



www.isleofwedmore.org.uk

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Section 1 - Introduction

1. **This Plan represents an agreement** between the Isle of Wedmore community and Wedmore Parish Council, as to how they would like the parish to develop in future.
2. **It can be downloaded** from the Parish Plan website - www.isleofwedmore.org.uk - and can be viewed in hard copy at Wedmore Parish Council's offices.
3. **It is designed to be used in the following ways:**
 - Initially, as an agreed set of objectives and outline strategies for a range of plans and proposals to be taken forward by several Working Groups of volunteers, in consultation with the Parish Plan Steering Committee (PPSC) and Wedmore Parish Council (WPC).
 - As a reference work for individuals, groups, or the Parish Council, wishing to introduce new proposals or projects in the future; to check that what they propose is in line with the majority of parishioners' wishes.
4. **It is set out as follows:**
 - A brief history of the project since its inception in October 2001; and a background description and profile of the Parish.
 - A brief summary of the key findings from the Community Appraisal.
 - A Summary of Plan Content, giving an at-a-glance list of proposed objectives and potential solutions; and the Community Appraisal findings from which they originate.
 - All other issues raised by the Community Appraisal, but not covered by the volunteer Working Groups.
 - A description of the structure, lines of communication and role of the Parish Plan team.
 - The role of the PPSC and Working Groups.
5. **It may be viewed in conjunction with a separate report, 'Community Appraisal Findings'** (available in the same locations as the Plan), which includes the following:
 - A full report on the key findings of the Community Appraisal.
 - The objectives and suggested solutions given to each volunteer group working on the Plan's implementation
 - Demographic profiles of the Isle of Wedmore parish
 - The Constitution of the PPSC and the Terms of Reference of the Working Groups.
 - A brief guide to statistics, for those unfamiliar with the principles of quantified research and statistical analysis.
6. **Objectives listed in this plan are not guaranteed to be achieved.** Inclusion in the Plan simply denotes an *intention* on the part of the community to work together to try and achieve it. Furthermore, some issues highlighted in the Community Appraisal will be difficult, and may take a long time to achieve, if ever. Also, some are already being addressed by WPC.
7. **The Parish Plan will not be static and unchanging.** In recognition that some projects will 'fall by the wayside' over the coming years, and new ones will present themselves as potentially fulfilling the community's key objectives, it will be formally reviewed and updated by the PPSC annually, in consultation with WPC, to reflect changing priorities over the previous and forthcoming years.

Section 2 - Background

History

1. The initial public consultation was in October 2001, a public meeting called by the Parish Council.
2. From April 2002-July 2003 was *Phase 1 'The Community Appraisal'* - purely research; no proposals. 800 adult responses = 35% response rate. Statistically reliable data (see below).
3. Plus, a further several hundred net additional findings from, in particular : farmers, the elderly, teenagers and children, measured 'qualitatively' - i.e. via focus groups, written comments, and a survey of pupils at Wedmore First School
4. Starting now - *Phase 2 'The Parish Plan'*. Proposals based on the research findings.

Statistical reliability

- Analysis based on the whole sample of 800 is statistically reliable to between 99.39% and 99.97% certainty, since the sample is big enough to be fully representative of the adult community aged 15+ (est.2,400 people). For very small sub-sets of the sample - e.g. farmers, who only represent 5% of the community (44 respondents in the Survey) - statistical reliability drops to just over 97%. These definitions of reliability are calculated by the specialist research software used by the data processing agency employed.
- The sample, then, is a reliably representative cross-section of the population. It is not necessary for 100% of the 'universe' (in this case, IoW adults aged 15+) to respond, for the data to be absolutely reliable; any more than it is necessary for MPs and Councillors to be elected by 100% of voters for them to be 'representatives' of a ward or constituency.
- In addition to the Main Adult Survey, many hundreds of parishioners responded through specialist 'qualitative' research techniques (see description above). Although these data are not analysed for statistical reliability, they are nevertheless *equally valid as research findings*, providing, as they do, much more detailed insights into parishioners' thoughts and concerns.

