



AMT 2009 Convention

Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POSITIVE

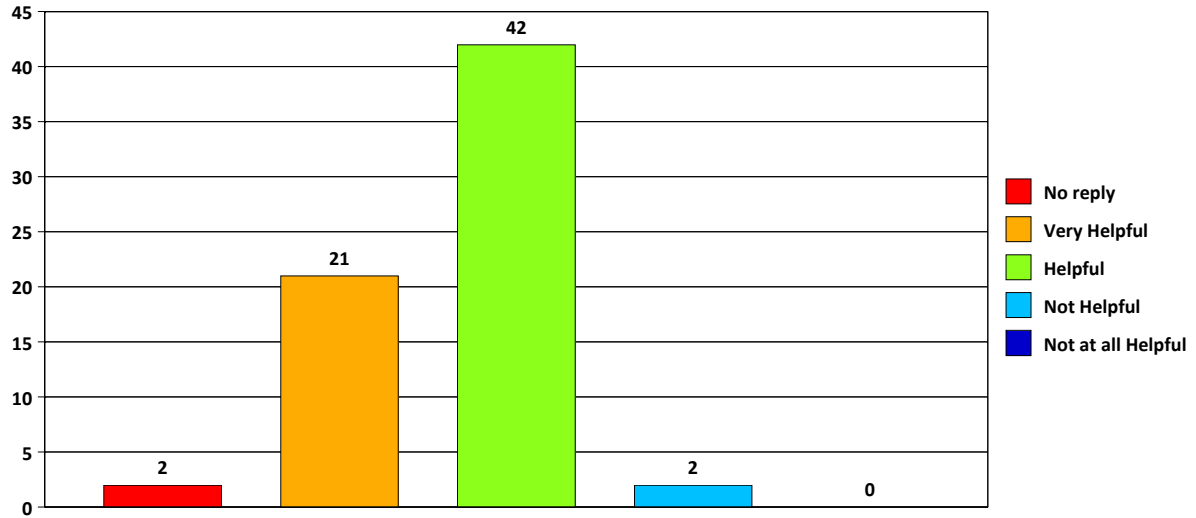
- All of the delegates who rated the usefulness of the Convention stated that it was either, 'Very Useful' (29) or 'Useful' (33).
- 49 respondents reported that AMT staff members were 'very helpful'.
- Feedback concerning the Workshops was very positive.
- The 'Beyond the Recession' presentation by Chris Wade was rated as 'Very Good' by 23 respondents and 'Good' by 32.
- The Market Towns Award was the most popular presentation, which was augmented by qualitative feedback, with 38 respondents rating the talk as 'Very Good.'
- The Melton Mowbray- 'A Rural Capital of Food and Drink' was a popular Study Tour with 14 of the respondents stating it was 'Very Good' and 5 'Good'.
- The Action for Market Towns Policy Forum was successful with 20 delegates offering a rating of 'Very Good' and 20 'Good.'
- The majority of respondents rated Leslie Watson from Sustainability South West's presentation on 'The Sustainability in Rural Areas and Market Towns' highly.
- Joining instructions were felt to be helpful.

NEGATIVE

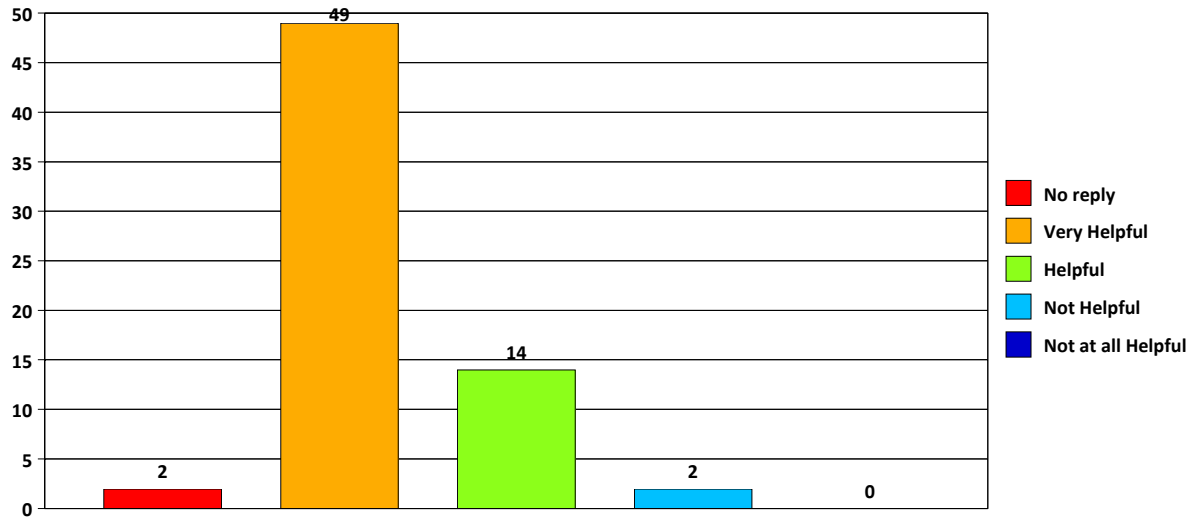
- Philip Dunne MP's presentation on policy issues affecting towns and rural areas was not well received, with 40 respondents rating the talk as 'Very Poor' (12) or 'Poor' (28).
- 18 respondents rated the main presentation by Graham Biggs from the Rural Services Network, 'Why do we need a Rural Services Manifesto,' as 'Poor' (16) or 'Very Poor' (2).
- Reflecting the qualitative comments concerning the attendance and relevance of the 'Closing Debate', the majority of respondents did not provide a rating (36).
- Suggestions for improvements revolved around more opportunities for 'networking', 'improvements to the performance of the main speakers', 'more time for interactive workshops', increasing the role of the 'Market Towns Awards' and 'logistics' surrounding the timings and distance to delegates accommodation.

DAY 1: MAIN PRESENTATIONS

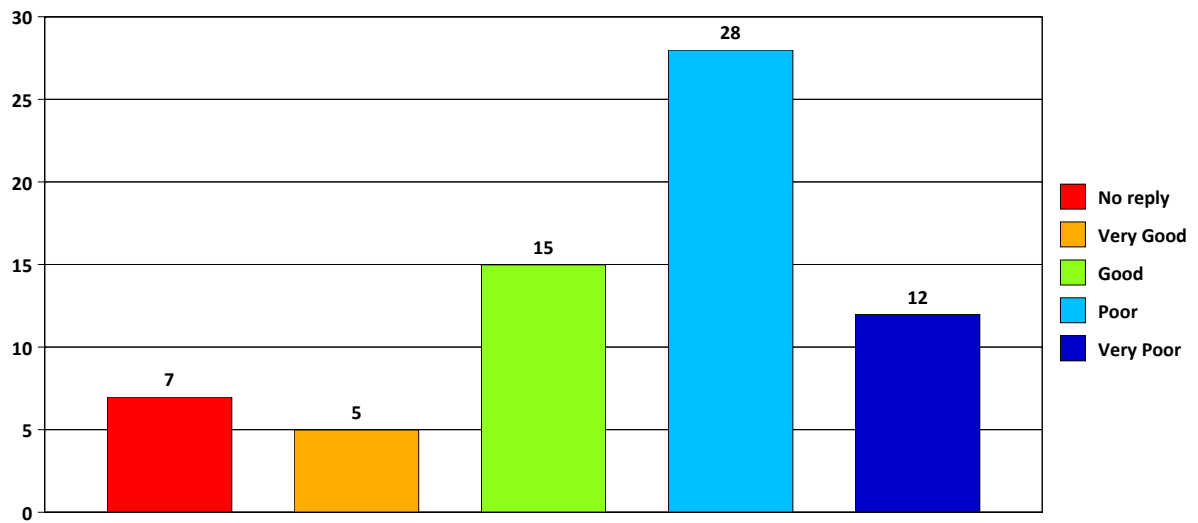
How helpful were the pre-Convention joining instructions?



