

CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

Regarding support of the idea of a George Michael birthday celebration event (probably in the month of June) organised by his fans, at an appropriate location in Goring.

The Goring-on-Thames Parish Council has been asked by a George Michael fan group to have a 'George Michael birthday weekend' event somewhere in Goring in June 2019. As there have been supporters of this idea, there have also been some concerns raised about this becoming an annual event. The Parish Council determined it was best to consult on the matter prior to making a decision.

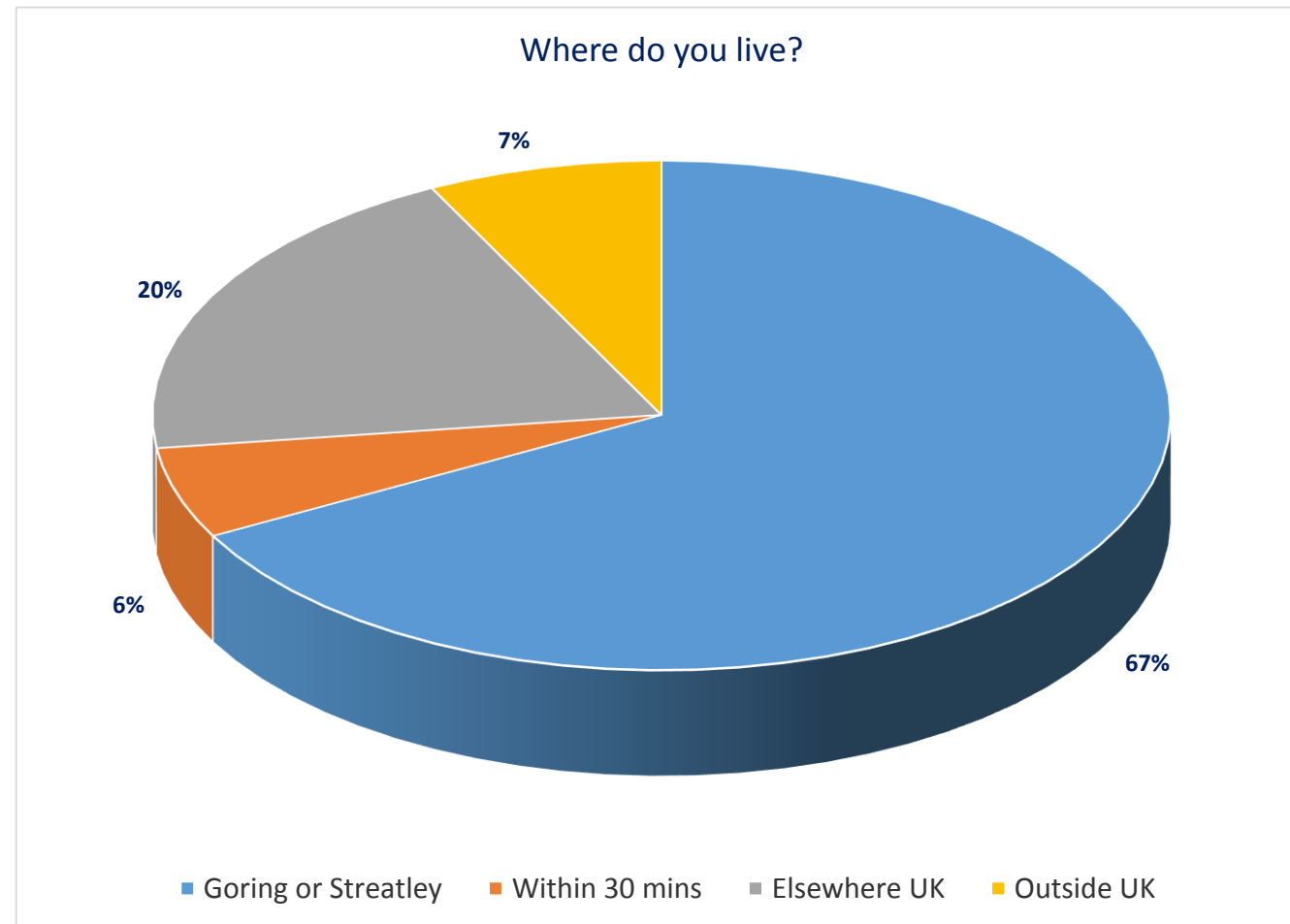
Views were sought with an on-line questionnaire, as well as a duplicate of the on-line questionnaire being provided to all homes in Goring-on-Thames parish as well as on-line and at the GPC offices. As well as the questionnaire being delivered to all Goring homes, it was also advertised in the Goring Gap News, the GPC website and Genie.

