing.
- This land is wasted space so could definitely be put to better use. Also houses would not look out of place here with the other housing around the area.
- Feel they would be better there because that land doesn't seem to be used for anything like it to used to be when there was a small park there.
- I do accept that it will be a good use of this space as long as there is access to the rear of the properties that are already there.
- We are generally supportive of the scheme if there is a genuine need for affordable housing.

Against

- Does not integrate well with surrounding properties/Does not enhance the form and character of this area/Is classed as open space taking this away for housing will take another piece of open area/Has been used as a play area for many years/Land is liable to flood/Land is safe for children to play on there as there are many houses that overlook it/An increase in traffic/An increase on the local amenities (water and drainage)/Increase in pollution into the atmosphere/Would spoil views that many people bought their properties for/Would devalue the area and turn it into a 'council type' estate.

- The village of Swanton Morley is big enough. More houses means more children – can the school cope? Too many villages in Norfolk are getting spoilt by mass building ‘rabbit hutch’ style into every available field just to make some property developer richer and ignoring other residents.
- This is needed as a safe playing place for the children on this estate and to take it away to squeeze on bungalows would be irresponsible. I did not choose to live in a built up area, these bungalows would be overlooked by many houses and I feel that they should be built where the proposed 50 houses are to be put up. On a health issue this would become a noisy building site and the noise would be detrimental to my husband’s health.
- This area is well used by children/adults playing football and this helps to keep children away from playing ball games in front of resident’s houses/front gardens (anti-social behaviour). This area is deliberately overlooked by many houses so people can keep an eye on them.
- Leave it as grass so the kids have somewhere to play.
- Building on green spaces in built up areas is not a good idea. Houses prices are reducing so it stands to reason that building house prices will follow. Perhaps it would be an idea to enter into dialogue with house owners to reach a compromise.
- Because it is a safe play area for the children, rather than having them hang around the streets
- No growth as there would be more strain on doctors surgery and school places. More cars mean more dangers to local children.
- Loss of green space and overlooked by existing houses.
- Too close to existing houses.
- We understood from previous literature sent to us that land had already been allocated for affordable housing (on Rectory Road). This didn’t include building on Middleton Avenue/Gray Drive.
- This would take away green amenity space for youngsters to use where they can be seen and supervised without too much adult interference. It would also spoil the outlook of the present householders in Gray Drive.
- With no available park with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of this location our children play safely on this piece of land.
- Depends on who is going to live there. Bungalows suggests old people so that’s ok. But there already enough uncontrolled children roaming around so if it is for starter homes then I don’t want it. Already there is a problem of children playing ball on the green on Gray Drive near cars and windows. If more of the playing field is used up then this will get worse, especially if more unruly children live in the neighbourhood.
- Overcrowding/lack of privacy/restriction on parking/taking away play area.
- This is a small communal piece of land next to the back of residents’ houses. This area should be left as green space. Car parking would also be an issue.
- This area provides a safe environment for children to play and this would be removed. It would remove the necessary rear access to properties in Gray Drive, Ward Crescent and Middleton Avenue. The transfer of the play area would result in the children being placed in a vulnerable location.
- I think this should be left for children to play on and also this land is a nice open space and should not be over crowded with more housing as there is land nearby which would easily accommodate these properties I believe for up to 50 homes which

would not look out of place. Also there is a parking problem on Middleton Avenue at the moment, there is no room for residents or visitors so the impact of this development would be a disaster.

- This is a safe area for children to play on the estate.
- This would remove the play area for the children to play such things as football. Access to the area for vehicles such as the dust cart would be difficult possibly resulting in a lack of reversing. The provision of adequate parking is hard to imagine. If designed as affordable houses you must be advised that a 3 bedroom semi in this area would at this time cost £105,000. How can the bungalows compete?
- I do not think you need to take away this open space as there are better sites.
- This has always been a children's' play area and is the only one this end of the village, it is also safe as well as no traffic passes. Where would the cars go in and out if these properties were built – across the paths that the children run along?
- We are firmly against the idea and will not agree to any form of alternative plan located anywhere in the village. The proposed plan would be too close to our property and we do not feel that there is sufficient space for this development. We brought our home knowing that there would be no homes directly behind us.

