

# **Claygate Business Survey 2025**

Commissioned by Claygate Parish Council

Report by Emma Curtis (independent researcher)

31 December 2025

## Executive Summary

### *Why this survey matters*

The **Claygate Business Survey 2025** was conducted to understand the views of local shops and businesses on issues affecting footfall, visibility, collaboration, and the future vitality of the village. It was designed to complement the Claygate Residents' Survey 2024 and to provide an evidence base for practical next steps.

A total of 54 valid responses were received from 73 eligible businesses, representing a **74% participation rate**. Responses were received from a wide range of business types, including Retail, Hospitality, Wellbeing, Skilled Services and Trades, and Community-based organisations. This high level of participation means the findings provide a robust and representative picture of business perspectives in Claygate.

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### *Key findings at a glance*

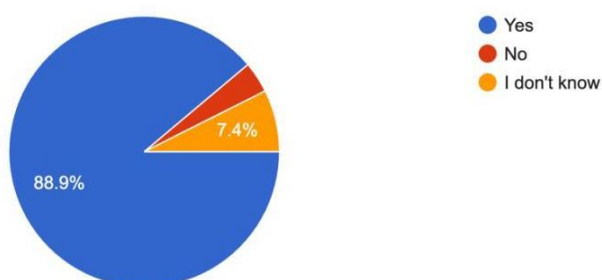
Across the survey, businesses expressed clear interest in initiatives that support Claygate as a whole, alongside a willingness to explore collaborative approaches where benefits are clear.

Three overarching themes stand out:

- Businesses largely perceive themselves as contributing positively to Claygate's sense of community
- There is strong support for practical measures that improve footfall and visibility
- There is meaningful interest in collaboration, including the potential formation of a Business Collective, provided it is developed carefully and transparently

Do you see your business as contributing to the sense of community in the village?

54 responses



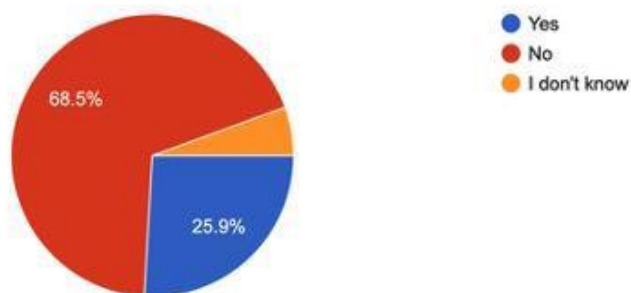
## What Claygate's businesses prioritise

### Parking and access

Parking emerged as one of the clearest and most consistently expressed priorities. A strong majority of businesses indicated that **30 minutes' free parking is not sufficient** to benefit their trade. Longer free-parking periods - **around one hour or more** - were widely viewed as more supportive of customer visits.

There will be 30 minutes free parking in Torrington Lodge and Hare Lane car parks from 31 March 2025. Do you think 30 mins is long enough to benefit your business?

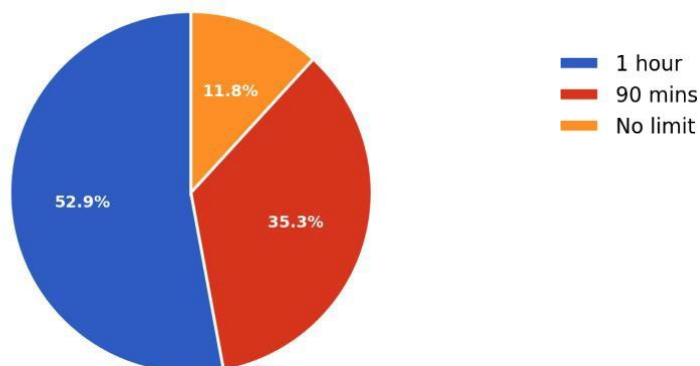
54 responses



Most businesses do not feel 30 minutes' free parking is sufficient

Preferred free-parking duration among responding businesses (excluding 'not applicable')

34 responses



This finding closely aligns with concerns raised in the Residents' Survey and highlights parking as a foundational issue affecting both businesses and the wider community.

*Further detail on parking responses is provided in Section 4.1.5 of the full report*

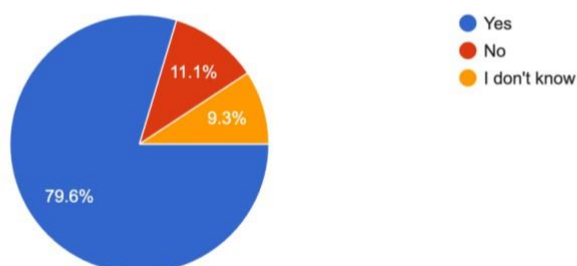
## Visibility, navigation, and information

Businesses showed strong support for practical measures that help visitors find and engage with local shops and services. In particular:

- An **official village website or online information hub** was widely supported as a central platform to promote local shops, services, and events.

Would your business benefit from an attractive, official Claygate website promoting the village, acting as a shopping/business information hub with links to your business website or social media?

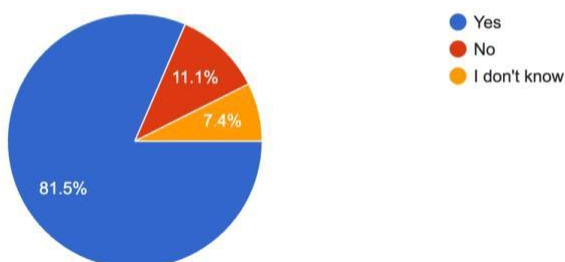
54 responses



- **Village maps in car parks** were also strongly supported as a visible, low-cost way to encourage visitors to explore the village more fully.

Do you think it's a good idea to have a large village map in each car park showing the locations of Claygate shops and businesses?

54 responses



Both initiatives were viewed as benefiting the village overall rather than individual businesses in isolation.

### Other initiatives

Some proposals, such as a printed household booklet or shared training opportunities, attracted more mixed responses. In these cases, a higher proportion of respondents selected "I don't know", suggesting openness in principle but a desire for clearer information about relevance, cost, and delivery before forming a view. These initiatives appear less urgent but may warrant further exploration if clearly scoped.

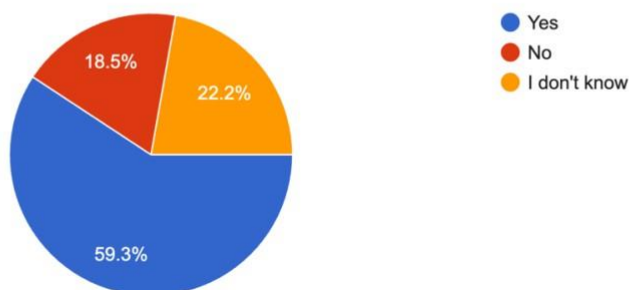
## Collaboration and a potential Business Collective

### Interest and readiness

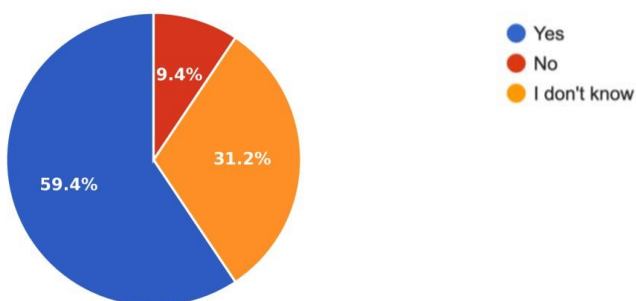
Around **60% of respondents** expressed clear interest in forming a **Claygate Business Collective**, with a further 22% as yet unsure. Among those responding “Yes”, nearly **60% indicated that they would be willing to help establish it**, with participation strongest among business owners and others with clear decision-making authority. This suggests that early leadership capacity exists within the business community.

Would you be interested in a Claygate business 'collective' ie. a group working together to further the interests of shops and businesses in the village?

54 responses



Would you join the team to help set up this Claygate business 'collective' ?  
32 responses



#### How to read this chart

This chart shows responses from businesses that said they would be interested in forming a Claygate Business Collective.

By business type, readiness to participate in set-up activity was most evident among Retail, Wellbeing, and Skilled Services and Trades businesses, with Hospitality and Community organisations also contributing, albeit sometimes with more limited capacity.

### Structure and financial contribution

Views on structure varied. Some respondents favoured a more formal model with paid administration, similar to a Business Improvement District (BID), while others preferred a lighter-touch, volunteer-led approach.

Willingness to contribute financially was cautious and provisional. Among businesses interested in forming a collective, around one-third indicated readiness to contribute financially, most commonly at lower levels (£100–£200), with a smaller number open to higher contributions that could support limited administrative or marketing capacity.

Importantly, a substantial proportion selected “I don’t know”. This appears to reflect a need for clearer information about structure, benefits, and value for money rather than reluctance to engage. This interpretation is supported by the fact that some respondents who were uncertain about forming a collective nevertheless indicated provisional willingness to contribute financially at both volunteer-led and administratively supported levels.

*Further detail on collaboration and collective models is provided in Section 4.2 of the full report.*

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### ***What this means and next steps***

Taken together, these findings are encouraging. They suggest that there is **meaningful interest in forming a Claygate Business Collective** and that such a collective is potentially viable, provided it is developed collaboratively, with clear leadership, realistic expectations, and options for phased or flexible participation.

More broadly, the survey highlights a business community that is pragmatic, community-aware, and open to collective solutions where benefits are clearly articulated. These findings align closely with the Claygate Residents’ Survey 2024, which emphasised the importance of a welcoming and lively village environment in supporting local shopping and engagement.

The next step will be to share the survey findings and explore possible ways forward. All businesses will be welcome to take part in future discussions, and those who gave permission to be contacted will be invited directly to a follow-up meeting. This will provide an opportunity to discuss priority initiatives, explore collaborative options in more detail, and consider what forms of coordination or collective action may be appropriate for Claygate.

By continuing the dialogue begun through this survey, Claygate is well placed to strengthen connections between businesses, residents, and local stakeholders, supporting a village economy that is visible, resilient, and rooted in community.