The consultation period was from 14th November 2018 until 5th January 2019.

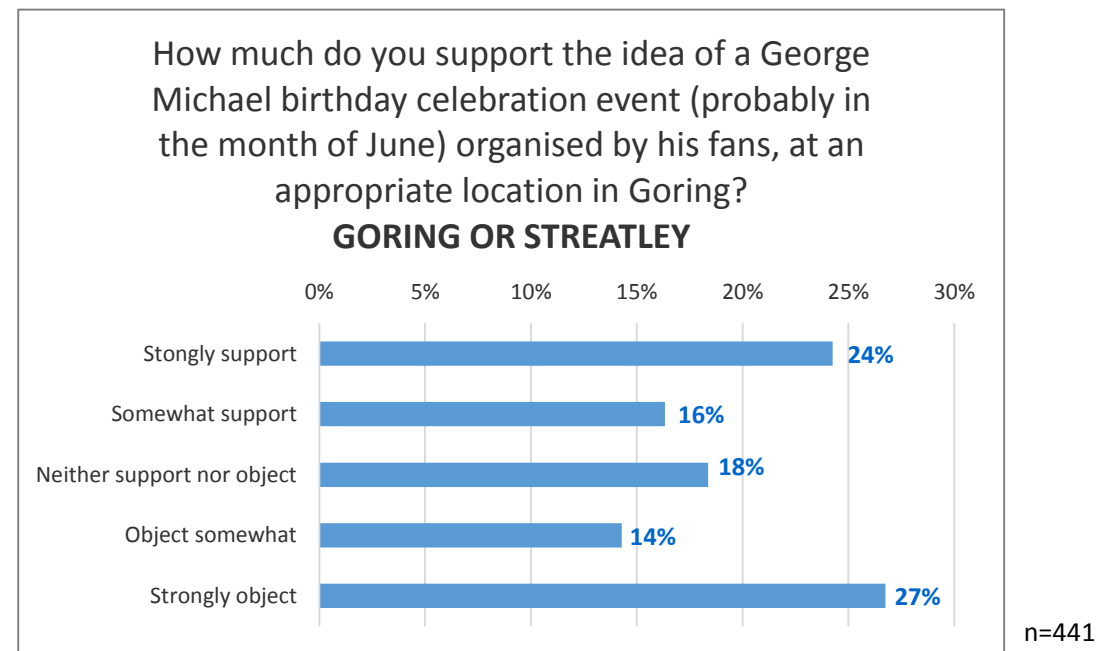
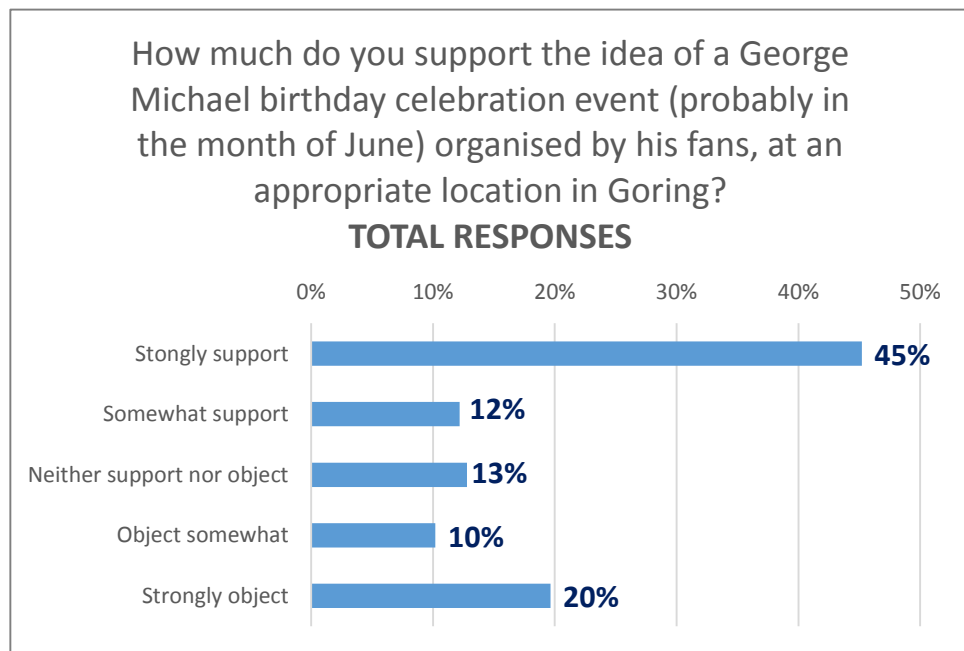
The summary results of the consultation is provided in the following pages. Detail of responses are available electronically from the Clerk (clerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk).

