

Ophir Community Plan



September 2015

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Background

What:

Community planning is an opportunity for the local community to determine its own future. A community plan is based on the views of community members – what they value about their community, the opportunities they would like to see realised and the issues they would like to see resolved to ensure their town is attractive and a desirable place in which to live, work and play.

How:

The Ophir Community Plan has been developed following surveys of visitors, local residents (including young people) and ratepayers, interviews with local business owners, and a workshop with residents and ratepayers who wished to attend. Forty-two visitors completed the Ophir Visitor Survey. Forty-two residents/ratepayers also responded to their survey (a 39 percent return); seven completed the young people's survey; seven businesses were interviewed and a total of 23 attended the community workshop. Analyses of results from the opinion surveys are attached in the Appendix.

Aspects of Ophir which residents, ratepayers and visitors value the most have been identified, along with shared aspirations and concerns, and recommendations on how these might be achieved or resolved, if possible.

Who:

A working group, comprising interested community members, will oversee the plan on behalf of the community, and will help to drive many of the recommendations within it.

While the community plan has no legal status, it provides valuable information for organisations involved with Ophir on projects and issues which are important to the Ophir community.

This plan focusses on the views of the Ophir community (as defined in Community Profile). However it also acknowledges there is a wider community – from residents of neighbouring settlements, private individuals and national organisations – that for historical, ancestral, commercial or 'community' reasons consider themselves to hold an interest in the future of this area.

This plan should also be read in conjunction with the Omakau Community Plan, which was developed in late 2014, when considering the future of both the Ophir area and the Manuherikia Valley as a whole.

A key challenge in achieving many of the aspirations outlined in the Ophir Community Plan and resolving the issues will be funding. Projects will need to be prioritised and funding avenues investigated.

Community Plan Process

The process and timeframes to develop the Ophir Community Plan is as follows:

Surveys carried out:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| - residents/ratepayers | March 2015 |
| - young people | March 2015 |
| - business owners | March/April 2015 |
| - visitors | March 2015 |

Community workshop held April 2015

Draft plan developed May 2015

Draft plan available for community feedback July 2015

Community submissions considered by the working group August 2015

Plan amended September 2015

Plan confirmed by the working group September 2015

Plan implemented October onwards

Vision...

A vibrant, self-sufficient and safe community, in an historic village with successful businesses, modern services and a healthy natural environment.

We Value...

The following outlines the aspects of Ophir which community members who attended the community workshop value the most, in order of importance:

Our wide range of facilities and amenities:

- Community hall and the activities held there
- Swimming pool
- Picnic area
- Rail trail
- Restaurant
- Hotel
- Visitor accommodation
- Vintage shops
- Proximity to other services in Omakau, Alexandra, Queenstown (airport), Dunedin

Our community:

- Strong community spirit
- Caring and supportive people
- Quiet and safe
- Strong interaction and communication between community members
- Pride in the village's appearance

Ophir's history:

- Its well-preserved heritage buildings, particularly the Post Office and the bridge, and the history they represent

Natural environment and climate:

- Surrounding landscape
- Manuherikia River
- The weather and the seasons

Our Community Action Plan

The following is a list of outcomes and recommendations that have been prioritised as high, medium or low by the Working Group. The community's ability to carry out these recommendations will be dependent on resources provided by all stakeholders involved.

Each priority has been defined as the following:

H (High) – completed in the next 1-2 years

M (Medium) – completed in the next 3-4 years

L (Low) – completed within 5 years

Page	Objective	Recommendation	Priority
16	Retain and enhance Ophir's qualities as a safe, supportive and vibrant village in which to live and visit.	a. Investigate funding sources and how to apply for funding, and lodge applications when improvements and projects are planned.	H
		b. Speak with the community to determine ways that Ophir residents and ratepayers can be aware of community happenings (including council policy changes, and community-driven projects), giving everyone the opportunity to have their say and to help.	M
		c. Encourage more families to move to Ophir.	L
18	Have quality community facilities and amenities that are enjoyed by a wide range of users, and have safe, off-road access between Ophir and Omakau for cyclists and walkers.	a. Develop events and initiatives that increase community use of Ophir's Peace Memorial Hall.	M
		b. Create a development plan for the Peace Memorial Hall and investigate fundraising opportunities to achieve potential structural developments.	H
		c. Investigate options for providing a public toilet in Ophir (including the possibility of developing outside access to the Peace Memorial Hall toilet facilities).	L
		d. Consider ways the swimming pool area could be enhanced to encourage a greater number and wider range of users.	H
		e. Scope the feasibility of developing a cycleway/walkway between Ophir and Omakau (including funding avenues, route, planning requirements and safety standards).	H
20	Ophir is developed and maintained in a way which is in keeping with its historic theme.	a. Explore funding opportunities to assist with the repair and maintenance of heritage buildings.	M
		b. Investigate public demand for extending Ophir's 'heritage precinct' status across a larger portion of the village, and research the requirements and implications of choosing this option.	M

		c. Improve communications with authorities (Heritage New Zealand /Central Otago District Council) to better understand and work with legislative requirements.	M
		d. Utilise the Ophir Welfare Committee to link individuals with local experts who have a knowledge and understanding of heritage projects and can provide assistance with the processes involved.	M
		e. Utilise Council's District Plan review process to develop policy that best fits Ophir community values.	M
22	Ensure safe and sustainable water, waste water and storm water systems for Ophir which fit the village's needs and are affordable for its residents.	a. Support the <i>Omakau/Ophir Water Working Party</i> in their investigations of alternative, affordable, and clean water services for the region.	H
		b. Promote the development of an affordable reticulated sewerage system for the Ophir community.	M
		c. Notify Council staff, through the CODC Service Request system, if urgent maintenance or repair work is needed to Ophir's infrastructure.	H
24	A village with safe traffic speeds and tidy, functional roadway infrastructure.	a. Investigate options for discouraging motorists from speeding into and through Ophir with the CODC once the Government's new policies on traffic calming measures are confirmed.	H
		b. Seek advice from NZTA on possible options for erecting heritage directional signage, and/or 'signature' Ophir entranceway signs (that include NZTA's heritage logo) along roadsides to feed traffic to Ophir village.	H
		c. Investigate the possibility of installing street lights and tar sealing Macdonald Street.	L
		d. Encourage the maintenance of Ophir's street lights to an adequate standard.	M
		e. Identify where footpaths and gutters are needed and discuss their possible installation with the CODC, using a design which suits the historic nature of the village.	H
		f. Ensure the ongoing annual maintenance of the stone heritage gutters and investigate the possibility of extending this heritage guttering along the main street of Ophir.	H

		g. Investigate community interest in planting trees along Ophir's streets and in public spaces, and discuss planting plans with Council.	M
		a. Support moves to have the one-lane bridge off State Highway 85 at Omakau upgraded or replaced.	L
25	The Ophir community engages in responsible refuse disposal practices that encourages waste minimisation.	a. Investigate options whereby the community could work together to arrange the transfer of large bulky items to Alexandra for waste disposal or recycling for those people in the community who cannot manage it themselves.	M
27	Provide more reasons to visit Ophir, through permanent tourist attractions and events.	a. Investigate the development of a website and/or Facebook page for Ophir.	H
		b. Consider the establishment of a museum and craft precinct.	L
		c. Gauge the community's appetite for holding new events and investigate how to get them off the ground.	M
		d. Progress initiatives on new events for visitors and local community.	H
		e. Seek advice from local authorities to better understand their rules/regulations and Ophir's development opportunities.	M
		f. As a community, consider the long term vision for the village, with respect to commercial development, and work with Council to enable the Central Otago District Plan to reflect this vision.	M
		g. Explore the possible demand for establishing facilities and services for the motorhome/campervan community.	L
28	Ophir community values and protects its environmental resources.	a. Research the feasibility for whether a 'sustainable village model' could work for and add value to Ophir's community and environment.	L
		b. Ensure community vigilance in maintaining the cleanliness and health of the Manuherikia River.	M
		c. Raise community awareness of any proposals which could affect the Manuherikia River, and its course, and utilise opportunities to submit community views on proposals that affect it.	M
		d. Seek advice from the ORC on possible ways to protect the town from the risk of Manuherikia River flooding, and ways to reduce the impact if flooding occurs.	H

Community Profile

Location

Ophir lies in the Manuherikia Valley, a large glaciated valley with low, rolling hills and bordered by the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range (including Blacks Hill), with the impressive St Bathans and the Hawkdun ranges visible to the north-west. The grey and lavender thyme-covered hillsides, speckled with schist rock formations, contrast with the green, irrigated valley floor. The Manuherikia River runs through the valley, providing both a water source and recreational opportunities.

Manuherikia Valley's sparse terrain, with the relative absence of settlement and vast clear sky, is well known throughout the international atmospheric research community due to the work undertaken at the NIWA research station, situated at Lauder (7km from Omakau).

Ophir is located near State Highway 85 in the Central Otago District and is close to the east bank of the Manuherikia River. The small town of Omakau is located on the other side of the Manuherikia River, 3kms to the northwest. The larger towns which are closest to Ophir are Alexandra (27kms south-west via State Highway 85) and Ranfurly (58kms west via Ida Valley-Omakau Road and State Highway 85).

Natural Features

- Manuherikia River
- Dunstan Range
- Raggedy Range (including Blacks Hill)
- St Bathans Range
- Hawkdun Range
- Tiger Hill
- Lauder Gorge
- Ophir Gorge

The Area captured within this Plan

For the purpose of this Plan, the Ophir community is defined as people living in Ophir township or on the neighbouring farms. The aerial photograph below defines the geographic area within which the Ophir community is defined. While residents/ratepayers of the neighbouring settlements – Omakau, Lauder and Chatto Creek – are not included within this area, and have not been involved in the development of this plan, those who affiliate themselves with Ophir are welcome to become involved.



History

The settlement began as a gold-mining town. It became established very quickly when gold was discovered on the property of local runholder, Charles Black, in April 1863. Within three months, thousands of goldminers were living at what was then known as Blacks Diggings. The name was shortened to Blacks before being officially changed to Ophir in 1875, although the school, which has now been closed, and the hotel retained the name Blacks. The settlement was officially named after the goldmine described in the Bible as where the Queen of Sheba secured gold for King Solomon.

An estimated 34kgs of gold was extracted from the Ophir mines. The settlement became the district's commercial and social hub, with shops, two large hotels, a doctor and a hospital, school, post office, police station, bank, courthouse, and two churches.

But, as was the case with many booming goldmining settlements, the village became somewhat of a ghost town when the easily-extractable gold supply ran dry. Ophir was further depleted in 1904 when the newly developed Central Otago railway line bypassed the village, instead servicing the nearby farming settlement of Omakau, across the Manuherikia River.

However, it is believed the near abandonment of Ophir is the reason many of its historic buildings are in such good condition, and they are largely behind a renaissance of the village in recent years. Ophir is considered to rank alongside St Bathans and Clyde as among the



country's most authentic gold-mining settlements. A number of the buildings have been carefully restored and the heritage values of the village attracts many visitors. Vintage shops have also been established, in keeping with the township's historic theme.

