

Upton Bishop Parish Plan 2004

FOREWORD

This Parish Plan was prepared by the Steering Group in autumn 2004. It is based on the responses received from residents who completed the questionnaires and those who attended the Focus Groups and Public Meetings. As a Steering Group we were very pleased with the level of response to the questionnaires but disappointed by the relatively poor attendance at many of the public meetings.

The comments and action plans reflect the views expressed by residents in the various consultations and do not necessarily reflect the individual views of the Steering Group members. Prior to publication, the Plan was circulated to the Countryside Agency, Hereford Council and Upton Bishop Parish Council for comment. Due note has been taken of views expressed to us by these organisations in preparing this final report. We believe that residents of Upton Bishop will find the Plan to be a significant parish document that will guide the creative evolution of our parish in the coming years in ways that will benefit us all.

As Chairman of the Steering Group I would wish to thank all who participated and, in particular, Ben Casson, Vicky Eldridge, Alan Major, Elaine Powell, David Price, Margaret Rigby, Jan Stevenson and Jacky Thomson for their help and support over the past 21 months.

Dr B Jarvis
Chairman, UB Parish Plan Steering Group

December 2004

Credits:

Ben Casson, Vicky Eldridge, Basil Jarvis and Jan Stevenson kindly provided the photographs reproduced on the cover. The map inside the back cover was produced by Hereford Council IT Department and is Crown Copyright.

Appendix I is an abridged version of an essay written by Emily Misselbrook who kindly gave permission to reproduce it.

Abbreviations:

UBPP – Upton Bishop Parish Council; UBEG – Upton Bishop Ecology Group; HUB – Heritage Upton Bishop; HC – Hereford Council; PCC – Parochial Church Council; UBRSI – Upton Bishop Rural Safety Initiative Group; UBMHC – Upton Bishop Millennium Hall Committee

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1. The Parish Plan

Purpose and Objectives

Parish Plans, part of the “Vital Villages” scheme run by the Countryside Agency, were launched in the November 2000 Government White Paper “*Our Countryside - The Future*”. Plans are required, *inter alia*, to “*identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be addressed and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved.*”

Parish Plans should be holistic in scope and based on consultation of all persons who live and work in an area. They should seek to identify local issues and *opportunities* and set out a realistic, long-term (10 year) vision for the future, with a plan of action to achieve these aims. They should complement policies set out in the Local Development Plan. A village that has an agreed Parish Plan is deemed to be a Vital Village and is better positioned to obtain grant aid for public amenities.

The Consultation Process

An initial meeting was held in February 2003 to explain the background behind the development of a Parish Plan and to advise residents that the Parish Council had been awarded a grant of £5000 towards the cost. The meeting agreed that Upton Bishop should seek to develop a Parish Plan and residents were invited to participate in a steering group that met first in March 2003. Since that time the Parish Plan Steering Group (SG) has met monthly to progress matters - the minutes of each meeting are available from the Clerk to the Parish Council. Specific members of the SG were delegated responsibility for different aspects of the Plan e.g. Environment, Development, Crime, etc. Staff of the Herefordshire Partnership and other organisations provided specialist advice to the SG.

A number of approaches to consultation were identified and discussed; a two-pronged approach using questionnaires and focus groups was agreed:

- Questionnaires were circulated to every household in the parish (one for adults and one for young people 7-18 yrs old) to be returned to the Research Department at Hereford Council (HCRD), in order to ensure anonymity and objectivity in the evaluation of the responses. The Interim Report, based on the HCRD analyses, was circulated to all households in October 2003 and two public meetings were held in the Millennium Hall in late November.
- Focus Groups on specific topics were held during the period February to July 2004; at these meetings, relevant “experts” from Herefordshire Council and/or other bodies were invited to discuss the topics and to answer questions from residents. Through the use of facilitators, a record was made of the key issues needing to be resolved and, whenever possible, an action plan was agreed.
- In addition, the young people were invited to write an essay about their “vision” for Upton Bishop - the winning essay in the Senior Section (over 11 years) is given in Appendix I.
- Additional consultation and publicity were done at the 2003 summer and Christmas Fayres held in the Millennium Hall; and through reports and articles in *The Chimes*. The Parish Plan is based on the outputs from the questionnaires, the focus groups and essays. A public meeting to discuss the Plan was held on 23rd November 2004.

