

## 9. Services and Infrastructure

The considerable growth in Woodhall Spa's population over the last 10 years has caused many to question the ability of the infrastructure to cope. For a community of its size, Woodhall Spa is blessed with many services that would normally only be found in a large town. However, with many more dwellings in the pipeline, there is evidence that in some areas the supporting infrastructure is under strain.

### Transport and Travel

Many rural villages' transport systems are seriously under utilised and supported, Woodhall Spa falls into this bracket too. The services provided are not depicted specifically negatively although many feel that the service could be improved by better timetabling and improved value for money. The high use of private transport does show that the current provision has significant weaknesses; however this is not specific to Woodhall Spa alone and is part of a wider systemic problem with the British public transport system.

The issues around public transport are well known to be self-perpetuating, with fewer people using services causing fewer services to be provided for economic viability reasons. However, some respondents felt that additional thought is required, particularly around timetable and access, with 31% of respondents using the services. Evening and week-end services are a particular problem. The issue of access for those with

**Quote**  
"Not appropriate for times and the car is more convenient"

physical disabilities were highlighted, as were issues for those with pushchairs. With current standards laid out through the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 the lack of suitable facilities should be challenged. There is also a need to increase the number of dropped curbs around the village in order to ease the problems those in wheel chairs, on buggies and pushing prams have in navigating some of our roads. A number of people did feel that more journeys and later services would be of most benefit. This is currently a real problem for young people who cannot get to or from college/school or social events in Horncastle/Boston/Lincoln.

Although it used to have two, Woodhall Spa no longer benefits from a railway station with the nearest station being Metheringham. The practicality of using Metheringham is negated by the distance from the village and the lack of suitably connecting bus services.

Only a small number of people within Woodhall Spa regularly take the healthy and environmentally friendly option of cycling to and from work and other destinations. One of the requests that arose from the consultation was for the improvement of bridleways/footpaths and routes suitable for cycling; this would hopefully encourage more people to use a cycle as their main mode of transport. Although a number of projects are currently being supported (see the Environment and Countryside Section).

### Amenities

The village library was well used with 67% of people using it. There were a number of suggestions, however, for how the service might be improved and the number of users could be increased. There are three main suggestions; larger stock of books across the range, more local information and longer opening hours. The opening times seemed to have the majority of comments with people pointing out 'that if they worked it was impossible to use the service'. Many people would like to see later opening and longer



**Interior of the Woodhall Spa Library**

hours on Saturday. This might be possible by opening later and changing to pattern of times altogether so as not to increase running costs.

The national issue of lack of NHS dentist provision is certainly felt in Woodhall Spa with almost half the local population having ‘difficulty’ in registering with a dentist. Some people travelling as far as Norfolk, London, York and Sheffield, for example. This certainly needs addressing; although it might be difficult seeing that it is a countrywide issue.

Quote  
“I couldn’t find an NHS dentist anywhere”

The general practices are not quite as under strain as the dental service although they are beginning to reach capacity. Waiting times are increasing and newer residents have been having difficulty in registering with one of the practices refusing to accept new patients. Furthermore, since the survey was completed one of the Coningsby practices has closed, this has no doubt placed extra strain on Woodhall Spa surgeries and people have had written confirmation since that the register is full. This is another clear indicator that housing development must stop as vital services are so overwhelmed.

During the consultation periods, concern was raised over the nursing home provision, specifically the future of the one remaining nursing home. This nursing home is the subject of a planning application for redevelopment, although not by the current owners. Residents are concerned that there may not be a future for the nursing home and this is a cause of some concern.

The local banking provision is not very good with 53% of respondent saying their banking needs were not met, although this seems to be accepted as a result of a rural location. The Post Office has also been noted for doing a great job of taking up the ‘slack’.