Significant Heritage Structures:

Significant buildings and objects listed within the Central Otago District Plan Register of Heritage Buildings, Places, Sites and Objects and Notable Trees (Schedule 19.4) include:

- Blacks Hotel – Ophir;
- St Andrews Presbyterian Church – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Kintail House – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The Bungalow – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Dressmaking Shop – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Flannery's Store (The Bakery) – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Bank of New South Wales – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Pitches Store – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Policeman's House – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Old Courthouse – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Postmaster's House – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Post Office – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- The former Cottage Hospital – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Two-Cell Cottage (former Library Athenaeum) – Swindon Street, Ophir;
- Cottage, Stable and Out Buildings (west side) – Main Street, Ophir;

- The Daniel O’Connell Bridge – Ophir Bridge Road, Ophir;
- The Rock Cutting at the entrance to the Daniel O’Connell Bridge – Ophir Bridge Road, Ophir; and
- McTavish’s Stone Hut – Poolburn Road, Ophir.

People

Today Ophir is home to 60 permanent residents – comprising 56 adults and four children. There are 56 residential properties in the village, comprising 31 permanent homes and 25 holiday properties. The owners of the holiday properties are known locally as “cribbies.” Sixteen of them live in Dunedin, three live in Christchurch, two in Oamaru and one each in Bluff, Alexandra, Invercargill and Wellington.

It is believed the population of Ophir swells to up to 150 during the peak holiday periods. This includes an estimated 105 adults and about 12 children, who stay in the permanent residences and holiday properties, plus visiting family, friends and tourists staying privately or at commercial accommodation such as Blacks Hotel, Pitches Store, Ryan’s Cottage and The Bakery Cottages.

At the time of writing, 18 of Ophir’s permanent residents were retired, 27 were employed fulltime and 11 were employed part-time. Of those in either full or part-time employment, 11 people work within the Ophir area and 27 commute outside of it.

Statistics New Zealand categorise Ophir within the Dunstan Area. This Area encompasses a large portion of Central Otago District’s rural areas, including Omakau, Earnsclough, Bannockburn and Tarras. Census data indicates that the Dunstan Area has a rapidly growing population, experiencing a 19.7 percent increase in population to 4,515 people, according to the 2013 Census figures. In contrast, Ophir’s resident population has remained relatively static over this time.



Lifestyle

Ophir residents enjoy the peace and quiet of the village and the sense of safety and support associated with belonging to a small community. They also value Ophir's vibrancy, with its historic ambience, successful hospitality businesses and large number of tourists.

Residents and visitors have many recreational and social activities to choose from. The Manuherikia River, which runs close to Ophir, is known for its angling and walking opportunities. Ophir is near Omakau's entrance to the popular *Otago Central Rail Trail* and the land's topography lends itself to numerous other biking opportunities. Hunting of game animals – such as deer, possums, rabbits, ducks and pigs – is also enjoyed by some residents.

Socially, there is a popular café/restaurant and pub in Ophir, plus a small community library and periodic screening of films at the community hall. The swimming pool, community hall, and picnic area all provide social and recreational opportunities for the community.

While essential emergency services are not situated within Ophir, residents are supported by the services in nearby Omakau, which has a police officer and a volunteer fire brigade, assisted by a volunteer co-response team. The Omakau and Districts Playcentre is located on the main street of Ophir, and Omakau provides a primary school for the children of the area. The nearest secondary school is located in Alexandra (28 km from Ophir) and pupils can access this by school bus via Omakau. Medical services and facilities are also provided in Alexandra and Clyde (32 km from Ophir).



Ophir residents align themselves with Omakau's sports facilities and clubs. The neighbouring town offers a high level of sporting opportunities for both participants and spectators. Omakau's sporting facilities include a golf course, bowling club, race course, and the Omakau Sports Domain which contains a rugby field and clubrooms, a cricket ground and nets, a hockey/tennis turf and squash courts, plus a public playground and camping ground (with cabins and an ablution block).

Climate

Despite its relatively low altitude of 305m above sea level, Ophir is known for its extreme air temperatures. It has the greatest temperature range in New Zealand, of 55 degrees Celsius. Described as a continental climate, Ophir's air temperature reaches 38 degrees Celsius in summer and drops to -15 degrees Celsius in winter. The township holds the record for New Zealand's second lowest temperature, of -21.6 °C on July 3, 1995.



Economy

The main industry in Ophir village is tourism. A number of visitors, including Otago Central Rail Trail users, stay in one of the township's commercial accommodation providers (including Pitches Store, Blacks Hotel and bed and breakfast operators) or in one of the cribs/holiday homes which leased short-term. Other offerings to tourists include meals at Pitches Store and Blacks Hotel, a visit to the beautifully restored Post Office, and unique shopping opportunities at the village's vintage shops.

The main industry in the wider area is sheep and beef farming, although some dairy farms have been established in recent years. The Manuherikia Catchment Water Strategy Group is investigating ways to improve the supply and reliability of irrigation water to users throughout the greater Manuherikia Valley.

Community Development

Community

Ophir residents and “cribbies” enjoy village life. They value its peaceful lifestyle, sense of community, and the diverse range of skills and abilities that individuals bring into the area. They also appreciate Ophir’s heritage and its many facilities and amenities.

Ophir has a very connected, organised and committed community, which is helped greatly by the *Ophir Welfare Committee*. This small group of community representatives coordinates community activities and fundraising events, acts as a ‘collective voice’ on matters that affect the community, and looks out for the overall well-being of the people of Ophir. The committee keeps residents and property owners updated on issues and events through its electronic database, which holds contact details for all Ophir residents and property owners. In addition, a community member generates a regular community newsletter, which is distributed to local households, and the community has their own local telephone directory (that includes home contact details of the local cribbies).

Being aware of local authority policies/proposals/decisions which affect Ophir and having a united community voice, will assist the Ophir community in driving community initiatives; securing funding; and lobbying territorial and/or government authorities. Members of the community have identified several barriers that are currently impeding their community from effectively achieving this. These include:

- the small size of the community;
- the difficulty in getting a consensus;
- apathy/negativity toward local authorities; and
- the need to rely on the same few people to do the work.



Representatives of the Ophir Community after the 2013 ‘Gold 150 Celebrations’ Ophir Gala Day

It is acknowledged that some members of the community would rather not be involved in collective activities. However there may be potential to grow community involvement in community decision-making. There are also opportunities to develop more community-driven initiatives within Ophir, such as activities that utilise the community hall and local events (as listed in the Tourism section).

A lack of funds was identified as a barrier to improving a number of areas within Ophir – including community facilities and events, infrastructure and heritage preservation projects. There are however community funding opportunities through organisations such as the Central Lakes Trust, the Bob Turnbull Trust and the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board that could be worth further exploration by Ophir community members.

An aspect of living in Ophir that residents value greatly is the feeling of safety and security, and it is important to them that this is maintained.

While many community members want Ophir to stay as it is, several mentioned the lack of young people in the village. Community members would like to see initiatives established that encourage a more balanced population, between retired people and families.

Objective:

Retain and enhance Ophir's qualities as a safe, supportive and vibrant village in which to live and visit.

Recommendations:

- Investigate funding sources and how to apply for funding, and lodge applications when improvements and projects are planned;
- Speak with the community to determine ways that Ophir residents and ratepayers can be aware of community happenings (including council policy changes, and community-driven projects), giving everyone the opportunity to have their say and to help;
- Encourage more families to move to Ophir.

Community facilities and amenities

For a community of just 60 residents, Ophir boasts a wide range of facilities and amenities – including a hall, swimming pool and picnic area. Many of these are managed or operated by the community and all are greatly valued.

It is important to Ophir residents and ratepayers that the existing amenities be maintained and/or upgraded to attract more, and potentially a wider range of users. There is also community support for new amenities to be developed.

Peace Memorial Hall: The community hall is considered to be a significant asset to Ophir. Residents and ratepayers would like to see it used more, leading to higher rental income. Improving the hall's facilities and amenities is believed to be a way to achieve this, including installing a commercial kitchen; investing in better audio visual equipment and improving the heating system. There is widespread community support for seeking funding to enable the improvements to be undertaken, including from charities, trusts and local authorities.

Other ideas to encourage more use of the hall include publicising its availability more widely; greater promotion of events held at the hall, including the movie nights, and introducing new events, such as dances.

Swimming pool area: Ophir's swimming pool area is considered to be an important community asset and there was support at the community workshop for improving it. Current improvement initiatives include installing shade sails, upgrading the changing sheds, and promoting the grounds as a smoke free area. Another option could be to install a petanque court on the grounds beside the pool.



Public toilets: There are currently no public toilets in Ophir and many community members believe it would be a useful addition to the town's amenities. The swimming pool toilets are open for public use during the swimming season (December through March), though they are not widely promoted as cleaning and maintenance is managed by volunteers. Suggestions for the development of an 'official' public toilet facility included adapting the toilets in the Peace Memorial Hall so they can be accessed from outside the hall while the rest of the facility remains locked.

Cycling/walking track: Developing a safe cycling/walking track between Ophir and Omakau is important to Ophir residents and ratepayers, and was identified as an opportunity in both the Visitor and Youth surveys as well. Suggestions included a "bridge to bridge" track along the roadside linking Ophir and Omakau, and/or from Ophir to the Otago Central Rail Trail at Omakau. Extensive investigations into land access, funding avenues and planning permissions will be required.

Objective:

Have quality community facilities and amenities that are enjoyed by a wide range of users, and have safe, off-road access between Ophir and Omakau for cyclists and walkers.

Recommendations:

- Develop events and initiatives that increase community use of Ophir's Peace Memorial Hall;
- Create a development plan for the Peace Memorial Hall and investigate fundraising opportunities to achieve potential structural developments;
- Investigate options for providing a public toilet in Ophir (including the possibility of developing outside access to the Peace Memorial Hall toilet facilities);
- Consider ways the swimming pool area could be enhanced to encourage a greater number and wider range of users;
- Scope the feasibility of developing a cycleway/walkway between Ophir and Omakau (including funding avenues, route, planning requirements and safety standards).

Heritage

Ophir's heritage and historic buildings are seen by its residents and ratepayers as being a very important part of the character of the village and community. The community places importance on preserving its historic buildings and repairing those which have fallen into disrepair. Barriers perceived in achieving this include a lack of funding, the "red tape" associated with Heritage New Zealand and the Central Otago District Council and, to a lesser extent, attitudes within the community to the village's heritage.

Ophir residents and ratepayers' most significant concern in regards to heritage is what was described at the community workshop as "destruction of buildings by neglect." Some residents queried whether funding opportunities were available to assist private property owners with the repairs/maintenance of heritage buildings. Others queried whether community ownership could be an option for Ophir village.