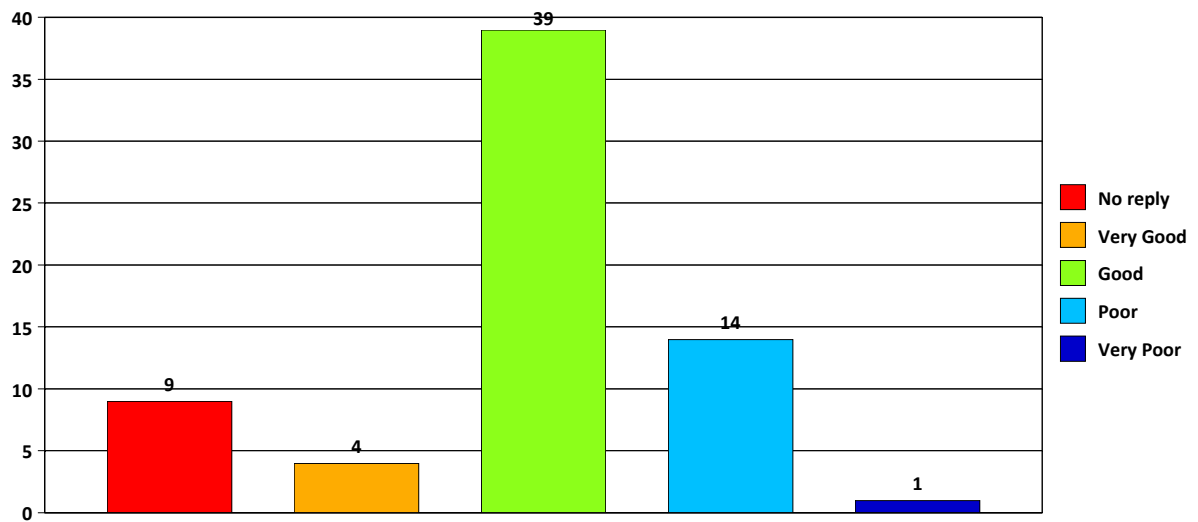
How helpful were the Convention Staff?



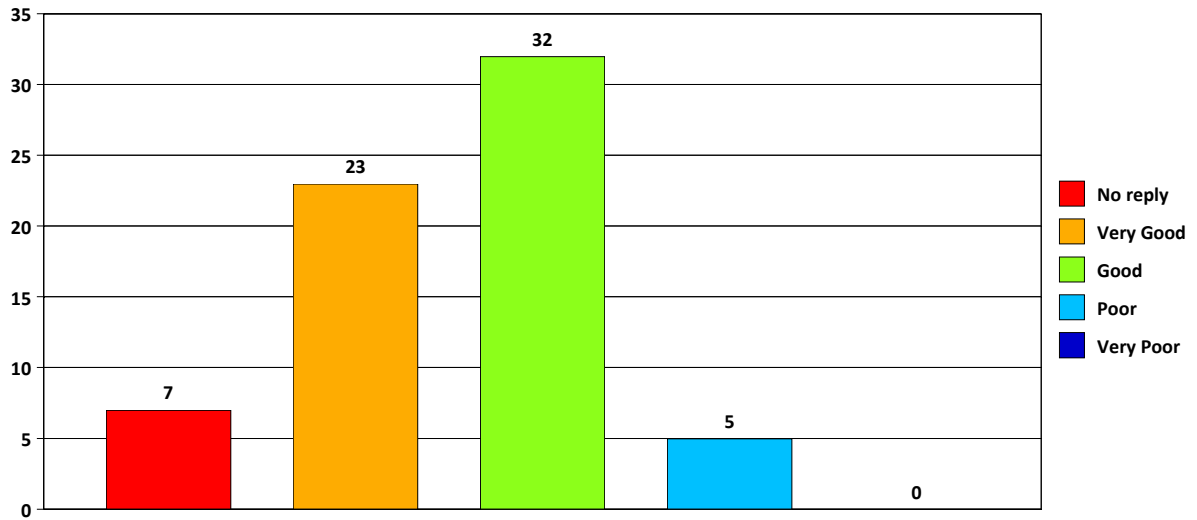
***Policy issues affecting towns and rural areas: Philip Dunne MP**



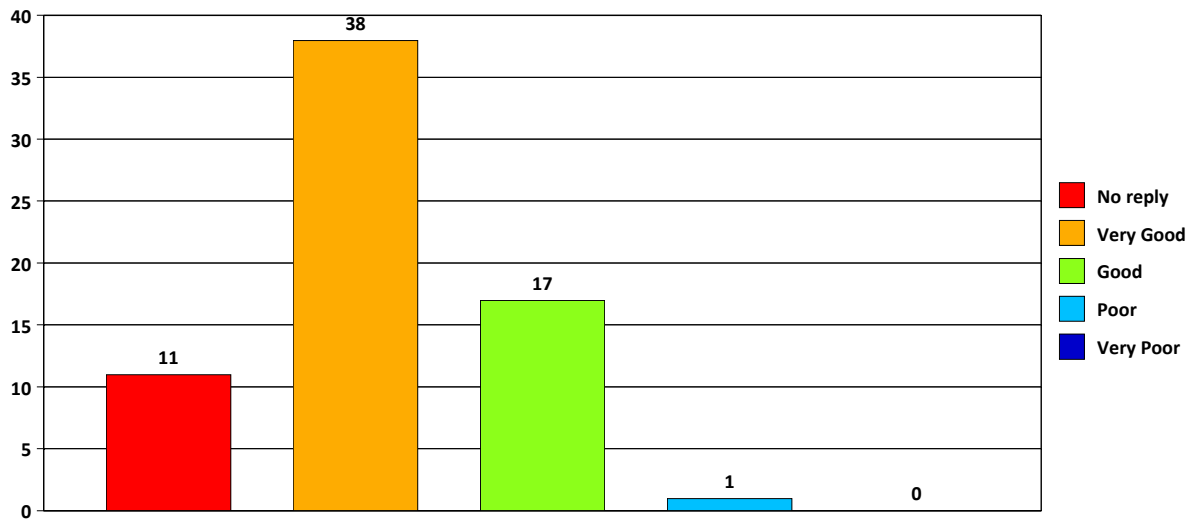
***Clr Geoff Stevens: Rural Board Member of EMDA**



