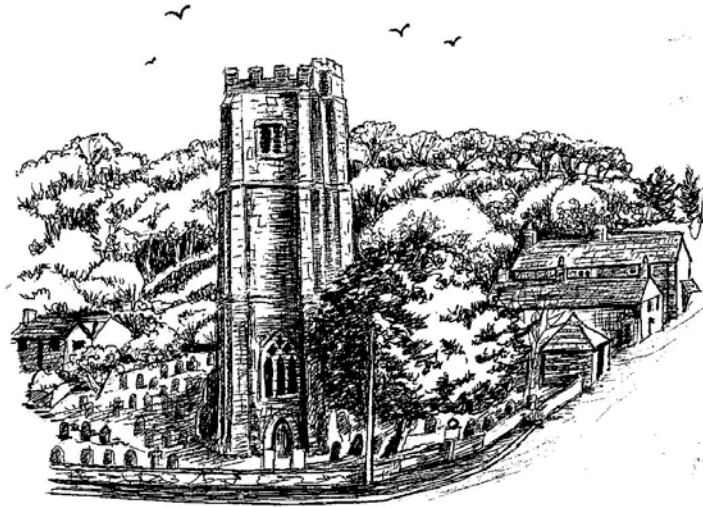


HALWELL AND MORELEIGH PARISH PLAN 2007



Thanks go to all the following for their contribution to this Parish Plan:

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HALWELL & MORELEIGH PARISH PLAN

Introduction

This Parish Plan is based on a detailed process of consultation to discover the requirements and worries of parishioners, living in the Halwell & Moreleigh Parish including the outlying hamlets of Collaton and Washbourne. This plan will refer to this as The Parish. It outlines both views and recommended actions under various headings: Traffic, Transport Footpaths, Planning and the environment, and the Village Hall and associated recreation area.

Methodology

The questionnaire was delivered to 144 households. 137 were completed and returned, a response rate of 95.1% (compared with 56% when a similar survey was last carried out in the Parish in 1999). Two Open Meetings were held in the Parish, the first of which introduced the Survey and the second was for the presentation of the results. Both meetings were publicised by a leaflet drop into every household.

The Parish

In the Parish there are 393 persons living in 144 households. 48% live in Halwell, 38% in Moreleigh, 10% in Washbourne and 4% in Collaton. Compared with others, it is a young parish, having only 19% of people over 65. 14% are under 21. It is a stable community in that 36% of parishioners have lived here for over 15 years, 23% were either born in the Parish or came into it as a child. 39% gave their reason for living in the parish as either "Love of the area" or "Love of Country Life". Another 23% work in the Area.

The Community relies very much on private transport. Assuming that 90% of those over 17 years drive a car there are 9 private cars for every 10 drivers!

MAIN FINDING - TRAFFIC

By far the gravest concern of parishioners is Traffic. It is the biggest worry on their minds. It affects their views on almost all other subjects on which they were asked to comment. It is the danger from traffic, to which parishioners are subjected on a daily basis that so strongly emerged from the survey and open day. One must add to this the shared scepticism within the Parish that the authorities do not speak to each other and lack the will to even listen, let alone take action. (See History: Section)

The traffic problems are different within the two main villages of the Parish:

Halwell suffers from the ever present dangers and hold-up at Vicarage Corner on the A381 and the dreadful situation in Church Street. 81% of comments from Halwell residents under Main Worries, mentioned Traffic.

Morleigh suffers from the ever increasing and speeding rat-run of traffic using the unclassified and narrow road between the A381 and the A38 which takes absolutely no notice of any speed restrictions. Some heavy lorries (probably using Satellite Navigation Systems) still come through the Village in spite of the recent weight limit restrictions. 54% of comments from Moreleigh residents under Main Worries mentioned Traffic.

Pictures of Traffic problems at Halwell



The pictures above show all too frequent situations, where the width of the road at Vicarage Corner, Halwell is insufficient for large vehicles to pass, resulting in many traffic blockages.

The Community has access to a considerable amount of video and photographic evidence of a similar nature.

Halwell: The Traffic History.