2. Upton Bishop Parish

Geographical Location and Key Features

Upton Bishop Parish is situated in the south east of Herefordshire, bordering with Gloucestershire. It is a broad parish covering an area of 1574 hectares (15.7 km²), with a number of smaller settlements: Crow Hill, Upton Crews, Upton Bishop, Upton Court, Tanhouse, Phocle Green and Hill Top.

In 1883, Francis Tebbs Havergal (vicar of the parish from 1874 - 1890) wrote¹:

“The whole surface of this Parish is undulating and hilly. Extensive and beautiful views are obtained from the Breconshire Mountains to the Malverns and Cotswold Hills, from Bromyard Downs to May Hill and the Forest of Dean. There are extensive woods in and around the Parish, so that the general prospect is that of a well-wooded country, with crops mainly consisting of wheat, barley, beans, roots and clover, goodly pastures and orchards. It is considered a healthy locality, with a rather cold and bracing climate. There are five small centres of population, Tan House, Fishpools, Croose, Crow Hill and Focle. With these exceptions the habitations are very far apart. The roads generally good and the footpaths numerous.”

Today the landscape remains essentially unchanged although modern agricultural and horticultural practices have led to a number of localised land-use changes, e.g. new crops, removal of hedges, erection of poly-tunnels, etc. The M50 lies to the south with access at both ends of the parish, making Upton Bishop very accessible for private and business travel, but resulting in increased through traffic.

In the survey of residents, Upton Bishop was described as being:

- ***“An area of outstanding beauty”*** with ***“a good local climate”*** and having ***“diverse historical interest”***.
- ***“Peaceful”*** and ***“friendly”*** with a ***“high proportion of ‘caring’ residents”***, it is ***“convenient for shopping in neighbouring towns”***, has ***“good road communications”*** and ***“reasonable (but distant) rail communications”***.

Housing and Local Employment

Historically, small discrete settlements evolved with the livestock farming and forestry units that crafted the countryside and the people who worked the land occupied the houses. Workers’ dwellings are now largely modernised and owned by people who are retired or who work outside the parish. Limited building development has taken place within the settlements and, to a lesser extent, outside these areas. In particular, there are three small modern housing developments in the centre of the village at Crow Hill. Some farm businesses have ‘modernised’ and intensified to supply supermarkets with soft fruit and herbs. There is a large seasonal work force on the fruit and herb farms and two packing and distribution centres.

¹ Rev. Francis T Havergal (1883) Records, Historical and Antiquarian of the Parish of Upton Bishop

The Parish has lost most of its key services and facilities over the years (the shop, two schools, Baptist chapel, Post Office and “The Pheasant” pub are no more), but it retains one pub in Crow Hill, formerly *The Wellington* but now called *The Moody Cow*. Residents have to use their cars for most of their shopping and other service needs although a few “mobile” services visit the parish. The village has a new purpose-designed hall, which is well supported with a range of activities for the parishioners of Upton Bishop and neighbouring areas.

Population Data

The 2001 Census recorded a total population of 564; 114 (20%) were below the age of 18 years and 129 were aged 60 years or more; 321 (57%) were between 18 and 59 years. Since 1951, when some 370 voters (i.e. persons of 21 years or over) were registered in the parish, there has been a significant population increase (+19%), although the population remains much smaller than the 716 persons registered in 1861 (of whom about 100 attended the village schools!) Seventy six percent of properties in the parish are owner occupied; 17% of residents live in rented accommodation and 7% in “tied” homes (i.e. occupied through employment).

The 2001 Census showed that 296 persons (72%) were in full or part-time employment, including 99 self-employed persons; only 2% were unemployed. Twelve percent of employed persons worked in agriculture or horticulture; the employment sectors of the remainder included health, education, business and manufacturing industries (all largely outside the parish). Twenty-one percent of employed persons worked mainly from home whilst 69% travel by road to work outside the parish.

