

M40 NOISE SURVEY

The M40 Environmental Group distributed some 1800 questionnaires in late June 2009 to households living close to the motorway in all communities between Loudwater and Milton Common. We received well over 900 completed replies, an amazingly high response rate.

The answers revealed even greater nuisance and stress from motorway noise than we had suspected. Over three-quarters of respondents are “Frequently” or “Nearly Always” subject to impact from the noise, with 89% affected in their gardens, 72% in their bedrooms, and 47% in their living rooms.

Coping strategies include triple glazing, not opening bedroom windows at night, even in summer, and playing loud music to drown out the sound. The general consensus is that the noise has got worse in the last few years, particularly at night.

The findings confirm international research which suggests that motorway noise affects rural and semi-rural communities to a greater extent than their urban counterparts – although Government spending on noise mitigation is skewed towards towns and cities.

This is probably the largest survey of its kind undertaken in the UK, and the detailed analysis has been submitted jointly by Wycombe and South Oxfordshire District Councils to the Government, under the Sustainable Communities Act.

Is it too much to expect action on this problem which blights so many lives? Practical solutions exist.

To see the full report visit the website at www.m40-chilterns.org.uk.

And click on the links page to find it.