1965-1980. The A381 was designated as the main arterial road for traffic moving north/south through the South Hams by Devon County Council, feeding Totnes, Kingsbridge and Dartmouth. The plan involved Halwell losing thirteen roadside cottages, some dating back to the fifteenth century. In return for these losses the main road would be diverted to the west and behind the Old Vicarage to ensure greater safety by the removal of three dangerous bends and to give a quiet cul-de-sac for the two new houses built opposite the vicarage to re-house some of those losing their homes. The cottages were knocked down but the road was not diverted.

1980 to 2000. This was a period of small and overdue safety improvements to footpaths, visibility etc. It was also a period of an unprecedented increase in traffic through the villages and in South Hams generally.

2001 to present day. The housing development at Crocadon Farm off Church St, Halwell in 2001 added a further 27 family houses to that village. Continuing increased Traffic on the A381 has shown a build-up to almost 10,000 vehicle movements through Halwell, each day. (*Statistics recorded from a mid-season traffic survey undertaken by the Parish Council in 2003 showed the traffic count to be over 42% more than that recorded by Devon County Council at about the same time*) Much of the traffic which heads for Dartmouth, turns up Church St, using it as a slip road to join the A3122 at Halwell Cross. This has meant that no one can walk safely in Church Street. In addition there is a significant increase in traffic, coming down Church St from Dartmouth (illegally turning right at Halwell Cross to avoid traffic congestion at Totnes Cross) and this makes the situation very dangerous indeed.

Moreleigh - The Traffic History

The traffic through Moreleigh is divided between traffic following the original old Plymouth road via Modbury and traffic taking a short cut from the A381 to the A38 through Moreleigh to the Marley Cross junction on the A38 thus avoiding the traffic hold-ups in Halwell, Totnes and on the A381.

Traffic following the old Plymouth road through to Modbury is restricted due to the weight restriction on the narrow bridge at Gara Bridge and is the smaller amount of traffic – though still speeds through the village.

Traffic taking a shortcut from the A381 to the A38 is increasing – much of which takes absolutely no notice of the recently introduced 20 mph limit thorough Moreleigh and the very narrow roads and corners in the village. The recent introduction of a 7.5 ton limit for lorries using this route has had some effect, but enforcement of transgressors is sadly needed.

Traffic Recommendations

The ideal situation is for Halwell to be by-passed by the provision of a new road from Totnes Cross to the East via Halwell Cross and Bickleigh Lane. It is clear that the very limited and small scale road adjustments at Vicarage Corner and Church Street, Halwell are not the solution to the long-term problems thrown up by the ever-increasing traffic on the A381. and is no more than tinkering with the problem.

The recent curtailment of heavy traffic using the unclassified roads between the A38 and the A381 through Moreleigh is welcome, but subsequent increase of car and light van traffic using this route needs attention by the authorities to slow down the traffic by road engineering and/or enforcement methods.

Until these are agreed by the County Council and others, lives in the Parish will continue to be blighted.

TRANSPORT

Private Transport

Statistics show that there are 266 vehicles in the parishes of which 71 are normally garaged, 181 parked off road and only 13 parked on road; 3 in Halwell and 10 in Moreleigh. It is thought that these numbers might have increased since the initial survey was undertaken.

Public Transport

Buses run regularly from Torquay to Dartmouth through Halwell (roughly 14 return journeys Mon-Sat) from Exeter to Kingsbridge through Halwell (roughly 7 return journeys Mon-Sat) and from Totnes to Kingsbridge (roughly 7 return journeys Mon-Sat) including 2 return journeys through Moreleigh at off peak times. The nearest railway station is at Totnes – six miles away

