

# **Kersey People and Place Plan**

## **Short summary of March 2025 survey responses from Kersey residents and community organisations**

### **Kersey Residents Responses**

#### **Residents participation and demographics**

- Response rate 29% of households in Kersey (49 out of 171 households), which is strong for a community survey. It reflects a high level of engagement and interest from residents.
- Evenly split — 25 paper responses, 24 online responses.
- 50% of respondents live in central Kersey, the remainder were evenly split across the parish.
- 5% of respondents use Kersey as their second home.
- Half of households are made up of two people, with nearly 20% living alone.
- 53% of households are over 60 years old with more than 30% of those over 70.
- 17% of households have children under 18.
- A third of respondents had lived in Kersey less than five years, and a third for more than 20.

#### **What residents value most**

- Peace and quiet (lack of traffic, noise, light pollution)
- Friendly community (strong social bonds)
- Countryside, natural beauty and wildlife
- Heritage streetscapes, visual character and rural atmosphere
- Footpaths
- The Splash
- The Bell, St Mary's Church, village hall and community events all received strong support

**Insight:** Residents treasure the tranquil rural lifestyle, natural beauty, and friendly community. There's a desire to preserve the peace, heritage, and environmental integrity of the parish, along with its low-crime, unpolluted, and undeveloped character. The Bell pub, church, village hall and community events are seen as vital hubs of social and cultural life, helping foster community spirit and connection.

#### **Housing and development**

Concerns:

- Too many empty or derelict homes; these should be used before new builds.
- Holiday lets and second homes are seen as damaging to community cohesion.
- Fear of overdevelopment or large-scale housing schemes.

Significant support for:

- Affordable, characterful homes for young families and lower-paid workers.
- Small-scale, sensitive development avoiding the historic medieval centre of Kersey.

**Insight:** Residents are open to gentle, community-focused development but are firmly against large-scale projects or anything that might compromise Kersey's unique identity and character. Looking ahead over the next 15 years, the community envisions Kersey remaining much the same, preserving its charm, beauty, and tranquillity. There is, however, support for modest growth—particularly in the form of small, family homes intended for local people. The prevailing sentiment is that Kersey should evolve gradually, with thoughtful, community-minded changes that support modern needs while protecting the parish's heritage. Avoiding large scale housing developments and maintaining a clear distinction between Kersey and Hadleigh is also a priority.

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### **Transport, infrastructure and amenities**

#### Concerns:

- Public Transport is limited and a major concern. Many want regular services to Hadleigh, with a few looking for buses to Sudbury, Ipswich, and local villages.
- Potholes and road maintenance are a recurring concern.
- More safer walking and cycling routes: Especially to Hadleigh.
- The total reliance on private cars (87%).
- Mobile phone signal is very poor in several areas of Kersey - many request improvements.
- Broadband connections are poor in central Kersey.

#### Desired amenities and services:

- Community shop
- Better local bus service
- More off-street parking
- More social/welcoming pub atmosphere
- Better climbing frame and more recreational facilities – padel, tennis and pickleball
- Post box at Kersey Tye and later post collections
- Walking tour app about the history of Kersey and it's medieval heritage

**Insight:** There's a strong desire for day-to-day convenience, especially around transport, safety, and local services. Improved mobile phone signal is a priority across the parish.

### **Environment and sustainability**

#### Key priorities:

- Protecting biodiversity with more nature friendly gardening, wild areas, bird boxes, bee hives, trees, better hedgerow and ditch maintenance.
- Curbing litter, dog fouling and fly tipping.
- Supporting farmers and sustainability
- More support is needed for renewable energy and green tech – simplify planning rules to support the installation of solar panels, heat pumps, and insulation, particularly for retrofitting older and listed buildings in a way that respects their character but allows progress.
- More sustainable transport options - better bus links, safe walking and cycle paths, electric vehicle charging.
- Create a community sustainability group.

**Insight:** Residents care deeply about protecting the environment, biodiversity and the countryside. There's a desire to enhance natural habitats, and ensure the parish remains clean, green, and tranquil. All while supporting local farmers and exploring sustainable energy and transport solutions. Heritage restrictions and infrastructure gaps are seen as barriers.

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### **Community and social life**

Valued:

- The Bell Inn, St Mary's Church, Village Hall and Kersey School
- Community events and local groups
- Kersey newsletter
- Volunteering by residents to run the community groups and events

Challenges:

- Many groups/events are unknown or inaccessible to some, possibly from unclear communication.
- Events perceived to be skewed toward older generations.
- Desire for younger families and more intergenerational engagement.