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## ***Village Market – business perspectives***

Although the Claygate Village Market is independently run, the survey included a small number of questions to understand how local shops and businesses experience its impact on trade after its first full year of operation. The findings show strong overall support for the market, with relatively few businesses reporting negative impacts. While direct positive effects on individual businesses were reported by a minority, feedback indicates that practical adjustments to layout, access, and visibility could help translate broad support into wider business benefit.

*Further detail on the Village Market is provided in Section 6 of the full report*

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# 1 Introduction

The Claygate Business Survey 2025 was commissioned by Claygate Parish Council to build on the work of the Shops and Businesses' Advisory Committee and the findings of the 2024 Residents' Survey conducted by Claygate Village Association (CVA), which identified the vitality of local shops and services as a key concern for the community. This follow-up study aimed to capture the views of local shop and other business owners and managers regarding opportunities, challenges, and priorities for sustaining a thriving village economy. The survey sought to understand which collective initiatives owners and managers felt would be most beneficial to individual and collective business footfall, and to identify the conditions under which businesses would support or participate in future collaborative activity.

This survey was developed in response to findings from the 2024 Residents' Survey, which showed strong resident support for initiatives designed to strengthen local commerce and protect Claygate's distinct village character. Residents highlighted the importance of practical measures to improve visibility, access, and collaboration among local traders. During the Claygate: The Way Forward campaign, The Shops and Businesses' Advisory Committee had already identified 'Levers we can pull for driving footfall'. These levers included Collective Marketing which was identified as essential. Specific ideas to be taken forward included shared marketing such as a printed directory or central website, improved car-parking arrangements, and collective promotion of village events. These suggestions together with the findings of the Residents' Survey provided the foundation for the Business Survey, which sought to explore— from the perspective of business owners and senior managers— which initiatives would be most beneficial to individual or collective business footfall, and what forms of collaboration might make them achievable. By aligning business perspectives with resident priorities, the study aimed to identify areas of shared interest and inform future community-led economic development planning.

The study was designed and delivered in partnership with local volunteers to ensure high engagement and representation across Claygate's business community. The survey was developed using good practice guidance for social research, with a clear emphasis on transparency, informed consent, and proportionality. Ethical considerations followed the Government Social Research (GSR) Ethics Framework (2021) and were documented through a formal GSR Ethics Checklist and accompanying Ethics Statement approved by the Parish Council.

The 2025 Business Survey was developed to deepen understanding of the commercial life of Claygate and to inform the Parish Council's strategic planning for the local economy. Its aims were to:

- Capture the perspectives of local businesses on opportunities and challenges in sustaining a vibrant village centre.
- Identify which collective initiatives—such as shared marketing, training, signage, and parking—are perceived to be most beneficial to individual or collective business footfall.
- Assess willingness to participate in future business-led activity, including the potential formation of a Claygate Business Collective.
- Provide an evidence base for dialogue between businesses, residents, and the Parish Council on policies or infrastructure (e.g. parking, wayfinding, communications) that affect the trading environment.

These aims build directly on the priorities emerging from the 2024 Residents' Survey, which emphasised the importance of supporting local shops and services as central to community identity and economic resilience. 78% of residents felt local shopping choice was essential to village identity.

## **2 How this survey was conducted**

This document reports the findings of a survey of Claygate shop and business owners and senior managers. It was designed collaboratively by the Parish Council's Shops and Businesses' Advisory Committee and facilitated and overseen by an independent researcher. The survey was conducted online in April 2025 and included a combination of structured (closed-question) items and optional free-text responses.

Results are reported at group level only. Percentages are based on the number of valid responses to each question and therefore vary where respondents selected "not applicable" or did not answer a particular item. Further detail on survey design, data collection, and analysis is provided in Section 8.

## **3 Profile of Respondents**

Fifty-six responses were received, representing a 77% raw response rate. Of these, two responses were excluded: one business was invited 'off-list' by a volunteer but did not meet the eligibility criteria for participation (non-business-rate-paying), and another provided insufficient respondent information for inclusion. This resulted in a final valid sample of 54 businesses responses, yielding a participation rate of 74% among eligible premises. Only 18 of the 73 listed, invited businesses did not send responses to the survey.

Respondents represented a broad cross-section of Claygate's commercial landscape.

Businesses were grouped for analysis by location in the village ('Area in Village', 4 groups: The Parade area (including Hare Lane slip road and Torrington Lodge area), Old Village (including Village Green, High Street and Elm Road), Equidistant (an equal distance from the Old Village and The Parade areas), and Other. To protect respondent anonymity, the number of businesses responding in each location has been withheld, and findings have been omitted where readers might otherwise infer the views of individual businesses, whether or not such inferences would be justified.

Respondent businesses were grouped into five 'Business Type' categories reflecting the dominant mode of service delivery and customer interaction. (Further detail of business groupings can be found in Appendix A.)

Businesses were further grouped by the respondent's role in the business dependent on likely decision-making capacity. At the start of the survey respondents were instructed that, *"This survey must be completed by the business owner or senior manager. If you (the owner or senior manager) are not working in Claygate, you may wish to speak with the manager at your Claygate premises for their experience."* The purpose of this requirement was to ensure that responses reflected the informed views of those with responsibility for business direction. However, several responses were submitted by individuals identifying their role as e.g. local manager or assistant, being roles with more operational than strategic responsibility. Because these respondents offered valuable practical insights into daily operations, customer patterns, and the lived experience of trading in Claygate, their contributions were retained. To acknowledge this range of perspectives while distinguishing likely levels of authority, also including roles within charitable/community organisations, a derived variable, Decision-Making Authority Group, was created for analysis. (Further detail can be found in Appendix B.)

*Table 1: Survey Respondents by Business Type*

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Hospitality	11	20.40%
Retail	10	18.50%
Wellbeing	11	20.40%
Skilled Services & Trades	12	22.20%
Community	10	18.50%

*Table 2: Survey Respondents by Decision-Making Role in the Business*

<b>Decision-Making Role</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Confirmed Decision-Maker	39	72.20%
Probable Decision-Maker	8	14.80%
Operational / Contributor	7	13.00%

This structure enables comparison between different types of business, their location within the village, and the level of authority held by respondents. Together these provide a nuanced understanding of the perspectives represented in the data without identifying any shop or business.

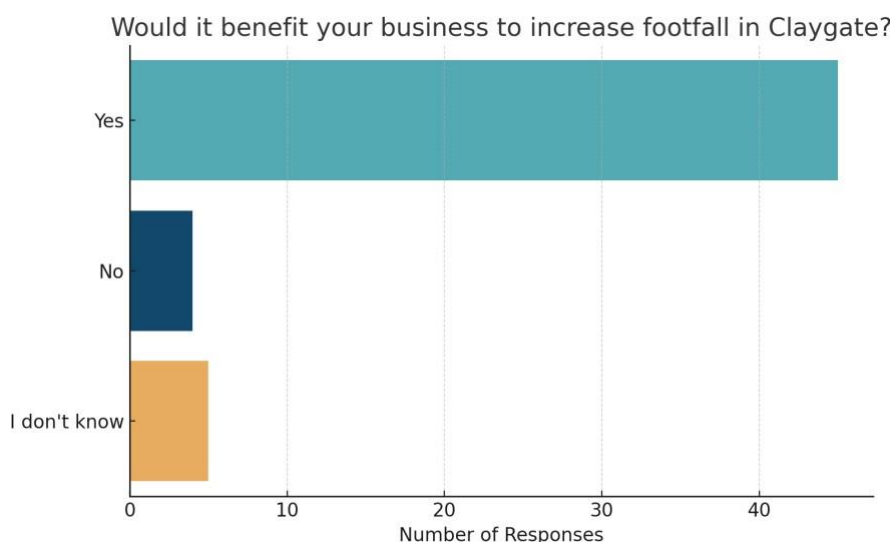
## 4 Part A: Business Priorities and Collective Action

### 4.1 Initiatives to increase footfall

#### 4.1.1 *Would it benefit your business to increase footfall in Claygate?*

Respondents were asked whether their business would benefit from increased footfall in Claygate, defined as the number of customers entering a shop or group of shops or businesses.

Figure 1: Responses to “Would it benefit your business to increase footfall in Claygate?”

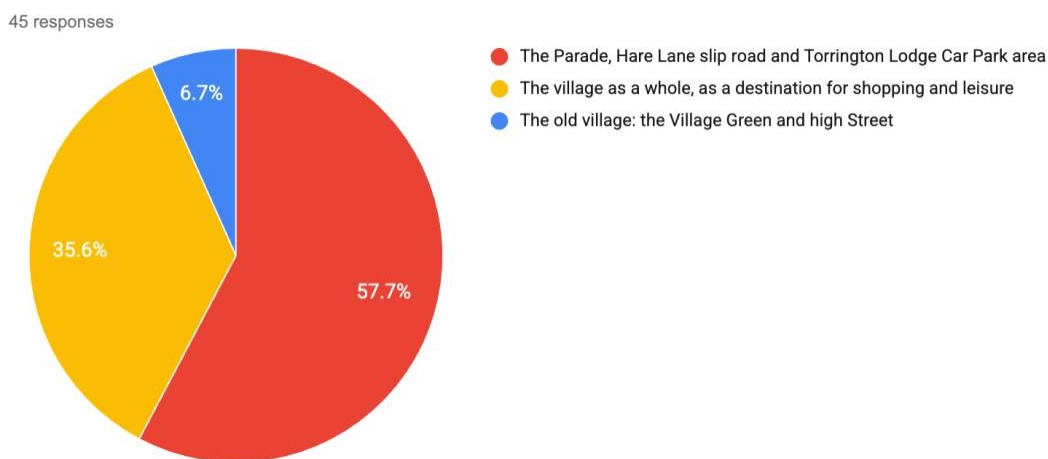


Forty-five businesses (83.3%) responded ‘Yes’, their business would benefit from increased footfall in the village suggesting they would be in favour of initiatives aimed at drawing more people into the village. Four businesses said ‘No’ (7.4%), suggesting that they may already have sufficient footfall or that increased traffic might not serve their model. Five businesses (9.3%) were unsure whether increasing footfall would benefit their business. This may suggest a desire for more information before forming a judgment or the respondent being operational staff rather than a decision-maker in the business.

