



Marsden Business Owner Survey Report - Winter 2024

During Autumn 2022, volunteers from community groups, Colne Valley ward councillors, and Kirklees Council staff gathered opinions from Marsden residents through the 'What matters to Marsden' engagement activities. The results were published in October 2023.

In Winter 2023, the Marsden Community Trust and Marsden Community Association held drop-in sessions to discuss these results and to work with local people to prioritise community needs. An online questionnaire was also available.

The findings from this stage are accessible at www.marsdenmatters.org.uk.

Since then, volunteers from Marsden Community Trust and across the village, local ward councillors, and council officers have been working together to create a 'Community Action Plan' based on these insights. This plan will be driven by the local community and complements the Marsden Blueprint Engagement, which is also led by the community in partnership with Kirklees Council. More information on the Marsden Blueprint Engagement can be found at www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/marsden-blueprint/index.aspx.

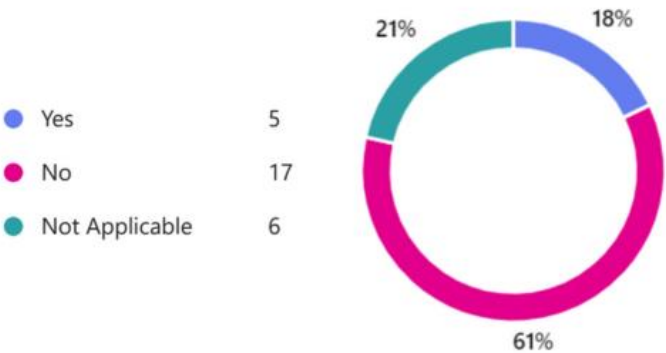
Since 2022, 'What Matters to Marsden' has engaged with 17.5% of the Marsden population. While this is a good level of engagement, it was suggested that more input from the local business community was needed. Therefore, the Marsden Business Forum conducted further engagement with local businesses to inform both the Community Action Plan and the Marsden Blueprint Engagement.

12 questions were asked, in order to capture business-specific insights, with 28 local businesses responding.

Business owner survey response summary

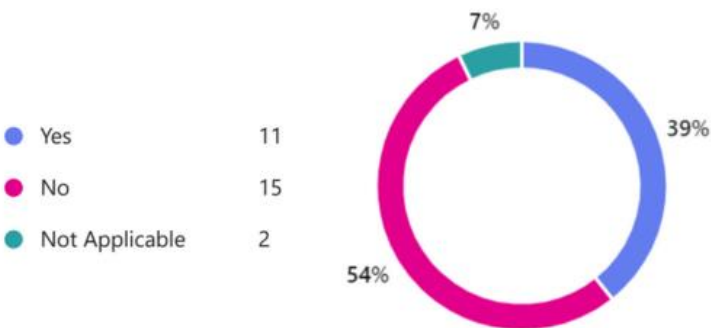
Have you ever had a problem with the availability, cost or quality of business premises in Marsden?

Three businesses reported difficulties in finding suitable, affordable premises. Issues included private deals, building maintenance, parking, and costs. Suggestions included developments at New Mill helping find new business spaces, along with better signage.



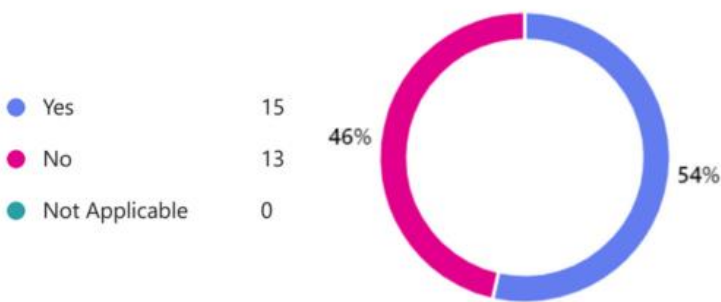
Does the way traffic is managed in Marsden affect your business in a negative way?

Six businesses felt that insufficient parking harmed customer numbers, while three others mentioned inconsiderate parking affecting pedestrians and deliveries. Suggestions included more off-road parking, double yellow lines, time-limited parking, and bollards.



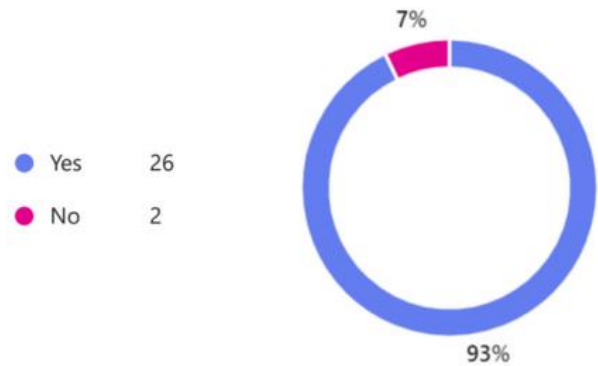
Does the location, extent and availability of parking in Marsden affect your business in a negative way?