A brief description of the Isle of Wedmore Parish

The Isle of Wedmore consists of three principal villages, Wedmore, Blackford and Theale with a further seventeen hamlets that include Clewer, Cocklake and Crickham (the Three C's), Stoughton, Heath House, Panborough, Little Ireland and Little Scotland.

Wedmore is a busy thriving village, which still retains its essential character. It has a variety of retail outlets including butchers, boutiques, restaurants and coffee shops as well as a post office, bank, dentist, doctor's surgery, chemist and several public houses. There are also seven churches of three different denominations within the three principal villages.

Sitting on a ridge of higher land rising out of the Somerset Levels it is four miles from Cheddar and the Mendip Hills and eight miles from both Wells and Glastonbury. The Isle of Wedmore has an ancient history; it was here that King Alfred the Great signed peace with the Danes in 878 AD. The main shopping street is The Borough, which was laid out as a market in the 12th and 13th Centuries, and the 14th Century Market Cross can still be found here today.

The Parish is mainly farmland with a population of around 3,300 with approximately 2,500 residents on the 'Register of Electors'. It has 58 miles of footpaths and is bounded by 26 miles of roads.

For the sports enthusiast the community is well-served by its very popular golf, bowls, tennis, cricket and football clubs.

Objectives

<i>The Parish Council's Objective</i>	To provide research-based evidence in support of future bids and applications.
<i>The Government's Objective</i>	“ We want to give rural communities a bigger say in managing their affairs and the chance to give everyone in the community a say in how it develops”
<i>The Community's Objective</i>	To participate actively in managing the affairs of their own community

A genuine piece of grass-roots democracy.

Here is an extract from the government White Paper which initiated the project:

“People in rural communities care strongly about the places where they live, about the services and activities that hold the community together, the local landscape and its features, and how it is likely to evolve in the future. Every country town and village has its own priorities, local strengths and distinctive features which are special and unique.

We recognise that diversity and local pride. We want to enable rural communities to improve their quality of life and opportunity. *We want to give them a bigger say in managing their own affairs and the chance to give everyone in the community a say in how it develops.* To achieve this we will help all rural communities develop Parish Plans.”

Sample and methodology of the survey

The following are the components of the Community Appraisal:

1. Main adult survey aged 15+. Self-completion questionnaire containing 40+ questions, 2,400 distributed to approximately 1,200 households in the Isle of Wedmore. 800 questionnaires returned on time, representing a 35% response rate.
2. Six focus groups: two with elderly ladies and men, aged 70-85; two with teenage boys and girls aged 12-16; one with farmers and one with people whose families have lived here for generations.
3. A survey of children aged 5-9, all at Wedmore First School, in the form of a self-completion questionnaire and drawing competition. Twenty eight completed questionnaires.
4. Verbatim Comments from the 516 that were returned by respondents of the main adult survey, using the separate ‘Yellow Pages’.
5. Government Census data, collected from the Office for National Statistics. County and District data, from Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council. This has enabled us to analyse the present and future demographic profile of the Isle of Wedmore compared to that of Sedgemoor, Somerset and UK. Such profiling will be invaluable for the future planning of housing, employment and health services needs.

Some of the national, county, district, and parish organisations and individuals the Committee consulted in drafting the content of the Adult Questionnaire - Sept. 2002

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Individual</i>
Wedmore Parish Council	All, including clerk
County Police and Traffic Engineer	Sgt Graham, Traffic Management Committee; Mrs Norman, Sedgemoor Traffic Engineer
Local Police	PC Will Danning, Cheddar Station
Local farmers and retail traders	A number helped pilot the questionnaire*
English Heritage	Conservation Areas Department
Wedmore Surgery	Dr Matthew Dolman, Partner
IT for the Terrified	Mrs Angela Vivian, Founder
St Mary's Church	Rosy Hasler, Church Warden
Isle of Wedmore News	Lis Bull, Joint Editor
Hugh Sexey Middle School	Head Teacher
Wedmore First School	Head Teacher
Wedmore VH Committee	Muriel Welch - member + PC member
Youth Club	Mrs Maxine Ingrouille- Kidd, Youth Worker
SCC Adult Learning Service	Holly Cole, Manager
Wedmore Neighbourhood Watch	Roy Millward, Co-ordinator
Wedmore Theatre Club	Sue Rippon, Chairman
Wedmore Opera	Marylin Johnstone, Director
Somerset Community Council on behalf of the funding body.	Saveria Moss

Notes

The above list is not exhaustive. Over a six-month period, a number of prominent announcements were made in the local press, in the Isle of Wedmore News, and via a series of posters put up around the villages of the parish, inviting ALL parishioners - whether private individuals or business owners - to put forward suggested content for inclusion in the Community Appraisal questionnaire.