### 4.1.2 Area to increase footfall for business benefit

Respondents were asked, “In which area of Claygate would increased footfall most benefit your business?”. Responses were only considered valid for analysis if the respondent had previously answered “Yes” to “Would it benefit your business to increase footfall in Claygate?” A total of 9 businesses selected “Not applicable” and were excluded from this analysis, leaving 45 valid responses.

*Figure 2 - Areas of Claygate where increased footfall would benefit respondents’ business – “Claygate has two village centres. If you answered “Yes” to the above question, in which areas to the village would increasing footfall benefit your business?”*



More than half of respondents (57.7 %) identified The Parade area as the place where increased footfall would most benefit their business, reflecting its role as the main commercial hub.

A further 35.6% believed that improvements across the whole village would be most advantageous—showing interest in joined-up approaches rather than focusing on a single centre.

Only 6.7% chose the Old Village area, likely reflecting both its smaller number of businesses and its different customer profile.

One business in the Old Village selected increased footfall in The Parade area as beneficial to their business. This may indicate cross-location relevance or unintentional mis-selection of the response.

When analysed by the current location of the business:

- Businesses based in The Parade mainly selected The Parade area as where increased footfall would benefit them (71.4%). The remainder selected Whole village (28.6%). None selected Old village area (0%).
- Old Village–based businesses (15.6%) most often selected Whole village (4; 57.1%), followed by Old village area (28.6%), and The Parade area (14.3%).
- Equidistant / Other locations (6.7%) were split across Whole village and Old village area but it is important to note that this group is only a small subgroup of the overall responses.

These patterns indicate that businesses most often prioritise strengthening footfall in the area where they are located, while a substantial minority also emphasise the importance of village-wide footfall initiatives. Overall, around one-third of respondents identified benefits beyond their immediate location, suggesting recognition that increased movement across the village supports the wider business environment.

The response pattern shows a clear geographic alignment: businesses generally seek footfall close to where they are based, but this is not exclusive. Notably, among businesses located on The Parade, just under three in ten selected the village as a whole as the area where increased footfall would benefit their business. This may be in part due to the station's location at the end of The Parade, meaning that visitor's arriving by rail pass potentially provide footfall to The Parade on their way to other parts of the village.

### 4.1.3 Business Contribution to Community

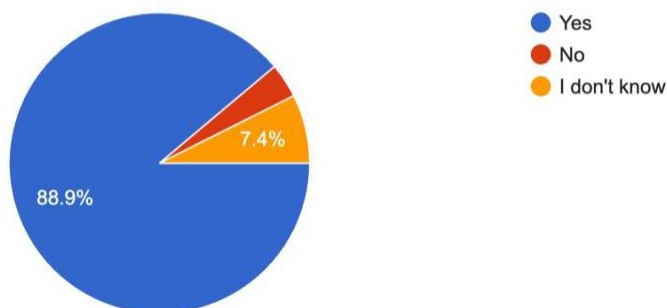
Businesses were asked “Do you see your business as contributing to the sense of community in the village?”

Responses indicate very strong agreement that local businesses contribute positively to the Claygate community. Almost nine in ten respondents (88.9%; 48 businesses) agreed with this statement; 7.4% (4 businesses) selected “*I don’t know*”, and only 3.7% (2 businesses) responded “*No*”. This suggests a widely shared perception of businesses as an integral part of village life, rather than solely commercial entities.

*Figure 3: Responses to “Do you see your business as contributing to the sense of community in the village?”*

Do you see your business as contributing to the sense of community in the village?

54 responses



Responses overall suggest a strong sense of community identity across Claygate’s business community.

This high level of agreement was evident across decision-making roles. Confirmed decision-makers reported strong agreement (87.2% Yes), operational or contributor roles showed similarly high agreement (85.7% Yes), and probable decision-makers were unanimous (100% Yes).

Taken together, the responses suggest that local businesses widely see themselves as contributing positively to Claygate’s sense of community, regardless of the respondent’s decision-making role.

#### 4.1.4 Support for an Official Claygate Website

The Residents' survey revealed that almost 50% of respondents learn about what is going on in Claygate from online resources: 49% from Facebook posts, 40% from local Whatsapp groups, 26% from the Parish Council website and 16% from internet search (N=1614).

Respondents were asked, "Would your business benefit from an attractive, official Claygate website promoting the village, acting as a shopping/business information hub with links to your business website or social media?"

Overall, 79.6% of respondents answered 'Yes', showing strong support for the initiative.

*Table 3: Responses to, "Would your business benefit from an attractive, official Claygate website promoting the village, acting as a shopping/business information hub with links to your business website or social media?"*

##### *a. Overall Frequency of Responses*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Yes	43	79.60%
No	6	11.10%
I don't know	5	9.30%

##### *b. Comparison of Responses by Business Type*

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I don't know</b>
Hospitality	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Retail	7 (70.0%)	2 (20.0%)	1 (10.0%)
Skilled Services & Trades	11 (91.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)
Wellbeing	9 (81.8%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Community	8 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (20.0%)

Considering support for an Official Claygate Website by business type:

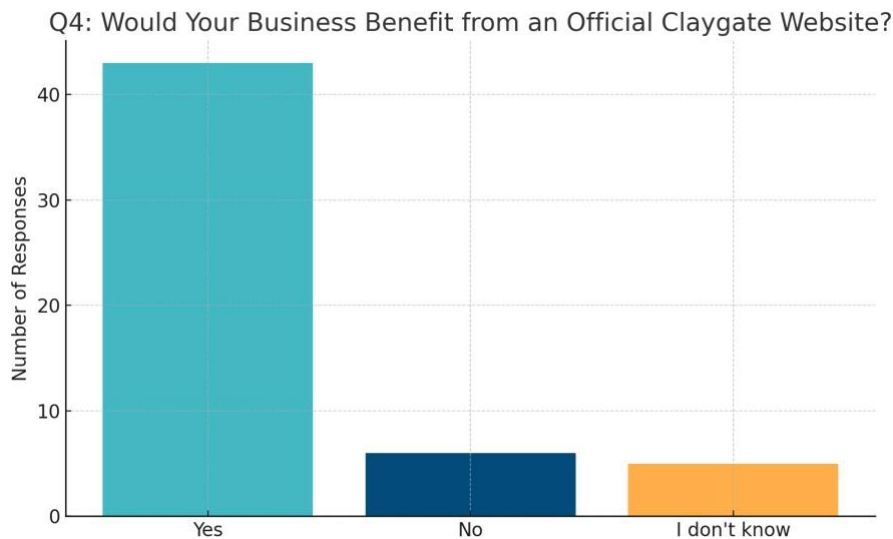
- Skilled Services & Trades showed the highest support, with 91.7% in favour.
- Community, Wellbeing, Retail and Hospitality sectors were also largely positive (70–80%).

Just five businesses in total answered 'I don't know', suggesting most had a clear opinion but that some businesses require further information, even an active website, before making a judgement regarding participation. Some reservation may have been based upon uncertain costs as this question did not ask whether

businesses would be willing to invest in any individual initiative but was focused on whether an initiative might be beneficial in the first instance.

These findings support further exploration of a central online hub as a beneficial initiative for the majority of Claygate businesses.

*Figure 4: Responses to “Would your business benefit from an attractive, official Claygate website promoting the village, acting as a shopping/business information hub with links to your business website or social media?”*



#### **4.1.5 Parking Questions**

This section compiles responses to four related questions on parking and business needs in Claygate. The 2024 CVA Residents' survey found that parking time limits constrain local shopping and affect footfall. This survey sought to understand how necessary shops and businesses view the availability of space in public car parks in the operation of their businesses. These questions were grounded in the recommendations and findings of the 2024 Residents' Survey, particularly around the proposed redevelopment of Torrington Lodge Car Park and ongoing concern over the sufficiency and allocation of parking for both shoppers and operational needs. As development of Claygate's council car parks proceeds, car parking availability may be reduced by up to 147 spaces (101 in Torrington Lodge Car Park and 46 Hare Lane Car Park respectively) thus, it is important to understand local businesses' dependence upon these public car parks.

At the time of the Residents' survey there was no free parking at Torrington Lodge or Hare Lane car parks. In a "check all applicable" question asking, "where do you usually park?" 60% of visitors to The Parade by car said they used on-street parking on The Parade, 43% used street-parking on Albany Crescent or Gordon Rd and 32% used Hare Lane Slip Road (N=1614). Despite needing to pay for use of Torrington Lodge Car Park, 18% said they used it. Fifty per cent of respondents felt that street parking in Claygate is a problem, with a further 21% saying it may be a problem. Only 27% felt street-parking was not a problem.

#### 4.1.5.1 Is Customer Parking Important?

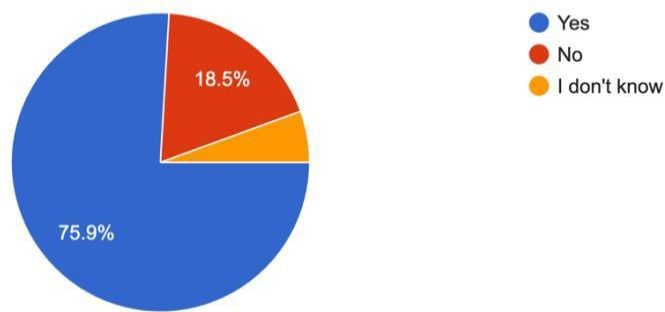
This question, “Is the availability of customer parking in public car parks important to your business?” aligns with resident feedback that parking time limits constrain local shopping and affect footfall.

Forty-one businesses (75.9%) responded, “Yes”, customer parking in public car parks is important to their operations; ten (18.5%) responded 'No' with 3 businesses (5.6%) unsure. This aligns with findings from the residents’ survey in which 78% of respondents (N=1327) said they would use the village car parks more if the first period was free and 185 (12%) respondents raised “better parking”, including “free parking” was something that would encourage them to do more shopping in response to an open-ended question asking, “What would encourage you to do more of your shopping in Claygate?”