Community concern was expressed regarding some building construction and repair work undertaken that was not in keeping with the historic nature of the village. There were suggestions from members of the community that a heritage status should be applied to the entire village to control for this.

The western half of Ophir's main street (Swindon Street) is designated as a Heritage Precinct under the Central Otago District Plan. This "status" requires all property owners to obtain a resource consent prior to undertaking any constructions or alterations to buildings within this precinct – the purpose for this is to make sure that constructions and alterations do not impact on heritage values. While there is no cost imposed by Council in processing these resource consents, there is a time factor involved, and applicants are also required to



have written approval from Heritage New Zealand to accompany their resource consent application.

The Central Otago District Plan is being reviewed in the next 12 months and there is an opportunity for the Ophir community to present a case to Council to extend their heritage precinct area (including its buildings, paths and stone gutters) during this process. However, in doing so, the community also needs to take into consideration that this in turn is likely to impose additional layers of protection (rules) within the District Plan that developers will need to comply with.

People's perceptions of heritage and their willingness to get involved in heritage projects was seen as an issue, and one which could be addressed through better communication between the community, Heritage New Zealand and Council. There are also members of Ophir community with knowledge and expertise in heritage projects who would be willing to assist other individuals, as needed.

Objective:

Ophir is developed and maintained in a way which is in keeping with its historic theme.

Recommendations:

- Explore funding opportunities to assist with the repair and maintenance of heritage buildings;
- Investigate public demand for extending Ophir's 'heritage precinct' status across a larger portion of the village, and research the requirements and implications of choosing this option;
- Improve communications with authorities (Heritage New Zealand and Central Otago District Council) to better understand and work with legislative requirements;
- Utilise the Ophir Welfare Committee to link individuals with local experts who have a knowledge and understanding of heritage projects and can provide assistance with the processes involved;
- Utilise Council's District Plan review process to develop policy that best fits Ophir community values.

Infrastructure:

The lack of some infrastructure and issues with some existing infrastructure is currently the largest concern for Ophir residents and ratepayers.

Three waters (potable water, wastewater, storm water)

Potable water: Ophir residents and ratepayers are concerned about the quality and cost of its potable water supply. There is often a requirement to boil water after heavy rain, and it is believed by some that this poor water quality may be deterring people from purchasing real estate in Ophir. To further aggravate matters, Ophir and Omakau's potable water supply currently has the highest fixed charge of any water supply in Central Otago District.

Ophir residents would like to see alternative potable water sources investigated that will be affordable for their community. The *Omakau/Ophir Water Working Party*, which comprises interested community representatives and Council's Water Services Manager, is currently undertaking investigations on the community's behalf to improve potable water quality. Options for consideration include locating a cleaner water source and providing a higher level of treatment. The challenge for the working party is to find an adequate system that will be *affordable* for the small number of properties that will be drawing from it.

Wastewater: There is a strong desire within the community for a reticulated sewerage system. It is believed by some that the reliance on septic tanks is deterring development in Ophir, particularly in relation to commercial enterprises. Some members of the community are also concerned that an increase in septic tanks, as a result of residential/commercial development, would have negative environmental effects.

Affordability of a reticulated system for such a small community will once again be a real challenge for the Ophir community.

Storm water: Another concern for Ophir community is the upkeep of their storm water drainage ditches or *swales*. Residents and ratepayers would like the existing swales in the village to be maintained to a higher standard. Some of the swales are reported to be full of weeds, and are creating an eyesore and causing problems for residents who live near them.

Maintenance of Ophir's swales is carried out by contractors on Council's behalf. The contractors check and clear the swales once a year, generally during autumn. If swales are becoming overgrown and unsightly in the interim, residents can contact Council and lodge a Service Request for work to be undertaken. The community could consider negotiating with Council to increase the maintenance frequency, however this will incur additional charges to local ratepayers.

Long-term funding: CODC is currently reviewing the way in which ratepayers are charged for their water, wastewater and storm water services across the District. Water schemes are currently funded separately by those ratepayers connected, or serviceable, to each scheme. A number of communities are facing major upgrades to their water and waste water schemes to comply with national standards, renew ageing infrastructure and meet community expectations. However these upgrades will be extremely expensive for ratepayers in small communities like Omakau and Ophir. Council has been developing a district-wide *3 Waters Strategy* that proposes allocating infrastructural costs as a district-

wide uniform annual charge. This option will spread the burden of smaller communities, such as Ophir, having to fund their own scheme independently.

The development of Ophir's potable water supply and waste water system are both included Council's *30-Year Infrastructure Strategy and Activity Management Plans*.

Objective:

Ensure safe and sustainable water, waste water and storm water systems for Ophir which fit the village's needs and are affordable for its residents.

Recommendations:

- Support the *Omakau/Ophir Water Working Party* in their investigations of alternative, affordable, and clean water services for the region;
- Promote the development of an affordable reticulated sewerage system for the Ophir community;
- Notify Council staff, through the CODC Service Request system, if urgent maintenance or repair work is needed to Ophir's infrastructure.

Roading

Traffic speed: Many Ophir community members are concerned about traffic speeding through the village. They say the speeding occurs both from Blacks Hotel to the Post Office, and from the end of the village to the bridge. Ways to discourage speeding which were discussed at the community workshop included installing speed bumps or chicanes at the Blacks Hotel entrance to Ophir, reducing the 70kph zone to 50kph (from the end of the existing 50kph zone to the bridge), and reducing the 100kph zones in the vicinity of the village to 70kph.

Central Government is currently reviewing its policies and procedures around speed zones and traffic calming measures. Once the Government has confirmed its policies, the CODC will be able to utilise these standards to work with the community to find functional methods to "calm" traffic travelling through and around Ophir.

Signage: Ophir community members are concerned the village is missing out on potential visitors/income due to the lack of directional signs to the village from State Highway 85 (SH 85). Current road signage to Ophir includes a brown "Historic Ophir" directional sign at the turnoff from SH 85 to the one-lane bridge in Omakau and a green directional guide sign at the turn-off into Ophir at Blacks Hotel. Yellow fingerboard signs are also erected at the Blacks Hotel intersection and on the SH85 / Ophir Bridge road intersection near the Thompsons Bridge.

Authority to erect roadside signage on state highways is governed primarily by New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA). NZTA has national standards for determining what type of signage is permitted on State Highways, depending on the type of activity and traffic intensity on that road. These standards are also adopted by local authorities for consistency.

In the past NZTA has not agreed to erecting a green directional guide sign at the SH 85 Ophir Bridge road intersection because they, and also CODC Roding, do not wish to actively encourage greater traffic use at this intersection or subsequent access over the historic Daniel O'Connell bridge for the following reasons:

- a) Safety and poor visibility at this intersection and the fact that there is adequate signage indicating Ophir from the State Highway at the Omakau intersection;
- b) The historic Daniel O'Connell bridge is not designed to carry heavy traffic and users have been known to struggle with the lack of visibility through the cutting on the bridge approach (Ophir side).

In addition to the green directional guide signs, heritage towns (such as Clyde) also have brown NZTA heritage signage on the roadsides approaching the village to notify road users of the special character, and services available, within the village. There may be opportunities for Ophir to have signage such as this erected along the rural roads that feed into Ophir. This signage needs to be erected some distance away from the village turn-offs (e.g. the downward slopes of Blacks Hill and Tiger Hill) so that motorists have sufficient time to adjust their speed and make the turn into the village.

There is also an opportunity for Ophir to develop distinctive 'signature' signage at the entranceways to the village, to celebrate and promote the township. Both directional and town signage into Ophir should carry the approved NZTA heritage logo.

Streetscape: Some Ophir residents believe the lack of clear footpaths and adjoining gutters are a nuisance and potential safety hazard. The lack of footpaths means some motorists park where pedestrians want to walk and block residents' driveways. The lack of gutters means storm water is not channelled during heavy rain, resulting in flooding on some properties. Community members would also like better structural maintenance of the village's existing historic stone gutters, and potential extension of the heritage gutters along the main street. The possibility of extending the seal on the main street out to the cobbled gutters was also suggested. Unfortunately these projects will require significant expenditure.

Chip sealing, as well as the possible installation of streetlights, on Macdonald Street was suggested by some members of the community. However, given the relatively small number of properties on this street, it is unlikely that Council would be able to justify this level of infrastructure at this location over other roads in the District that have higher traffic demands.

There was also some support for beautifying Ophir's streets by planting trees along the main street and in public areas. It was suggested that the community could fundraise to cover the cost of this development.

Bridge access to Ophir: Road access from Omakau to the Ida Valley requires crossing either the historic Daniel O'Connell suspension bridge by Ophir or the concrete bridge at Omakau – both of which are narrow single-lane bridges. The bridge at Omakau is commonly used by agricultural vehicles, as it is slightly wider than the suspension bridge. However its 2.7m road width is still too narrow for many larger vehicles, which have to drive with one wheel on the concrete wheel guard, thus compromising the long term structural integrity of the bridge. There are also vehicles, such as tour buses, campervans, etc. that try to use the Ophir suspension bridge but are either too large or struggle to reverse off the

bridge, should someone be coming in the other direction. Ophir residents would like to see the Omakau bridge widened and promoted as the preferred access way for heavy vehicles.

Council has identified the one-lane bridge at Omakau within in the 30-year Long Term Plan as requiring a major upgrade or replacement. This will however be an expensive exercise!

Objective:

A village with safe traffic speeds and tidy, functional roadway infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Investigate options for discouraging motorists from speeding into and through Ophir with the CODC once the Government's new policies on traffic calming measures are confirmed;
- Seek advice from NZTA on possible options for erecting heritage directional signage, and/or 'signature' Ophir entranceway signs (that include NZTA's heritage logo) along roadsides to feed traffic to Ophir village;
- Investigate the possibility of installing street lights and tar sealing Macdonald Street;
- Encourage the maintenance of Ophir's street lights to an adequate standard;
- Identify where footpaths and gutters are needed and discuss their possible installation with the CODC, using a design which suits the historic nature of the village;
- Ensure the ongoing annual maintenance of the stone heritage gutters and investigate the possibility of extending this heritage guttering along the main street of Ophir;
- Investigate community interest in planting trees along Ophir's streets and in public spaces, and discuss planting plans with Council;
- Support moves to have the one-lane bridge off State Highway 85 at Omakau upgraded or replaced.



Refuse Disposal

Ophir village properties receive kerbside refuse and recycling collections. There is also a recycling drop-off facility available for residential users in Omakau. Large bulky items need to be taken either to the transfer station in Alexandra, which is open seven days a week for waste disposal to landfill (for items such as mattresses, carpet, furniture, construction/ demolition material, etc.), or for recycling at Alexandra's recycling depot (for re-saleable goods, whiteware, metal, electronic items etc.). Clearfill (e.g., rubble, bricks, sand, gravels, etc.) and greenwaste can be taken to the Alexandra transfer station – charges will apply.