*Beyond the recession- setting the scene: Chris Wade, AMT

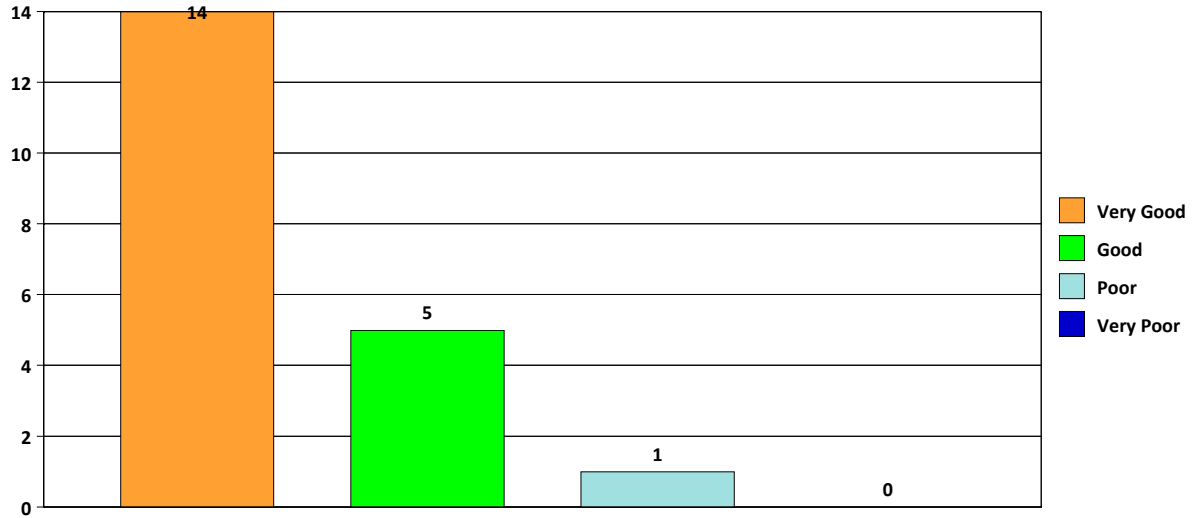


*Market Towns Awards

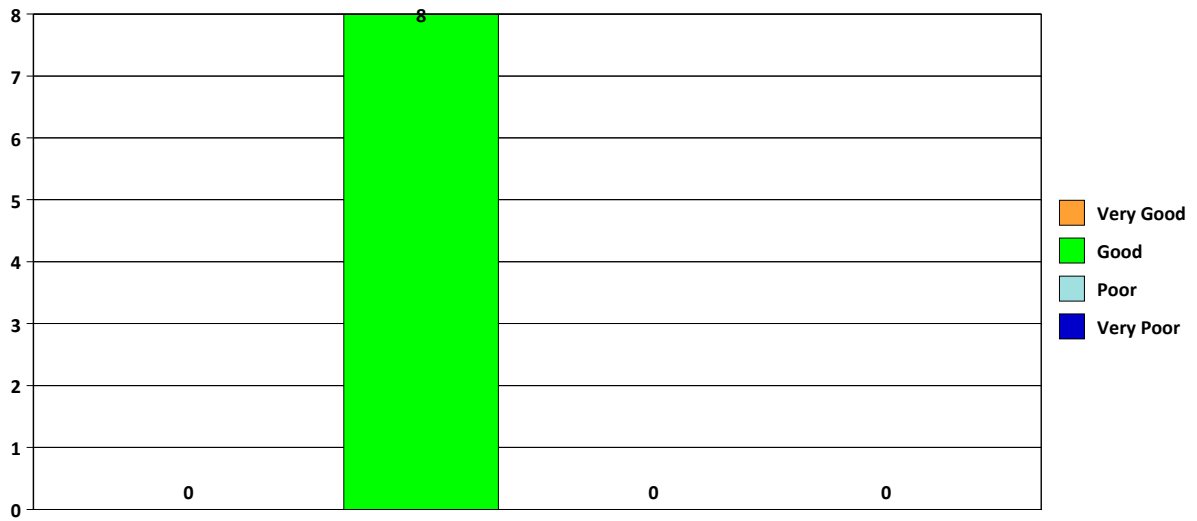


DAY 1 STUDY TOURS

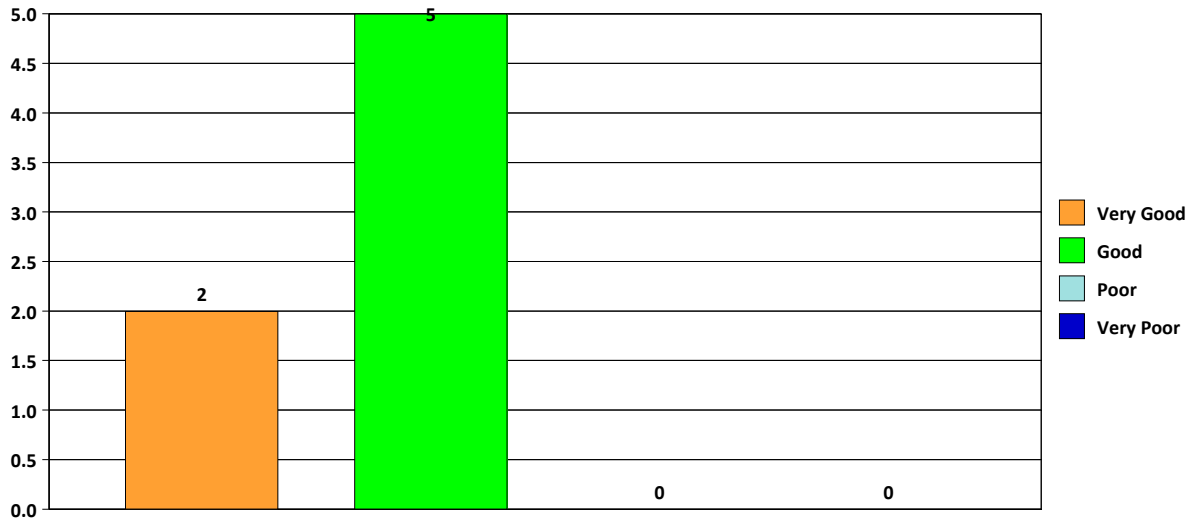
*Melton Mowbray- A rural capital of food and drink



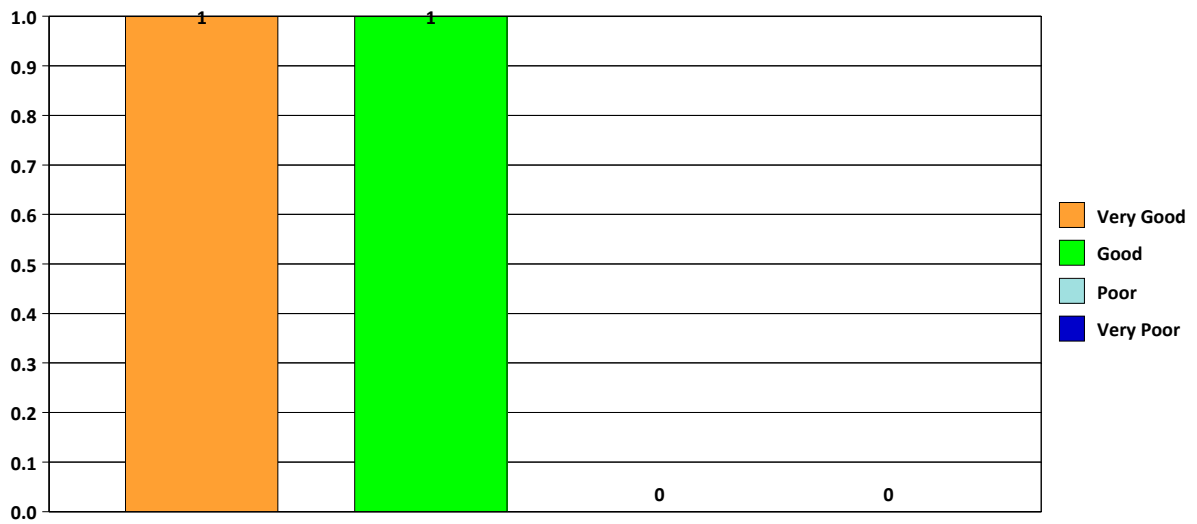
*Cattle Market as a potential regeneration



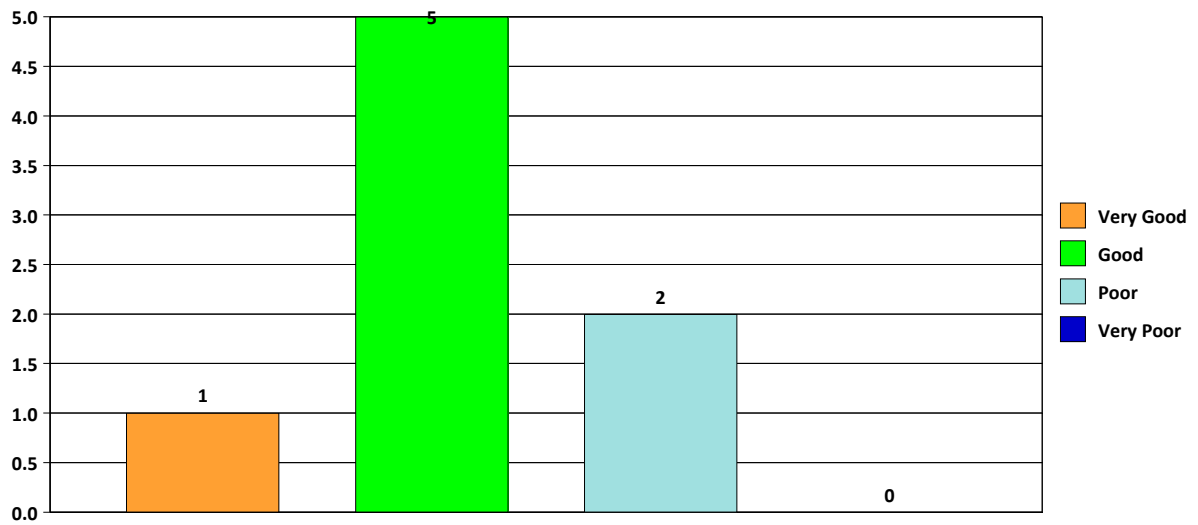
*Neighbouring towns working together in the Welland