**Before the final questionnaire was printed, it was piloted amongst a small number of parishioners - especially farmers and retail traders - to ensure that it flowed logically for respondents, was easy to fill in, and did not take too long to fill in*

In June 2003 an exhibition of findings took place in Wedmore VH. In July 2003 there was a follow-up public feedback meeting, also in Wedmore VH. Both events were well attended by parishioners.

Section 3 - A brief summary of the Research Findings

Isle of Wedmore demographic profile

21.3% of the Isle of Wedmore's **total** population is aged 65 and over. This is much higher than the national average, which is 15.9%, and even higher than the averages for Sedgemoor (19.1%), Somerset (19.4%) and the South West as a whole (18.6%). What is more, according to government and Sedgemoor projections, this age group will have grown by 18.6% by 2011, whilst the numbers of children (-7%) and young adults (-2.3%) in the village will have fallen.

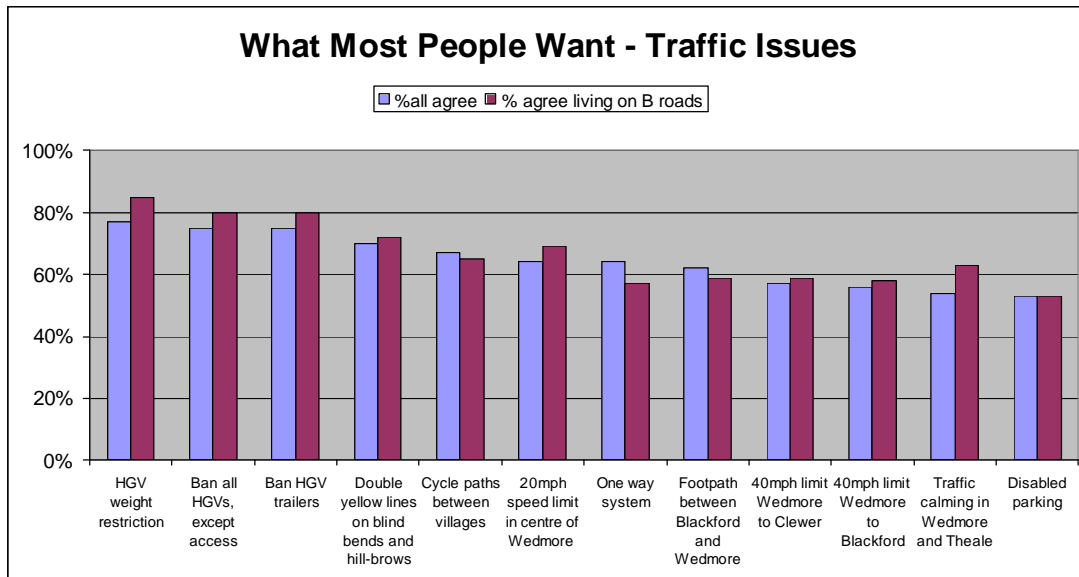
Future Housing Needs in the IoW - Our very own 'Demographic Time Bomb'				
Age band	Description	Numbers 2001 % of total	Numbers 2011 % of total	% change over 10 years
0 - 14	Children	628 20.4%	584 17.6%	-7%
15 - 34	Young singles + very young families	221 7.1%	216 6.5%	- 2.3%
35 - 64	School-age families + 'empty nesters'	1,569 51%	1,734 52%	+ 10.5%
65+	Retired	662 21.5%	785 23.6%	+ 18.6%
TOTAL		3,080 100%	3,319 100%	+ 7.8%

The parish has a much more up-market profile than Sedgemoor, Somerset, or the UK. Although, overall, the parish is reasonably well-off, there is a minority of 13% (about 400 adults) who are apparently living on a *household* income of around £10,000. These people are more likely to be elderly, or farmers; and more likely to need Social Services and benefits. All the above demographic findings are important for planning the parish's future housing, health, social and education requirements.