Some members of the community would like to have a disposal facility for these large bulky items located closer to the village. However this is not likely to be a viable option that Council could pursue. There may however be options for the community to work together in shifting these bulky items to Alexandra.

Objective:

The Ophir community engages in responsible refuse disposal practices that encourages waste minimisation.

Recommendation:

- Investigate options whereby the community could work together to arrange the transfer of large bulky items to Alexandra for waste disposal or recycling for those people in the community who cannot manage it themselves.

Tourism

Ophir residents and ratepayers would like to attract more tourists to the village. Ideas on how this could be achieved include the development of an Ophir website and possible creation of a museum and craft precinct.

A website and/or Facebook page focused on Ophir Village could provide a vehicle for giving people information about the village's attractions and events.

Members of the community suggested establishing a museum that could display artefacts such as smithy equipment, farm machinery and Bob Turnbull's cars. Historic artefacts and interpretation could also be displayed in heritage buildings, such as the old jailhouse, post office or community hall. A suggestion was also made to establish a craft precinct in a heritage building.

Ophir community members would like new, regular events to be developed in the village. These would not only attract people into the village but also provide the added benefit of bringing the community together more regularly. Three regular events suggested and supported by many community workshop attendees were:

- An annual farmers market;
- Street markets in summer; and
- An annual wine and food festival, potentially during Otago Anniversary weekend in March.



The resource consent process was identified as a barrier to increasing tourism activity in Ophir, along with the development contributions sought by Council. Ophir currently has no Business Resource Area zoned within the village, which means that potential commercial developers need to apply for a resource consent in order to establish their business.

Ophir community may wish to consider how it would like to see its village develop into the future. If there is a united demand to encourage commercial operations within the township, the community could address this within the Central Otago District Plan review, which is soon to be undertaken.

The motorhome industry was identified by the Ophir community as a growing market. It was recognised through the community planning process that the provision of facilities and services for this market within the the village could be an opportunity worth exploring in the future.

Objective:

Provide more reasons to visit Ophir, through permanent tourist attractions and events

Recommendations:

- Investigate the development of a website and/or Facebook page for Ophir;
- Consider the establishment of a museum and craft precinct;
- Gauge the community's appetite for holding new events and investigate how to get them off the ground;
- Progress initiatives on new events for visitors and local community;
- Seek advice from local authorities to better understand their rules/regulations and Ophir's development opportunities;
- As a community, consider what the appropriate level of commercial development is for the village, and work with Council to enable the Central Otago District Plan to reflect this vision.
- Explore the possible demand for establishing facilities and services for the motorhome/campervan community.

Environment

Sustainability: There is interest among Ophir community members in working toward the township becoming a model of a sustainable village, with an emphasis on self-sufficiency – particularly in the areas of electricity, water usage and growing food – and environmental awareness. This could be an opportunity for community members to investigate further.

Manuherikia River: A clean and healthy Manuherikia River, which is popular with anglers, walkers and campers, is important to Ophir residents and ratepayers. There is concern the health of the Manuherikia River will deteriorate if the amount of dairy farming/land intensification in the river catchment increases.

The risk of flooding from the Manuherikia River is also of concern to Ophir community members. Much of the farmland between Ophir and Manuherikia River, plus some sections within the village, have a flood-prone notation within the Central Otago District Plan. This notation reflects the flood



levels experienced during the 1990's floods and highlights the reality of flooding as an ongoing risk for the village. There is a desire from the community to meet with the Otago Regional Council to discuss risk reduction initiatives for the village. Some members of the community would also like to address the lack of financial support provided to maintain riverbanks.

Objective:

Ophir community values and protects its environmental resources.

Recommendations:

- Research the feasibility for whether a 'sustainable village model' could work for and add value to Ophir's community and environment;
- Ensure community vigilance in maintaining the cleanliness and health of the Manuherikia River;
- Raise community awareness of any proposals which could affect the Manuherikia River, and its course, and utilise opportunities to submit community views on proposals that affect it;
- Seek advice from the ORC on possible ways to protect the town from the risk of Manuherikia River flooding, and ways to reduce the impact if flooding occurs.

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OPHIR



Residents’ Survey Analysis Report

Prepared by Central Otago District Council

March 2015

The Central Otago District Council was approached by the Ophir Welfare Committee to develop a community plan for Ophir. This resident opinion survey forms part of the information-gathering process to gauge public opinion on Ophir township and community.

Surveys were distributed to residents on the community's newsletter circulation list on February 10, 2015. Forty-five households received the survey by e-mail and three households were mailed hard copies. An additional ten households received hard copies of the survey via the local post office mail boxes. Copies of the survey were also available at the Ophir Post Office for residents who preferred a hard copy (10 households).

The survey closed on March 4th 2015. Responses were received from 42 residents (comprising 36 electronic responses and 6 paper responses). There are approximately 107 residents in Ophir (excluding children) giving a survey response of 39%.

Respondents were asked to list up to five strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers in the community and town, highlighting the most important to them in each category. Then they were asked to add their vision for the community and town.

The Residents' Survey also included a section for youths (18 years of age or younger) to complete. Four households responded to this youth section and provided responses from a total of seven children/youths. Questions in this section related to what children/youths loved about Ophir, what they would like to see in Ophir in the future, and one thing they would like to change.

Following is an analysis of the residents' survey results.

Strengths – what makes Ophir a great place?

Residents were asked what they thought were Ophir’s good points, or in other words, the things that made Ophir a great place to live. Respondents could list up to 5 weaknesses, placing the most important weakness in the first box.

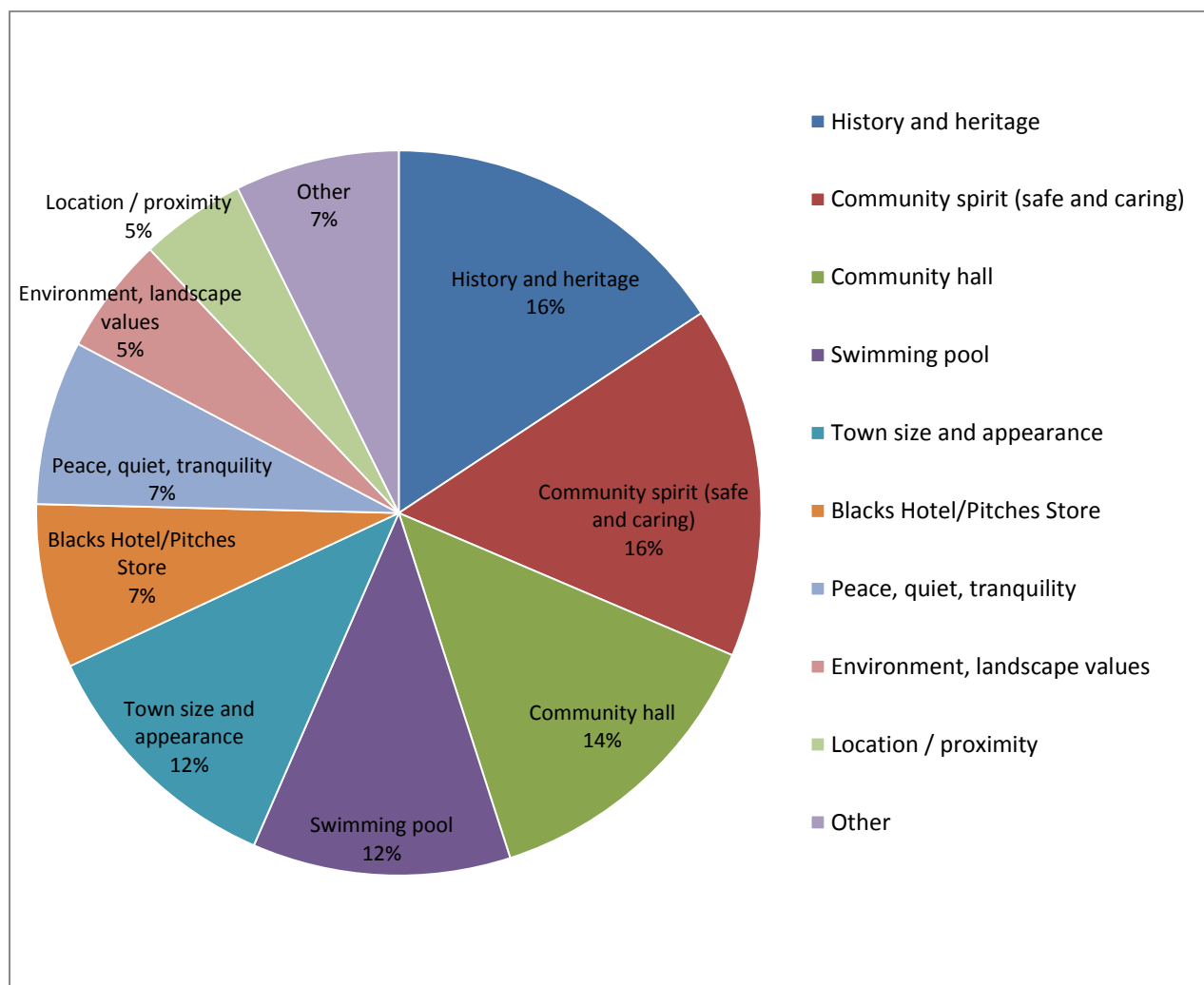


Figure 1. Comments describing residents’ views on the ‘Strengths’ of Ophir

All 42 respondents answered this question and generated a total of 182 comments. These responses are displayed in Figure 1 above.

Ophir’s history and community spirit were the most commonly reported strengths, each receiving 27 comments (16% of responses). References to Ophir’s history included historical buildings, heritage preservation, goldmining and the bridge. Community spirit included comments relating to caring neighbours and safety for young (grandchildren) and old (“retirement village”).

The community hall (14%) and swimming pool (12%) were popular assets and highly valued by community members, as were commercial ventures Blacks Hotel and Pitches Store (a total of 7%).

The size of the town, its tidy appearance and the effort residents made with their gardens garnered 12% of responses. Comments included –

“Residents are mostly house-proud and the town is neat, clean and tidy”; and
“People tend to make an effort to have their properties looking nice and gardens well cared for”.

Location and proximity to major centres (Dunedin, Wanaka, Alexandra) and recreation facilities (such as the Otago Rail Trail), plus landscape and environment values, both comprised 5% of responses. Comments included:

“Access to main centres while feeling remote”

“Ophir’s central location to both the city of Dunedin and the mountains of Queenstown and Wanaka”.

A total of 7% of responses fell into a mixed bag made up of appreciation for the Ophir Welfare Committee (5 responses), good cell phone coverage (2 responses) and general positive comments – e.g. “Ophir is one of the best places in Central to live in”.

Strengths – most important

Residents were asked to identify the one strength they most valued about living in Ophir. All 42 residents chose to do this.

