

THE PARISH OF WESTBOURNE

Including Aldsworth & Woodmancote

PARISH PLAN FROM QUESTIONNAIRES TO ACTION PLANS (July 2006)

Introduction

Developing the Parish Plan has been an interesting and exciting experience. The process itself has been of value, and we hope that the contacts made and the commitment we've seen will continue to be of benefit to the community in the Parish.

There are so many people whose work and wisdom has contributed to this Plan - those brave enough to be in the Steering Group, the members of Working Groups, the people that handed out and collected questionnaires, all the incidental people who supported us and shared their ideas informally, and in particular all those who took the time to put their ideas on paper in the questionnaire.

The process

The Steering group was set up at a parish meeting on the 23rd February 2005. Their first task was to consider what was needed to find out the views of residents about their Parish. Working groups were set up to consider specific aspects that would need attention, and how to focus the questions.

We arrived at twenty-one key questions, asking about the Parish Environment, Traffic, Housing, Shops, Medical Services, Local Halls and Social Activities, etc. Our attention was on "what it's like to live in Westbourne", and particularly on questions that could lead to action for change or improvement.

In November 2005, the finalised questionnaire was delivered by volunteers to all the households within Westbourne Parish, which includes the villages of Aldsworth, Westbourne and Woodmancote. Of the 981 questionnaires delivered, a total of 430 were returned (43.8%), representing 1,052 people.

The resulting Action Plan is an evidence-based view of how we wish to see the Parish develop.

The action points in this report focus on the individuals, groups or official bodies that have the power to take the action required. This involves making a clear case with them, publicising our wishes and following up on the individual points. This probably requires work and research by small groups as well as by the Parish Council, focusing on individual action points and taking them forward in the appropriate way.

The future

This Parish Plan is not a "one off" but a live ongoing Plan. A standing item on the Parish Council agenda should be "Parish Plan implementation". Progress should be reported back to the Parish via the minutes, the newsletter, the Parish Magazine and the web-site. Further, an independent annual review meeting will assess progress on actions and where necessary, priorities reworked.

Finally, on behalf of the Steering Group, I would like to thank everyone who helped to create this Parish Plan.

John Reeves (Steering Group Chairman)
The Old Orchard,
Old Farm Lane,
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PO10 8RU.

Results from Questionnaire

1. Local Environment

Overall, the Parish is considered a safe, clean, peaceful, friendly place with a semi-rural character and sufficient shops and other facilities. A strong desire was expressed that any future housing developments should maintain the sense of open spaces partly by ensuring that the surrounding farmland is not built on. Similarly, any new building designs should be sympathetic to the character of the existing parish. People were very clear that before any more building takes place the basic service infrastructure needs improvement. This includes pavements, parking, traffic calming, sewage and electricity,

1.a Water & Drainage

38 households (9% of respondents) have been affected by flooding in the past. 124 (29% of respondents) were not satisfied that there were sufficient flood prevention measures in place. The majority of ditches are over-grown and there does not appear to be any plan to operate the Mill Stream's sluice gates in emergency.

Action Point 1:

- 1) Determine who is responsible for the ditches and find out how to ensure that regular clearance is undertaken.
- 2) Ensure that a clear plan for operating the Mill Stream's sluice gates is in place.

By Whom: Parish Council & Environment Agency

When: 2006 and ongoing.

1.b Pavements & Local Rights of Way

26 (6.5% of respondents) complained of dog-fouled pavements. The majority did not specify a particular location but those who did indicated North Street and East Street.

372 (92% of respondents) regularly use the footpaths and bridleways. Of those, 79 (21%) thought that the stiles, paths and signposts were not well maintained. Most complaints were due to vegetation not being cut back; this also applied to some pavements.

A map of local footpaths and suggested walks was proposed.

There were a number of complaints about unregistered motorbikes being ridden on existing footpaths. This is dealt with in the Police Section.

Action Point 2:

- 1) Publicise dog-warden's contact details. (Dog-warden can impose fines on offending dog owners).
- 2) Determine who is responsible for overgrown hedgerows and ensure that clearance is undertaken.
- 3) Prepare footpath map and/or guide.

By Whom: Residents, Parish Council & Dog-warden.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

1.c Recycling & Waste Disposal

Residents in the Parish are enthusiastic about recycling and want to recycle more. Over 51% of respondents wanted the service improved, commenting overwhelmingly on the absence of local glass recycling facilities.