Eleven businesses said the lack of parking options negatively affected them. Three highlighted inconsiderate parking. Seven business suggested more parking is the simple answer, with others suggesting more central parking, better signage, and improved existing parking. More double yellow lines, allocated parking for business owners and a local stopper bus are also suggested. However, one business did highlight that the free on street parking can act as a draw to customers.



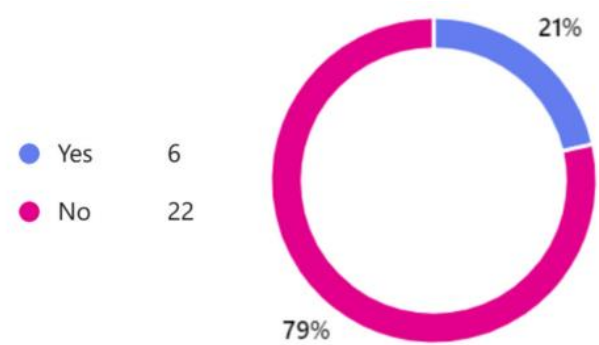
Current proposals for the New Mills regeneration scheme will involve reuse of some buildings, some new buildings and a mix of uses including residential, workspace and potentially some retail. In principle, do you envisage this development will have a positive effect on Marsden as a place to have a business?

Ten businesses believed the New Mills development would increase footfall and vibrancy. Concerns included increased competition may reduce existing business earnings, heritage building removal, and increased congestion. Suggestions included avoiding replacing existing businesses and adding more leisure facilities.



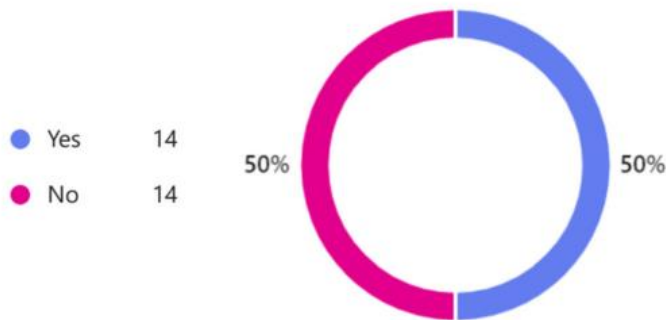
Do you have any concerns about the general standard of presentation when it comes to shopfronts in the village centre?

Five businesses noted that there are some shopfronts in poor condition and in need of repair. Suggestions included financial support for improvements, coordinated efforts for better maintenance or consulting a ‘shopfront specialist’. It was suggested businesses could play a bigger role in maintaining the centre of the village, maybe organising lights and flowers, and decorating the shop fronts for special occasions, which may also improve the overall appearance.



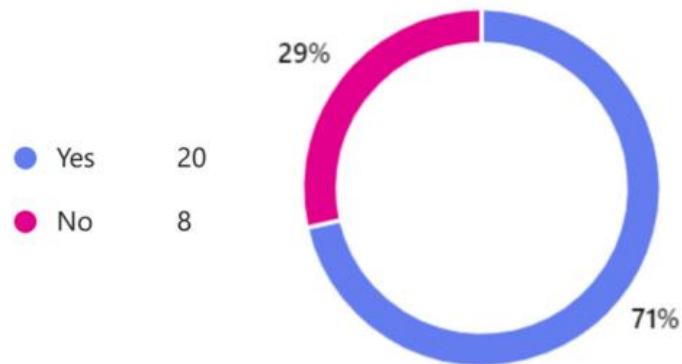
Do you feel that any additional public signage in Marsden would help customers find your business more easily?

There were lots of comments about where signage could go. Suggestions included better use of lampposts, signage at key locations including for parking options, and a village map. Some businesses felt the village was small enough for easy navigation.



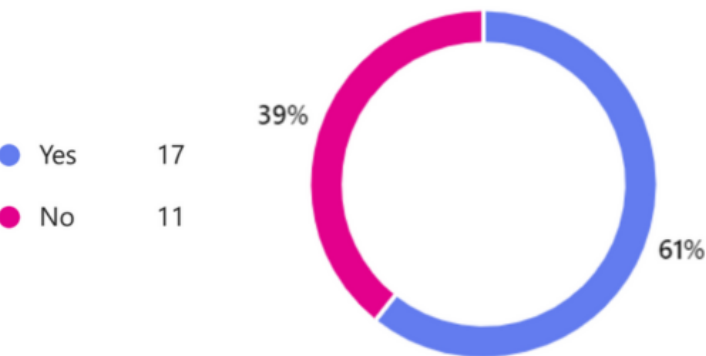
Are there any measures you feel might help increase the general amount of footfall the village centre receives?