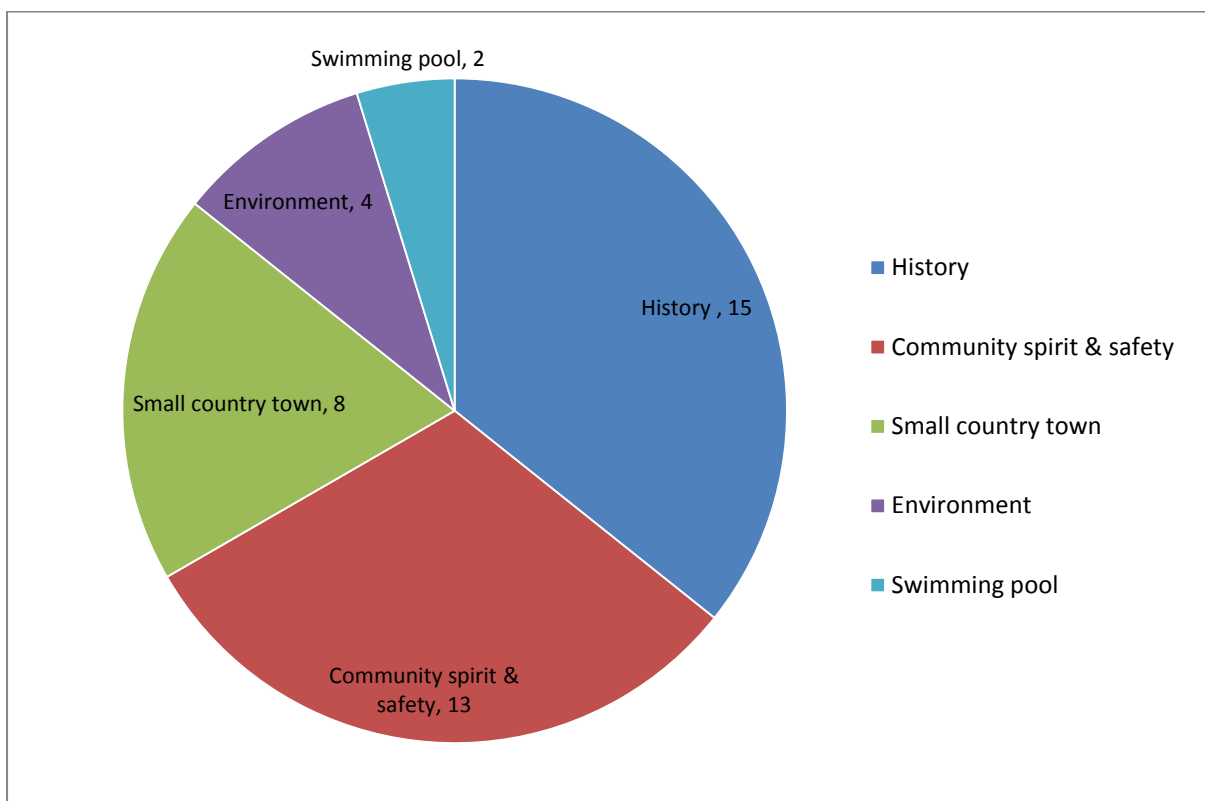


Figure 2: Comments describing residents’ views on the ‘Top Strength’ of Ophir.

The top value for residents was the town’s history and the buildings that have been preserved (15 responses), closely followed by the community for both its spirit and safety (13 responses).

Being a small country town with wide streets and its location away from busy highways was the next most important things (8 responses) with the environment (4 responses) and swimming pool (2 responses) rounding out the top strengths for residents.

Comments included:

“Sense of history and a journey back in time”,

“... people all work for the common good”, and

“The people that live here and the strong community spirit”.

SUMMARY

The strengths identified by most respondents were the value and protection of the area’s history and the strong community spirit, which ensured assets such as the pool and historical buildings were maintained. Residents appear to feel safe and cared for in a close-knit community with a good range of services, such as the hotel and café, supplying their needs.

Weaknesses – what aspects of living in Ophir are you dissatisfied with?

Respondents were invited to identify what they think are Ophir's weaknesses – the aspects that they are not completely satisfied with. Respondents could list up to 5 weaknesses, placing the most important weakness in the first box.

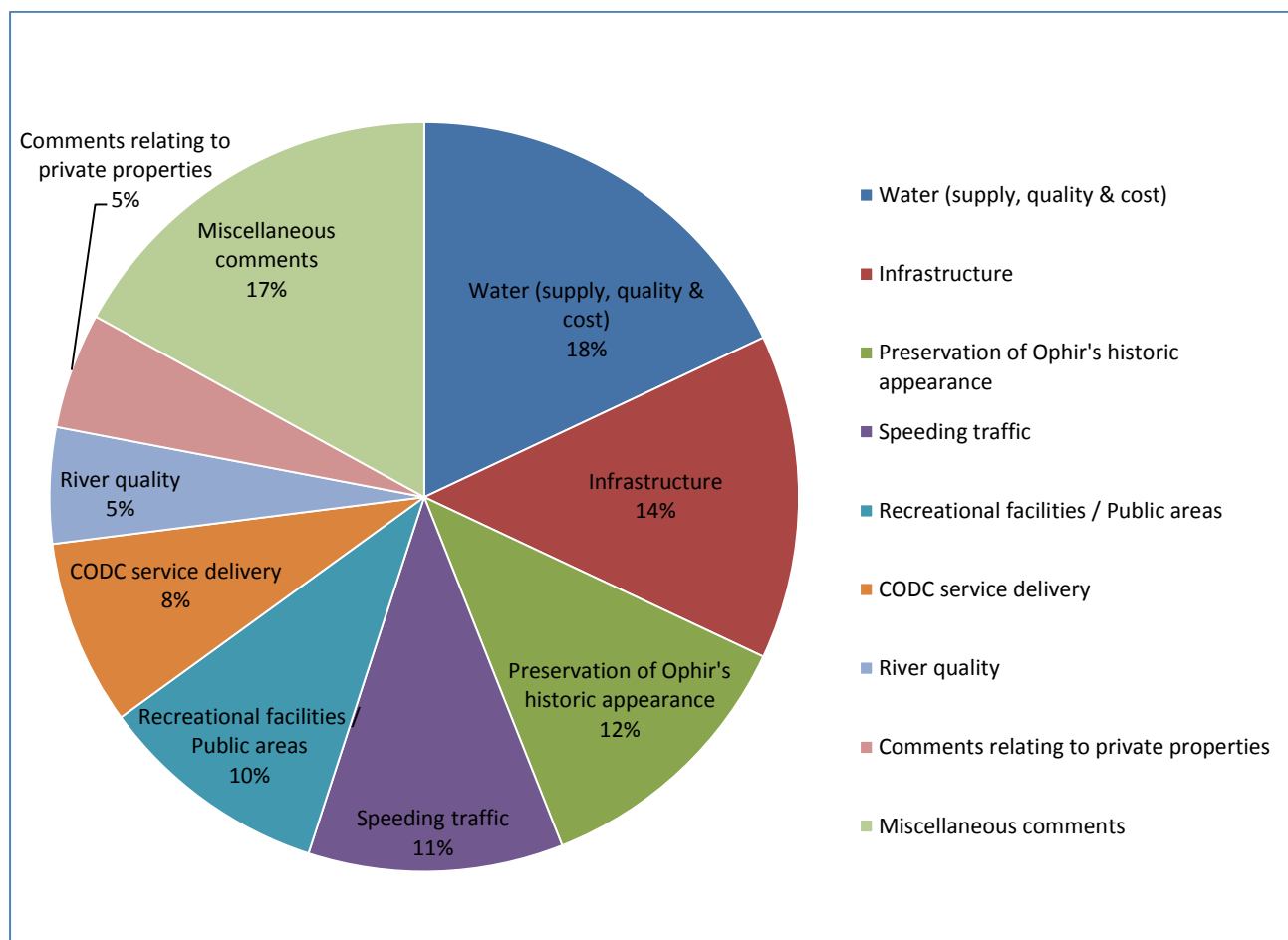


Figure 3. Comments describing residents' views on the 'Weaknesses' of Ophir

Forty-one respondents provided a total of 136 responses to this question. The weakness most commonly identified by residents was water (18%) – supply, quality and cost. Comments included:

- “the only weakness is the cost of water, no one can afford to water their grass due to cost”;
- “expensive and terrible water supply”;
- “quality and surety of water supply”.

Infrastructure was highlighted in several ways and attracted 20 responses (14% of comments). Footpaths, flood prone curbing and roading attracted 12 responses, while lack of upkeep on council and DOC land in a further two responses. Rubbish collection frequency, particularly for crib residents, was unsatisfactory for two commenters as was lack of lighting at night (2) and lack of sewerage scheme (1).

Recreational facilities (10%) which were a weakness were identified as the swimming pool changing rooms needing upgrading (2), signage at the town entrance and indicating the toilets and picnic area

could be improved (4). Three comments said the entrance to Ophir at the pub end was “dull”. Three comments suggested there needs to be a safe path for between Omakau and Ophir as well as to the Rail Trail and that there were no trees on the main street (2).

The necessity to preserve the historical appearance and integrity of the town attracted 16 responses (12%). Traffic issues drew 15 responses (11%). Residents commented that traffic speed through the town in excess of 50 kmph and that “Swindon Street and Ophir Bridge Road are used as short cut around Omakau – speeding vehicles”.

The CODC was mentioned in 11 responses (8%) as being “unsympathetic”, “reluctant to be on the same page as locals” and rates were perceived to be expensive.

Flooding and pollution of the river attracted seven comments including “... when ... river is low our quality of water suffers”, “ the uncertainty regarding flooding” and “threatened by constant flooding not enough done to maintain river and riverbanks”.

Other weaknesses identified were widespread. Dairy farming increasing in the area and being close to the town drew three comments as did lack of guttering on buildings. Others were people using firearms too close to houses (3), roaming dogs (2), underuse of the hall (1), managing the town as it gets busier (1), the harsh climate and Ophir only being “known as the coldest place in New Zealand” (2). The age (“need to move due to health and age”) and small size of the permanent population was identified as a weakness in four comments. The addition of a general store to the town attracted two comments while not enough building sections and slow broadband were mentioned in one comment each. The balance was comments relating to private residences (7).

