

Chiddingfold Parish Plan

INTRODUCTION

WHY A PARISH PLAN?

The process of creating a Parish Plan is a means of gaining a better understanding of the issues and priorities for the development of the Parish whilst conserving those features which make it attractive and valued. This has to be done within a framework of consultation that respects the wishes of a wide cross-section of those living within the Parish. Every effort has been made to encourage those who would not normally express an opinion to participate.

The results of the consultation process form a series of prioritised Action Plans for the various organisations, both existing and those that may be formed as a result of the consultation, that are concerned with what happens within the Parish. These organisations include the Parish Council, various Sports organisations such as the Football Club, LA21 and Youth and Social groups. In particular, the issues and priorities identified through the consultation will influence the Parish Council's responses to Planning and Transport issues and other matters that arise in its dealings with other authorities such as Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

The Waverley Borough Council Local Development Framework, which will replace the current Local Plan and which has to be produced by March 2007, requires the involvement of the community throughout the process and the Village Plans, and the accompanying consultation processes, are a critical element.

The evidence of consultation and prioritisation arising from the development of the Parish Plan is a key requirement in dealings with other authorities and also for applications for funding to realise any Action Plans.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

In early 2003 a Steering Group was formed amongst a number of interested individuals and representatives from the Parish Council to put together a questionnaire adapted from a nationally available computer software package. The resulting survey document comprised 43 questions that covered the demographics of the Parish, employment, transport and traffic, housing, utilities and services, sports and social activities and the local environment. Provision was made for respondents to make additional comments. The resultant survey forms were delivered to every household in the Parish. Provision was also made for the survey to be completed through the Chiddingfold Village website. A public meeting was held to explain and publicise the survey and visits were made to schools attended by children living in the Parish to gather the views of younger residents.

A total of 783 completed surveys were returned or collected from 567 households, representing a response from nearly half the households in the Parish, the results were presented and discussed during a second public meeting in early 2004.

Volunteers coming forward after the second meeting helped shape initial priorities for action plans. Priorities were finalised after revisions arising from a third public meeting in mid 2004.

SURVEY RESULTS

When looking at the results of the survey it is important to remember that the views expressed are of those who responded. As noted earlier, the response, whilst very good, still only represented the views of just fewer than half the households in the Parish. As expected with a self-completion survey, not all respondents answered every question. Some questions contained multi-choice responses; in others there was the option to tick as many as appropriate.

The questions and responses are linked to future action plans in this document. It can be seen that the subsequent prioritisation is not necessarily linked to the volume of responses to a particular topic; this is because the priorities for the action plans focus on what is more within the direct control of the residents and organisations within the Parish.

DEMOGRAPHY

The number of households answering the question about the numbers in their household was 567, accounting for 1330 people at an average of 2.4 people per household. Those under 18 years of age were 24% of the total whilst those over 60 years were 25% of the total. The single largest age group was the 25 to 44 years group representing 25% of the total. Overall females represented 52% of the total although that percentage rose to 56% in the over 60 years group.

The number of respondents to the question about how long they had lived in their current home was, 28% had lived in their current home for 5 years or less, 28.4% had lived in their present home for between 6 and 15 years, with 22.8% having not moved for 26 years or more.

A similar number responded to the question on employment. Those employed by others totalled 39.1% with a further 14.4% self-employed. Those retired totalled 30.4%.

The results indicate a largely stable population and one that is well represented in each major age grouping. Chiddingfold is not, therefore, an ageing Parish but one where a wide range of interests and needs require attention and accommodation. Common to other villages in the area there is a dip in the population in the age group 18 to 30. This can be accounted for by young people leaving for further education, and the lack of starter accommodation in the village.

TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC

TRANSPORT

Questions (number of respondents in brackets)

Would you be prepared to take part in a scheme to share private vehicles? (653)

How often do you use various transport services? (751)

What do you use the bus service for and how often? (301)

Would you like to see any improvements in the bus service? (486)

Summary of Responses

The response to private vehicle sharing schemes was strongly negative although there was some support for occasional use in relation to shopping and social activities. However, the most negative response was in relation to school, work and travel.

84% of the respondents never use the bus and over 96% never use any of the coach or dial a ride services. Over 52% use the train services, but over 90% never use the bus for a work related journey. The main use of buses relates to shopping.