The most common suggestion is to increase or improve parking, with improved signage and public transport also featuring highly, along with disabled access, and village promotion. Events and public toilets were also mentioned.



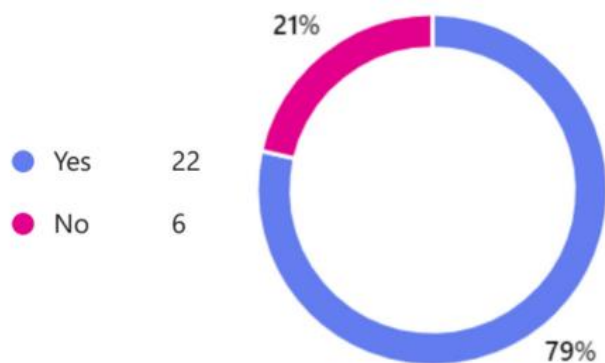
Are there any measures you feel might help encourage more local people to support businesses in the village?

The most common suggestion was to have more local parking options, with other suggestions being regular community partnership meetings, allowing hospitality businesses to place furniture on the street for customers, and a local loyalty scheme or resident discount scheme. Some businesses felt that the creation of the Marsden Business Forum was a step in the right direction.



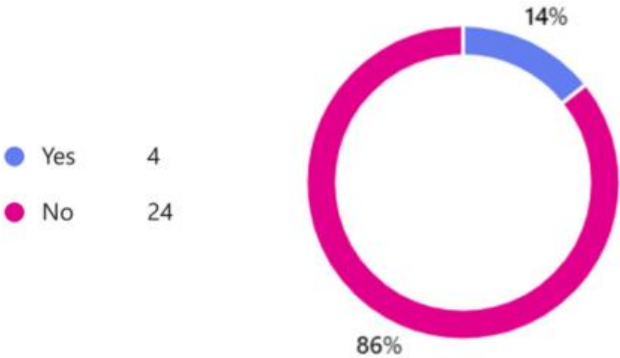
you feel the way community events such as the Jazz Festival are organised has a positive impact on your business?

Responses were mixed on the impact of events like the Jazz Festival, as some businesses are outside of the village centre or mainly operate online. Those situated closer to events suggested having more events throughout the year, better publicity, and improved collaboration between event organisers and local businesses.



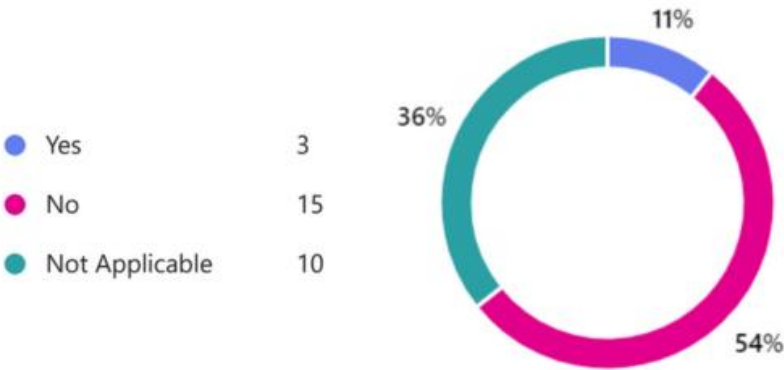
Has your business ever found it challenging to recruit and retain suitably qualified staff from the local area?

The majority of businesses responding have little issue recruiting staff. A small number of businesses said they found it hard to recruit due to unsociable hours and part-time roles.



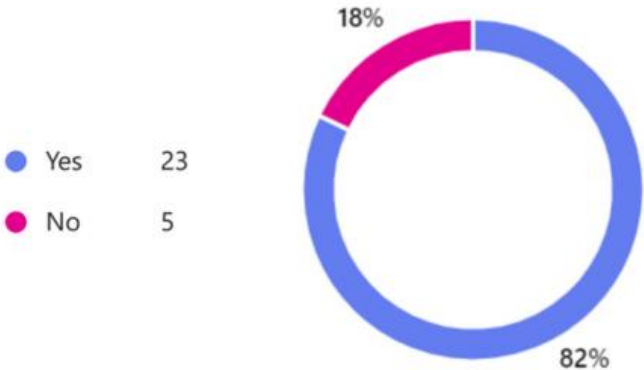
Has the administrative process of applying for licences from Kirklees ever caused any problems for your business? Experiences with Kirklees Council's licensing process were mixed.

The majority of businesses responding had positive experiences, receiving proactive updates from the council once they had begun the process. A couple of businesses think council departments don't communicate well enough and the licensing process is outdated.



Would you welcome more information about any support Kirklees can offer the business community?

Businesses wanted more information on grants, loans, and business development options.



Additional Comments:

Suggestions included improved lighting and CCTV in the village.