Cllr Bryan Urbick

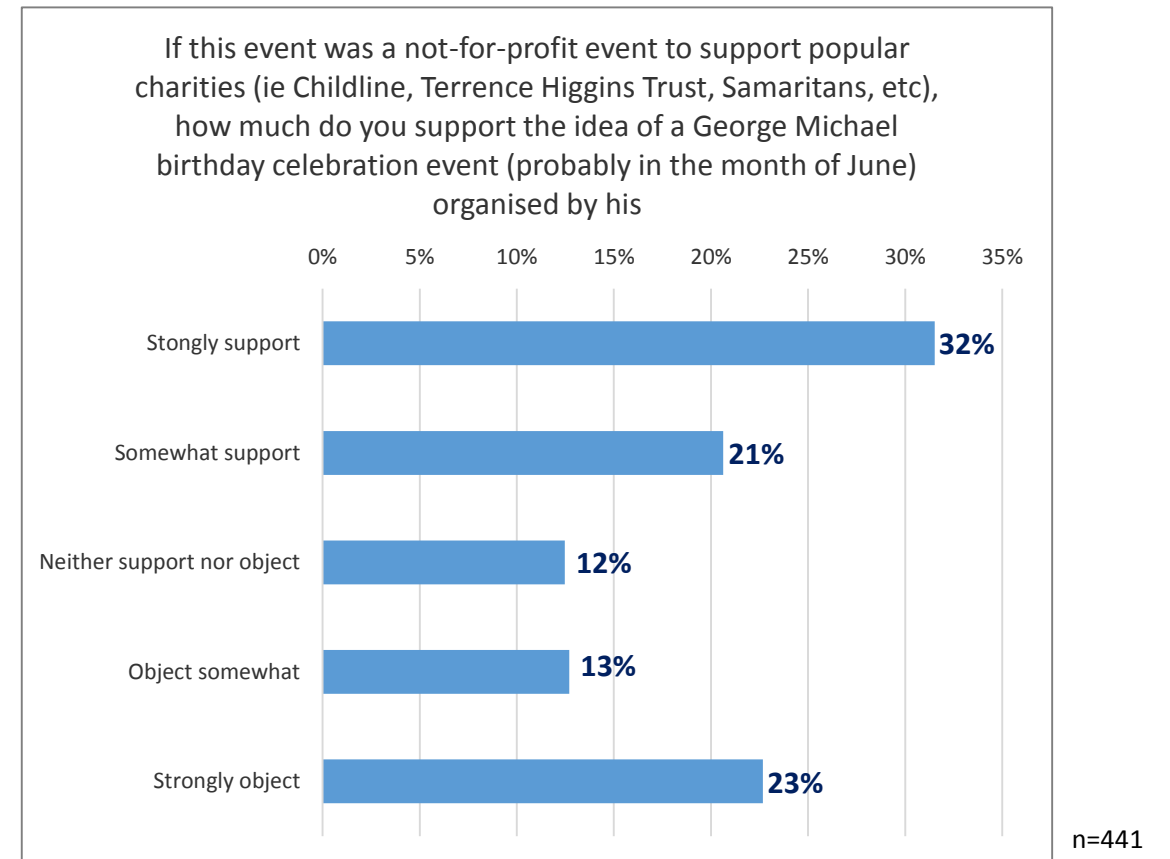
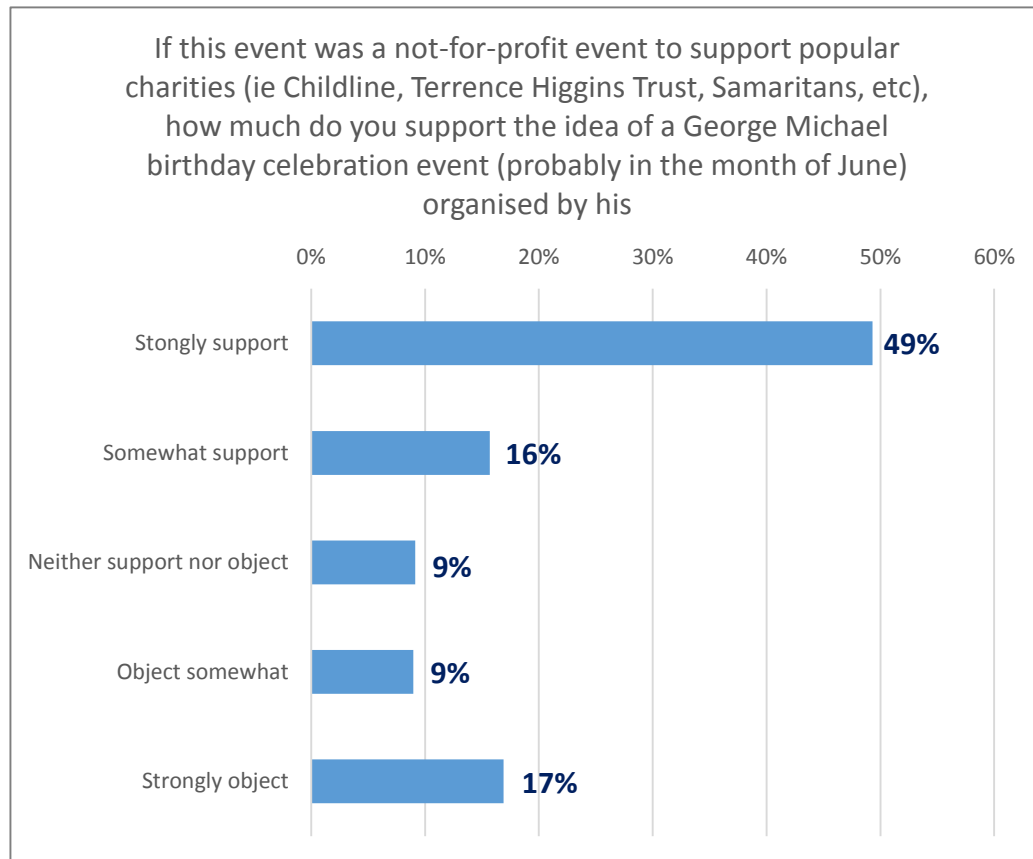
There was a good response to the consultation. There were a total of 657 responses to the survey questions, with two-thirds of the responses from Goring & Streatley (these were confirmed with names and post codes, those who did not include a name and post code are not included in the analyses of the survey responses). There were some responses of comments only, and these are included in the section reporting on comments made.