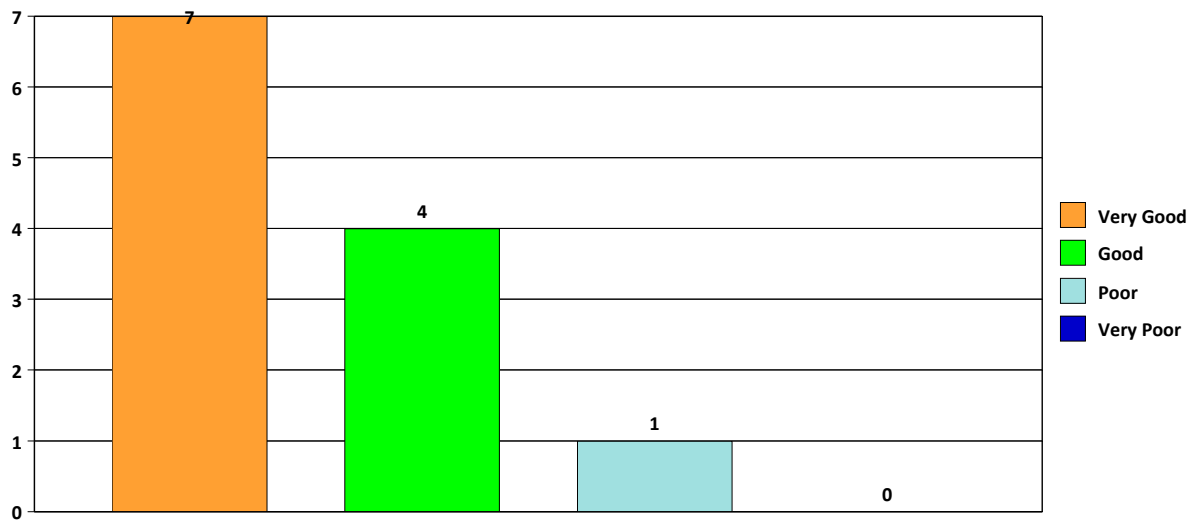
*Tackling financial exclusion in a credit crunch



***Masterplanning in Melton Town Centre**

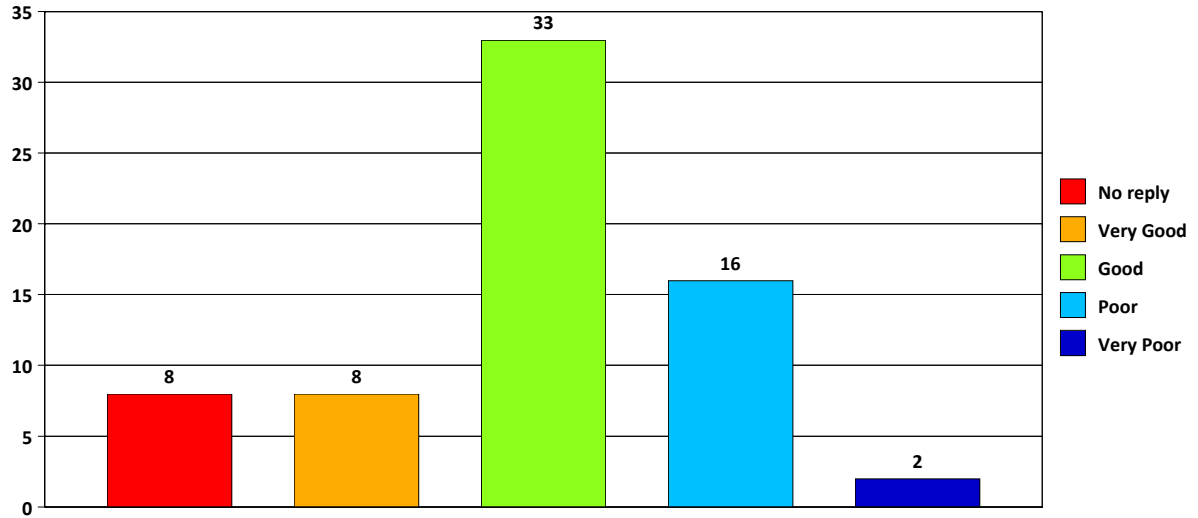


***Think Melton; Shop Melton- Tackling the economic downturn in a market town**

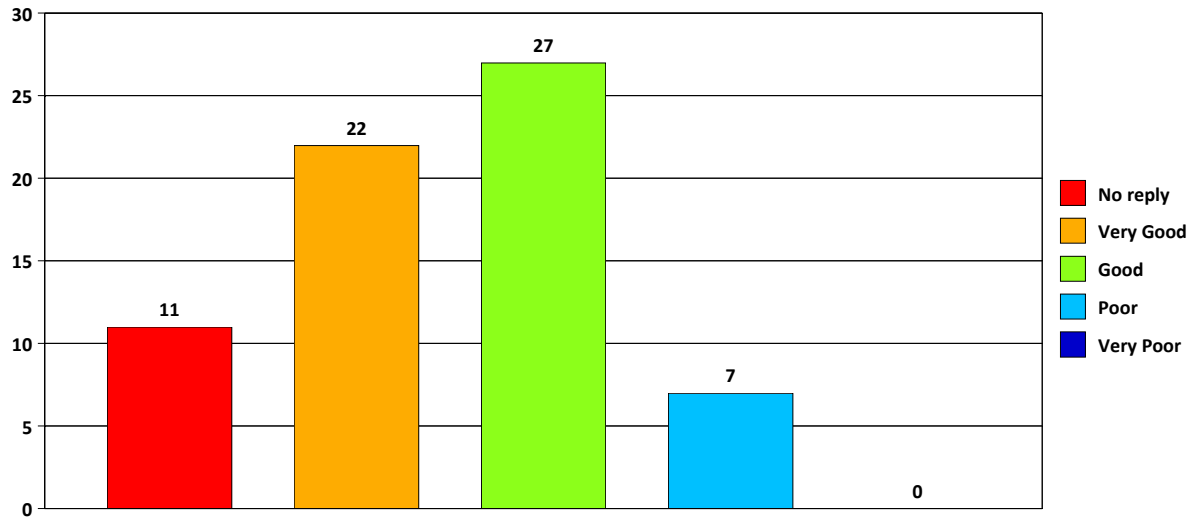


DAY 2 : MAIN PRESENTATIONS

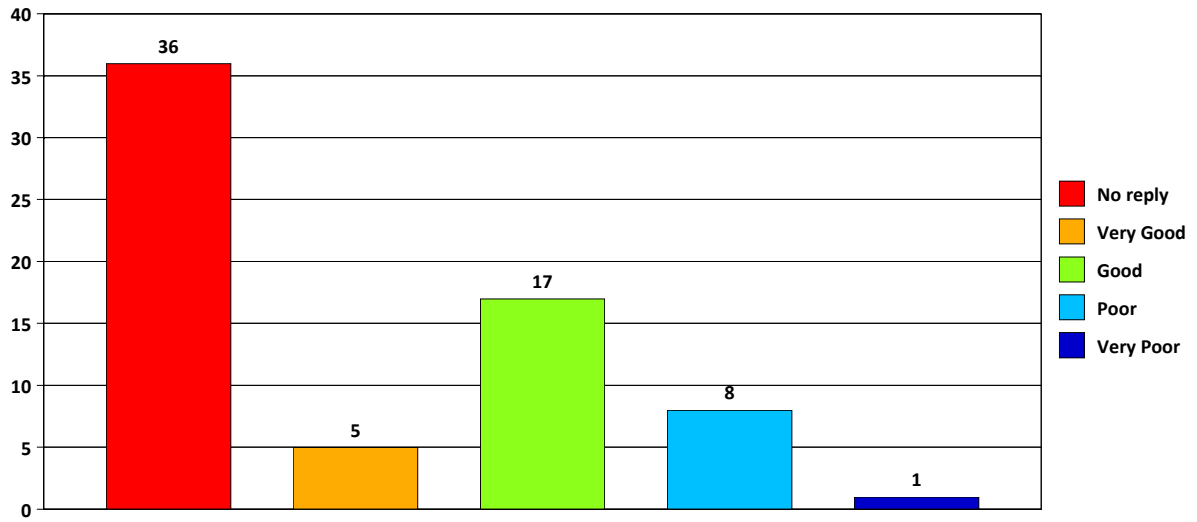
*Setting the scene- Why do we need a Rural Services Manifesto: Graham Biggs, RSN