Marlpit Lane amenity tip is very much appreciated and is used by over 65% of respondents. This would probably be close to 100% if it was open on Saturdays as well.

Those who used Marlpit Lane wanted it improved so that recyclable materials and green waste can be separated out from non-recyclables.

Action Point 3:

- 1) Provide local glass recycling facilities.
- 2) Open Marlpit Lane on Saturday.
- 3) Separate out green waste etc. from non-recyclables at Marlpit Lane.

By Whom: Parish Council, District Council & County Council.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

2. Traffic & Parking

The questions with the most comments all related to traffic and the problems it creates; Parking 59%, Speeding 53% and Volume of traffic 38%.

2.a Parking is especially a problem in the area outside the Co-op for shoppers followed by North Street and to a lesser extent East Street for residents. Various suggestions were put forward to resolve the problems, namely

- provision of a central car-park,
- enforcement of double yellow lines by traffic wardens,
- developing a one-way system around the Stag pub
- allow parking on one side only of North and East Street and reconfigure the Square to increase parking spaces.

Away from the centre of Westbourne, parking is also a problem and the most common suggestion was to restrict further development and where development did take place to ensure/enforce a minimum of two off-street parking spaces per new dwelling.

Action Point 4:

- 1) Examine all the above suggestions.
- 2) Seek new innovative ideas.
- 3) Challenge all objections by District, County and Highways, and continue to make appropriate representations.

By Whom: Parish Council, District Council, County Council and Highways Agency.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

2.b Speed of traffic is the second major concern of most respondents. The specific places highlighted as of most concern are

- East Street,
- Foxbury Lane,
- Monks Hill,
- North Street,
- River Street
- White Chimney Row.

There was a general concern about speed throughout the Parish. Traffic calming by speed cameras is seen as impractical due to cost and the number that would be necessary. Lower speed limits and traffic lights to control the speed might be unenforceable, judging by the number who ignore present limits and jump red lights in other villages. The Highways Department has suggested that having cars parked in the street slows traffic; this is not borne out by the fact that both East Street and North Street, the two streets most congested by car-parking, suffer noticeably from speeding cars.

What is required is something that forces motorists to slow down. It was suggested that either severe "Pinch Points" or "Speed Humps" are required.

Action Point 5:

- 1) Seek suitable locations for "Pinch Points" or "Speed Humps" in the roads listed above.

- 2) Seek new innovative ideas.
- 3) Challenge all objections by District, County and Highways, and persist in making representations about these ideas.

By Whom: Parish Council, District Council, County Council and Highways Agency.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

Two other issues were highlighted: these were

- a. the lack of a pedestrian crossing in the Square and
- b. the absence of pavements along River Street and White Chimney Row.

There is no safe means of crossing the Square; parked cars and delivery vans restrict the sightlines of both pedestrians and drivers whilst traffic speed is of concern to young, old and the disabled. A crossing point is urgently required.

The absence of a pavement from the eastern end of Commonsidge to the school is a serious hazard for children walking to the school in River Street. The problem is exacerbated by the large number of parents who drive their children to the school and park at the side of the road.

Similarly, there is no pavement along the narrow section of White Chimney Row. There is no clear view for pedestrians or drivers along the Row. There is only room for two saloon cars to pass each other, so if a larger vehicle such as the regular bus or a truck meets anything going in the opposite direction, one of them has to reverse. When residents had a meeting with Highways and the Police in the Row, the police officer refused to walk along the Row without his yellow reflective jacket considering it to be too dangerous, although residents have to walk there. White lines and slow signs on the road surface have not brought about any reduction in the speed of cars and vans along the Row. There is insufficient width to provide a pavement, so more drastic action is required such as severe reduction of traffic speed or road closure.

Action Point 6:

- 1) Install pedestrian crossing in the Square.
- 2) Provide a pavement in River Street.
- 3) Drastically reduce traffic speed in White Chimney Row or close the road to through traffic.
- 4) Challenge all objections by District, County and Highways and persist in making representations about these ideas.

By Whom: Parish Council, District Council, County Council and Highways Agency.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

3. Housing

12% of respondents strongly objected to any new housing in the Parish. The remainder accepted there was probably a need for some new houses. It was generally agreed that the prerequisites before any new houses are built were:

- improved parking in the village and provision of off-street parking for each new property,
- traffic reduction and safer roads,
- Planning Conditions to reduce traffic and to improve local utilities (gas, electricity, sewage, etc.)