When considering the general support of the idea of a fan-organised George Michael birthday celebration event (probably in the month of June), the total sample was supportive. The views were strongly polarised when considering those who reside in Goring or Streatley. If this is looked at statistically, there is no significance between those who support (either strongly or somewhat) and those who oppose (either somewhat or strongly).

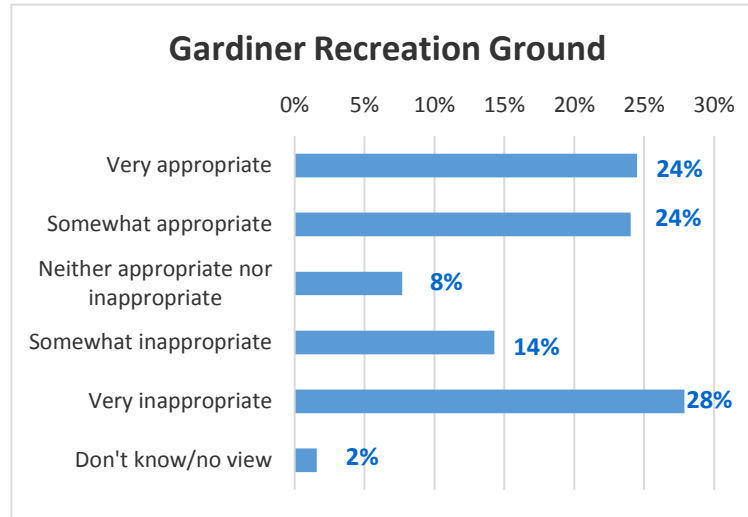


This changes, though, if the event would be in support of charity/ies. Support among the TOTAL RESPONSES increased. GORING & STREATLEY responses were also more favourable, increasing to 53% support with only 36% objecting, thus eliminating the polarisation of views. If the event was to go ahead, then it is recommended to ensure that it is in support of popular charity/ies.

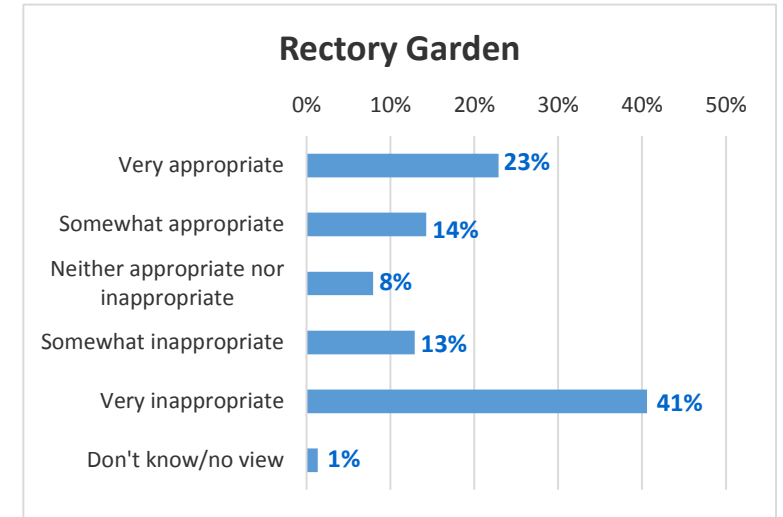


The views of respondents from GORING OR STREATLEY on appropriateness of location for such an event, if it was to be permitted by the Parish Council, were also quite polarised. GARDINER RECREATION GROUND is the least contentious. RECTORY GARDEN AND BOURDILLON FIELD were both strongly felt to be inappropriate.