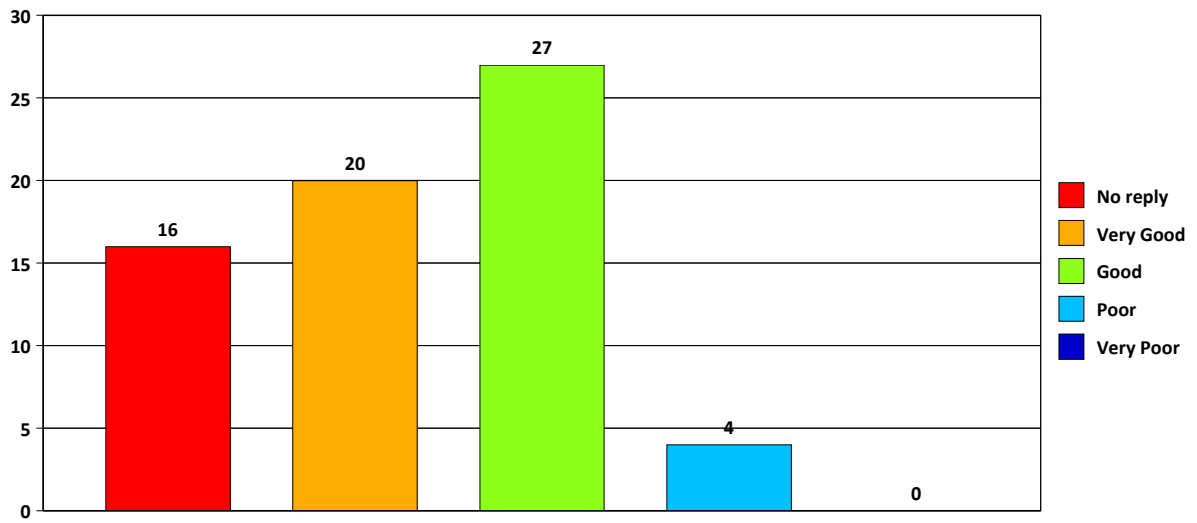
*Sustainability in rural areas and market towns: Leslie Watson, Sustainability South West



***Closing Debate- Should climate change be the main driver for the future development of the rural economy and services?**

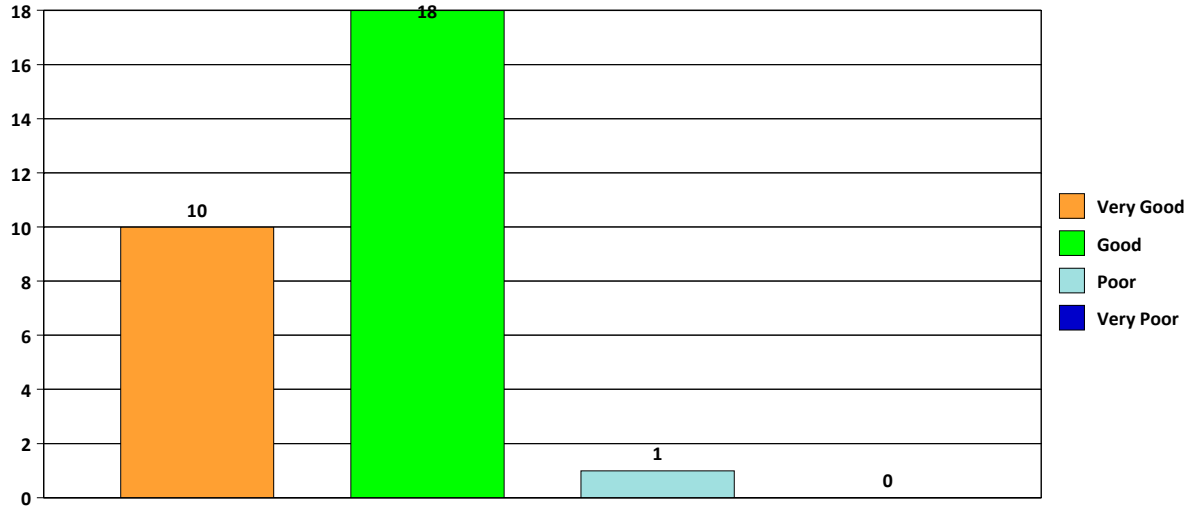


***Action for Market Towns Policy Forum**

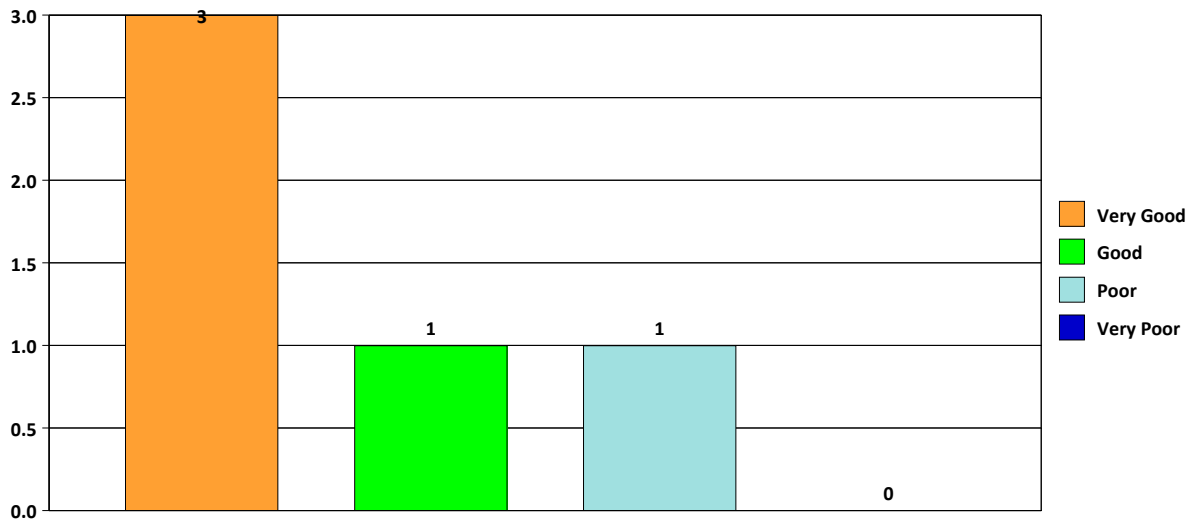


DAY2: WORKSHOPS

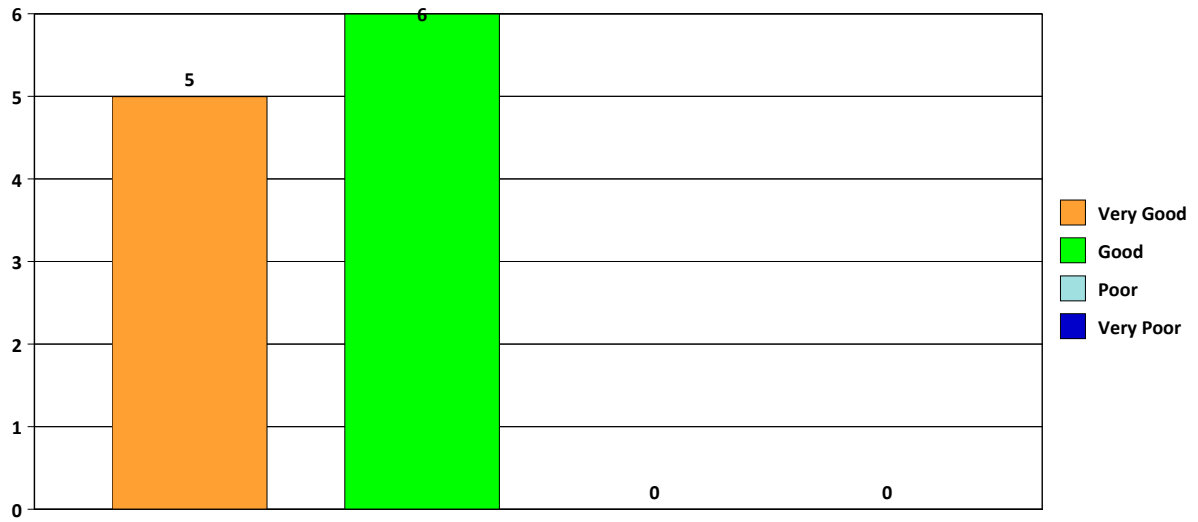
*Supporting local business, economic and skills development