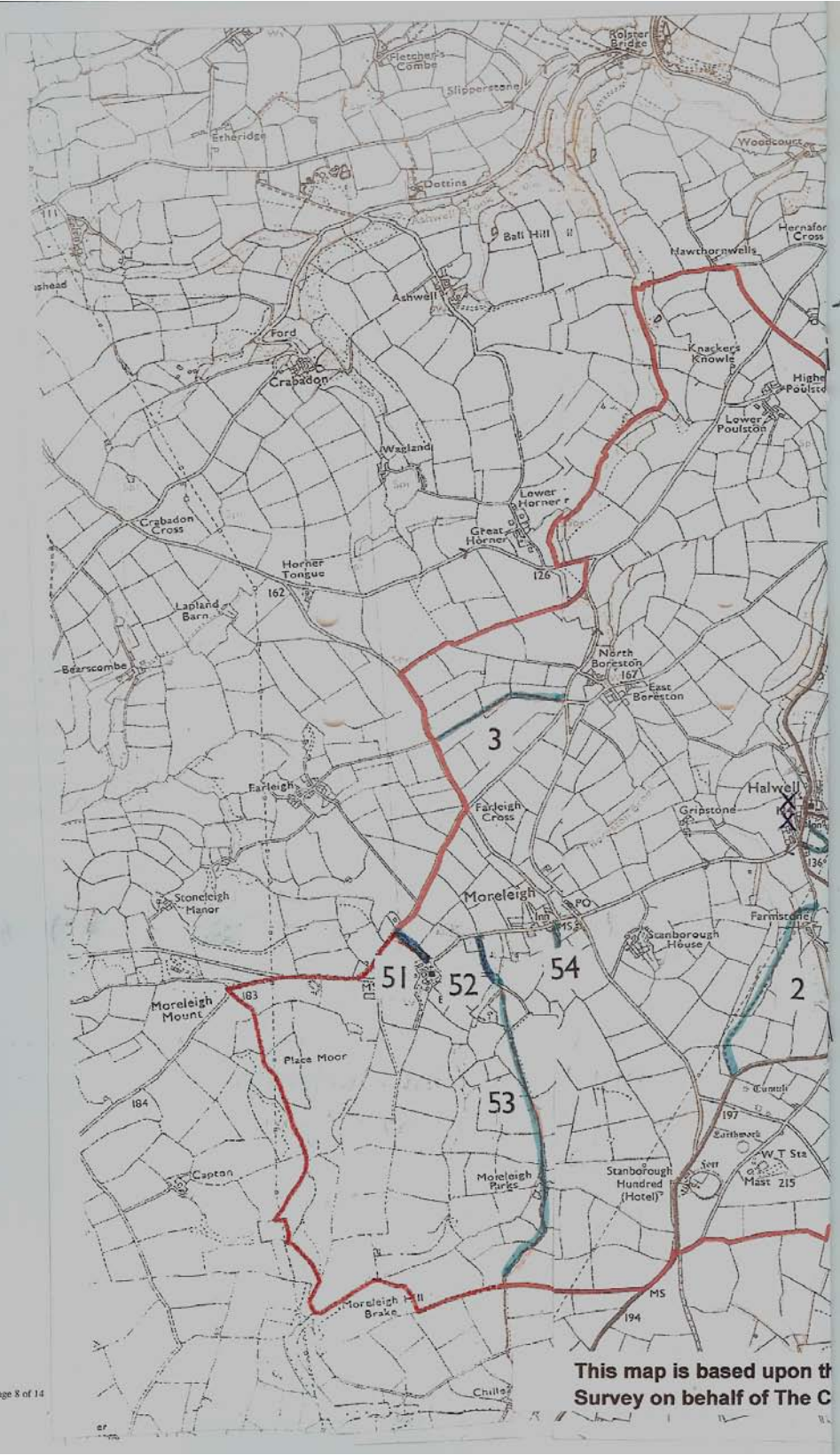
Bus Shelters

At the moment there is one bus shelter in Halwell on the northern route. The survey showed a bus shelter on the southern route was required and that 54% wanted a bus shelter in Moreleigh particularly for the school children. Other suggestions were for a bus shelter at the Forces Tavern on the Dartmouth road and for one in Washbourne - where presently no bus services operate!. Following a recent meeting with Devon Highways and the Parish Council a new bus shelter has been provided on the southern route in Halwell, and discussions are ongoing for a bus shelter in Moreleigh. The one suggested at the Forces Tavern is outside our Parish.