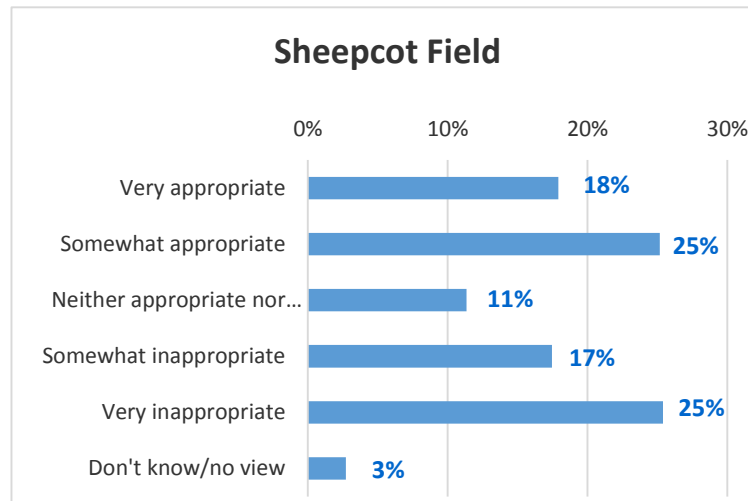
NOTE: Only Parish Council managed/owned locations were considered in this consultation. And though the results from the TOTAL SAMPLE were slightly more favourable for the RECTORY GARDEN (see Appendix for detail of TOTAL RESPONSES), in this matter it is (in my view) that the local responses should have the greatest weight.