Weaknesses – most important

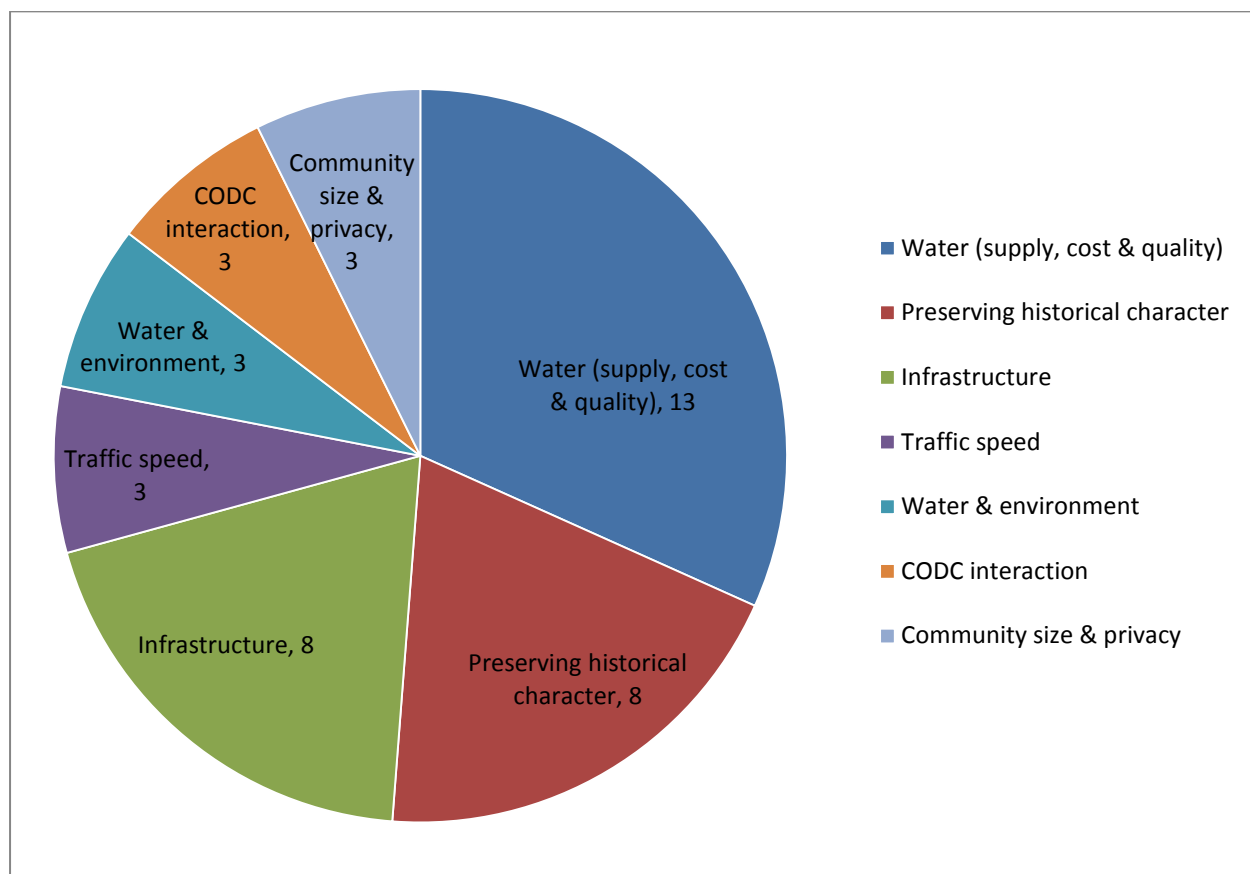


Figure 4. Comments describing the most significant weakness of living in Ophir

Of the forty-one responses received, the weakness most commonly identified by residents was the supply, quality and cost of water (13 responses). Comments included:

“it’s a shame to see all the dry verges that no one can afford to water”; and
“expensive and terrible water supply”.

Allowing new buildings that do not fit the character/style of others in the town was the next biggest weakness, and issues with infrastructure were the next biggest concerns for respondents.

Comments relating to infrastructure included “poor rubbish collections” (2), footpaths, curbing and channelling, lighting at night, gravel on the sides of the main street, and the poor condition of CODC and DOC-owned land (1 each).

Three respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the CODC as their top weakness – comments included:

“We seem not to be heard or appreciated for our efforts by the CODC”; and
“reluctance by the council to be on the same page as us”.

Traffic speed was rated as the most significant weakness by three respondents, while the small size of the permanent community was rated as most significant for two more.

Miscellaneous comments about dairy farming encroachment, water quality in the river, a pond and individual privacy each had one response.

SUMMARY

The biggest weakness identified by residents was water – cost and quality. The next biggest concern was new buildings that are perceived as being out of character with the rest of the town, reinforcing residents desire to maintain the town’s historical character

Infrastructure, difficulties dealing with the CODC, and traffic matters were the next biggest weaknesses identified.

Improvements and Opportunities

Residents were asked to list those things that they think would make Ophir a better place to live, play and do business, and to suggest opportunities that could improve life in Ophir. Respondents could list up to 5 opportunities, placing the most important opportunity in the first box.

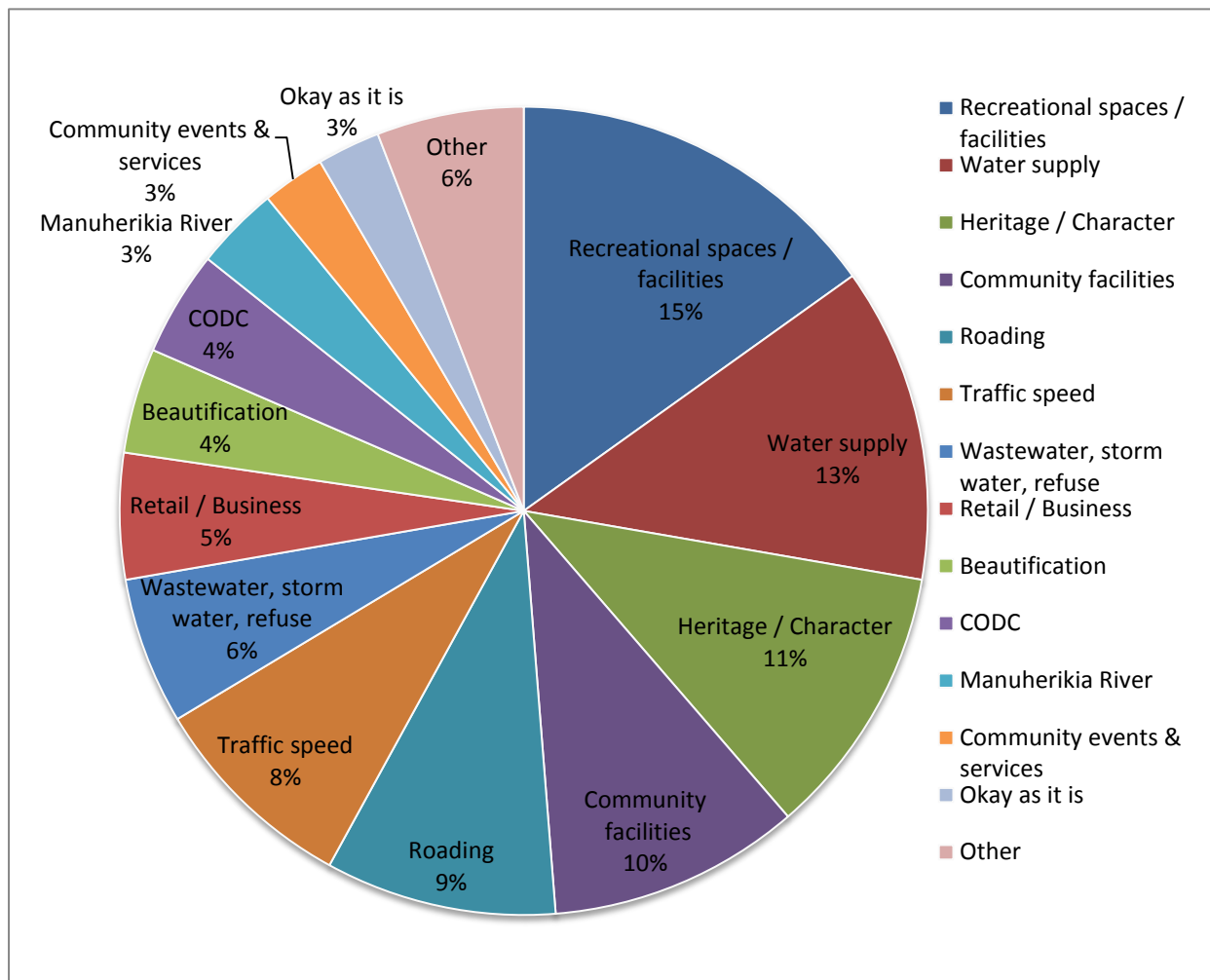


Figure 5. Comments describing residents' views on the 'Weaknesses' of Ophir

A total of 119 suggestions were generated from the 42 respondents, producing a wide range of potential opportunities for Ophir community.

Recreational spaces / facilities comprised 15% of responses, the majority of which related to creating a safe path to walk or cycle between Ophir and Omakau (15 responses). Other responses suggested a tennis and petanque court (2) and a camper van park (1).

The town's infrastructure received a number of recommendations for improvement. Ophir's potable water supply (namely its cost, quality, and the possibility of creating a second non-potable supply for gardens, etc.) received 15 responses (13% of responses). Rooding improvements (including footpaths, curbing, street lights and tar sealing) attracted 11 responses (9%) – comments included installing schist curbing and channelling the length of the town. Suggestions for improvement were also made concerning Council's waste water (3 responses), storm water (2

responses) and refuse/recycling system (2 responses). Four respondents also commented on water quality, beautification and flood risk from the Manuherikia River (3%).

Ophir's heritage opportunities attracted 11% of responses – further development and recognition of Ophir's heritage character attracted 11 responses and the development of a museum received 2 responses. Comments included "improving the inside jail house presentation", "a covenant for new buildings to ensure they fit the historic nature of the village" and "create the whole of Ophir into a heritage site".

Suggested opportunities to improve community facilities (10% of responses) included utilising and upgrading the community hall (7 responses), improving the swimming pool area (2 responses), and developing public toilets (2 responses).

Opportunities to reduce traffic speed through town attracted 10 suggestions (8% of responses). Ideas ranged from closing off the street to installing judder bars to slow vehicles.

Six suggestions related to small business opportunities (5% of responses), including comments such as dairy or shop, and more small tourist-related ventures (e.g., craft shop, artists, B&Bs, etc.). The development of more community events (e.g. an annual market day) and services (e.g. support for the elderly) received three responses. Suggestions relating to the beautification of the village (4% of responses) included tree plantings along the main street (3 responses) and sprucing up the welcome sign to Ophir (1 response).

Interaction with the CODC and assurance for elected members to honour election promises attracted five responses (4%). The balance of "Other" suggestions included comments related to improved digital technology (2), issues relating to private properties (2), a self-sustaining community, more publicity, and encouragement for the community to embrace change.

SUMMARY

With such a broad range of responses to this question, the single most important opportunity identified by respondents also varied greatly. Overall however, the opportunity commented on most frequently was for the development of walking / cycle trails between Ophir and Omakau.

Residents identified many opportunities to improve to the town's infrastructure, particularly in relation to its potable water supply, and its roading (footpaths, curbing and road surfaces). Further development and recognition of Ophir's unique heritage character was also a well-recognised opportunity amongst residents.

Barriers – what is preventing Ophir being what you want?

Residents were asked to list those things that stand in the way or may stop Ophir from being the place that they would like it to be. Residents were also asked would they would change if they could. Respondents could list up to 5 opportunities, placing the most important barrier in the first box.