Attitudes: Concerns, Needs and Wants

Almost all parishioners, of all ages, love living in the Isle of Wedmore, and appreciate its attractive appearance and excellent retail, health, spiritual and leisure services; plus the wide range of clubs and activities provided. People tend to describe the parish as 'friendly and welcoming'.

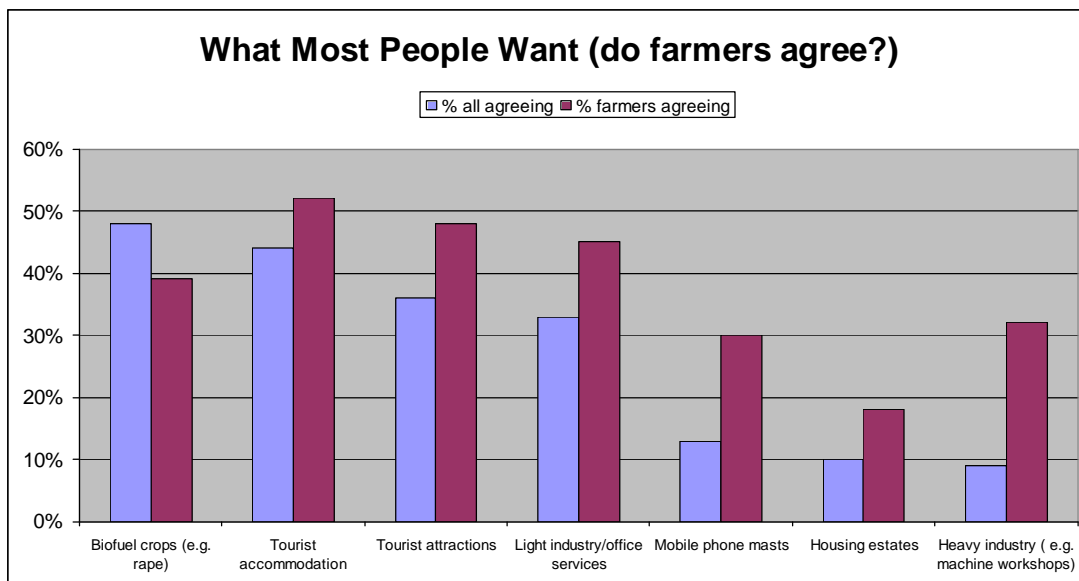
The biggest problems are HGVs, speeding vehicles and dangerous parking. 35% of all parishioners live on one of the two B roads that intersect in Wedmore, and for these 1,000 souls, the traffic problem has become a nightmare.



A variety of solutions are suggested by parishioners, with HGV bans and double yellow lines on blind bends and hill-brows topping the scores.

Also important to parishioners is the issue of housing, development and the environment. A majority (56%) feel that the parish still needs some more housing, but they are very clear what type. **Out** are large detached houses, or housing estates cutting swathes through the surrounding countryside. **In** are sheltered and adapted housing for the elderly and disabled, plus a nursing home, and more affordable housing for young and local people. Such developments to be either on brownfield sites, or in small developments tucked away behind existing buildings. If any expansion of the boundary is needed, there is a slight preference for the eastern end of Wedmore.

The surrounding countryside is vitally important to the vast majority, but there are some major differences between how farmers would like to see it diversified in the future, and what the rest of parishioners would prefer.



The two other outstanding issues are: anti-social behaviour and lack of facilities for young people:

- Most people recognise that real crime levels are quite low in the Isle of Wedmore, but most are also concerned by a variety of anti-social behaviour, ranging from under-age drinking to dog fouling and inconsiderate parking.
- Amongst all age-groups - not just teenagers - there is a feeling that our young people do not have sufficient facilities. Particular emphasis was laid on a skate park, but sports facilities and transport on Friday and Saturday evenings were also on the agenda.

A full and detailed report on the research results is contained in the separate document entitled 'Community Appraisal Findings'.

