

Ethics Statement for Claygate Shops and Businesses' Survey 2025 on behalf of Claygate Parish Council

Primary researcher Emma Curtis

Researchers – Leonora Tye (Shops and Businesses Advisory Committee leader), Redmond Walsh and Cllr. Jenny French

Data Controller Dawn Lacey

Ethical approval

This study is commissioned and supported by Claygate Parish Council (CPC). This ethics statement will be reviewed by the Council and, if undersigned by the Chair of the CPC, has been approved at the CPC meeting on 27 February 2025.

The CPC is funding professional design, preparation, analysis and reporting of the survey and the printing of materials. All other researchers and working group members on this project are volunteers. The CPC provides insurance for its volunteers in the pursuit of its activities, including this survey.

Background to the research

In response to Elmbridge Borough Council's (EBC) announcement in Summer 2023 to build a large retail store in Torrington Lodge car park in the centre of Claygate, Claygate Village Association (CVA) mounted a campaign called 'Claygate Can do Better'. The development proposal was halted as a result of the campaign and EBC agreed to listen to residents about future development in the village.

Following the successful campaign, the CVA set up working groups, under the banner "Claygate: The Way Forward" (CTWF) to explore six key areas of village life to inform future development and other issues. Shops and Businesses was one of the Working Groups. Its primary remit was to help and support the local shops and businesses to grow and to increase footfall in the village to ensure a thriving business and retail community.

In March 2024 the CVA conducted a comprehensive and rigorous Residents' Survey, including questions about shopping frequencies and preferences, a Village Market, an additional Supermarket and what other outlets they would like to see in the village. The intention was to simultaneously conduct a survey of the shops and businesses with business-rated premises in the village, however, it was decided to delay this second survey to 2025 in consideration of the size of the Residents' Survey and volunteer resources available. The CTWF report (June 2024) offered a series of recommendations for collaboration with EBC, Surrey County Council and the Parish Council. One of these recommendations was to conduct the planned Shops and Businesses' Survey. Responses to this survey will then, further, inform the implementation of other recommendations which would benefit from input from owners and senior managers of Claygate's shops and businesses with business-rated premises.

Following the publication of the CTWF Residents' Survey Report in June 2024, the CVA passed responsibility for the CTWF Working Groups to Claygate Parish Council, where the Shops and Business Group now functions as an Advisory Committee reporting directly to the Parish Council. The Parish Council have asked the Shops and Business Advisory Committee (the "Group") to undertake the planned and recommended survey.

Purpose and rationale of the research

To discover the views of shop and business owners and senior managers on the recommendations made subsequent to the Claygate Resident's Survey 2024, to learn from business owners' past experiences and about the impact on businesses of recent initiatives, and to gauge whether owners and senior managers are interested in collaborating to further increase footfall and revenue as well as community feeling.

Where the survey will take place

The survey will take place online through Google Forms on the respondents' own computers, tablets and smart phones. The respondent must give their email address and business name and may not submit more than one response per business. A paper copy of the survey can be provided upon request. If a paper form is used the data will then be entered into the Google Form by one of the researchers.

Methods and procedures

A list of all shops and businesses operating from business-rated (as opposed to residential) premises in Claygate Ward has been prepared. All businesses on the list will be targeted for the study. A member of the Group will visit the premises with an invitation letter, inviting the owner or senior manager to complete the survey. Each volunteer recruiter will be assigned a list of businesses to which they will be instructed to give equal attention.

The survey will take place online using Google Forms accessed via a QR code and weblink provided to the owners or senior managers of targeted businesses. The QR code and weblink will take the respondent to a screen within Google Forms which introduces the study to the respondent and informs them of how their data will be used and stored. The introduction assures respondents that data will be anonymised before publication of findings and advises them of their right to withdraw up until the point where their data can no longer be identified due to anonymisation. The respondent consents to the study and proceeds to the next stage if they are satisfied with the information provided.

The survey questionnaire involves 23 questions: 19 multiple choice (Yes/No/I don't know), four free text questions, plus a check box for consent to data use and a further check box to consent to being contacted about the initiatives in the questionnaire. The survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete and submit.

The respondents are asked to identify themselves for the purpose of knowing which businesses have responded, where in the village those businesses are located and to check that any business only responds once to the questionnaire. Once the analysis is complete the data set will be anonymised. Unanonymised information will not be reported. The results will be in terms of groups rather than individual businesses. The anonymised data set may be made available upon application for validation of the report.

Respondents are separately asked if they wish to be contacted about the initiatives mentioned in the questionnaire.

At the end of the survey, respondents are thanked and invited to submit their responses. After submission respondents are thanked again and given information about how to become involved as part of the Shops and Businesses Group.

Participants

The participants will be a volunteer sample of the 66 targeted shop and business owners (and senior managers) who have business-rated premises in the village of Claygate defined by the boundaries of Claygate Ward. We aim to recruit more than 60% of Claygate's shops and businesses in this study.

If there is more than one response from a business or we do not have the business name listed as eligible, the information prefacing the questionnaire states: "we will contact you at the email address you provide in order to confirm eligibility of your data."