Despite the negative responses to the bus service, it would appear that a significant number of non-users have views on improving the service. Besides the expected calls for improvements to reliability and the timetable and for lower fares, 61% of the respondents wanted a dedicated bus service to and from Witley railway station.

Action Plans

The priorities indicated at the public meetings did show a major requirement for reducing vehicle usage around Chiddingfold village. There was also some requirement for transport improvements in relation to leisure activities and this is covered in the sports and social section.

Ideas for Action	Development by	Time frame
Alternative forms of transport e.g. cycle and safe footpaths, walking buses	Traffic & Transport Group/Safe Routes to School	Medium to long term
Investigate viability of and carry out a detailed survey for a dedicated bus service to & from Witley Station	Traffic & Transport Group/Waverley Transport	2004/5
Publish edited time tables for bus & train services on Chiddingfold website and in Parish Magazine	Traffic & Transport Group	2004/5

TRAFFIC

Questions (number of respondents in brackets)

Do you think there are any major "danger spots" on the roads in Chiddingfold? (757)

Which speed control measures would you support? (760)

What do you use the bus service for and how often? (301)

Which type of disturbance affects Chiddingfold? (479)

Summary of Responses

Nearly 95% of respondents thought that there were "danger spots" with the majority. Spread consistently along the A283 through the village and as far as the Ram's Nest. There was concern expressed about Combe Lane, the Woodside, Ridgley Roads and Coxcombe Lane triangle, the Pickhurst Road, Fisher Lane and High Street Green area. Less than 4% of the respondents were opposed to any form of speed control measures. 68% wanted action on lower formal speed limits and 63% were in favour of the introduction of speed cameras. 46% supported flashing over speeding signs and 56% wanted more warning signs. Significantly, additional traffic calming measures and road narrowing attracted support from 46% and 28% respectively.

Perhaps not surprisingly over 75% of respondents complained of traffic noise, 34% of low flying aircraft and 22% of undefined noise pollution.

Action Plans

The feedback from the public consultation meetings place a high priority on the ideas for action relating to controlling traffic speeds on both the A283 and on the minor roads that had been singled out in the survey.

Ideas for Action	Development by	Time frame
Engineer more appropriate traffic speeds on minor roads within Parish	Traffic & Transport Group/CRASH/Surrey Highways	Medium to long term
Implement traffic calming measures agreed in 2004 A283 route study	Traffic & Transport Group/CRASH/Surrey Highways	Present and ongoing

HOUSING

Questions (number of respondents in brackets)

Do you think Chiddingfold can accommodate more new Housing? (755)

What type of home is needed in Chiddingfold? (682)

Is there a need for more accommodation with differing forms of ownership? (677)

Summary of Responses

Whilst 19% of respondents expressed no opinion on the need for new housing, the remaining 81% were almost equally divided between the "yes" and "no" response. However, in answer to the question of the type of housing needed, the number saying that none was required fell to two thirds of the responses against additional housing in the previous question but still comprising the biggest single response at 32%.

Concern had been expressed at the public meetings about the availability of suitable housing for younger people wishing to stay in Chiddingfold and for "key workers". In the survey 31% were in favour of terraced housing, 26% in favour of semi-detached houses, 24% in favour of cottages and 20% in favour of flats and maisonettes.

In response to the third question, 31% were not in favour of any type of alternative ownership and this was consistent with the responses to the second of the above questions. 36% of the respondents want sales to be restricted to local people, and the same number wish to see low cost sales. 31% wish to see council or housing association owned rented accommodation being made available.

Clearly, there is a significant proportion of the Parish who wish to see no further housing development in the Parish. Amongst those that do, the concern is with meeting the needs of local people who might otherwise be priced out of the Parish.

Ideas for Action	Development by	Time frame
Conduct audit of current housing stock & in conjunction with the Housing Need Survey (2002) draw up priorities for housing development	Parish & Waverley B.C. and interested parties	2004/5
Develop a Parish statement to be taken into account when considering Planning applications	Parish Council and interested parties	Present & ongoing
Ensure that a submission is made to the Local Development Framework Document (successor to the Local Plan) Housing development	Parish Council	To conform with timetable for LDF

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Questions (number of respondents in brackets)

Do you have difficulty in getting to various medical services? (679)

Is there a need for various facilities relating to health? (635)

What are the views on the standard of public services in Chiddingfold? (760)

What are the views on the standards of environmental services in Chiddingfold? (762)

Does Chiddingfold need a public toilet? (759)

How often are local shops and services used? (775)

What are your reasons for shopping in Chiddingfold? (738)

Where do you usually buy various items? (767)

What do you use the local Post Office for? (758)

Summary of Responses

The overwhelming majority of respondents had experienced no difficulty at all in accessing the various medical facilities. 15% had experienced occasional difficulty in getting to hospital.