*Figure 5: Frequency of responses to “Is customer Parking in public car parks important to your business”*

Is the availability of customer parking in public car parks important to your business?

54 responses



Further, considering the needs for customer parking by village area:

- Businesses based in The Parade were most reliant on parking (89.5% of businesses from The Parade area said 'Yes').
- Old Village businesses were mixed with 60.0% responding 'Yes', respectively.

Although there is street parking in both the Parade area and Old Village, availability for visitors to these commercial areas is often limited. Findings from the Residents’ survey showed that 50% of respondents (N=1614) responded, “Yes” that street-parking in Claygate is a problem, another 21% saying street-parking, “Maybe” a problem.

Responses to this question demonstrate that space in public car parks is critical to most Parade and retail-centred businesses. However, some community, hospitality and peripheral service businesses may be less dependent, having either onsite parking or adequate street-parking available.

Further, many events at community venues are likely to be community clubs and societies. Therefore, residents of Claygate may be walking or using active transport to the venue. The Residents' Survey findings showed that approximately 80% of respondents (n=1614) either walk "Always" or "Often" within the village.

*Table 4: Responses to "Is customer Parking in public car parks important to your business," comparison by Business Type*

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I don't know</b>
Hospitality	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Retail	10 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Skilled Services & Trades	10 (83.3%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)
Wellbeing	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Community	4 (40.0%)	4 (40.0%)	2 (20.0%)

#### 4.1.5.2 Is 30 Minutes Long Enough for Free Parking?

Respondents were informed that there is currently a trial of 30 mins free parking in Torrington Lodge and Hare Lane car parks and asked, “Do you think 30 mins is long enough to benefit your business?”

Thirty-seven businesses (68.5%) felt that 30 minutes of free parking is not long enough to benefit their business. Fourteen businesses (25.9%) considered 30 minutes to be sufficient, while 3 respondents (5.6%) were unsure.

Figure 6: Responses to “Do you think 30 mins free-parking is long enough to benefit your business?”

There will be 30 minutes free parking in Torrington Lodge and Hare Lane car parks from 31 March 2025. Do you think 30 mins is long enough to benefit your business?

54 responses

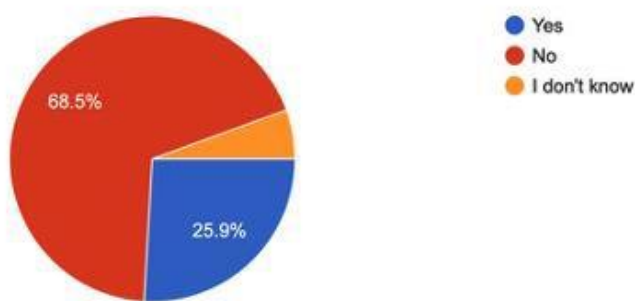
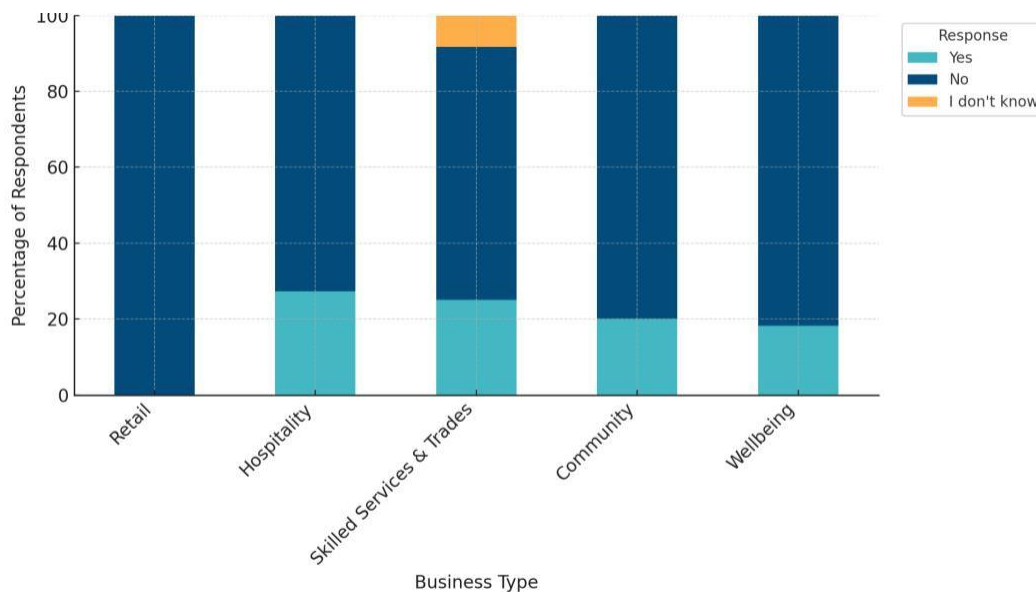


Figure 7: Responses to “Do you think 30 mins free-parking is long enough to benefit your business?” by Business Type



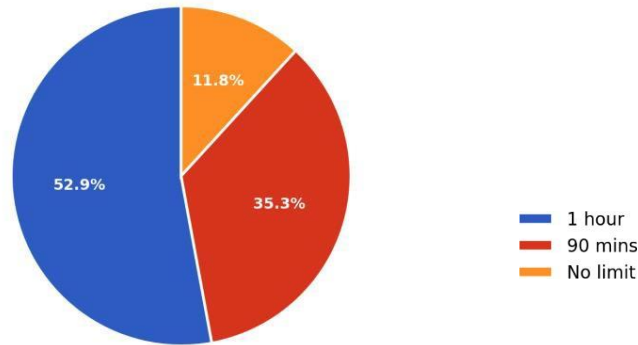
Concern about availability of free parking was especially prominent among Retail (100%) and Wellbeing (82%) businesses. Community organisations were more divided, possibly reflecting off-peak activity schedules or in-village audiences.

#### 4.1.5.3 If No, How Long is Enough to Benefit your Business?

Of the 34 respondents who felt 30 minutes free parking was not long enough, 52.9% preferred 1 hour (18 businesses), 35.3% (12 businesses) preferred 90 minutes, and 11.8% (4 businesses) requested no time limit.

Figure 8: Responses to “If No, how long would the free-parking period be to benefit your business?”

34 responses



This closely mirrors the 2024 Residents' Survey results, where 52% preferred 1-hour free parking and 16% preferred 90 mins with 5% wanting no time constraint (N=1288). In free-text responses regarding incentives to shop in the village, 12% of residents suggested they would do more shopping in Claygate if there were better availability of parking.

#### 4.1.5.4 Is Your Business Reliant on Car Parks for Staff or Supplier Vehicles?

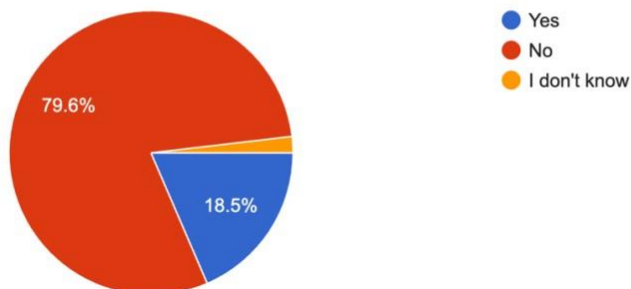
Only 18.5% of businesses overall stated they were reliant on public car parks for their own vehicles or supplier deliveries; 79.6% (43 businesses) had no reliance on them, and only one business was unsure. Retail businesses unanimously reported no reliance (100% 'No'), and no business type exceeded 27.3% reporting reliance.

This suggests that most operational needs are being met through private arrangements or at locations that do not depend on public car parks. Only 2 of 10 community venues reported relying on public car parks. It seems likely that community businesses may rely on volunteer staff living in the village and minimal supply logistics. Businesses outside of the village centres are, logically, not dependent on centrally-located public car parks.

Figure 9: Responses to “Is your business reliant on public car parks for supplier deliveries to your business or for your own vehicles?” grouped by Business Type

Is your business reliant on public car parks for supplier deliveries to your business or for your own vehicles?

54 responses



### 4.1.6 Large Village Maps in Car Parks

The 2024 *Claygate: The Way Forward* (CTWF) report highlighted the importance of improving signage and helping visitors navigate Claygate's two village centres. Building on this general priority, the Shops and Businesses' Advisory Committee explored examples from other Surrey villages, particularly Great Bookham, where clear, attractive village maps installed in car parks have successfully increased visitor awareness of local shops, services, and walking routes.

This Business survey included a question to test whether Claygate businesses would support a similar initiative. The aim was to understand whether local businesses felt that improved wayfinding and village visibility could help increase footfall, encourage exploration of both village centres, and strengthen Claygate's profile as a destination for shopping and leisure.

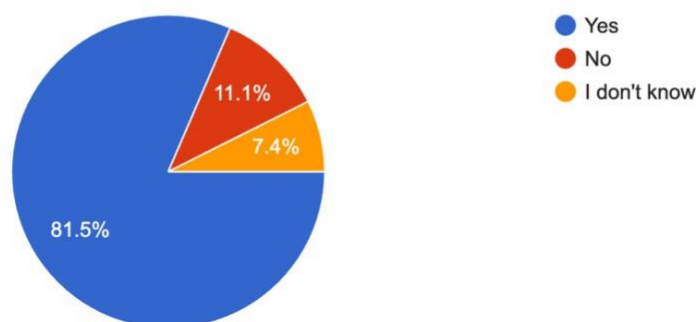
A clear majority, 81.5% of respondents (44 businesses), responded that this would be a good idea. Only six businesses (11.1%) were opposed, and four (7.4%) were unsure. This strong support suggests that a village map is viewed as a helpful and non-contentious way to encourage footfall and promote awareness of Claygate's commercial offer.

The findings complement earlier questions around destination identity and efforts to increase footfall, and indicate that practical signage would be widely welcomed by the business community.

*Figure 9: Responses regarding installation of large village maps in car parks*

Do you think it's a good idea to have a large village map in each car park showing the locations of Claygate shops and businesses?