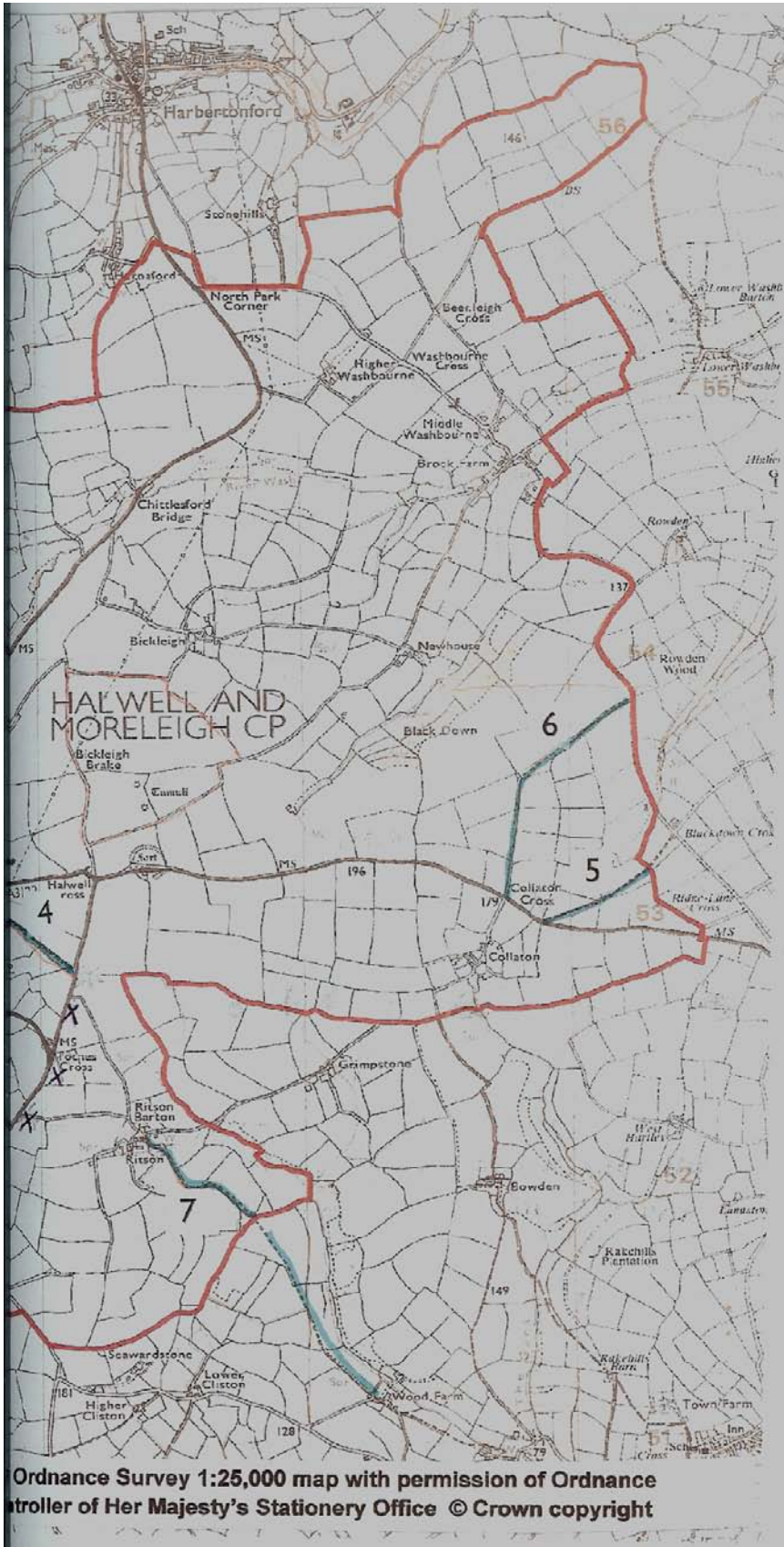
Parking

Parking is a great problem in both villages. but only 39% in Halwell would like more parking whilst 54% had no opinion. For both villages 40% felt that the Local Authority should increase the number of parking spaces incorporated with new developments, while 21% was against.