Section 4 - Plan Content - Objectives and Possible Solutions

The Major Issues

Working Group	Objective	Possible Solution(s)	Relevant research finding
Traffic	Establish parking policy	Village car park	Qualitative (from 516 'yellow pages' of verbatim comments)
		Double yellow lines on bends/hills	90% concerned. 70% want.
		Passing and disabled places	Qualitative (from 516 'yellow pages' of verbatim comments)
	Implement speed restrictions	20mph in Wedmore centre	89% concerned. 64% want
		40mph between villages	89% concerned. 57% want.
Speed gun (separate initiative)		Post-survey consultation (WPC).	
Restrict HGV traffic	Establish 'access only' zone around Wedmore	88% concerned. 80% want.	
Provide specific pedestrian and cyclist safety improvements		Cycle paths (WPC has tried this)	56% concerned. 67% want.
		Pavements (where ?)	79% concerned.
		Pedestrian crossings (Borough + Church Street)	Qualitative (from focus groups with elderly people)
		Walking school bus (separate initiative)	Post-survey consultation (Axbridge group)
		Safe routes to school (separate initiative)	Post-survey consultation (local mums + head teacher).
Housing, development and the environment	Housing for elderly people	Sheltered/disabled housing	Of those in favour of more housing (56% of all adults), 96% want this.
		Old people's residential home	Of those in favour etc...87% want this
		Brownfield + infill first; then 'concealed' boundary expansion (East slightly preferred)	Of those in favour etc...91% want this
		Refer to demographic forecasts	65+ age group to grow by 18.6%
		Low-energy 'eco-housing' / sustainable materials	55% to 60% of adults want these
Affordable housing		For first time buyers	Of those in favour of more housing (56% of all adults), 96% want this
		For local people	Of those in favour etc...95% want this
		For all owner-occupiers, regardless of age.	Of those in favour etc...95% want this
		Refer to Worthington Close experience, and demographics	Anecdotal evidence; Office of National Statistics (ONS)
Business units		Employment survey needed	To establish demand/jobs.
		Brownfield + infill first; then 'concealed' boundary expansion (East preferred).	Of those wanting any building (56% of all adults) 91% want this

	Green spaces	Communal ‘village green’	66% want this.
		Woodland and nature reserves	82% want this.
Crime	Reduce incidence of ‘avoidable’ house burglary and vehicle crime	Roy Millward (Neighbourhood Watch Chairman) will ask police to provide monthly Wedmore crime statistics, with crime prevention tips for householders/ vehicle owners, for inclusion in IoW News.	house burglary: 87% concerned; 16% affected. vehicle crime: 81% concerned; 12% affected.
Community Code	Devise strategies to encourage parishioners to observe a ‘Community Code of Conduct’, designed to reduce anti-social behaviour for the benefit of the whole community.	<i>Target groups:</i> 1. Motorists not parking on blind bends and hills. 2. Parents supervising their children, especially at night. 3. Publicans not selling to under-age drinkers 4. Dog owners not leaving dog mess 5. Litter droppers not dropping litter. 6. Motorists not speeding in the villages. 7. Children to be able to walk or bus to school safely. 8. Farmers clearing unsightly rubbish from their fields 9. Farmers not burning plastic silage bags.	90% concerned. Qualitative (from focus groups with elderly people). 84% concerned. 82% concerned. 80% concerned. 89% concerned. 79% concerned (87% of parents). Qualitative (from 516 ‘yellow pages’ of verbatim comments) 49% want this
Community Forum	Reconciliation between groups of parishioners with differences	Ad hoc meetings to bring together groups with apparently opposing views/needs. Debate moderated by an independent individual; held in a ‘neutral’ location, and achieving resolution and agreed action plan.	e.g. - teenagers and the elderly - road users and landowners
Youth facilities	Seek the provision of facilities for young people aged 12-17	1. Skate park (with ramps and shelter) 2. Hard-surfaced sports area for e.g. basketball, football, volleyball 3. Community Bus to other centres on Friday nights. 4. Low-cost access to existing Wedmore sports facilities (e.g. tennis) 5. Access to Hugh Sexey swimming pool in holidays. 6. Alcohol-free gigs in VH, featuring local school bands. 7. Coffee bar/internet café/after school homework + games club.	All qualitative findings from focus groups with teenagers aged 12-16. Angela Vivian on the case.