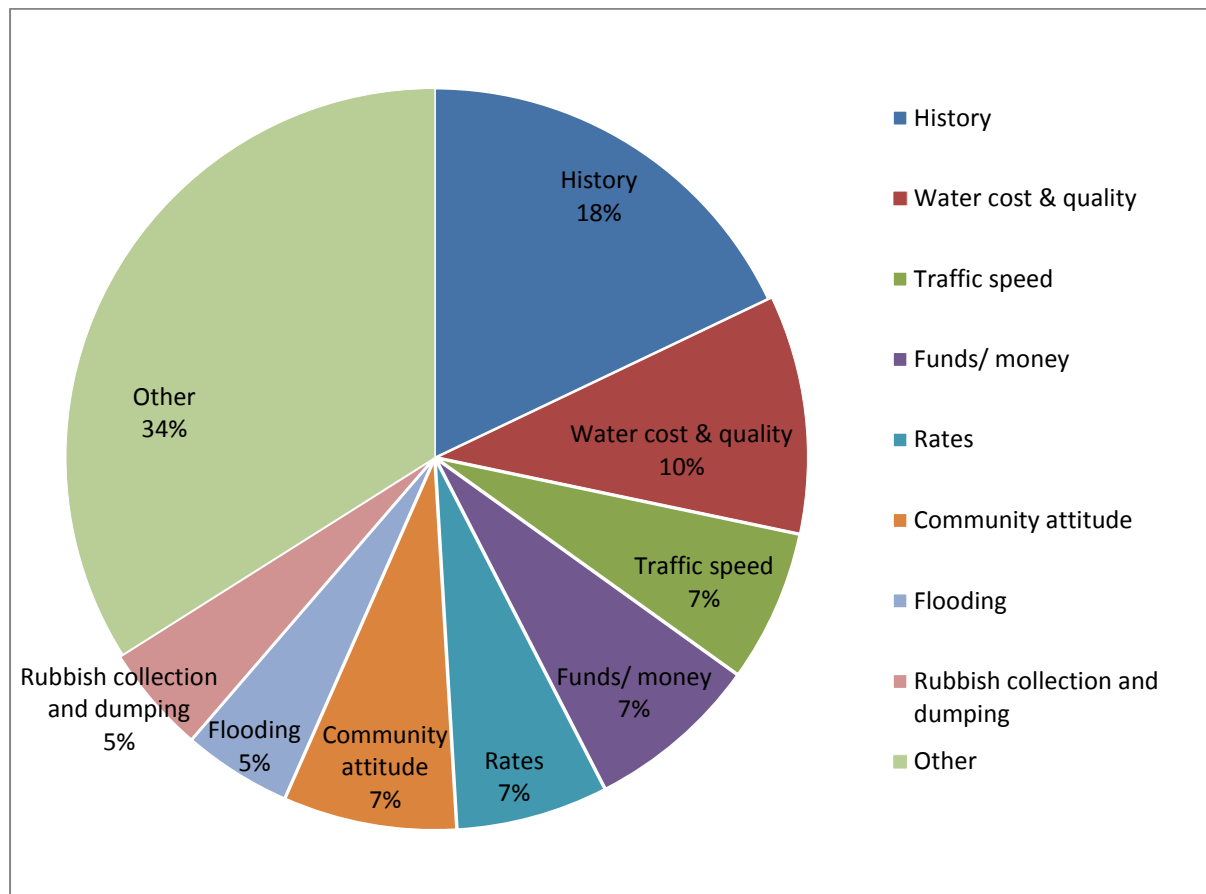


Figure 6. Comments describing residents' views on the 'Weaknesses' of Ophir

From the 42 survey respondents, 35 offered 81 responses to this question.

The comments were diverse and covered many topics. Many barriers identified had fewer than three similar responses such as 'celebrate seasonal market days', 'dairy or shop', 'biting insects'.

The most common barrier identified was the possibility of the historical nature of the town being neglected and modern buildings being allowed while old ones decay beyond restoration (14 responses).

Water, cost and quality, was the next most common barrier, according to respondents (8) followed by speeding traffic (5).

The potential for flooding in the town was noted in four responses, as was rubbish, both collection in the town and dumping near the river.

Funding or money was mentioned by six respondents as a barrier, though no information was offered so it is unclear what source of funding is a barrier or what they wish to see funded.

Six respondents mentioned lack of community spirit, small-mindedness, lack of vision and “newcomers wanting to change it all” as barriers.

The balance of comments were wide-ranging covering Council ‘red tape’, the need for a more diverse population, no linkage to the Rail Trail, and the town’s small population with the resulting lack of rates collected.

The lack of residential land for sale and the possibility of residential development of rural land was a barrier to three respondents.

SUMMARY

According to the survey responses, the most significant barrier for Ophir is if residents allow the village’s existing sense history to diminish. The passion residents have for this was demonstrated in the volume of responses on the subject – nearly twice as many related to preserving the town’s history than the next most common topic.

Vision for Ophir

Residents were asked for their vision for Ophir, what they would like the town to look like in 20 years. Of the 42 respondents 35 offered their vision.

Common responses included:

- Very much the same as now. Retain historical past
- To stay the same if possible
- Not much different from today ... a charming historical village focussed on sustainable living
- A small, picturesque, vibrant, thriving village with a strong focus on its heritage and community spirit
- A well-preserved heritage village which should be a jewel in the crown for Central Otago still allowing for modern day living with small village businesses prospering as they are now through the Rail Trail and heritage tourism. Encouraging people with new ideas and being open to embracing newcomers to the area.
- More permanent families, particularly families with children
- Some young families living here

Other comments included:

- Smaller, friendlier Arrowtown
- I think it will be only the rich that will be able to live here and that is a bit of a shame for the Ophir we know
- Further business is not desirable from our perspective unless they are low impact environmentally. For we city dwellers it's all about the serenity!
- No more eyesore homes being built unless they have a heritage approved look

Under 18-year-olds' survey

Residents were asked if they have any children under 18 living in their household and, if so, to identify how many, what school they attend and what year they are in.

Four households responded to this section of the survey, and provided responses from a total of seven children. Four of the children attend high school, three locally and one in Dunedin. The other three attend primary school, two locally and one in Dunedin. They ranged from year 8 to year 12.

The children/youths were asked to describe what they think about living in Ophir – what they love doing in Ophir, what they'd like to see in Ophir in the future and what they'd change about Ophir if they could.

Responses were as follows:

Asked what they loved about Ophir the children responded:

- I love the river, the swimming pool, the character buildings
- The dramatic season changes
- Many of the people who live there
- Water holes in the river
- The quiet and lack of people
- The community
- The swimming pool

To the question what would you like to see in Ophir in the future they answered:

- A winter celebration of some sort
- Street plantings
- More young people
- Playground for older children
- Reticulated sewerage
- Improved water supply
- Exactly the same
- Development without the village losing its charm
- Bike trail link to rail trail

The one thing they would change in their community was:

- Water and sewerage
- More children

OPHIR



Visitors’ Survey Analysis Report

Central Otago District Council

March 2015

As part of the consultation process to develop an Ophir Community Plan, visitor surveys were developed and distributed throughout Ophir to gauge visitors' first impressions of the village and its community. Surveys were left at the Post Office, Blacks Hotel, Pitches Store and Ryan's Cottage accommodation between February 3rd and March 4th 2015. A total of 42 completed surveys were returned.

The intention was to add the visitors' perspective on the strengths, weaknesses and potential improvements of the town.

Three questions were asked:

- What do you like about Ophir?
- What don't you like about Ophir?
- What would you change about Ophir?

Following is a summary of the answers received.

What do you like about Ophir?

The 42 respondents submitted 83 responses to this question.

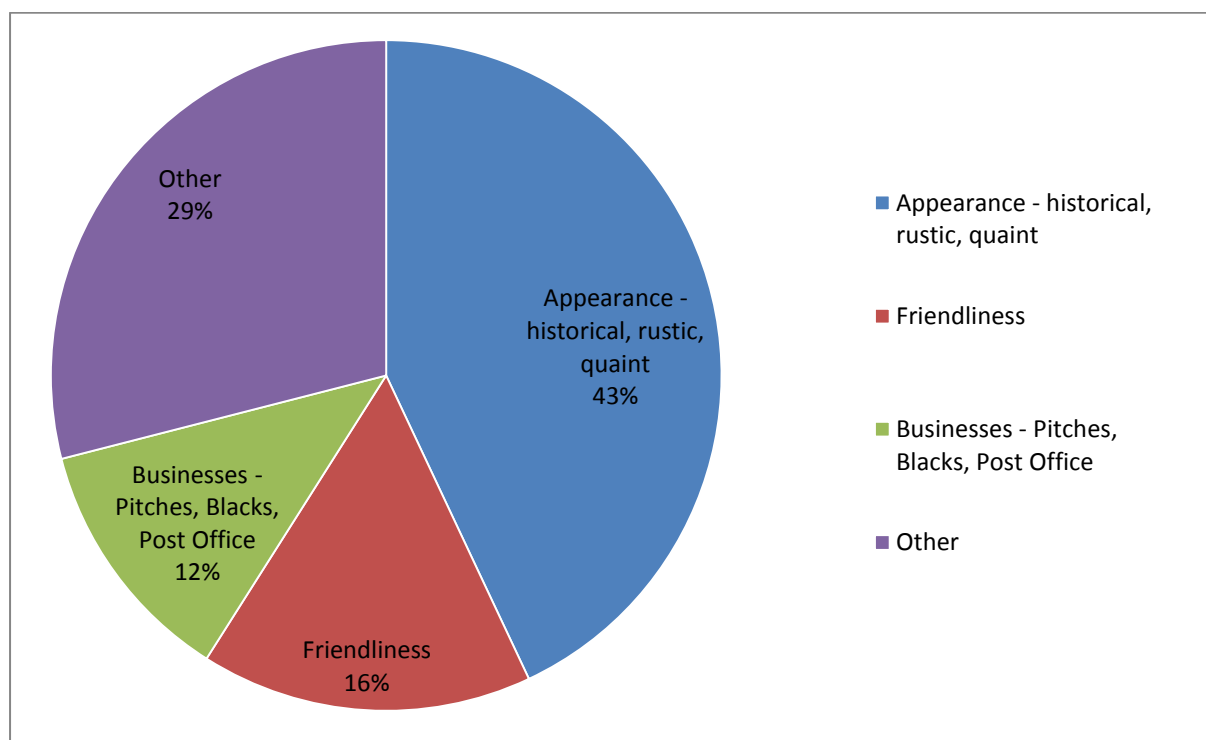


Figure 1. What do you like about Ophir?

The town's history 'rustic appearance' and 'quaintness' were top attractions for visitors (36 responses). The bridge, stone cottages and old buildings were all mentioned. "So full of character", "... fun being able to go into the old police cells" and "the historic buildings – we are losing so many of these nowadays" were among the comments.