The overall present parking provision is more complex as there is no obvious solution, but it was felt that more firm consideration should be given by the local authorities to provide more adequate off-road parking in future developments.



This map is based upon the
Survey on behalf of The Council



The Red outline shows the Parish Boundaries

The various footpaths within - the parish are highlighted in blue - alongside which the footpath number known to local authorities are displayed

Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with permission of Ordnance Survey Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright

FOOTPATHS

History There are currently 10 footpaths in Halwell and Moreleigh. The Parish Council joined the Parish Paths Plan (P3) which is run by the Devon County Council in 2004 and funding is received annually for maintenance. There is a parish Footpath Warden and a team of volunteers check and keep the paths clear.

Survey The need for a footpath between Halwell and Moreleigh was addressed. 49% of households wanted an off road footpath; 42% did not want a footpath off road, the argument being that traffic can be heard approaching and that a footpath hidden behind large banks could be a potential danger. 9.5% said they would use this footpath once a week, 10% less than once a week, and fewer than 2% would use it very often.

Six other suggestions were put forward: Three are of extreme importance as they highlight the danger of traffic to pedestrians in our area. They are marked with Xs on the attached map. There is also one footpath (No. 5 highlighted on the parish map enclosed) which the Parish Council have discussed and strongly recommended that either it is re-routed or closed as at the moment it ends down some steps directly onto the Halwell/Dartmouth road just after a blind bend.

Other, suggestions were for a footpath from Moreleigh to Totnes Cross; from Crocadon Meadows to the pub and bus stop in Halwell; and to Harbertonford towards Washbourne opening up green lanes.

Recommendations

Ros Davies of the D.C.C. has been to The Parish and inspected the first three suggested additional footpaths and is fully aware of the dangerous exit of Footpath 5 and will continue to follow these up. It is understood that the Parish Council will keep these comments under review.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Not surprisingly this subject generated a lot of strong feeling and conflicting views. Many inevitably contradicted their own views being in favour on one hand of light industrial development but on the other wanting to preserve the rural nature of the Parish. We have to face the fact that life moves forward and whatever development is carried out be it housing or industrial, the flip on effects will be considerable, especially to the traffic situation in the two villages.

History

The ancient borough of **Halwell** was one of the four boroughs in Devon and only moved to Totnes in the 10th C, so Halwell has been of considerably greater significance in the past. The Iron Age fort of Halwell Camp (situated to the south of the village at the top of the hill) and Halwell camp to the east of the village are obviously of historic importance. Halwell once had its own mint. Archeologically it has probably never been properly assessed.

One of the earliest records of **Moreleigh** was in the Domesday Book when Alfred the Breton held *Morlei* manor. In the thirteenth Century the ancient division of the County of Devon called the *Stanborough Hundred* had a courthouse above the New Inn – the steps to which can still be seen. Moreleigh church dates back to 1239.

Refurbished Barns. 75% said that they should be used for accommodation whilst 12% did not agree or had no view. 27% wanted them to be used for industrial units whilst 32% disagreed. 28% thought they should be used for holiday lets with 29% against. All felt that whatever the use they should be developed in the character of the area.

Planning. Views on the greater enforcement of planning were even handed, 35% in favour, 32% against. Some would like a greater say in the development of the Parish and would like to see better communication between the Parishioners and the Parish Council.

Industrial development in the villages. Those in favour of light industrial development in the villages (Halwell, Moreleigh, Collaton and Washbourne) were in the minority; only about 20% of those answering the question being in favour. There was some comment on the effects the Halwell Business Park has had on the increase in number and size of the lorries passing through the area.

Affordable Housing. The subject of affordable housing was much mentioned in our survey, in terms of housing being made available for people living and/or working in the area. South Hams District Council (SHDC) will allow affordable housing “where there is demonstrable lack of access housing and/or affordable housing to meet local needs within a community.” SHDC lays down that:

- a: The initial and subsequent occupancy must be restricted to those having identified a local need
- b. The development will be managed by a Housing Association, Trust or other organization, to the satisfaction of the Council

It is understood that the Parish Council is keen to consider ways of carrying this forward.