54 responses



### 4.1.7 Interest in a Printed Booklet

In the Residents' Survey 2024, a significant minority of residents expressed preference for tangible printed materials for local information, with 37.3% (N=1614) saying they find out what is going on in Claygate from free magazines and newspapers. Therefore, this question tested whether businesses would be interested in a printed booklet to promote Claygate shops and services.

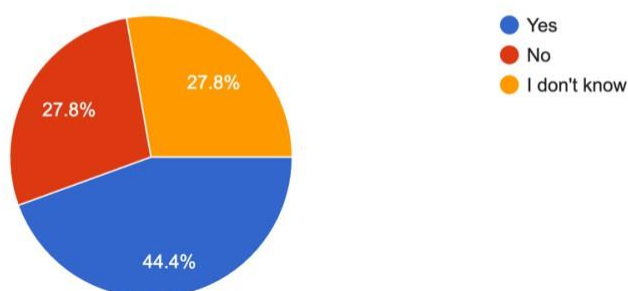
Businesses were asked whether they would be interested in paying to advertise in a printed village booklet promoting local shops and services.

Responses showed a mixed pattern. **Just under half of respondents (44.4%; 24 businesses)** expressed interest in advertising in such a booklet. An equal proportion of respondents either indicated that they were **not interested (27.8%; 15 businesses)** or selected **"I don't know" (27.8%; 15 businesses)**.

Figure 10: Responses regarding interest in a printed booklet

Would you pay to advertise in a printed booklet delivered to all Claygate households listing local services, shops, businesses, societies and groups?

54 responses



This distribution suggests that while a printed booklet may appeal to a substantial minority of businesses, it is not a universally supported initiative. The high level of uncertainty indicates that some businesses may require clearer information about format, reach, costs, and potential return before forming a view. As such, interest in a printed booklet appears to be conditional rather than dismissive, and may depend on how the proposal is developed and presented.

### 4.1.8 Interest in Training Providers and Shared Training

These two questions assessed the 'in principle' potential benefit of offering local training provider recommendations and the appetite for shared training schemes to reduce costs for businesses.

#### 4.1.8.1 Would your business benefit from access to details of recommended local training providers?

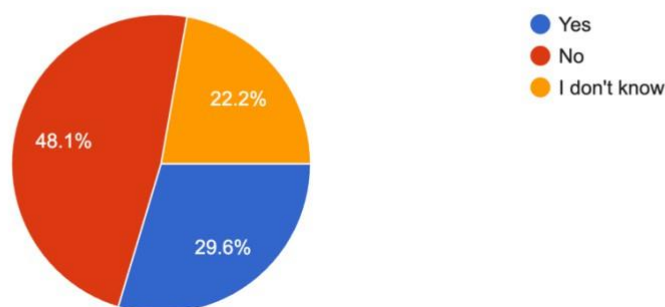
Responses to this question indicate that most businesses did not see a clear benefit in access to details of recommended local training providers. Just under half of respondents (48.1%; 26 businesses) answered *No*. However, a substantial minority expressed either interest (29.6%; 16) or uncertainty (22.2%; 12).

Taken together, this suggests that while demand for signposting to training providers is not widespread, around half of businesses either see potential value or are open to the idea, possibly depending on relevance, sector-specific needs, or clearer information about available training opportunities.

*Figure 11: Response frequencies regarding access to details of recommended local training providers.*

Would your business benefit from access to details of recommended local training providers for staff ie. Health and Safety, Food Safety?

54 responses



#### 4.1.8.2 *Would you be interested in shared training for staff to reduce your training costs?*

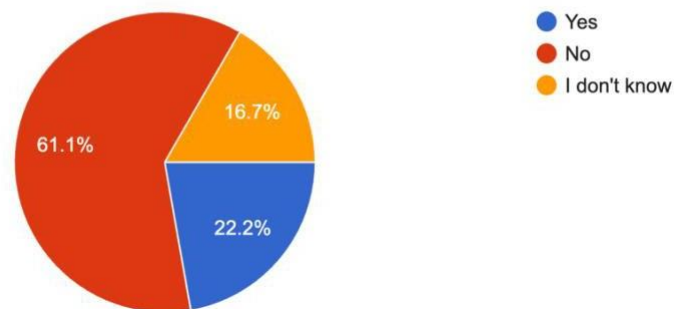
A clear majority of businesses (61.1%) indicated that they would *not* be interested in shared training for staff as a means of reducing training costs. Nonetheless, 22.2% responded positively, and a further 16.7% reported being unsure.

These findings suggest that shared training is not a priority for most businesses, but that a meaningful minority may be open to such arrangements under the right conditions. Any future exploration of shared training would therefore need to be highly targeted, focusing on businesses with similar operational or compliance requirements.

*Figure 12: Frequency of responses regarding interest in shared staff training*

Would you be interested in shared training for staff to reduce your training costs?

54 responses



## 4.2 Interest in a Claygate Business Collective

92% of respondents to the Residents' survey (N=1614) said they visit the village Shops at least weekly and findings generally emphasised community cohesion as central to Claygate's identity. In the Residents' Survey, the question "What would encourage you to do more of your shopping in Claygate?" was asked to reveal where improvements might be made by shops and businesses in the village. Suggestions made by more than a single resident related to generally improving the welcome in shops, village-wide loyalty cards and potentially pedestrianising The Parade including pavement cafés to create a more pleasant and social atmosphere, although a separate question about the proposal to pedestrianise suggested that the overall opinion on this was neutral. (See these findings on page 15 of Appendix A of the Residents' Survey.)

Together with the initiatives examined by the questions posed in this Business Survey, all three of these suggestions from the residents would need the buy-in of the majority of businesses to be successful in increasing footfall in the village's two commercial areas. Thus, it was proposed that a Claygate Business Collective might be formed to pursue initiatives to bring together and benefit the Shops and Businesses in the village.

A series of four questions investigated the potential of forming a Claygate Business Collective to further the interests of the village's shops and businesses and carry forward popular initiatives to increase footfall.

### 4.2.1 Interest in Forming a Claygate Business Collective

One of the recommendations to arise from the work of the Shops and Businesses' Advisory Committee and the Residents' Survey was to "establish and support a new Village Business Initiative" to include implementation of "a marketing strategy and collective website to promote Claygate", including "shops, businesses and activities, as an attractive retail and lifestyle destination".

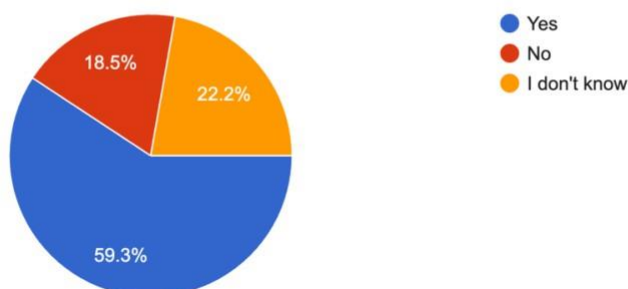
Respondents were asked whether businesses would be interested in forming a Claygate Business Collective, defined as "a group working together to further the interests of shops and businesses in the village". The question was intentionally left open to capture interest in a range of models, from volunteer-led networks to more formal initiatives akin to a Business Improvement District (BID)<sup>1</sup>.

32 businesses (59.3%) said 'Yes', indicating strong baseline interest in forming a Claygate Business Collective. A further twelve (22.2%) selected 'I don't know', which is strategically valuable and suggests these businesses may become engaged with more information or structure. Only ten businesses (18.5%) were not interested in belonging to a Claygate Business Collective.

Figure 13: Frequency of responses regarding interested in forming a Claygate Business Collective

Would you be interested in a Claygate business 'collective' ie. a group working together to further the interests of shops and businesses in the village?

54 responses



Among confirmed decision-makers - being those with confirmed authority to approve strategic involvement - 53.8% were supportive, 23.1% were unsure, and 23.1% opposed. Operational and probable decision-makers were even more supportive but cannot be assumed to have final say and commit to action without

<sup>1</sup> A BID (Business Improvement District) is a defined area where local businesses collaborate to fund and deliver projects that enhance the commercial environment. Businesses within the BID area pay a mandatory levy (in addition to business rates), which is used exclusively for BID initiatives. A formal ballot is held and a majority of eligible businesses must vote in favour in order to set up a BID. Claygate is considered too small to set up a BID. However, the model may inform the formation of a Business Collective for the village.

reference to and authorisation from senior management. However, their enthusiasm is important: contributors may bring village awareness and act as internal advocates for participation if equipped with a strong case.

Retail businesses were the most enthusiastic, with 80% (8 businesses) saying 'Yes' to forming a business collective. Wellbeing and Skilled Services businesses showed more uncertainty than other business types, which may relate to working in isolation due to appointment-based business model or unclear benefit from collective efforts. Hospitality businesses' responses were mixed (6 businesses said, 'Yes', 4 'no' and 1 'I don't know'), potentially reflecting differing business models (e.g., café vs restaurant). Community organisations showed moderate support (60%; 6 businesses), with 30% (3 businesses) reporting uncertainty, possibly reflecting the more collective decision-making processes common within this group.

#### ***4.2.2 Willingness to Join the Team to Set Up the Business Collective***

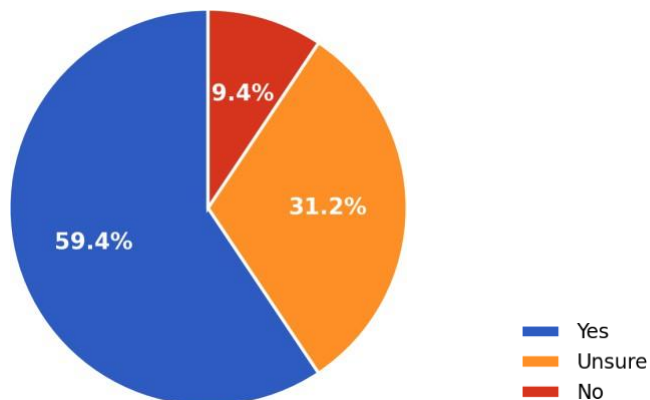
Respondents were asked whether they would be willing to join a team to help set up a Claygate Business Collective. This question moves beyond general support for the idea of a collective to consider the practical capacity for active involvement in its establishment.