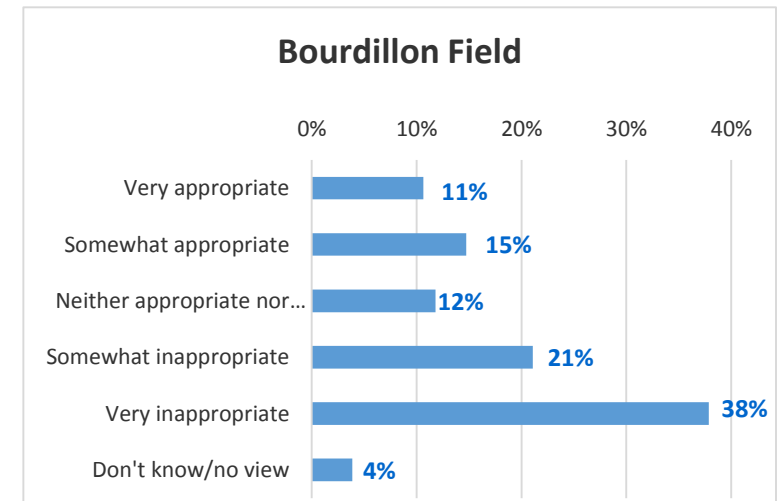
n=441



n=441

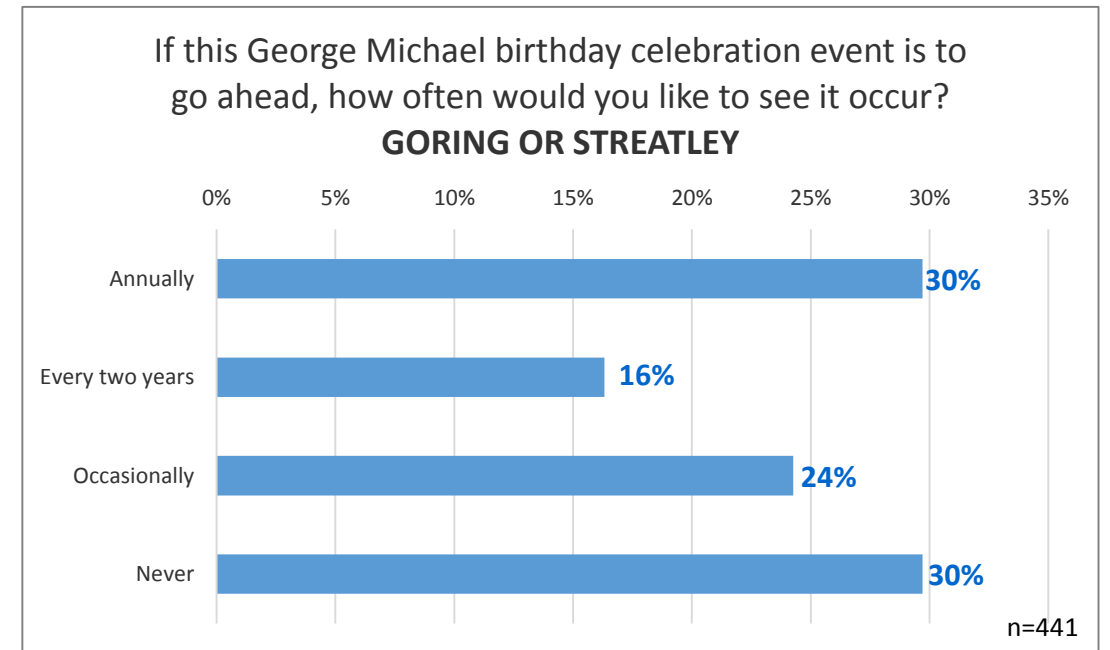
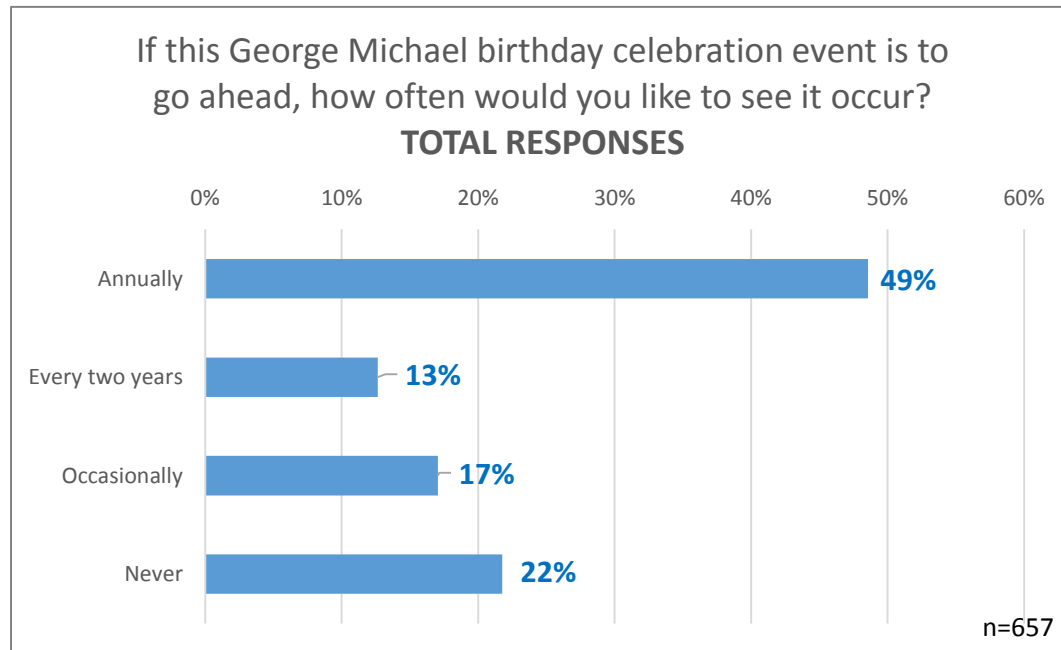


n=441



n=441

When considering frequency of the event, the TOTAL RESPONSES were in favour of it being held annually. The views of GORING OR STREATLY were again quite polarised, though it is clear that most would prefer the event to be less frequently than each year. If the event is to go ahead, it is recommended that it be no more frequently than every two years.



When considering the comments, the views – particularly of those in GORING OR STREATLEY – were very polarised.

There were many – positive and negative to the potential event – who felt that ‘George Michael would have liked/disliked it’ – these have been discounted because it is now not possible to learn what he would/would not have liked. Also, some felt that ‘the family wouldn’t/doesn’t want it’, and that is also not true (the family has requested no more tributes outside GM’s homes, but that is not the same).