Further development. Private development was favoured by 23% and a retail outlet desired by 25%. Holiday accommodation came bottom of the list with only 7% in favour.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 41% were in favour of being so designated but 27% were against fearing restrictions on development.

Parish Development. There was a large vote of *individuals* replying, 188 were in favour of the community being a balanced one; 68 wished it to be a working community, no one wanted it to become a retirement area and there was only one vote for it being a commuter parish. Not surprisingly 84 wished it to remain unchanged. It is hard to believe that there isn't more than one commuter family in the village or that a retirement community is non-existent.

Planning: Overall the results reflect the need for vigilance when it comes to planning; - those in responsibility must be alert to not upsetting dramatically the balance of the community but at the same time allowing that much needed commodity affordable housing. (Keeping it affordable is the major problem here). Whatever is allowed will inevitably cause an increase in traffic through the village of Halwell and the effect of this must be weighed up. Also any new housing would need car parking and this was already a rare commodity in the villages. On being asked if anyone in household had had to leave the Parish in the last 5 years due to lack of employment or lack of housing roughly 4% replied in the affirmative and the same number indicated that these family members would be likely to return

Environment. The majority of households held no strong opinions when it came to the pollution of the environment locally, but conversely were very forthcoming as to what they would like to see conserved.

Pollution. Noise came highest on the list, followed by lighting then contamination of streams and rivers.

Conservation. When it came to supporting various introductions, mainly commercial, into the Parish, the answers were in favor of small scale workshops, local shop, weekly visit by fish and chip van; but anti caravan and camping sites, wind farms and light industry. In answer to the question "would you prefer to see things stay as they are?" 29% replied yes and 22% no.

Recommendations

On-going discussions and meetings on affordable housing should be encouraged.

THE VILLAGE HALL

The Parish Plan sought views regarding the village hall. The present position of only an initial hall structure containing toilets, a kitchen and an entrance hall was only ever designed to be the first step for a full village hall and was constructed primarily as a self build with the additional help of a local builder at a very minimal cost. It has always been intended that a full and much larger village hall to serve the community be added on when funds were available. Planning permission has been obtained for this and architectural drawings obtained at not inconsiderable cost – the latter supported by the Parish Council.

The Trustees and Management Committee of the Village Hall have - over a number of years – tried to obtain competitive quotes for the building of the village hall extension. This has not been easy as we have not been able to co-opt the necessary expertise. No local builder has been willing to offer a quote, - or indeed to offer other than limited help – and thus it has been difficult to have any idea as to the costs involved. The only rough idea as to the costs of building a full and proper extension was quoted as over £100,000 some three years ago, to which fitting out costs will have to be added. Other ideas are to construct a steel framed building with insulated breeze block walls. There is some indication that this might be a cheaper option but to date no firm costings have been obtained. This would rely upon encouraging volunteers to help either to construct the building or to help build the hall extension by “buying a brick” or similar fund raising schemes.

It is important to realise that to fund a village hall will rely both on local fund raising and resources, but also by obtaining funds from both local and national grant bodies. This appraisal has shown that 65 (48%) of households were in favour of extending the hall, whilst 11 (8%) households were not in favour, the remaining 60 households (44%) had either no view or did not answer this question.

The Parish Plan has also shown that only an average of 11% of residents indicated support for any suggested activities to be undertaken in a proposed full village hall, and there was an almost nil response to offer any help to organise anything. These figures fall far short of any statistics that would support a business plan – a necessary criteria for any grant application. Any business plan has to show that operational costs can be self-financed from income, including any local grants, received.

Recommendations

There is a desperate need to get a younger, positive and supportive team to move the village hall forward which will need to incorporate much needed expertise in building and funding. In the meantime, the present small management team will try to maintain the present hall and recreation area

to the best of its limited ability. We hope to continue to raise useful funds from the use of the small present hall, and to maintain the accounts and all necessary paperwork required - undertaken by volunteers for over seven years.

Since this Parish Plan survey, the Parish Council has designated £10,000 to provide matching funds for any proposed grant application.