28% of respondents thought there was no need for new health related facilities but 40% were in favour of sheltered housing, 34% in favour of a nursing home and 25% in favour of residential provision for people with disabilities.

The majority of respondents to the third question reported that they had not used ambulance, hospital transport or police services. Amongst those that had, most dissatisfaction was with the police, over 17% with emergency services and 35% with general police presence.

The respondents to the question on environmental services thought that standards were either good or reasonable. However, a significant minority thought that services were poor in respect to street lighting, TV reception, radio reception, mains electricity supply, roadside care/street cleaning and winter weather service.

50% of the respondents did not think that Chiddingfold needed a public toilet.

Local shops, including the post office and chemist, are supported by the majority of respondents on at least a weekly basis. Very few are never supported. However, 91% never use the mobile library.

Local shops are supported by 85% of the respondents for different reasons, 73% for last minute items, 53% because it saves time and 39% because it saves transport costs. 36% value the social contact. Lack of transport is not a major issue. However, only 19% thought that local shops offered good value.

Godalming and Haslemere are the preferred destinations for shopping for groceries, green grocery, meat and fish and DIY supplies. Guildford is the preferred destination for clothes, electrical goods and furniture,

91% of the respondents use the local post office for the postal services, 73% for vehicle tax, other licences and other bill payments, 22% for payment of pensions and other allowances and 21% for banking and giro services. Only 3% of the respondents did not use the post office.

Action Plans

<i>Ideas for Action</i>	<i>Development by</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
Consider the installation of additional street lighting	Parish & Waverley B.C. and Surrey County Councils	Medium to long term
Invigorate Neighbourhood Watch scheme within Parish & work with adjoining schemes	Parish Council, Neighbourhood Watch organisers and Specialist Officer	Present & ongoing

SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Questions (number of respondents in brackets)

Which new sports clubs/other activities would you attend in Chiddingfold if they were provided? (398)

Comment on how sports facilities could be approved (211)

What are your views on local social facilities for various age groups? (702)

Summary of Responses

The options for new sports activities included some that are already provided and, therefore, might be expected to be known about already. However, there was significant support for facilities to be provided as new in some cases where facilities already exist. 41% were in favour of Keep Fit activities and 36% in favour of Yoga. 26% were in favour of tennis club activities and 24% in favour of children's playground activities.

Whilst sizeable minorities had no opinion on the provision of local social facilities for various age groups, 25% thought that facilities for children up to 16 years were poor and that percentage rose to 46% for the next age group up. This question proved to be a dominant issue at the final public consultation meeting.

<i>Action Plans</i>	<i>Development by</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
<i>Ideas for Action</i> Investigate feasibility/business case to build facilities at Combe Common	Parish Council and interested parties	Present to medium term
Investigate relevance to Chiddingfold of Waverley's Youth Strategy	Parish Council and interested parties	2004/5
Investigate setting up youth orientated facilities in village	Parish Council, Waverley & Surrey Youth Workers & Sports Officers	2004/5
Ask young in Parish what they want	Parish Council & interested individuals	2004/5
Investigate use of mini bus to take people to nearby leisure & sports facilities	Parish Council/ Traffic & Transport Group	Short to medium term
Investigate employing a leisure facilities manager for the village to improve use of existing facilities	Parish Council & interested individuals	Medium term
Investigate idea of a Youth Magazine & contributions to Parish Magazine and village web site to better publicise existing youth & leisure facilities	Parish Council & interested groups & individuals	Short to Medium term
Look at local "best practices" in youth facilities	Parish Council & interested groups & individuals	2004/2005

ENVIRONMENT

Questions (*number of respondents in brackets*)

What business development should be encouraged in Chiddingfold? (730)

In relation to paths and street lights, would you like to see any additions or changes? (721)

Comment on what should be done to protect and enhance the countryside around Chiddingfold. (431)

How important is the quality of the countryside around Chiddingfold to you? (761)

What difficulties have you experienced when using local footpaths etc? (645)

What should be done with local roads, paths etc to make the countryside more attractive? (755)

Summary of Responses

On the question of business development in the Parish, a surprising number of respondents had no strong opinion. However, a significant number had either reservations or strong feelings against tourism development. There was stronger support for and fewer reservations against development of small-scale businesses and the creation of local jobs.