Friendly people was the next most popular thing about the town (13 responses), followed by the businesses – Pitches, Blacks and the Post Office (10). Great food is included in this sector as it was mentioned in six comments about the businesses.

Comments regarding Ophir residents included "a warm welcome", "people to talk to – knowledgeable", "everything – the community, the people".

Visitors appreciated the businesses in Ophir as evidenced in comments such as "the Post Office and Post Mistress are your 'jewel in the crown' ", "great restaurant; good pub" and "the wonderful lunch" .

The remaining responses, categorised under "Other", commented positively on the atmosphere, the weather, being close to the river for fishing, good information available and the quietness of the town. Comments made included:

"laid-back atmosphere",

"... very picturesque and very unlike most of NZ, especially in the North Island", and

"peace and quiet".

SUMMARY

The historical aspects of Ophir stood out as the thing visitors most liked. Friendly people and the “feel” of the town was the next best thing.

What don't you like about Ophir?

There were 32 responses from the 42 surveys completed. Of these, 20 respondents indicated there was nothing that they did not like about Ophir.

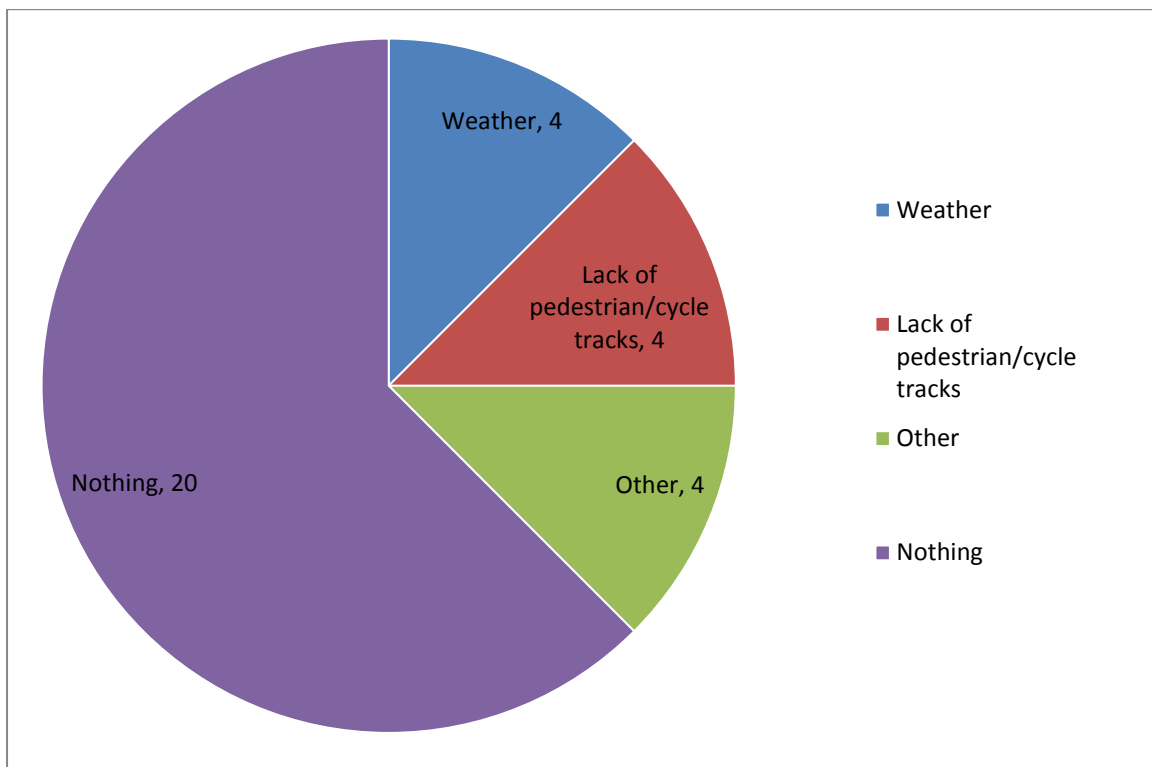


Figure 2. What don't you like about Ophir?

Twelve comments were made in relation to things that visitors did not like about Ophir. Four of these related to the weather – the cold winters (3 responses) and the wind (1 response).

Four visitors commented on the lack of footpaths and/or cycle ways. Safety for walkers and cyclists was mentioned, as was access to the Ophir bridge, DOC reserve by the river or mining sites. One comment voiced concern about cycle safety due to the trucks on the road.

Other comments related to extending the seal on the main road to its full width, a speed reduction for traffic, burying the power lines, and a shop that leaves its sign out on the roadside.

What would you change about Ophir?

There were 44 responses from the 42 surveys completed. Of these, 20 responses indicated there was nothing that they would like to see changed in Ophir.

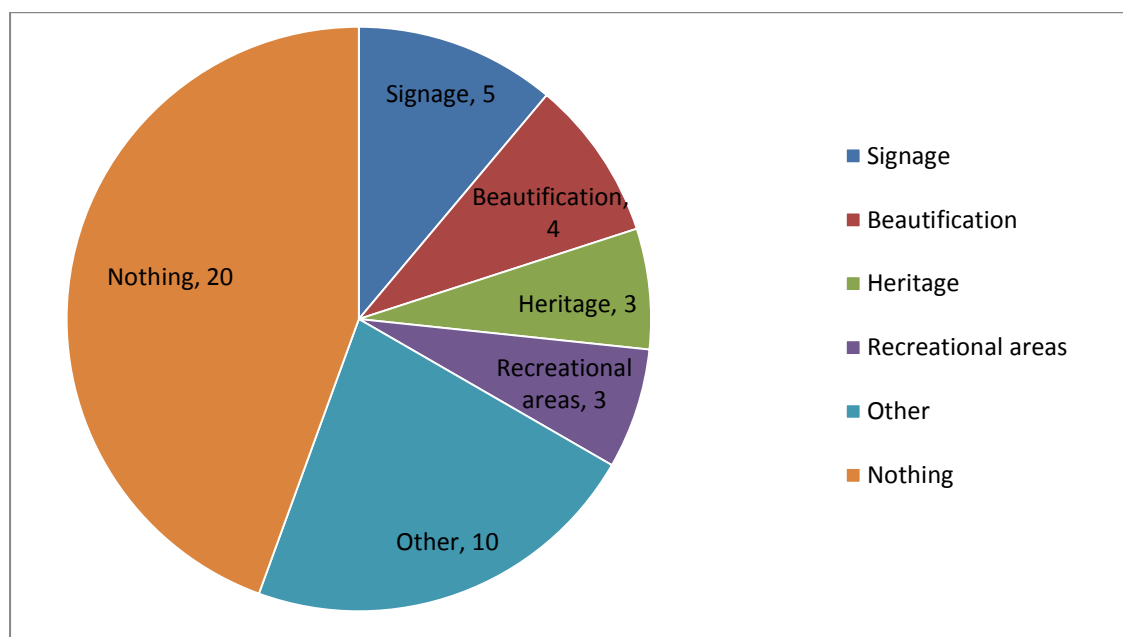


Figure 3. What would you change about Ophir?

Twenty-four suggestions were made for things that could be changed within Ophir. Five of these related to signage, including both directional signs to Ophir, numbers on heritage buildings to match the self-guiding brochure, and signage to public toilets.

Comments relating to beautification included:

- Planting trees along the main street;
- Increasing atmosphere and photo geniality;
- Better themed with more homogeneity of streetscape; and
- Add more colour.

Suggestions relating to heritage included the possible restoration of the Old Drapery Store and potentially establishing an old house for visitors to view. Potential changes to recreational areas included the establishment of a picnic area near the bridge and creating walking tracks on the DOC reserve by the bridge.

There was also a range of other comments, including:

- The development of stall(s) selling local craft/produce (2);
- Burying the overhead power lines (2);
- More advertising and promotion of the village (2);
- The installation of public toilets (2);
- A safe cycle route from the Rail Trail, along the south end of Omakau Golf Course, and linking up to the Daniel O’Connell suspension bridge (1).

Appendix Three – Ophir Business Operators’ Interviews

The Process

In the period between 31 March and 10 April 2014, I interviewed seven Ophir business owners or managers. As in Omakau, the interviews were conducted face-to-face and discussions followed a similar format to that used previously in other Central Otago communities. This is the first Community Plan for Ophir. The business community is excited about the process and there is an engaged, cohesive and passionate group, keen to progress the plan.

Ophir Business Community

Ophir is a small community – with eight businesses, 56 permanent residents and a growing number of holiday makers who come to cribs and commercial accommodation in the town. The business community is positive and cohesive. It is proud of the town, its history and the lifestyle the residents have. All those interviewed spoke about how the people, the community feel and the loyalty of locals make the town. Residents and business owners already work collaboratively to get jobs done in the town, including sharing the upkeep of the Ophir Pool each summer.

The Economy

Tourism is the main industry in Ophir with visitors cycling the Otago Central Rail Trail bringing a steady flow of customers. There is a rising number of day visitors from the wider Central Otago area coming to the town (for meals and to browse the gift shops) as well as a growing number of visitors basing themselves in Ophir for longer holidays. While the seasonal fluctuations of demand are difficult for a few businesses, it suits the majority of business owners to have some down time in the offseason.

Future of Ophir

The business community in Ophir feel that the town is humming along well and they would not like to see any fundamental changes. There are however some tweaks they think would help the town function better.

Signage – Businesses would like better road signage to the town. They feel this is needed after the Tiger Hill cutting (from the south), from the centre of Omakau and as traffic descends the Poolburn Hill (from the north). It was suggested that these could be blue Transit services signs. Reducing the speed of traffic to 70km before the Ophir Bridge turnoff was also suggested to make this turn safer.

Businesses would also like to see some ‘Welcome to Ophir’ signs at each end of the town and the historical bridge well signalled.

Maintaining the historic feel of the town – There is concern that buildings are being built in the town that are not in keeping with the historical feel of the place. There is interest in exploring what can be done through Historic Places Trust and the Council to ensure that future developments are in keeping with the look of the town. There is also a historic building in the main street (privately owned) that locals would like to see restored.

Continue to maintain facilities – Business owners would like to see continued community support for the upkeep of the hall and the pool. Some felt that more could be made of the reserve and that the town could explore the possibility of developing a petanque court.

Communication between business owners – It was felt that while businesses in Ophir worked very well together there is the opportunity for Ophir and Omakau accommodation providers to work better together to manage visitor overflow in the peak season.

Curbing – Business owners would like to see the schist curbing the main street finished and pavement repaired. There are places where water pools and paving is messy or non-existent.

Verge maintenance – Many raised the issue of grass verges and would like to see these better maintained (spraying and trimming) as they feel they are messy and a fire risk.

Public toilets - Some would like to see some toilets built in the main street however business owners raised the issue of who would clean them. There is interest in employing a caretaker for the town.

Fortnightly bins – There is concern about the move to fortnightly bin collection – and the health risks as well as the overflow that may occur.