3. The “Vision” for Upton Bishop

Responses to the Parish Plan consultations show that residents of Upton Bishop consider themselves privileged to live in this particularly beautiful and tranquil setting. The community is generally well informed, caring and committed; residents are able to participate in a range of social and other activities organized by diverse groups within the parish, with particular focal points being the new Millennium Hall and the historic church.

Yet Upton Bishop is not Utopia and the consultations show that residents have concerns about many issues. The current age of prosperity is both a benefit and a threat to our future well-being. The location of the parish near major road networks poses potential threats: for instance, through pressure for inappropriate housing development, with local people being priced out of the market; the danger of becoming primarily a commuter village with the consequent erosion of community spirit; and ever increasing traffic problems. More distant, yet still real, threats facing us and every other community include the looming energy crisis and environmental problems from global warming.

Our vision is above all for a strong, engaged community; able to adapt and embrace new ideas to deal with whatever the future may throw at us. This means strengthening the various groups and activities that enrich our parish life, and protecting our communal buildings and spaces, so that we can all really feel that we belong to and value our own parish. A strong community values individuals and respects diversity; it sustains young families and has regard to the elderly and all those in need.

Our vision is also for an increasingly sustainable community: one having a heightened awareness of our precious resources – both local and global - active in safeguarding the natural beauty of our environment and our rich historic heritage.

In producing this action plan we have sought to capture the opinions, concerns and needs expressed by residents and the plan contains a wide range of specific proposals for the improvement of our parish life based on these views. It must be recognized that some of these proposals will require funding, either through the Community Charge or by way of grants; however, many will be dependent upon the residents themselves working together (and through the Parish Council and other local organisations) to undertake projects and set up new social or educational activities, etc. Without the commitment of residents towards parish activities many of the key actions will not start or will fail.

4. The Environment

Upton Bishop has a diversity of wildlife habitats including meadows, ancient hedgerows and woodland, scattered individual trees, wetland, streams and ponds. There are 7 Special Wildlife Sites, a Historic Parkland Site and a considerable area of farmed land in the parish under Stewardship and/or organic management. (see map for locations). Farming includes arable crops, fruit growing and pasture/livestock holdings. Numbers of livestock have diminished sharply in recent years and the once traditional hop yards have gone altogether. Several groups of farm buildings have been converted for light industrial use in one of the settlements of the parish. Two intersecting main roads and a number of small lanes cross the parish.

Issues Raised

Concern for the environment within the parish ranked highest among the responses to the questionnaire and engendered lively debate at the Environment Focus Group. The overwhelming view of residents was that we should preserve, protect and improve this tranquil environment for the benefit of people and wildlife alike. Matters of importance include the need for:

Conservation:

- Retain & protect the native wild daffodils and bluebells
- Map the special features of the Parish
- Manage ancient woodland and hedges, increase tree planting and improve care of verges
- Record rare species of fauna, especially water voles and bats, and flora (e.g. black poplar and veteran trees)
- Develop local nature reserves

Recycling and composting by and for the community:

- Establish a roadside collection of sorted waste
- Establish a central village recycling scheme
- Set up a village composting scheme
- Provide allotments

Action Plan

To resolve and implement all the above matters will need enthusiastic parishioners and a Parish Council dedicated to sustainability and self-help.

Energy saving and energy generation:

- Take note of the threats posed globally and locally
- Focus initially on energy conservation and efficiency

Development in the parish:

- Ensure that future developments have minimal impact on the environment and are discrete and in keeping with the parish

Local environment problems include:

- Litter and dog fouling
- Motorbike scrambling
- Agricultural practices, especially waste and crop spraying, poly-tunnels and large vehicles on small lanes
- Light pollution
- Smoke pollution from carelessly lit bonfires