Recruitment

A letter will be hand delivered with a personalised envelope to the owner or senior manager of eligible Claygate Shops and Businesses by a member of the Shops and Businesses Group ("Volunteer Recruiter"). This letter will invite the owner or senior manager to participate in the online survey via a QR code or weblink provided in the letter. The letter will state the reason for the study and the value of the business owner's contribution. Volunteer Recruiters will revisit shops and businesses that have not completed the survey to make sure that the business owner or senior manager has received the letter and to remind them of the opportunity to take part.

Volunteer recruiters will work from a list of all shops and businesses with business-rated premises in the village. Volunteer recruiters will contact or visit each business during business hours and identify the decision-maker, addressing a letter to them personally. They will be instructed to visit all businesses on the list, keep a record of the visit and give equal weight to each business. If the business owner or senior manager responds to the recruiter that they do not wish to take part, that will be noted and honoured.

Data to be collected

The survey asks about the business owner or senior manager's thoughts regarding improving footfall in the village, use of car parks and parking initiatives, and whether they feel their business would benefit from new marketing and training initiatives, including the formation of a business collective. It also asks for feedback on the Village Market after the first complete year of *The Claygate Sustainable Village Market*.

Respondents are asked for their email address, business name and personal name and role in the business for the purposes of confirming which businesses have responded, their location and the name of the owner or senior manager who completed the survey on behalf of the business.

Consent

A data protection statement with information about how data will be anonymised and used is included in the introduction to the survey questionnaire. The respondent is asked to check the following statement after reading the information provided, "I confirm that I have read the above information and consent to the collection, storage, analysis and report of the responses I provide to this questionnaire." The questionnaire cannot be submitted without this consent being given.

The anonymised data set may be made available upon application for validation of the report.

Consent will also be asked for a member of the Shops and Businesses Group to contact the respondent about the initiatives proposed in the questionnaire; respondents also have the option to decline. If the respondent wishes to be contacted regarding their contact details will be provided to the Shops and Business Group on a list (name, email, business name) which is divorced from responses to questions unrelated to formation of a business collective ie., interest in formation or membership of the collective business group will be explicit on this list, however, interest in other initiatives will be grouped and the respondents updated regarding other initiatives as a group.

Completion of the questionnaire, including the free text response should not require any commercially sensitive data. The information sheet says, "You should not need to divulge commercially sensitive information to complete this survey, however, if you choose to do so it is at your own risk". The free text questions also bear a warning, "Please do not share commercially sensitive information with us."

Measures for protection of respondents' data

The data will be stored within Google Forms for the duration of the study. The primary researcher and data collector have access to the Google drive which is passkey and two factor protected. The other named researchers will have access to unanonymised data for the purposes of understanding responses as related to business location and type. Identity of respondents in connection with their responses will only be discussed confidentially by the researchers. Identifiable data will not be reported but shops and businesses responses may be reported as part of a group referred to by general location or category.

The primary researcher will keep and analyse the data on their own computer which is protected by fingerprint authentication and files may be shared using Dropbox or Google drive with 2-factor authentication.

After the report is published, data will be stored in the Google drive until all initiatives are actioned or definitively rejected, whereupon email addresses and business names will be deleted from datasets associating businesses with responses. The anonymised dataset will be made available for verification of the analysis and reports as appropriate.

Risks or adverse effects for researchers

We do not anticipate any significant risk or adverse effects for the volunteers delivering invitations to shops and businesses to take part in the study. These are commercial premises that are visited by the public daily and frequently.

Researchers will be working on their own computers in their own homes and offices and we do not anticipate any significant risk or adverse effect beyond their general use of their own equipment. Researchers can work on their own schedule and take breaks as necessary.

All volunteers working in the Shops and Businesses Group are covered by CPC insurance and supported in the pursuance of activities as part of the group as stated in the Parish Council volunteer agreement.

Risks or adverse effects for participants

We do not anticipate any significant risk or adverse effect for participants beyond their general use of their own computers, tablets, or smart phones. The survey is

unlikely to be strenuous and participants can take breaks as necessary. Participants are free to exit the survey at any point.

Analysis

Analysis will be undertaken, focussing primarily on frequencies and descriptive statistics to gauge support for initiatives. Inferential statistical analysis may include comparison of groups based on location or business category. There will be regular meetings of the researchers to consider and explore the data. Analysis of the data will result in a report to the Parish Council and targeted shops and businesses facilitating further discussion with EBC regarding implementation of the recommendations emerging from the Residents' Survey 2024.

Timeline for completion of the project and presentation of findings

The survey will open in April and continue for one month or until 40 businesses, being 60% of the target group, have completed the survey if that goal is not attained within one month of launch of the survey. The survey may close at a later time if the 60% goal cannot be achieved. Members of the Shops and Businesses' Group will revisit businesses who have not responded to the survey to remind them of the opportunity. Volunteers will be instructed to give equal attention to the businesses they are assigned to visit to avoid a recruiter bias emerging in the shops and businesses sample. A report will be prepared once analysis has taken place, timescale to be confirmed upon closing of the survey.

The survey findings will be presented at a social evening networking event for shop and business owners of Claygate, supported by the Parish Council.

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Ethical approval from Claygate Parish Council granted:

Date

Chair of Claygate Parish Council
Donna Holt