In the main, those who supported the event:

- Generally good for the village
- Good for local businesses (shops, pubs, guesthouses/B&Bs, etc)
- Encourages people to visit Goring; good to have regular events; good for tourism
- Previous events have been fine; nice/respectful fans
- Raises money for good causes
 - GM supported good causes and (if event benefits charity/ies) is in-keeping with his attitude/approach/support.
- Shows Goring in a positive light/as a positive place/positive publicity
- It’s only one day/one weekend; no harm; people can choose to leave for the day if they don’t want to be affected; it’s only a bit of fun

Many of the supporters did feel, though, that there should be some restrictions/limitations

- Not every year
- Make sure the music isn't too loud; doesn't go too late; is properly managed
- Clean-up is done by the fans
- Self-supporting (no costs to the Parish Council – ie policing, clean-up, parking/traffic management, etc)
- Manage traffic/parking/roads
- Nearby residents should be warned/notified in advance
- Ensure that the proceeds go to the charity/ies
 - There were a few suggestions that local charities should be chosen over bigger/national charities
- Local residents given some priority (priority tickets, access to the event)
- If it continued, it should be re-evaluated in 5-10 years to see if still relevant
- Suggestions to alternate with Gap Festival/Regatta

Those who were against the event:

- Generally disruptive to local residents
- Loud music/too loud/too much noise
- Crowds/congestion
 - Pavements
 - Roads
 - Parking
 - Public toilets
- Litter
- Drunkenness
- Provides no benefit to the village/Goring; it will ruin village life, don't want village reduced to 'where GM lived'
- GM was quiet/unassuming and gave to charity quietly - and an event is counter to the way he was; GM wasn't involved in village life; let him rest in peace; doesn't honour why GM lived here; GM didn't do anything for the village but live here; Goring wasn't his primary home
- Goring doesn't have the infrastructure/facilities; the village can't cope
- Distasteful to make money from GM's death
- The village has already paid sufficient homage; it's time to move on
- Previous events were very disruptive/inappropriate; too loud; parking problems
- If we do this for GM, why not honour other local famous people (ie Bomber Harris, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Saunders); others who have lived here are more deserving

From those who were against the event, if it goes ahead:

- Manage noise, crowds, parking, ensure it doesn't go late, be near toilets
- There needs to be proper planning (including transport and other logistics) and open and transparent consultation with residents, particularly those located close to the chosen venue
- Ensure it is environmentally appropriate (ie no balloons released, no litter, plastic free, etc)
- Should only be a show/tribute act (not a day-long party)
- No a regular occurrence – just one more; perhaps on milestone birthdays like every 5 or 10 years

Where do we go from here?

The residents are split about having such an event – with about 40% supportive and 40% objecting, and 20% neutral. If the event supports charity/ies, though, the support exceeds 50%. To disallow an event supporting charity/ies would go against the majority of local residents' views. Saying this, the frequency, location and structure of the event should be considered carefully.

Based on the consultation results it is proposed:

- GPC allow the fans to conduct an event
 - Within a strict time limit (ie no more than 8-10 hours in a day; no later than 7 or 8pm - TBD)
 - Strict monitoring and limits to noise
 - Coordination of parking, police, etc (organised by the sponsoring fans)
 - Provision of portable toilet facilities (to be provided by the sponsoring fans at their cost)
 - All insurance, licensing, etc to be organised and funded by sponsoring fans
 - All necessary clean-up, repair/'making good' to the field to be guaranteed and funded by the sponsoring fans
 - Not more than biennially (every two years)
- Gardiner Recreation Ground to be the only site allowed for this type of event – and since biennially should alternate with the GAP Festival to be least problematic for the sports' groups using the field.
- As this is not for local charities, nor is it being promoted by a local organisation, the full, non-resident commercial rate for Gardiner to be applied.

Appendix

Please rate each on appropriateness for this event (Very appropriate, Somewhat appropriate, Neither appropriate nor inappropriate, Somewhat inappropriate, Very inappropriate). **TOTAL RESPONSES**