Comments Regarding Alternative Location for 3no. Bungalows (Bottom of Gray Drive)

Support

- Would not spoil anybody's views/Would be more suitable rather than going for infill/Would be easier to reach rather than adding another junction/safety for children who would notice properties and extra traffic/Houses would be more open allowing emissions to flow away easier rather than being on an enclosed space/Would fit in better than scheme one.
- Easily accessible
- Better position. Land not really used by children.
- More suitable
- At least its not using the kids play area.
- Wouldn't overlook as many properties and not be taking away a play area.

Against

- Would look unsightly and out of place. Would be better tucked in with other housing and space here used for a play area.
- Why choose to build on a small grassed are on this estate when there are more appropriate areas in the village. Where would people park as there is already trouble with parking cars.
- Would put strain on parking, sewage and surface water removal. Current drains not coping now. Not enough current car parking spaces.
- They would cause more parking problems.
- There are more than enough houses in this part of the village with parking sometimes a problem and not enough play areas for our children.
- It would be a shame to put properties on this piece of land as it would spoil the views from the houses on Middleton Avenue. These properties would also look out of place – keeping them in a row would look better.

- This would affect resident's views of the countryside. It would also mean that the houses would lead straight onto the junction with Gray Drive and Middleton Avenue giving a possible risk of injury/accident. Car parking would also be an issue.
- Being built on a busy junction.
- Impact of traffic/parking
- Building across from a junction where visibility is poor because of parked cars is a bad idea.
- There is a shortage of parking here and along Middleton Avenue
- Just do not think you need to use this area.
- As a resident of Gray Drive I have to park on this piece of grass as most people have a car each in the road and there is not enough parking now. I would make more sense to turn this area into car parking spaces.
- No affordable housing in this area of the village as it would make it overcrowded.

Comments in Relation to Scheme 2 (4no. Affordable Starter Homes Along Middleton Avenue)

Support

- As long as the plans were changed so that the properties built followed the line of the existing properties there.
- If you have to build on this estate this is the one place I would support – but 2 houses not 4.
- If the garages were compulsory purchased the land would probably hold 6 houses.
- Would they be made available to existing people on the housing list? This site would be ideal because it is just used for some people to turn around on the grass rather than reverse in the road. So I felt it would be put to good use.
- If any area were to be considered I think this scheme would probably be the best.
- I think that this would be a good use of this piece of land as the houses would be kept in line with the existing properties and would look out of place or spoil anyone's views.
- More so but they would be incredibly small.
- Good choice
- Only if we get what we were told we were going to get
- This would be an extension to the row of houses already there and would keep children out of the cemetery.

Against

- It is too close to the cemetery
- Needs room for graveyard to expand
- The loss of green space in a built up area is not a good idea. We would likely support building on open farm land instead of building in areas being made more built up.
- Loss of green space and too close to other houses. Too close with loss of privacy for the burial ground. More traffic and car parking problems in Middleton Avenue.

- This is an area of natural beauty, open green space. This land is used by residents for a variety of communal activities eg:sport, games. The land is next to the burial ground and therefore additional housing would result in increased noise in what is currently a relatively quiet and tranquil area. Car parking and increased traffic would also present additional problems in an already congested estate.
- It would seem inappropriate to have properties overlooking an area for solemn reflection. Also, the area is congested with parked vehicles seriously limiting access for delivery lorries and waste collection and additional pressure would not be sustainable.
- Impact of parking too many cars. Why fill a nice area up with housing – may as well sell and go live in a town.
- While this is the most sensible option as the development would be a continuation of the line of houses in Middleton Avenue, as the houses in this area are all relatively low cost properties, any cheaper home should be spread over the rest of Swanton Morley.
- Too many houses in the available space – it should be 3 maximum.
- The access along Middleton Avenue is very poor. When large vehicles drive down this road they stop residents getting out. They block the road. Without new parking areas this proposal should be considered as a non starter.