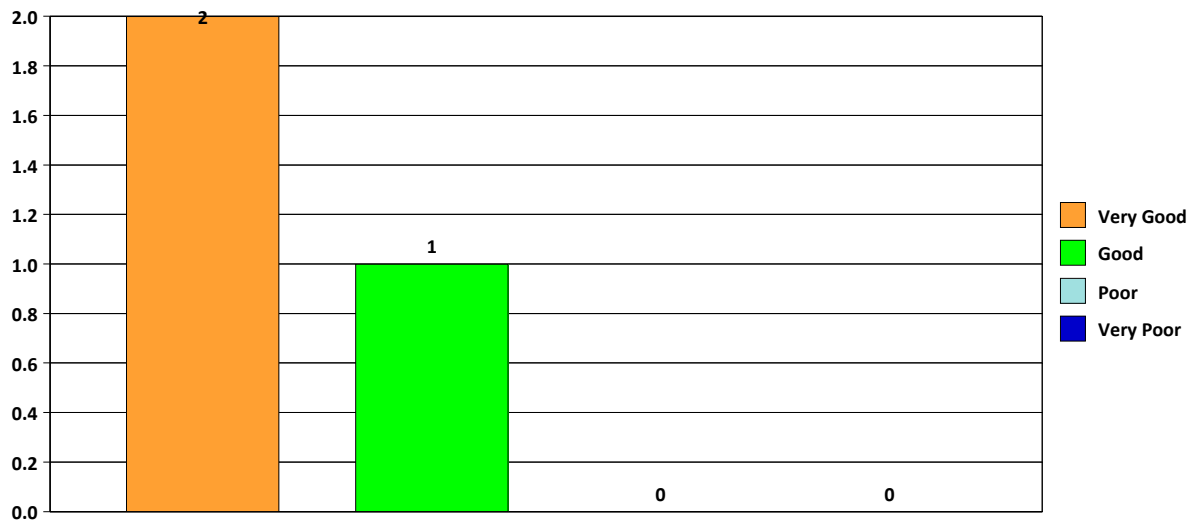
*Vulnerable rural communities and sustainability



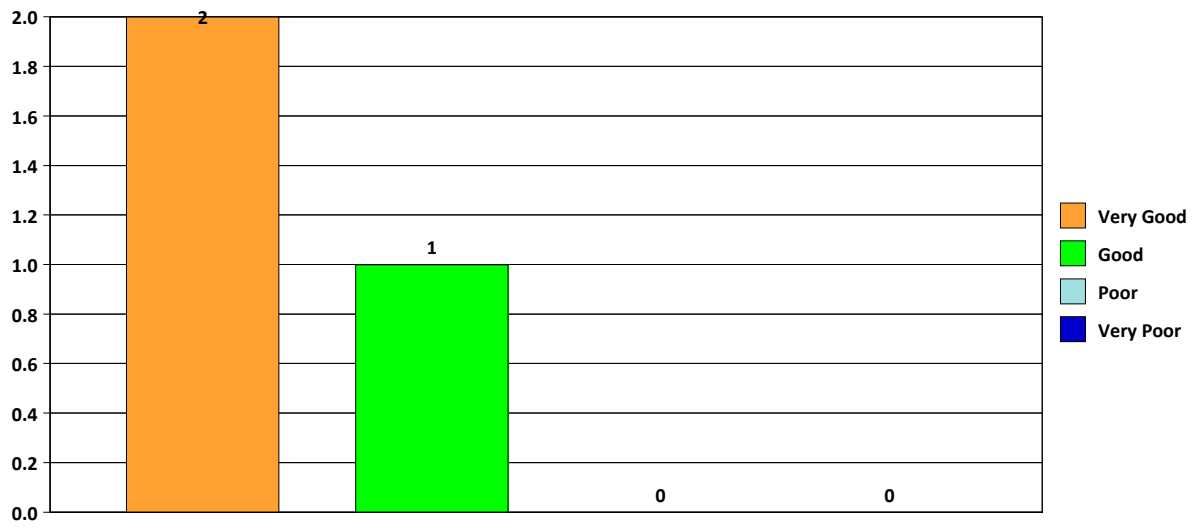
*The challenge of delivering rural services