Not surprisingly in view of the comments on services, there was support for more street lighting (38% of respondents) and 34% specified more environmentally sensitive lighting. There was support for pelican crossings (34%), more pavements (27%), cycle paths (27%) and footpaths (24%).

99% of the respondents thought that the quality of the surrounding countryside was either very important (86%) or important (13%).

The most common difficulties experienced when using footpaths etc were mud/water (44%) and bushes and nettles (33%). However, 33% experienced no difficulty.

Aside from the wish to reduce traffic which was raised elsewhere also in the survey, the major improvement to make the countryside more attractive was the removal of litter. Also important is the keeping mown and tidy the roadside verges, although a significant number of respondents want the verges to grow to encourage wildlife. There was also strong support for finding means of stopping vehicle damage to road verges. Opinion was divided over opening more footpaths: 35% thought it not worth doing but more, 77%, thought it not necessary to close any footpaths. There was strong support for improved signposting and for repairing stiles and gates.

Action Plans

<i>Ideas for Action</i>	<i>Development by</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
Develop a Parish Statement on the environment to be taken into account when adjudging planning applications	Parish Council and interested parties	Present & ongoing
Provide more litter bins & more frequent litter blitzes and collections	Parish Council	2004/5
Draw up management plans for both conservation areas & consider an improvement plan for land at Northbridge	Parish Council	Medium to long term
Ensure a submission on the countryside is made for the local development Framework	Parish Council	To conform with timetable for LDF

OTHER MATTERS

COMMUNICATIONS

Questions (*number of respondents in brackets*)

Where do you get information about events taking place in Chiddingfold? (737)

What do you think of the quality of the information about events in Chiddingfold? (751)

Do you feel your elected representatives in local government are sufficiently aware of local concerns and feelings? (725)

Summary of Responses

The most popular sources of information about local events are Parish Magazine (75%); Local Paper (43%); Notice Board (40%); Post Office (40%) and free paper (22%). Only 5% use the village website.

Most respondents (60%) think that the quality of the information available is reasonable, 17% think it is poor.

On the question of the awareness of the local government organs 27% think that the Parish Council is fully aware and 40% think it is quite aware; 23% have no opinion; the same percentages for Waverley Borough Council are 3%, 37% and 31%, whilst for Surrey County Council the percentages are 2%, 20% and 36%.

Action Plans

<i>Ideas for Action</i>	<i>Development by</i>	<i>Time frame</i>
Renew & increase numbers of notice boards & improve web site	Parish Council	2004/5

FINANCE

Would you be prepared to pay a slightly higher council tax to meet some of the needs of Chiddingfold? (756)

Summary of Responses

49% were not prepared to pay extra whilst 38% were. However, for those that are willing there will be the question of linking any extra revenues so raised to improvements specific to Chiddingfold.

THE WAY FORWARD

Every village is an old settlement trying to come to terms with the impact of the modern world upon it. Chiddingfold has to address a number of challenges such as increased traffic on narrow roads and insufficient housing for young people, whilst keeping the unique character of the village intact. To steer our way through these action plans we will require volunteers for a variety of projects. If you are interested in helping please contact the Parish Council at the addresses below stating the particular area you would be willing to help with. The Parish Council also wishes to encourage residents to continue the dialogue started by the Village Appraisal and we welcome your comments and ideas. The Council can be contacted as follows:

- By letter, email or telephone to our Parish Clerk, Davida Cole, at 25 Yewens. Her phone number is 683906. Mrs Cole works part time for the Council and the best time to contact her is on weekday afternoons between 2-5pm. We ask you to respect her family's privacy outside these hours
- By attending the monthly council meetings which are held in the Charles Watts room at the village hall on the second Thursday of each month at 7.45pm. At each meeting there is time set aside for questions from the public. The agenda is posted every month on the council notice board outside the Old Bakery on the Green.
- Via the village website on www.chiddingfold.org
- By contacting individual councillors whose details can be found on the parish council notice board.