All Other Issues

The research findings below are from the Survey, but this Plan does not currently propose any action on them. Interested parishioners can see the full findings in the ‘Community Appraisal Findings’ report, or apply to the PPSC for a detailed analysis of any of these topics.

Issue	Key Finding
Churches/ chapels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important for 58%-77% of adults, for a range of purposes
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction with, and low usage of, public buses (31% ever use) • Very high appreciation of daily Community Bus service for shopping
Village Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% want existing VH to continue. (Only 0.6% wanted a new VH). 69% want it paid for by more fundraising.
Health and Social Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V. high usage (84%) of Wedmore surgery, and Chemist (90%); v. high levels of satisfaction of <i>all</i> village health and DSS services. GPs have issued statement pledging to keep Wedmore Surgery, but new health centre now not possible, due to change of NHS structure and policy. • Only 44% use Wedmore dentist. Of those who don't, 54% go elsewhere to get NHS treatment. 70% of these would switch if NHS available in Wedmore.
Retail Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V. high support for all, especially PO and Paper Shop. • Strong potential support for farmers' market/farm shops.
IoW News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General satisfaction. A bit less of some items + request for some new ones, especially monthly WPC reports.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, higher PC ownership (74%) than the national average. But some groups - farmers, low-income families - quite low. 55% of all adults want better mobile 'phone reception. 51% want broadband.
Childcare facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little evidence of need. 8% would use after school clubs; 8% would use holiday play schemes. All else 3%-4%.
Adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some interest in languages (19%), arts/crafts (17%), Keep Fit (17%), advanced computing (11%).
The Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V. high interest, esp. in adult theatre and classical music.
School facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% want swimming pool access; 42% sports halls access.
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44% would use a swimming pool; 18% a squash court. All else 3%-4%. Almost no one (1% - 2%) interested in starting up any new sports teams!

Section 5 - Structure of the Parish Plan Organisation.

The Parish Plan Organisation now consists of around **75 people in total**, including 16 Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk. Furthermore, many of these people have volunteered for more than one job. This is the size of a medium-sized company; clearly it will be necessary to organise the structure and procedures tightly and efficiently.

Roles of participants

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Parish Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final approval of <u>all</u> proposals, after liaison with PPSC and WGs.• Implementation of <u>most</u> proposals, in consultation with the PPSC• Official Keeper of the raw data, although WPC will <u>not</u> supply analyses from the tables. The PPSC is responsible for providing these. |
| PPSC | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly liaison between Working Groups and WPC;• Supplier of data analysis from the Community Appraisal findings, as required from time to time by Working Groups and/or WPC;• Advice and support to Working Groups;• Day-to-day budget management on behalf of WPC;• Responsible for ensuring all participants know what is going on• Issue written briefs to all Working Groups and sub-groups, setting out their objectives and suggested solutions to be investigated. |
| Working and Sub-groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A volunteer 'army of foot-soldiers' working on behalf of the community, with the backing of the Parish Council. |

Initiation of Proposals

Can be initiated by *any* of the above-named participating groups. Must reflect a majority community view per the survey findings; and must conform to the Parish Plan.

Structure

The four main Working Groups - Housing, Traffic, Youth, Community Code - will report in to the Parish Plan Steering Committee (PPSC), which in turn reports into the Parish Council. In addition, the main Working Groups will liaise with their respective sub-groups; and the Traffic group will also liaise with John Sanderson, representing the Parish Council Highways Committee. This will speed up the communication process, and facilitate a pragmatic and efficient approach to the specific issues.

Transparency - Liaison and Communications

Each month, the PPSC will collect from Working Groups a status report on work in progress, with a brief statement. These will be collated into a monthly report which will be made available as follows:

- Copy to the Parish Council and to District Councillors
- Posted on the Parish Plan website
- Published in the Isle of Wedmore News, in consultation with the Parish Council, who will also be reporting on their own activities each month.