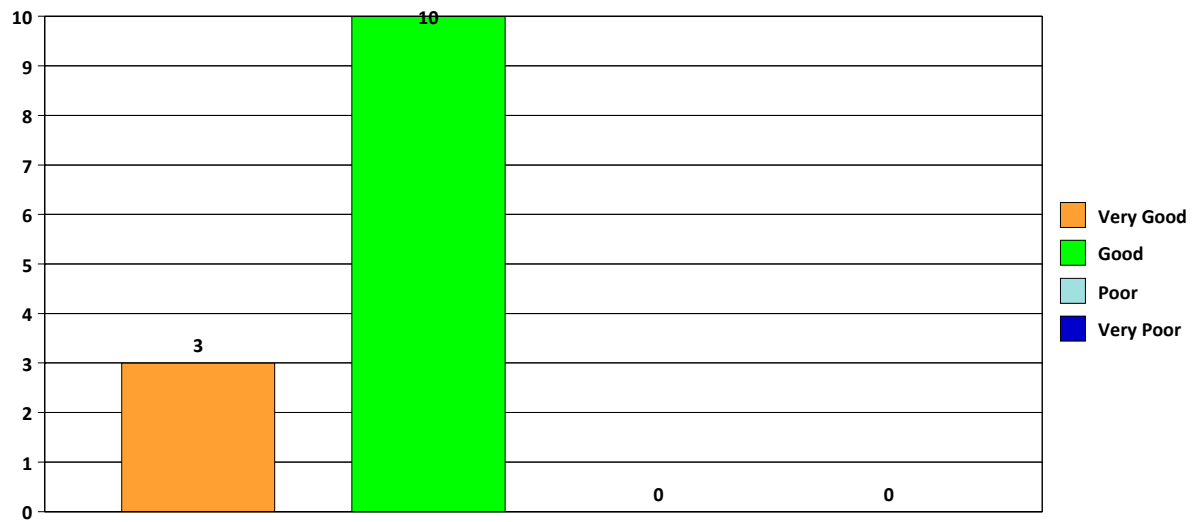
*Affordable Housing



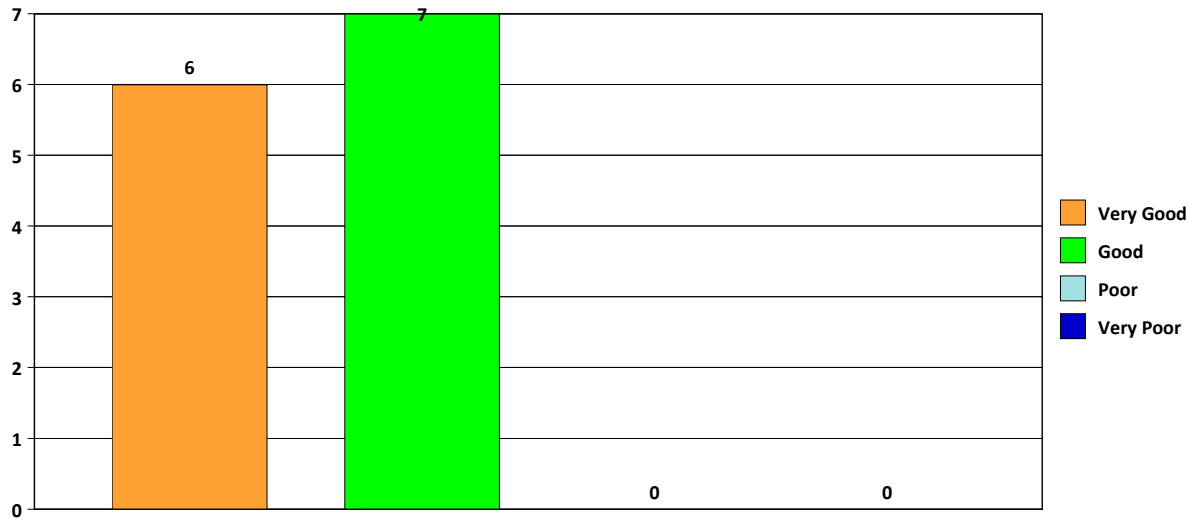
*Affordable Housing



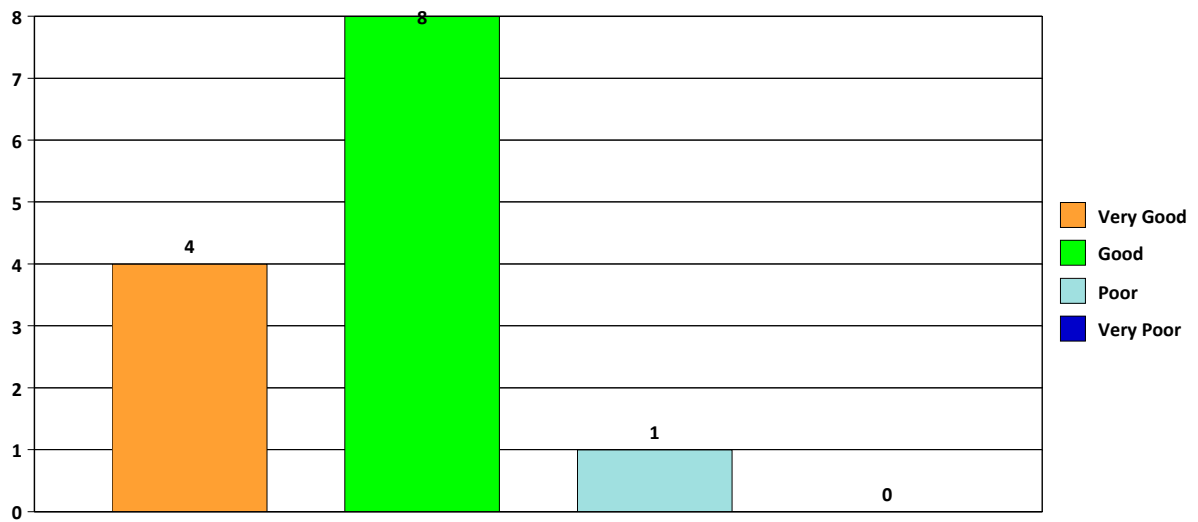
*Delivering the Rural Development Programme for England



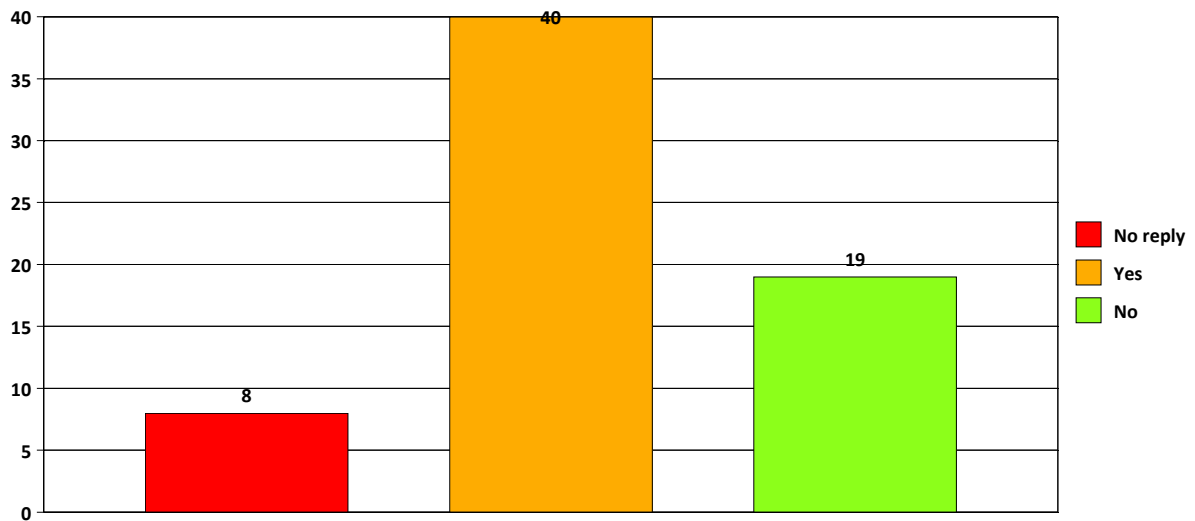
*Sustaining Town Partnerships



*Going green



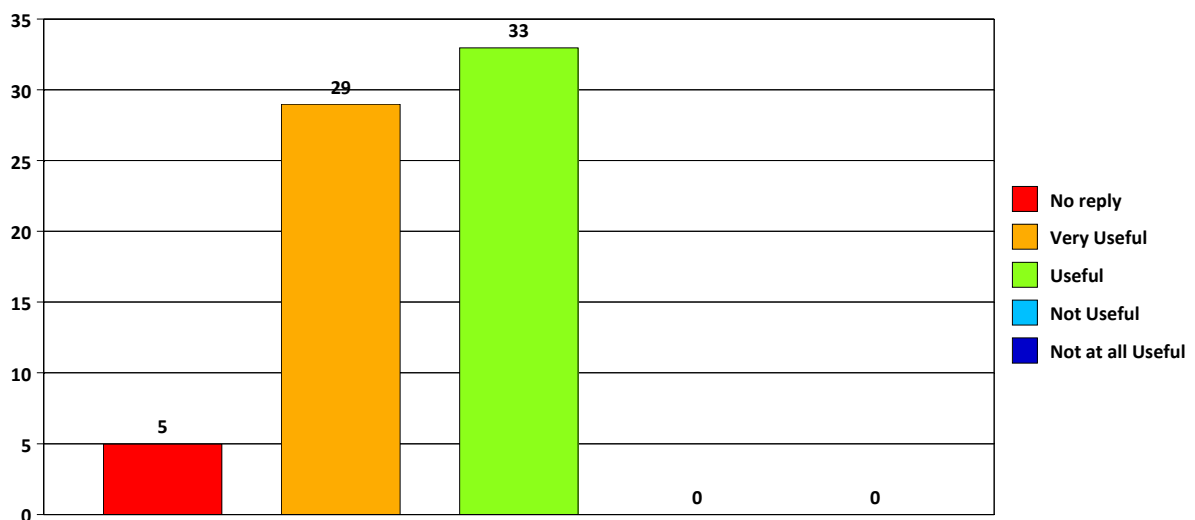
Do you think the 2009 Convention could have been improved?