Across all respondents, 35.2% (19 businesses) said they would be willing to help with set-up, while 27.8% (15 businesses) were unsure and 37.0% (20 businesses) said they would not be willing to take on this role.

When considering only those 32 businesses that had already expressed interest in forming a Business Collective a clearer pattern emerges. Almost six in ten (59.4%; 19 businesses) indicated that they would be willing to help establish the collective. A further 31.2% (10 businesses) were unsure, and only 9.4% (3 businesses) said they would not be willing to participate in the set-up team.

Analysis by decision-making role indicates that early leadership capacity is most likely to come from business owners and senior decision-makers. Among those willing to help establish the collective (19 businesses), 78.9% were confirmed decision-makers, with the remaining respondents split between probable decision-makers and operational or contributor roles. In practical terms, this suggests that the emerging set-up group is likely to comprise predominantly confirmed decision-makers, with the remaining approximately 20% drawn from other roles.

Figure 14: Frequency of conditional responses on willingness to support set-up of a Claygate Business Collective. Base: respondents answering 'Yes' to interest in forming a collective (32 responses)



A similar pattern emerges when responses are examined by business type among those already interested in forming a collective. Willingness to join the set-up team was highest among Wellbeing, Skilled Services & Trades, and Retail businesses, with lower but still present levels of willingness among Hospitality and Community organisations.

Together, these findings suggest that early leadership for establishing a Business Collective is most likely to come from Wellbeing, Skilled Services & Trades, and Retail businesses, where respondents may have greater scope to commit time or resources at an initial stage. Hospitality and Community organisations also show engagement, though levels of immediate commitment appear more mixed, potentially reflecting operational pressures or governance arrangements rather than lack of interest.

Overall, the results indicate a **strong and diverse potential core group** for the establishment of a Claygate Business Collective. A model in which a committed group of business owners and senior decision-makers provides early leadership, alongside more flexible or staged participation options, may allow additional businesses to translate goodwill into active involvement as the collective develops.

### 4.2.3 Willingness to Pay an Annual Fee to Join a Claygate Business Collective

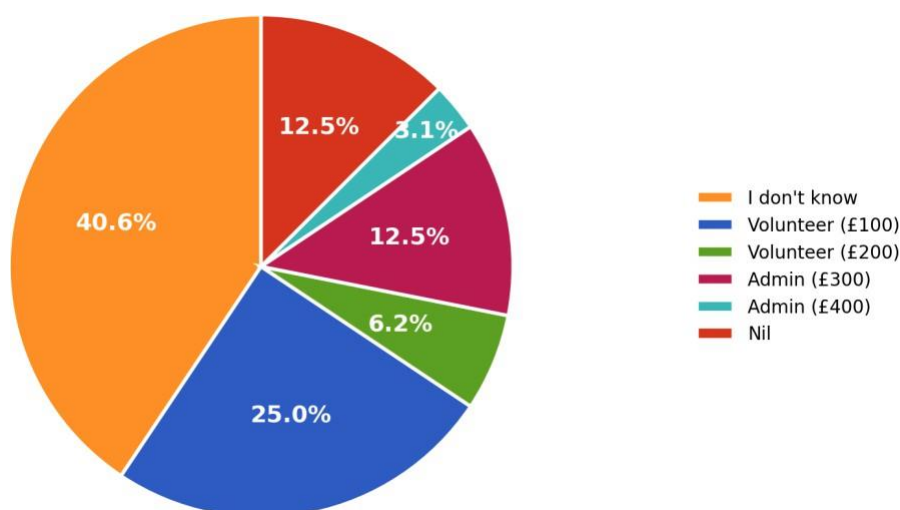
All respondents were asked, “How much would you pay as an annual fee to belong to a Claygate Business Collective?” It was noted below the question that “the specific amount would depend on the size of the collective and its agreed goals.”

This question was intended not as a definitive funding proposal, but as a way of gauging appetite for different types of collective structure - from a low-cost, volunteer-led model to one with potential funding for a part-time administrator or marketing professional.

For analytical clarity, results are reported here for those 32 businesses that had already indicated interest in forming a Business Collective, as businesses not wishing to pursue a collective would not reasonably be expected to contribute financially.

Among these 32 businesses, responses indicate a wide range of views, with a substantial proportion reserving judgement at this stage. **Over 40% selected “I don’t know” (13 businesses; 40.6%)**, suggesting that many would require further detail about the structure, benefits, and costs of a collective before indicating a preferred contribution level.

Figure 15: Frequency of conditional responses on proposed annual contribution to a Claygate Business Collective. Base: respondents answering ‘Yes’ to interest in forming a collective (32 responses)



Among those expressing a provisional view, 31.2% (10 businesses) indicated willingness to contribute at a lower level (£100–£200), consistent with a predominantly volunteer-led model. A smaller group, 15.6% (5 businesses), indicated willingness to contribute at a higher level (£300–£400), which would support some administrative or marketing capacity. Four businesses (12.5%) indicated that they would not be able to contribute financially.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while there is no single preferred contribution model, there is potential support for both lower-cost, volunteer-led arrangements and more structured models with limited administrative support. The high level of uncertainty highlights the importance of clarity around governance, benefits, and value for money in shaping future buy-in.

While this analysis focuses on 32 respondents who expressed interest in forming a collective, it is also notable that a small number of respondents who were uncertain about forming a Business Collective nevertheless indicated a provisional willingness to contribute financially across both volunteer-led and administratively supported models. This pattern reinforces the interpretation of “I don’t know” responses as reflecting a need for further clarity about the structure, purpose, and benefits of a collective, rather than an absence of willingness to engage or contribute.

This question should therefore be interpreted as a **conversation starter** — a way to explore preferred approaches to running a business collective and to indicate readiness for financial contribution. Any future model would need to be discussed and refined with interested businesses to determine what structure is realistic and beneficial.

#### ***4.2.4 Suggestions Regarding Setting Up a Claygate Business Collective***

An opportunity was provided for respondents to offer open comments regarding the potential formation of a Claygate Business Collective. Of the 27 responses received, 17 included substantive reflections, suggestions, or considerations. The remaining responses were neutral or non-elaborative (for example, “No” or “Not at the moment”) to the question, *“Do you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding setting up a Claygate business collective?”*

The substantive comments were coded thematically and are summarised below. While the number of qualitative responses was limited, they provide useful insight into perceived opportunities, constraints, and considerations relevant to the formation of a Claygate Business Collective.

### **1. Organisational and governance-related constraints on participation**

A small number of responses highlighted organisational constraints that may limit the ability of some businesses or organisations to commit financially or make binding decisions, irrespective of their level of interest.

Verbatim examples include:

*“As one branch of a larger company I am unable to make financial decisions”*

*“As a charity it would be good to be affiliated with such a Group, but not something we could pay a subscription.”*

These responses suggest that uncertainty or non-commitment may reflect internal governance or financial restrictions rather than a lack of support for collaboration.

### **2. Conditional support linked to clarity, value, and transparency**

Some responses indicated openness to participation or contribution, contingent on clearer information about purpose, benefits, and costs.

Verbatim examples include:

*“In regards to cost, if it proves worthwhile I would probably increase the amount offered to allow for admin/marketing”*

*“I have put I don’t know because it would have to be transparent as to the positive benefits this would provide.”*

This theme reinforces the importance of clear objectives, visible value, and transparent decision-making in any early-stage proposal.

### **3. Governance and leadership of a potential business collective**

Several responses addressed how a business collective should be governed and led. One detailed response emphasised the importance of inclusive, business-led governance, independent of external agendas.

One respondent expressed a preference for clearly independent, business-led governance, stating (verbatim):

*“The group would need to be openly inclusive of all the shops and give everyone an opportunity to contribute if they wish. It should be run by someone with an interest in the shops and businesses – who might better understand the challenges facing shop owners – perhaps a past owner with experience or an outside paid dedicated lead. Not run by any council or organisation with outside agendas or interests.”*

In contrast, one response suggested that responsibility for establishing such a group should sit with the local council:

*“This should be set up by the Parish Council”*

Taken together, these views indicate that while there is a preference for business-led or independent leadership, there are differing expectations about the appropriate role of local institutions<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4. Learning from previous attempts**

One response referred to a previous attempt to establish a similar group that had not been sustained due to interpersonal or behavioural challenges among participants (paraphrased to protect anonymity)

This highlights the importance of clear governance structures and shared expectations in any future initiative.

#### **5. Constructive ideas and offers of expertise (partially paraphrased)**

Several responses offered constructive, forward-looking suggestions focused on marketing, visibility, and shared promotion.

Verbatim examples include:

*“In principle a good idea. Enhanced use of social media and AI for marketing may be helpful”*

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<sup>2</sup> Note: While the Parish Council supports the local business community in a number of ways, including commissioning this survey, it does not have the remit or resources to establish a business collective or propose a Business Improvement District (BID). Further, any involvement requires consideration and agreement by the full Parish Council.

*“The way forward is a Claygate village Instagram page... A map of the local shops and businesses would definitely be a good idea.”*

In addition, one respondent with experience of leadership within a nearby Business Improvement District indicated willingness to act as a resource for a Claygate Business Collective (paraphrased to protect anonymity).

These responses align with quantitative findings showing interest in collaborative initiatives, particularly those with clear, practical benefits.

### **4.3. Contact About Future Initiatives**

A large majority of respondents (83.3%, 45 businesses) gave permission to be contacted about future business-related initiatives and updates within Claygate. Only nine businesses (16.7%) opted not to share contact details.

This high level of consent indicates a broad openness among local businesses to staying informed about collective efforts and developments affecting the village’s trading environment. It provides a strong practical foundation for ongoing communication, including information-sharing about events, parking policy, and further exploration of collaborative activity such as the potential Claygate Business Collective discussed earlier in the survey.

While consent to be contacted does not imply commitment to specific initiatives, it does suggest a generally positive orientation toward continued dialogue and engagement between businesses, the Parish Council and its advisory committees, and other local stakeholders.