Comments Regarding Whether Refurbished Garages and/or and Equipped Play Area is Fair Investment for these Schemes and Alternative Infrastructure Suggestions

- Rather than build a play area at the bottom of Gray Drive which has many safety issues, build the houses instead and make the land for Scheme 1 into a play area for the children, have the Parish Council take it over and have this protected for future generations. Also measures to slow the traffic down on the estate.
- A playground would be good but would need some sort of warden as vandalism is a problem in the village. How much would this push up our council tax?
- Both infrastructures would have to be done. Only problem I foresee is how can you have a child's play area in between 2 rows of garages that cars may access. Can you not buy the garages and knock down?
- It would be dangerous to put a children's play area at this junction. I do not want these schemes to go ahead. I live here and do not want extra houses built on this estate.
- Not sure but whatever happens the kids in Middle Camp need a play area (swings etc). Gooseberry Hill is great but quite a walk for youngsters from here.
- Need new footpaths/drains/speed control/parking spaces/tree planting/garage refurbishment/extra street lights.
- Take the garages away as they are an eyesore
- No to the garages – yes to the play equipment with provisions
- We think the garages should be demolished anyway as they are unsightly and dangerous.
- The pathway between Thompson Close and Middleton Avenue – the concrete base us breaking up down to the ground and has become dangerous for mums and tots going to and from school. Resurfacing needed and lighting requested (health and safety issue)

- Feel a play area is more suitable and that people who own the garages should be responsible for refurbishing them. The drainage system needs to be sorted as drains in Gray Drive and Middleton Avenue don't seem to take the water away – the pipes must be blocked.
- Definitely a play area.
- I feel that both of these should be done as it would provide a safe place for children to play and would tidy up the views by renewing the garages.
- Who are the garages for? Can we rent them and who benefits? A play area would be great if it includes ball game facilities which would help stop kids playing near cars and windows and trampling on people's gardens. Turn the grassed area at Gray Drive into car parking as there never seems to be sufficient space and its very boggy grass.
- Better parking
- When we came to a Parish Council meeting we were told if we accepted 3 bungalows on Ward Crescent/Middleton Avenue/Gray Drive then a children's play area would be built between the garages AND the garages would be refurbished. No and/or was mentioned.
- People should be responsible for ensuring their garages are maintained at their own expense and not form part of a paid scheme. Also, where would a play area be made that would be safer than the 2 plots considered. No alternative infrastructure benefits as we do not wish the scheme to go ahead.
- Do not support the schemes. Before any consideration be given the road infrastructure requires improvement (waste collection lorry has considerable difficulty in manoeuvring).
- The parking should be addressed regardless of the housing being built.
- Better parking facilities for all.
- Large parking area (not garages). More play areas.
- Improve parking
- Car parking spaces at the end of Gray Drive
- No alternative infrastructure suggestions as we are against the development of any play areas where the garages currently are on Middleton Avenue. This is most of the kids in the area are teenagers and we would be concerned about vandalism. If a play area were to be built it should be on the site of scheme 2 near Hoe Road.
- Speaking as an owner of one of the garages I feel that I am not entitled to public money to refurbish it. If it needs improving I shall do it, which I have. The owners of the derelict garages should be served with an improvement order requiring them to repair them. In any case, the garages are of little use since you have to drive over grass to get to them and it becomes a quagmire in winter, which is why they are little used. It would be far better if they were purchased by the council and demolished thus giving more development land. A play area for children would be a good idea so long as the area does not become a mecca for teenagers.

Comments About Street Lighting in the Area

- Extra Lighting is needed between Middleton Avenue and Thompson Close, but other than that street lighting OK. Maybe a street light between ends of Middleton Avenue and school.