The two Post Offices in the parish are both highly valued by their customers with 99% saying that they are ‘important’ or ‘very important’ to the village. The main Post Office in the middle of the village is substantially busier than its counterpart in Martin Dales being used by 80% of respondent weekly or more. The Martin Dales Post Office is in actuality a sub-Post Office and is smaller, open only part-time and located on the outskirts of the village. However, it is envisaged that the usage will increase as there are significant and growing numbers of residents who live at that end of the village.



**Martin Dales Post Office**

Refuse collection seems to be adequate and when questions about recycling were asked over 59% said that the current facilities within the parish were suitable for their needs. There were many specific mentions of additional collections for cardboard and glass. Residents had expressed regret at the loss of the separate green waste collection; however, with the decision by ELDC to move to “wheelie bins” this appears to be a closed issue. The move over to “wheelie bins” did not receive overwhelming endorsement from the community; perhaps the need has not been well presented by the ELDC and the local councillors.

Street cleaning on The Broadway is restricted by all night parking. There should be a car-free period at least once a month to allow for street cleaning.

Village Halls are often the hive of activity in any village with most activities centred on them. Over the past few years there have been a few requests for a new Village Hall, the Parish Council felt that there was already enough provision which was not being fully utilised. The question of the need for a new hall was included in the household survey. Over 82% of the results were opposed to the

development of a new hall, with the existing facilities being deemed to be satisfactory. There is support, however, for the refurbishment of Coronation Hall.

Several residents have expressed concerns about the street lighting. Issues range from the positioning of the lights on Stixwould Road (obscured by trees) to concerns about light pollution and to the mismatch of various styles of lights and colour of the illumination. Under the Heritage Section, the issue of a standardised Edwardian style light fixtures was identified. A further development could be for the Parish Council to adopt a street lighting policy to address all these issues.

### What we want to achieve What do we need to do

We need a more comprehensive bus service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A late night bus from Lincoln</li> <li>• Improved bus links with either Newark or Lincoln train stations</li> <li>• Young people have particularly asked for buses on Sundays</li> </ul>
Improve our halls and meeting places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronation Hall in need of a major revamp. Look at using this for a young person drop in centre</li> <li>• Jubilee Park café site - again a major revamp (even better a re-build) needed to exploit potential</li> </ul>
Help promote cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a cycle track behind the Broadway along the edge of the woods and along Stixwould Road along the Woodside</li> <li>• Mark-up split footways/cycle tracks on Tattershall Road, Horncastle Road, Witham Road and Stixwould Road on the wood's side</li> <li>• Have a "pay-and-go" bike system with racks at: Royal Square, Jubilee Park, Bainland, Spa Baths and Witham Marina</li> </ul>
Change library open times to fit in with our needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request the library service both extend their hours and change them to meet the needs of young people on their way home from school and longer opening on Saturday</li> <li>• We'd like also a wider range of material available</li> </ul>
More NHS dentists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to find a way of attracting an NHS dentist practice to Woodhall Spa</li> </ul>
Ensure nursing home care provision in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make authorities aware of the continuing need for local nursing home care provision</li> </ul>
Improve accessibility for those in wheel chairs and pushing prams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of dropped curbs in the village</li> </ul>
To keep Post Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the continued survival of both Post Offices</li> </ul>
To have better house keeping in Woodhall Spa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more litter bins</li> <li>• Weed and sweep up the planted areas on The Broadway more regularly particularly in the Autumn</li> <li>• Give the street signs an annual scrub</li> <li>• Paint the fence by the Police Stn</li> <li>• Have a new Parish Notice board</li> <li>• Restrict overnight parking on The Broadway at least once a month to allow access for street cleaning</li> </ul>
Recycling and rubbish collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need collection of our glass and cardboard</li> <li>• We do need a by-law that stops people leaving their rubbish days before the collection date</li> </ul>

Improved street lighting

- A village street lighting policy which dictates the style of the light furniture (Edwardian), the direction of the illumination (downward and dimmed) and the siting in respect of nearby trees