## 4.4 Summary of Responses to the Proposed Initiatives

### 4.4.1 Overview

Taken together, responses to the proposed initiatives indicate a **strong shared commitment to Claygate as a village destination**, with businesses frequently framing their interests in terms of collective benefit rather than individual gain. This aligns with earlier findings showing that most businesses see themselves as contributing positively to the village's sense of community.

Several initiatives attracted **clear and consistent support**, suggesting they may be suitable for early action. These include proposals to improve visitor orientation and visibility through the installation of **village maps in car parks**, and the development of an **official village website or online presence** to support coordinated promotion. Responses to the parking questions also revealed **clear views on customer access**, with a strong majority of businesses indicating that **30 minutes' free parking is not sufficient** to benefit their business.

Other proposed initiatives elicited more **mixed responses**, often characterised by substantial levels of uncertainty. Interest in measures such as a printed village booklet, shared training opportunities, or signposting to training providers appeared to depend on factors including cost, relevance, and perceived value. In these cases, "I don't know" responses suggest openness to the ideas in principle, alongside a desire for further detail before forming a view.

Questions relating to the formation of a **Claygate Business Collective** indicate a distinct and potentially significant area of opportunity. **Nearly 60% expressed interest in the idea of a collective**, with a substantial proportion also indicating willingness to be involved in its establishment. While views on financial contribution varied and many respondents reserved judgement pending further information, the results suggest the presence of a viable core group capable of taking discussions forward.

Overall, the findings point to a business community that is **collaborative in outlook, clear about certain practical priorities, and open to further development of more structured initiatives** where purpose, governance, and value are clearly articulated. These patterns provide a strong evidence base for progressing a small number of well-defined initiatives, while continuing dialogue on others as proposals are refined.

#### 4.4.2 *Priority breakdown of initiatives*

To support practical next steps, both “*Yes*” *only* responses (indicating clear support) and “*Yes*” *plus* “*I don’t know*” responses (indicating broader openness) were considered. This approach helps distinguish initiatives that appear most ready for early action from those that may require further development or clarification.

##### **Higher-priority initiatives (clear and consistent support):**

- **Car parking and access:** Responses across multiple questions highlight the importance of public car parks for customer footfall as well as supplier and service access. A clear majority of businesses indicated that **30 minutes’ free parking is not sufficient** to benefit their trade, with **longer free parking (an hour or more) viewed as more beneficial** to business activity. This issue aligns closely with concerns raised in the Residents’ Survey and is particularly salient given ongoing consideration of public car park use and development.
- **Official village website or information hub:** This proposal attracted strong support as a central platform for promoting local shops, services, and events, and for improving visitor awareness. It also aligns with residents’ reported reliance on online sources for local information in the 2024 survey.
- **Village map signage in car parks:** Widely supported as a practical and visible way to help visitors navigate the village and discover local businesses, reinforcing footfall across the village rather than in isolated areas.

##### **Secondary initiatives (openness but greater uncertainty):**

- **Printed household booklet:** Responses indicated some support for ensuring local information reaches residents who prefer tangible materials, though this option attracted higher levels of uncertainty than the initiatives above. This mirrors findings from the Residents’ Survey, where it was a substantial minority who expressed a preference for printed local information.
- **Shared and recommended training opportunities:** These initiatives generated more mixed responses, with many businesses indicating that they did not see them as directly relevant to their current needs. While potentially valuable for specific sectors or circumstances, they appear to be a lower priority for collective action at this stage.

### ***4.4.3 Formation of a Claygate Business Collective***

Responses to questions regarding the formation of a Claygate Business Collective indicate a **substantial level of interest and openness**, alongside emerging considerations about structure, capacity, and governance. Around **three in five businesses** expressed either clear interest in forming a collective or openness to becoming involved, suggesting that the concept resonates with a significant proportion of the local business community.

Among those expressing interest, there is evidence of a **potential core group** willing to take an active role. **Nearly 60% of interested businesses indicated willingness to help establish the collective**, with participation strongest among confirmed decision-makers. Businesses from the Retail, Wellbeing, and Skilled Services & Trades sectors were among the most ready to engage, suggesting that early leadership capacity is likely to be drawn from a diverse mix of business types.

Views on structure and resourcing varied. Some respondents favoured a more formal, BID-style model, while others preferred a lighter-touch, volunteer-led approach. Willingness to contribute financially was modest and provisional at this stage. Among interested businesses, around one-third indicated a readiness to contribute financially, most commonly at lower contribution levels (£100–£200), with a smaller number open to higher contributions that could support limited administrative or marketing capacity. A substantial proportion of respondents remained undecided, and some community or charity-based organisations indicated interest in participating without the ability to pay.

Importantly, patterns across responses suggest that **uncertainty reflects a need for further information rather than lack of willingness**. This is reinforced by the finding that some respondents who were unsure about forming a collective nevertheless indicated provisional openness to contributing financially, including at both volunteer-led and administratively supported levels.

Qualitative comments further emphasised the importance of **transparency, inclusivity, and flexibility** in any future model, as well as clarity around purpose, governance, and benefits.

Taken together, these findings are encouraging, suggesting that there is meaningful interest in forming a Claygate Business Collective and that such a collective is potentially viable, provided it is developed collaboratively, with clear leadership, realistic expectations, and options for phased or flexible participation.

## 5 Conclusion and Next Steps

The 2025 Claygate Business Survey achieved its primary aim of engaging a broad cross-section of the village's business community and gathering robust evidence to inform future planning. With 54 valid responses from 73 eligible businesses, representing a participation rate of 74%, the survey provides one of the most comprehensive and reliable snapshots to date of local business perspectives in Claygate.

Across the findings, a consistent picture emerges of businesses that see themselves as part of the wider fabric of village life and are keen to support initiatives that strengthen Claygate as a place to live, work, and visit. Respondents showed clear interest in measures that improve footfall, visibility, and ease of navigation, particularly where these benefit the village as a whole rather than individual businesses alone. Proposals such as improved parking provision, clearer village signage, and a central online presence attracted strong and consistent support, indicating that these are well-aligned with current business priorities.

The survey also explored interest in more collaborative forms of action, including the potential formation of a Claygate Business Collective. Responses suggest meaningful interest and emerging capacity for such a collective, alongside understandable caution about structure, governance, and resourcing. Taken together, the findings are encouraging, suggesting that a Claygate Business Collective is potentially viable, provided it is developed collaboratively, with clear leadership, realistic expectations, and options for phased or flexible participation.

Importantly, uncertainty expressed by some respondents appears to reflect a desire for further information rather than reluctance to participate. This highlights the value of an open, transparent next stage in which proposals can be refined, options explored, and businesses supported to make informed decisions about involvement.

The survey findings also align closely with insights from the 2024 Residents' Survey, which highlighted the importance of a welcoming, lively village environment in encouraging local shopping and engagement. Together, the two studies provide a balanced and complementary evidence base for community-led economic development in Claygate, grounded in both resident experience and the operational realities of local businesses.

**Next steps** will focus on maintaining the momentum generated by this survey. Businesses that indicated willingness to be contacted will be invited to a follow-up

meeting to share findings, discuss practical options for priority initiatives, and explore potential models for collaboration. This next phase will be an opportunity to co-design approaches that are proportionate, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse capacities of Claygate's shops and services.

By continuing the dialogue begun through this survey, Claygate has an opportunity to strengthen connections between businesses, residents, and local stakeholders, supporting a village economy that is visible, resilient, and rooted in community.

## 6 Part B: Business Perspectives on the Village Market

This section reports findings relating specifically to the Claygate village market, which is independently run and operates separately from the business initiatives discussed in Part A. The survey included market-related questions to gather business feedback following the market's first full year of operation – one Sunday market a quarter on The Parade between Hare Lane and Albany Crescent.

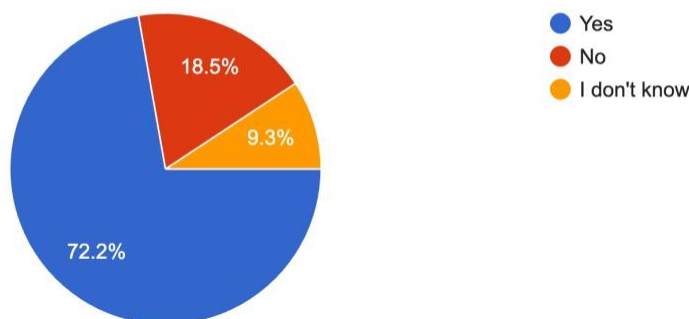
### 6.1 Support for the current village market

Across the full sample (n = 54), 39 businesses (72.2%) expressed support for the current village market, 10 (18.5%) said No, they are not supportive, and 5 (9.3%) said 'I don't know'.

Figure 16: Frequency of support for the current village market

Are you supportive of the current village market?

54 responses



### 6.2 Positive effect on the business

Thirty-six businesses (66.7%) reported no positive effect of the village market upon their business; eleven businesses (20.4%) reported a positive effect on their business; seven (13.0%) said, 'I don't know'.

Where positive effects were reported, common themes from open-text responses included (23 comments received, including 3 saying "none"):

- *Extra or new custom/visibility*  
e.g., "Increased footfall [at business]".
- *Opportunity to open or trade on a quieter day*  
e.g., "It's allowed for an extra trading day where we wouldn't normally, due to low footfall on Sundays."
- *General "village buzz"*  
e.g., "Increased footfall, sales and village vibe."

### **6.3 Negative effect on the business**

Two businesses (3.7%) reported a negative effect; 49 (90.7%) reported no negative effect; 3 (5.6%) were unsure if there was an effect.

Where negative effects were reported, they related primarily to (from 18 comments received, 9 explicitly said “no negatives” or “none”):

- *Location-specific impact*  
e.g., “We are based in the Old Village”
- *Reduced access/parking at certain times*  
e.g., “Reduced morning footfall.”  
e.g. “Stop to get our vehicles by [to conduct our own business].”  
(paraphrased to protect anonymity)

### **6.4 Suggestions to improve business benefit and footfall**

Open-text responses to the question, “Can you suggest any changes so that future Claygate village markets improve footfall to your business and provide benefit to you as a business owner?” focused on practical changes to layout, access, and visibility rather than on the market’s core concept, which was widely supported.