- Lights out in Thompson Close (never monitored). Manns Lane near school needs lights
- I think there is sufficient street lighting in Middleton Avenue, but the slip road at Ward Crescent is in dire needs of a light. It is pitch black at night and parts of the slip road have subsided by up to 2 ¼ inches. Quite a few people have said they have tripped there and are afraid of walking it at night.
- As long as the lighting is floor based so as night to shine in the windows of the residents along both sides of the alley way as it would be in direct line of bedrooms etc.
- The street lighting on the estate has always been poor.
- Street lighting is important in built up areas.
- Needs improving
- The street lighting in our area is very poor
- It is very poor. More lighting is needed from Thompson Close to be able to walk to church/shops
- The footpath between Thompson Close and Middleton Avenue is in definite need of lighting but it should be positioned in such a way that it does not shine into adjoining houses.
- Feel it does need more lighting, especially end of Middleton Avenue (10-12) and Thompson Close.
- I think people become too reliant on street lighting. It is a terrible source of light pollution and is unnatural. People need to use a torch!
- Low level lighting in the ally way needed so as not to affect the residents either side of the alley.
- The entire village of Swanton Morley could be designated as requiring more street lighting.
- There should be no dark areas in the village as it is not safe for people/children at night.
- There is sufficient street lighting – of people feel the need the need to wander around in the dark they can use a torch. We are all being encouraged to cut down on carbon emissions yet wish to erect more street lights.
- Fair but some areas are very dark and would be made more hospitable with extra lighting.
- If path is very dark it only needs one light/sensor light.
- I thought we were saving energy! The lights would have to be taller than the fences in the alley way and would be annoying to residents living there.
- More required on Rectory Road and the alley way from Thompson Close to Middleton Avenue.

Comments About Parking Provision

- Bearing in mind that most households have 2 cars and there is not enough room on the road to park, there is a lot of grass that would benefit the residents if it was turned into parking spaces – visitors too.
- A parking bay on Scheme 1 (alternative location) for 15 cars

- Not sure how many but could use some of the grass verges opposite as lay bays
- As many spaces as possible are required on Middleton Avenue and Ward Crescent due to multi vehicle households and the need accommodate visitors. This could be achieved by removing grass verges thereby widening the roads and making parking safe, or extending the existing parking bay at the Ward Crescent end of Middleton Avenue.
- Up to 30 extra spaces required. The grass area between 10 and 20 Gray Drive should be used as well as the grass areas along Middleton Avenue.
- Perhaps the area at the bottom of Gary Drive could be utilised as a car park – the whole of the area would benefit from further allocated parking spaces.
- I think the bulk of the grass areas down Middleton Avenue should be made to tarmac for parking.
- The area between the garages and the grassed area opposite the properties along Middleton Avenue
- Each home tends to have at least two cars if not more! There is insufficient street parking to cope with the demand. Some green space at the front of the homes could be used to extend the existing laybys which are used for parking (opposite side of road). More spaces could be created if the cars park towards the fence rather than alongside the road as currently happens.
- At least 5 residents have to park on the grass, so 5 at least. That's before the 4 new houses are built. Perhaps a car park would be a better idea than houses.
- Create more garages or a car park on Middleton Avenue or on grassed area on Gray Drive.
- Thompson Close also has a problem. Maybe for both areas the grassed areas could be used as parking bays.
- Make the existing lay-by spaces larger than already exist along Middleton Avenue to save parking on the road. Extra garages? \the garages that are proposed for revamp should be turned to open onto the road (face the houses).
- If lay-bays were made longer and wider so cars could park inwards like the one near Ward Crescent it would allow more cars. Some houses have 4 cars. So many park on the grass which is churning up the grass which looks messy and untidy.
- Cars are parked on grass verges – could some of the grass area be made into parking spaces?
- If the grass verges between the road and footpaths were removed and parking bays marked at 45 degrees to the road there would be room for a lot more cars to park.
- There are definitely not enough parking spaces. There should be provision for a further 10 spaces minimum.
- Use some of the space where you are thinking about putting houses.
- Parking along Middleton Avenue is very restricted. About 10 extra spaces required.
- The grass area between the garages removed allowing car parking.
- Extra parking for Gray Drive residents as well.
- Thompson Close is in serious need of more parking provision. The green could be used in some way as it is not being used for anything else.