Affordable housing to meet local needs and first time buyers were seen to be the highest priority closely followed by elderly accommodation.

45% of respondents expressed an opinion on where any new houses should be built. The most favoured location was The Old Army Camp in Cemetery Lane followed by Brownfield sites/Infilling.

Action Point 7:

- 1) Additional Planning Conditions as detailed above to be imposed on any new Planning Applications.

2) Parishioners' wishes on location and type of any new housing to be respected and not be ignored by central planning.

By Whom: Parish Council, District Council and County Council.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

4. Services

a) Public Transport

20% of respondents use the local bus service. Of that 20%, 58% thought that the service has not improved over the past 2 years. The main improvements that were wanted are

- Frequency
- Timetables displayed
- Reliability

Action Point 8:

- 1) Improve frequency
- 2) Display timetables.
- 3) Improve reliability.

By Whom: Parish Council, Bus Company.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

b) Police/Law & Order

The Parish is generally perceived to be a safe environment with low levels of crime. There is the occasional theft, most which appears to be opportunistic, vandalism of cars and property and the riding of unregistered motorcycles on footpaths. This latter item was the most frequently mentioned crime at 26 (6.5% of respondents) responses.

81% of respondents were not aware of or had not met the Community Policeman, 56% of respondents were not or didn't know if they were covered by the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and 61% didn't know the local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

Most of the anti-social behaviour occurred in the evenings and most respondents wanted a greater police presence at that time.

26 (6.5% of respondents) complained of unregistered motorbikes being ridden on footpaths.

Action Point 9:

- 1) Greater preventative police presence in the evenings.
- 2) More awareness of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and its Co-ordinator.

By Whom: Parish Council, Police Authority & Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

c) Local Representatives

54% of respondents didn't know a Parish Councillor, 72% didn't know the District Councillor and 76% didn't know the County Councillor. This may reflect the general apathy at large regarding politics but from the comments made, the biggest problem is lack of information of intent and feedback from the Parish Council. Only 10% believed they were 'Well informed' on Parish matters, 34 % 'Poorly' or 'Not At All' and 48% 'Reasonably' informed. Of this last figure almost everyone mentioned they got the information from the late John Holliss' articles in the Parish magazine.

Action Point 10:

- 1) More openness and information from the Parish Council.
- 2) Regular newsletters from the Parish Council.

3) Greater use of Westbourne web-site by Parish Council.

By Whom: Parish Council.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

5 Leisure

a) Halls

There are 4 places in the Parish where meetings can be held; the Church Hall, the Baptist Church Hall, Woodmancote Church and the Westbourne Club. 74% of respondents use these places either regularly or when the occasion arises and 69% did not believe there was need for another hall.

b) Sports and Social Activities

Generally, it was considered that there were enough sporting and social activities for all ages except for the 12 to 18 age group where the most frequently expressed wish was for a Youth Club.

Action Point 11:

1) Explore the possibility of organising a Youth Club, and take appropriate action steps.

By Whom: Parish Council and Parents.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

6. Community

a) Web-site

A Westbourne Web-site was set up earlier this year with space for everything concerning Westbourne Parish to be published. This site requires input from all Parish organisations, Councillors, business's, clubs and associations, etc.

Action Point 12:

1) Maintain, input information and publicise Web-site.

By Whom: Parish organisations and Web-site committee.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

b) Residents' and/or Business Association

76% believed that the Parish would benefit from having such organisations to serve its interests and to co-ordinate activities as seen in Emsworth and other local Parishes. It would be useful to have a forum for the Westbourne businesses.

It is not envisaged that these associations would replace or usurp the Parish Council but would rather work with it to improve the Parish according to the expressed needs of the residents (for example - setting up a Youth Club.)

Action Point 13:

1) Form a Resident's and/or Business Association.

By Whom: Existing Management groups e.g. Westbourne Week Committee and interested parties.

When: 2006 and ongoing.

Action Point Summary

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Group members, past & present

Steering Group

David Childs-Hopkins
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Bob Cooper
Joanna Howard
Caroline Manners
David Todd

Website

Jim Barlow *

*** Denotes Group Leaders**