The Parish Plan Steering Committee

Sue Rippon - Chair
Simon Tomes - Hon Treasurer
Marina Jonas - Publicity officer
Tessa Podpadec - Secretary
Dianne Culliford - WPC representative
Valerie Godfrey - WPC representative
Simon Emary - Treasurer +WPC Clerk

The Working Groups

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Traffic (working in close liaison with the Chairman of the PC Highways Committee) | <i>10 members</i> |
| 2. Community Forum + Community Code (dealing with anti-social behaviour and community relations) | <i>6 members</i> |
| 3. Youth Facilities (special focus on a skatepark and sports) | <i>11 members</i> |
| 4. Housing, Development and the Environment | <i>5 members</i> |
| 5. Avoidable Crime (working in close liaison with Neighbourhood Watch and the local police) | <i>3 members</i> |
| 6. Community Speedwatch (mobile teams with speedguns) | <i>8 members</i> |
| 7. Community Bus for young people on Fri/Sat nights | <i>5 members</i> |
| 8. Walking Bus/Safe Routes to School | <i>14 members</i> |

Like the Parish Plan itself, Working groups will not have an indefinite life. Once core objectives are either achieved, or deemed impossible, they may be disbanded. Also, members should have a chance, at the time of the annual review, to stand down if they want.

Items identified that are already in progress by WPC, the PPSC, and other groups.

Some projects proposed in this Plan are already under way and can report positive results. Progress to date is as follows:

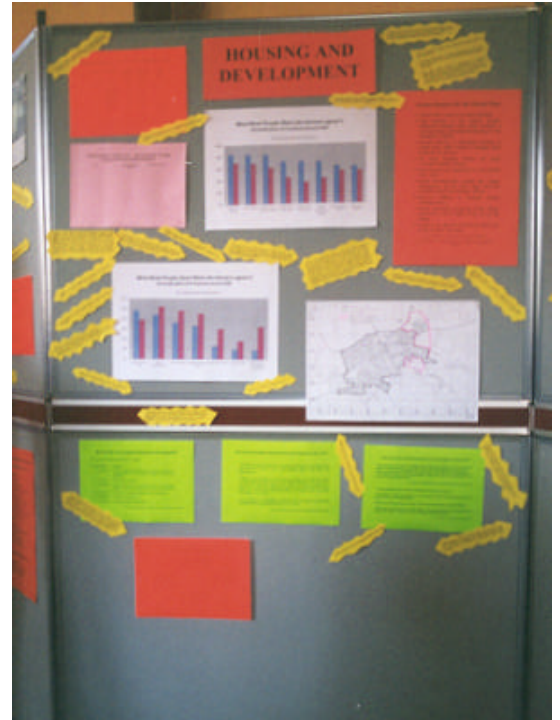
Item requested in Survey	Achievement to date	By whom
1. A car park in Wedmore	Land has been purchased by the PC...	Parish Council
2. More affordable housing	...plus land for possible affordable housing.	Parish Council
3. Broadband internet access	A Broadband system has been set up	Angela Vivian
4. Youth 'drop-in' centre	Internet Café at The George is now open	IT/Terrified
5. Reduce speeding	Community Speedwatch speedgun acquired	Parish Council
	8 volunteers recruited. 4 already trained	PPSC/police
6. Reduction of litter	Part-time Parish Litter Orderly employed.	Parish Council
7. PC reports in IoW News	Monthly reports now featured	Parish Council
8. Discourage anti-social behaviour	Object to pub entertainments licence, in order to reduce under-age drinking	Parish Council
	Permission to ban drinking in streets	Parish Council
	Look at friendly 'no parking' signs on bends	PC + Community Code WG

The above list illustrates *exactly* how the Parish Plan should work over its lifetime, i.e. with ideas being initiated by a variety of community groups, who then co-operate with each other to achieve improvements for the whole parish. Whilst some of the simpler solutions featured above might look like 'quick wins', other items - especially highways issues such as HGVs - are likely to take a long time and, indeed, may never be resolved, despite everyone's best efforts.

Exhibition of Findings - June 2003



200 visitors, including many teenagers



Different views from different groups on Housing and Development



The biggest issue - Traffic



Behind the boards, Kath's Tea Room!