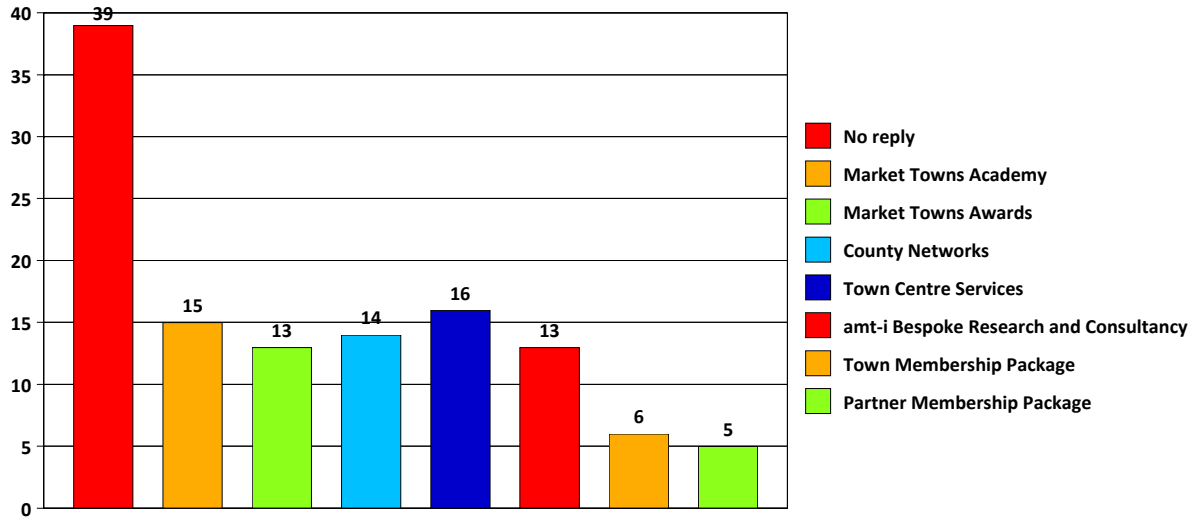
HOW DO YOU THINK THE CONVENTION COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED

The main suggestions revolved around more opportunities for ‘networking’, ‘improvements to the performance of the main speakers’, ‘more time for interactive workshops’, increasing the role of the ‘Market Towns Awards’ and ‘logistics’ surrounding the timings and distance to delegates accommodation. (All comments can be viewed in the Appendix)

Overall, how useful was the 2009 Convention to you?



AMT offer a variety of packages of support to members. Which of the following are you interested in?



APPENDIX

How do you think the Convention could have been improved?

- The Dinner. Rather too many speakers on local food at the dinner, not enough chance to relax and chat and it felt quite intense. Speakers and workshops generally good. Dr John England's talk was very dry and I found it difficult to know what it was intended for. Leslie Watsons talk was good but not clear how this can be applied practically
- Put a debate in during first or early second Day to get people motivated early on. Have the regional winners speaking earlier or as a part of the evening dinner. End of day means they are concerned about presentations and can't relax. The evening event food was good but talking from producers went on too long. Evening event should finish by 10pm to allow delegates to get accommodation at a reasonable hour
- Clarity on bus time collection/ drop off times could be improved. Directions to workshop rooms even clearer e.g. 'along the corridor to stairs in Conference Centre.'
- More Interactive workshops
- More networking. Move the market towns awards to the evening. Would be great to make more of this and take some of the successful ideas back to use in our own areas. Slightly rushed
- In the future can we have handouts of the slides being used- to make appropriate notes- but to be able to watch and listen and not just scribble
- Some speakers not very engaging. Leslie Watson the best. THE FOOD THIS YEAR COMPARED TO LAST WAS OUTSTANDING- REALLY GOOD! THE DINNER WAS ESPECIALLY ENJOYABLE AND THE SINGERS WERE BRILLIANT
- I think that the food workshop on Day 12 might have focussed more on the production of the goods on offer and not just a 'sales' pitch from the vendors- also less time looking in churches and more time to speak to vendors would have been better. The speakers needed to steer away from party politics, it was a little disconcerting. Whilst the speakers during the gala dinner were on the whole very informative, it really put the dampers on any constructive conversation developing during the meal. I feel more opportunities should have been provided for networking. WE HAD A REALLY GOOD TIME!
- Shortened to one day. Content of Day 1 was very poor

- Sally Williams and Hannah Bowden should have been given full presentations for their products. Day 1, the whole morning was a welcome. A structured overview would have been excellent to make sure delegates did not miss an opportunity to learn. e.g. what Alison Eardley spoke about on Day 2 and more on conference opportunities
- Involvement of reps from the Community Property or Community Land Trusts
- Getting motivational and inspiring speakers that set the conference feel. Add delegate email contacts to the delegate list
- Lecturers need to be kept away from politics. Some of the other lecturers were a bit dry. Some time for more structured networking would be useful i.e. some time to discuss pertinent issues- maybe round table discussions at the break times, with a chance to put a sign so people with the same interest could gather. As usual the best bit was the chance at the presentations to hear other people's cutting edge ideas. Who was the sexist buffoon who chaired the Day 2 morning session? Please get rid
- Not really- but more time for networking in evening. With speeches re food and entertainment, not much time to chat. V enjoyable, but maybe more balance needed. Would be useful to receive presentation/ workshop portraits of each session
- Cut out the self congratulatory sessions on Day 1 pre lunch. More examples of success stories
- Brief hotel staff with info on transport etc (shuttle bus times)
- Vet political speakers, very upsetting and very annoying to be lectured in such a boring way
- Study tour attended was a good tour, but more in depth look at issues would have been more informative. Possibly too much choice in workshops- mine were poorly attended. Forum debate hard to follow and somewhat hesitant presentations from speakers
- Time Keeping
- Not enough time for questions after the presentations. Final debate not focussed enough on Market Towns
- Only slightly by allowing more time for workshops which seemed quite rushed. Also a pity many people went home at 2.30- many missed the debate

- Need to retain people on Day 2. How about another study visit? I wanted to do several but could only do one. Workshops all day tend to be a bit tedious
- Could have done with more time in study workshops for questions to explore the subjects more and look at good practice. Didn't get chance to talk about shop front scheme etc in Neighbourhood Towns Working Together Workshop
- not inviting an MP at anytime
- Less political input. More case study feedback and research results. No sales pitches. Information on sources of public funding for market towns
- More participation, less sitting in one position and have been struggling with severe back ache
- More interactive workshops. More 'engaging' presentations on the second day
- Most speakers lacked focus on specific things that can be done
- Catering appeared to be overwhelmingly vegetarian which is not to everyone's taste
Local wine served at the dinner, as it is very good and available. Also local grown flowers
- Hotels very far out which made it a very long day. Gala dinner excellent but had food been earlier it would have helped shorten the day a bit. Not too much time to look at stalls in foyer as programme was very full
- More interactive sessions. Less speakers. Prompter start to last day
- Presentation skills of main speakers; on first day in particular. Visual aids not used effectively. Check that can all be read at the back
- More time for workshops. Perhaps too heavily weighted on presentations.
Unfortunately the closing debate was not a debate. Dr Reeves- good made the point, Dr England- more an extensive quotation from planning policy
- Generally I think the event was well run it is only minor changes for improvement.
Should have stuck with tea break on Wednesday morning. Also would have been nice to network a bit at the evening do
- More interactive format i.e. more opportunity for delegates to exchange ideas and best practice

- More time for the Awards winners- would have liked to be able to ask questions more time for networking
- First morning -reduce welcome addresses, people kept on saying the same thing, including the mayor! Could have done with more time to mingle after AGM- very rushed to return for 7.30. Hotel a long way out. Don't allow speaker 30 mins unless you know that they are really inspiring- it is too long to sit and listen. Try and time workshops so that people can ask questions. The first I went to, both presentations took 25 minutes so there was little time left for the audience
- Must have a break every hour even if not for coffee
- Let's talk about social issues which affect our quality of life
- The crowd vine type delegate interests log and opportunities to meet, rather than only chance?
- more time for questions and discussions
- turn heating off in rooms- climate change
- Possible handouts of all websites referred to by all speakers and workshops
- Hotel location less than half an hour away

Please let us know if there are any other types of support your organisation would be interested in receiving?

- Anything AMT think would be relevant- quite happy to self sort
- Training events, but we have very little money to pay for this
- I feel emphasis can be on small rural locations and their hinterland. I am interested in 'town' matters
- Town Centre Regeneration Project Consultancy
- Advice on developing performance indicators for Rural District Councils
- A town partnership template with a draft/ sample constitution. 'Creating a Town Partnership' with a supporting training/ briefing course
- Will the presentations at the conference be made available on the town.org website
- We hope to use the training sessions and I hope perhaps the towns 4 towns we may be able to participate in to share good practice
- Talks have covered my needs and will be following these up with you already!