The most frequent themes were:

- *Stall orientation and access to shopfronts* – 7 suggestions  
Businesses emphasised the importance of ensuring customers can see and enter shops during market days.  
e.g. “Making sure plenty of openings between stalls for people to visit our shops, so we are not all hidden behind the stalls.”
- *Road closure and footprint layout*– 4 suggestions  
Several comments proposed small extensions to the permitted footprint or full closure of the Parade to enable a continuous market route and more effective stall placement.  
e.g. “Closing the whole Parade, allowing for more stalls and variety of products.”  
e.g. “Extend up to Station car parks. Have stalls face towards the pavement/shops.”
- *Rotating or mixing market locations* – 3 suggestions  
A few businesses suggested varying the location between the Parade and other village areas, such as the Old Village Green, to share the benefits of the market more evenly.
- *Timing and frequency (minor theme)* – 2 suggestions  
2 respondents proposed holding the market on a Saturday.  
e.g. “To hold them on a Saturday.”

Among the 11 businesses reporting a positive effect, all attributed their benefit to the existing Sunday format describing good atmosphere, extra trade, or a “village buzz.” Remarks upon improvements were focused on visibility and stall layout. None suggested a change of day.

Of the 2 businesses reporting a negative effect of the village market on their business, their remarks centred on access and parking disruptions, not timing.

Only two respondents overall proposed trialing a Saturday market, neither of these reported any positive or negative effect of the current market.

Taken together, the two suggestions to move the market to a Saturday contrast with the 20% of businesses that reported a positive effect from the current Sunday market, suggesting broad satisfaction with the existing Sunday timing.

## **7 Summary regarding the Village Market**

Support for the village market is strong (72.2%), but direct positive business impact is reported by a minority (20.4%). At the same time, reported negatives are rare (3.7%).

Taken together, responses suggest that the Sunday format appears to be valued and should probably remain the preferred timing unless later data show significant shifts in participation patterns.

The improvement levers identified are highly practical: improving shop visibility and access during the market (e.g. stall spacing and orientation), and refining the market footprint or route design (potentially through extension or mixed locations).

These findings suggest that relatively small operational adjustments could help convert broad support for the market into wider business benefit.

## **8 Survey design and analysis**

This section provides a detailed account of how the Claygate Shops and Businesses' Survey was designed, conducted, and analysed. The same methods apply to both Part A (Business priorities and collaboration) and Part B (Village Market) which together form a single survey dataset collected in April 2025.

### **8.1 Targeted recruitment**

A list of brick-and-mortar Shops and Businesses paying business-rates in Claygate ward operating from a fixed, brick-and-mortar premises, excluding home-based or non-business-rate-paying entities, was compiled by i) volunteer documentation of all visible brick and mortar businesses in the village together with ii) examination of Elmbridge Borough Council published dataset of businesses paying business-rates within Claygate ward<sup>3</sup>. Where two businesses had the same owner one of the businesses was excluded from the study and the owner invited to respond considering both their Claygate-based businesses. Further, an article in the March 2025 issue of The Courier (Claygate Parish Council magazine) announced that the survey would be taking place. The clerks' address was given for businesses to contact if they felt they should be included yet were not invited; however, the clerk was not contacted. The survey opened on 2 April and formally closed on 30 April.

### **8.2 Survey design**

The survey adopted a mixed-mode design combining face-to-face engagement (where possible) with face-to-face, phone or online follow-up. Volunteers visited or contacted all eligible businesses. Businesses were invited to take part in the online survey via a link and QR code leading to the online survey through Google Forms platform.

Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent explicit in the introduction to the survey with a required check box for consent. After asking business name, responder's name and role in the business, the survey questionnaire had 16 questions (one open text) about initiatives to increase footfall to village shops and businesses, a request for consent to contact the respondent regarding these initiatives, followed by 4 questions about the current village market (2 mixed check box with open text opportunity, 1 open text). Completion of the survey should take approximately 10 mins.

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business-rates/business-rates-information/business-rates-datasets>

The survey invitation and information sheet prefacing the online questionnaire outlined the purpose of the study, how the data would be used, and assurances of anonymity.

### **8.3 Recruitment**

Volunteer researchers delivered invitation letters to 73 eligible shops and businesses during March and April 2025. Each was visited at least once, and many were contacted two or more times to encourage participation before close of the survey. The invitation letter explained the aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the commitment to confidentiality. Volunteers were trained by the independent researcher overseeing the study and supported via the 'Volunteer Researcher Instructions' document, which outlined ethical responsibilities and practical procedures for data collection. Volunteers were instructed not to discuss the content of the questionnaire during visits, but to affirm the importance of engagement with the survey so that the business' needs could be best understood. All volunteer researchers documented visits on provided report sheets to ensure all targeted businesses had received a fair opportunity to respond to the survey.

### **8.4 Ethical Considerations**

The research complied with the principles of the Government Social Research (GSR) Ethics Framework (2021). The GSR Ethics Checklist was completed to ensure proportionate consideration of participant rights, informed consent, potential burden, and data protection. No incentives were offered, and participants were free to withdraw at any time. Data were anonymised before analysis and stored securely in line with the Parish Council's data protection policy. The ethics statement and GSR for this survey were submitted to Claygate Parish Council together with the proposed survey questionnaire and were approved by the Council on 27 February 2025.

### **8.5 Analysis**

The analysis that follows explores both quantitative and qualitative responses to the survey, structured around the main question areas. Descriptive statistics are used to present frequencies and percentages for closed questions, while open-text comments were coded thematically to highlight areas of consensus, uncertainty, and divergence.

Open-text responses were analysed using two complementary approaches, reflecting the different purposes of the questions:

- 1) For open-text responses relating to the formation of a Claygate Business Collective, a thematic analysis was undertaken using an inductive approach. Responses were reviewed and grouped into themes based on recurring ideas and issues raised by respondents. Given the limited number of substantive qualitative responses, themes were interpreted cautiously and described using proportionate language (e.g. “one response”, “some responses”). Verbatim quotations were used where appropriate; paraphrasing is explicitly indicated and was applied selectively to protect anonymity and avoid reputational inference. No attempt was made to quantify qualitative themes.
- 2) For open-text responses linked directly to closed questions (those relating to the village market), comments were analysed descriptively and reported alongside their associated quantitative responses. In these cases, open-text comments were used to provide contextual explanation and illustrative examples rather than independent measures of thematic prevalence.

Elements of the analysis and reporting process were supported using AI-assisted analytical tools to aid efficiency, consistency, and quality assurance. These tools were used for preliminary tabulation, cross-checking of figures, and drafting support. All analytical decisions, interpretations, and conclusions were determined by the researcher, with outputs checked against the original survey data prior to inclusion in this report.

### ***8.6 Timing and scope note***

Data collection for the Claygate Business Survey 2025 took place in April 2025. Preparation and reporting of the findings were subsequently delayed due to unavoidable illness among those involved. During the intervening period, a small number of businesses on The Parade have changed or are in the process of changing occupancy.

The views of these newer businesses are not captured in this survey. However, the findings remain relevant as they reflect the perspectives of a substantial proportion of Claygate’s established business community at the time of data collection, and focus on structural issues—such as footfall, visibility, parking, and collaboration—that are likely to be pertinent to both existing and incoming businesses. Future engagement activities will provide opportunities to hear from businesses that were not operating in Claygate at the time of the survey.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Grouping by Business Type

Businesses were grouped into five 'Business Type' categories to allow meaningful comparison of groups of approximately equal size while maintaining confidentiality. These categories were developed during the early phases of analysis and reflect how businesses engage with customers and how local initiatives are likely to influence individual or collective business footfall.

- **Hospitality:** Includes cafés, coffee shops, pubs, restaurants, and other food outlets with seating. High in-person dwell time; trade is sensitive to parking, footfall, and seasonal activity.
- **Retail:** Covers everyday goods and specialist shops including grocers, butchers, bakeries without seating, convenience stores, and clothing or gift retailers. Driven by footfall and visibility.
- **Wellbeing:** Appointment-based personal and clinical services such as hair and beauty, physiotherapy, chiropractic, dental. Relies on reputation, trust, and reliable access.
- **Skilled Services & Trades:** Includes professional and specialist services (estate agents, design, finance, marketing) as well as home and trade specialists (interiors, dry cleaners, showrooms). Service-led rather than product-led.
- **Community:** Includes schools, charities, and community organisations offering education, care, or public-serving activity. Their participation is shaped by mission, funding, and governance.

Hybrid cases were handled transparently: pharmacies were classified under Wellbeing to reflect their health service function, and charity shops were retained within Community as community–retail hybrids. The single private nursery was also grouped under Community, given its educational and care-oriented purpose.

To protect businesses' anonymity a more detailed allocation of business to each group will not be made available.

## Appendix B. Grouping of Decision-Making Authority for Analysis

This three-tier grouping was applied to questions where respondents' authority might influence their willingness or ability to act — notably those concerning collaboration and engagement. Including all responses while differentiating by decision-making authority ensures that findings reflect both strategic leadership perspectives and front-line operational experiences, providing a fuller picture of Claygate's business and organisational community.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example Roles Included</b>
Confirmed Decision-Maker	Respondents clearly meeting the criteria stated in the information sheet: owners, partners, or senior managers with authority over business direction, finance, marketing, or participation in community initiatives.	Owner / Partner / Founder / Director / Owner-Manager / Clinical Lead (Founder)
Probable Decision-Maker	Respondents holding senior or representative positions likely to influence decisions but operating within a larger structure, such as a charity committee, regional organisation, or franchise.	Regional Manager / Area Director / Chair of Trustees / Committee Chair / Honorary Secretary
Operational / Contributor	Respondents providing on-the-ground operational insight, such as day-to-day management or customer engagement, who may not hold final decision-making authority.	Local Manager (e.g. Shop or Salon Manager, Assistant) / Coordinator / Employee / Volunteer Lead