**Insight:** Community events are valued but under-attended. There is interest in more inclusive, diverse and vibrant social opportunities — especially for newcomers and younger residents.

### **Looking ahead — 15-Year Vision**

Key Goals:

- Keep Kersey “much the same” – peaceful, beautiful, and community-focused.
- Support young families, keep heritage intact, and limit development.
- Retain essential services like the pub, footpaths, church, and potentially add a village shop.

**Insight:** The respondents have an overwhelming wish for Kersey to remain largely unchanged. They strongly value Kersey's character, beauty, and peacefulness. However, there is a desire for Kersey to grow a little with more small family homes for local people. There is a feeling that Kersey needs to evolve gently with careful, community-minded changes that support modern needs without sacrificing the parish's heritage. The ideal future for Kersey involves preserving its core identity while making small, thoughtful improvements that benefit everyone.

### **Notable quotes and final themes**

- “Too many empty homes... Kersey needs families.”
- “We want to be part of the parish's future.”
- “Newsletter is valuable — farming notes are appreciated.”
- “Pub should be more welcoming to locals — less fine dining.”

Residents wish to maintain what makes Kersey special. Its friendly community, beauty, peace, and history. They would support gentle evolution to remain liveable and inclusive for future generations. There is a desire for limited sympathetic development whilst avoiding overdevelopment to preserve the heart of parish life. Public transport needs to be improved. There is a real desire for an increase in younger families living in Kersey and more involvement in social activities to ensure the vitality of the parish.

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### **Kersey community organisation responses**

#### **Kersey Community Organisations:**

- Forget-Me-Nots
- Friends of the Bells of St Mary's Church
- Friends of St Mary's Church Trust
- Grays' Trust
- Kersey Playing Field Association
- Kersey Projects
- Nightingale Trust and allotments
- St Mary's Church PCC
- Table Tennis Club
- Tuesday Club
- Village Produce Association
- Kersey Village Hall

#### **Kersey Parish Council Working Groups**

- Footpath
- KCPC (Playground)
- KVG (Volunteer Group, helping to keep Kersey tidy, report highway and issues)

Below is a summary of the feedback from the seven community organisations which responded and three Parish Council working groups in Kersey.

#### **Volunteer and audience participation**

- Age range of volunteers: Primarily over 60; very few under 40.
- Virtually all volunteers live in Kersey
- Target audiences: Ranges from children to seniors; many groups cater to all ages.
- Attendance: Participants mainly come from Kersey with a few from surrounding villages, Hadleigh and further afield.

#### **Transport to activities**

- Car is the main mode of travel.
- Walking and cycling are used by some more local attendees.
- Car sharing is mentioned by Tuesday Club and VPA.

#### **Facilities and service needs**

##### **Common Requests:**

- Better car parking particularly for the village hall
- Improved facilities at Village Hall
- Flood risk prevention and better footpath signage at the allotments
- Better broadband and mobile connectivity (for security and event coordination)

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### **Organisational concerns and values**

What Matters Most:

- Preserving village assets like the Village Hall and allotments
- Maintaining community spirit and increasing local participation

Common Worries:

- Low community engagement in events
- Ageing volunteer base with limited new or younger participation
- Sustainability of groups threatened by reduced attendance or support

### **Carbon footprint and sustainability**

Current Practices:

- Allotments use rainwater harvesting and bore holes (very low carbon impact).
- Footpath and playground working groups depend on walking and volunteers.

Suggested Improvements:

- Solar panels, heat pumps, insulation for Village Hall (requires funding).
- Government grants to support energy-efficient upgrades.
- Better broadband to enable sustainable tech (eg security systems at allotments).

### **Key insights and opportunities from community organisation responses**

**Village Hall at risk:** Concerns over declining use and financial sustainability.

Suggested actions include:

- Hosting regular social events (eg coffee mornings)
- Promoting awareness of hall and activities
- Encouraging younger residents to get involved

**Sustainability is valued but under-supported:**

- Many organisations are mindful of environmental impact.
- Lack of infrastructure/funding is a common barrier.

**Need for broader community engagement:**

- Most of the community organisations rely heavily on a small number of older volunteers.
- All groups would welcome more community engagement and participation.
- Opportunities exist to better involve newcomers and families.