Issue	Action Plan	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resources
Preservation of the local ecology	Set up group to coordinate environmental action	H	Done	Upton Bishop Ecology Group (UBEG)		None
	Carry out detailed survey of the parish to identify key plant and animal species and sites of interest	H	ASAP Ongoing	UBEG HC Biodiversity Dept	Landowners, Herefordshire Nature Trust	None
	Where appropriate seek and enforce preservation orders to protect species, sites etc	H	Dec 2004 onwards	UBEG Upton Bishop Parish Council (UBPC)	Landowners; Herefordshire Nature Trust	Legal Fees
	Ensure environmentally friendly hedge and verge cutting	H	ASAP	UBPC HC	Jarvis Hereford Contracting	None
Recycling	Investigate possibilities for recycling within the village	M	2005	UBPC HC	Private companies	Bins Sites
	Investigate possibility for roadside collection of separated waste	H	2004	UBPC HC	Jarvis Hereford Contracting	
	Investigate voluntary collection of recycling to be taken to Ross	M	2005	Volunteers		None
	Investigate opportunities for a village composting scheme	M	2005	Individuals HC to provide bins		HC
Noise and light pollution	Seek controls on noise due to: - Light aircraft and micro-lights - Motorbike scrambling	H	2005	UBPC HC		Legal Fees
	Seek controls on misuse of high-power security lighting	H	2005			
Dog Fouling	Provision of bins and signage at appropriate locations	H	2004	UBPC, HC	Forestry Commission	Bins Sites
Litter	Investigate extent of problem and develop possible solutions	M	2005	UBPC, HC	Lengthsman	
Energy Conservation and Generation	Increase individual awareness of need for energy conservation	H	Sept 2004	UBEG	UBPC	None
	Consider opportunities for group energy generation schemes	M - L	2005 on	UBPC	Private companies	Considerable

5. Housing and Development

The Parish Council has sought to retain the integrity of the smaller settlements in the parish and has consistently objected to random development that is outside a settlement and not in accordance with the Structure Plan. As a result new housing has been largely confined to the existing settlements by in-fill and by two small developments at Crow Hill. This is a policy that should be pursued by the Parish Council. It is recognised that many houses in the Parish have been extended to cater for growing needs. Whilst this allows young families to stay in the parish it may in turn have reduced the number of “affordable” houses for younger families.

Issues Raised

The survey of residents showed that the majority of respondents (48 %) are opposed to further housing development with a smaller number (35 %) in favour and with 14 % indicating no preference. A poorly attended Focus Group meeting produced a call by some (16) of those present for more affordable housing particularly for young people. However, Parish Council experience over recent years suggests that, for many reasons, such developments are not justified. The representative from Hereford Council confirmed that Upton Bishop lacks the basic services that are deemed necessary to enable significant housing growth: however it does qualify as a smaller settlement under policy H6 of the UDP and some limited housing development within the Parish could meet the Council's criteria.

The survey, and the Focus Group meeting, identified a need for development of small local businesses (38% in favour), especially craft workshops (36%) and light industry, primarily utilising redundant farm buildings in the Parish so that wherever possible a redundant farm building should be used for this, as opposed to a residential, purpose. However, care is needed to ensure that such development does not aggravate existing traffic and environmental issues.

The past 20 years has seen the emergence of large industrial-type agricultural production and packing units in the Parish. Two such recent developments have ceased trading and new uses have had to be found for the buildings. One, at Phocle Green, has been given change of use permission for light industrial use, a use that by common consent would not have been granted permission when the development was first proposed. It is important therefore that care is taken at the outset to establish the long-term economic viability of any such developments before planning permission is granted.

It is recognised that the Government encourages diversification by farmers. Some diversification has taken place in the parish but it is important to ensure that diversification does not impact adversely upon the beneficial use and enjoyment of adjoining properties. A balance needs to be struck between the needs and requirements of the farmer, of adjoining landowners and other residents when considering new uses for farm facilities. Many residents do not wish to see developments that might change the character of the parish. The following action plan was developed as a result of the Survey and the Focus Group meeting:

Issue		Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners Dependencies	Cost Resources
Environmental Development	Preserve open countryside and encourage good stewardship	H	Ongoing	UBPC HC Landowners	DEFRA Countryside Agency	
Housing Development	Discourage new building, except within discrete settlements and ensure any “infill” development is “harmonious”	H	2005 - 2006	HC	UBPC	
Business Development	Discourage intensive farming practices	M		HC	UBPC Herefordshire Tourism	
	Encourage diversified local craft or/light industry	M				
	Encourage local marketing of locally-produced food/craft products	L				
	Encourage the use of redundant farm buildings for use for light industrial or craft purposes	M				

6. Traffic, Transport and Crime

Introduction

Upton Bishop is largely rural with many small lanes bounded by hedges. There are three primary routes through the parish:

- B4221 - runs roughly from east to west from Ross-on-Wye (and the M50 junction 4) to Newent and Gloucester.
- B4224 - runs roughly from, from Hereford to join the A40 Ross to Gloucester road near Lea.
- The M50 - runs through the southernmost edge of the parish and, significantly, has two key junctions (J3 & J4) just outside the parish. The presence of these junctions generates significant amounts of “through” traffic along many roads and lanes within the parish, especially at peak times.

The B4221 and B4224 cross at Crow Hill. The only traffic controls at this junction are “give way” road markings, priority being given to the Gloucester-Hereford route. This staggered junction of 5 roads occurs in the most highly populated part of the parish, which is covered by a 30 mph speed limit - no speed limits are imposed elsewhere within the parish. The majority (90%) of the villagers are car-owners and there is an above average level of two-car ownership (44%); 5% of the population are primarily bus users.

Issues Raised

The adult population of Upton Bishop rated traffic and road safety issues the 2nd highest priority, after environmental issues; 46% of young people who responded to the questionnaire also identified key concerns about traffic in the local area. The key concerns are:

Road Safety:

- Speed of traffic both through the settlements and on the lanes (majority of the questionnaire respondents)
- Too many large vehicles, especially on small roads and lanes
- Increased local traffic due to change in personal vehicle usage, shopping habits, local businesses, etc.
- Unacceptable risks for pedestrians, wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs (especially on the main road through Crow Hill)
- The key areas of concern were at Crow Hill (35%), Phocle Green (25%) and Upton Crews (24%) but similar problems also occur throughout the parish.

The Condition of the roads:

- Lack of maintenance of ditches, hedges and verges
- Road flooding
- Inadequate winter road gritting

Public Transport:

- The need to keep the bus service (or an alternative) running (38%)
- Better transport locally for young people - schools & social

Crime:

- Burglaries and housebreaking
- Lack of information available from West Mercia Police

Action Plan A “Crime, Safety & Transport” focus group in the Millennium Hall was attended by representatives of the Herefordshire Council, UB Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, West Mercia Police and local residents.

Issue	Action	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resources
Road Conditions	Identify road and roadside maintenance issues, including causes of road flooding; lack of winter gritting, etc & seek improvements	H	End 2004	UBPC and Lengthsman	HC	???
Road Safety	Set up a UB Rural Safety Initiative Group (UBRSI) Speak to Gorsley RSI group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find key individuals to lead Contact West Mercia Police RSTeam 	H	End of 2004	UBPC	West Mercia Police UBRSI (potential to link to Gorsley RSI group?)	None
	Seek to extend 30mph limit outwards on all key routes – and create village “entrance” markings to emphasise speed reduction needed	H	End 2005	UBPC	HC	
	Community Camera Scheme – to survey speed “black spots”	H	Spring 2005	UBPC	UB RSI Group West Mercia Police	
	Develop a “traffic calming” plan for speed reduction	M	End 2005	UBPC	HC	
	Investigate further options for traffic control, providing pedestrian facilities, at Crow Hill	M	2005	UBPC UBRSI	HC	
Crime	Improve communication from/with police on crime data, local incidents, self-help activities – especially use of e-mail	H	End 2004	UBRSI	West Mercia Police	None
	Set up a Farm Watch Scheme	M	Spring 2005	UBRSI	West Mercia Police Local farmers	None
	Promote & extend the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	M	Spring 2005	UBRSI	Existing Neighbourhood Watch team West Mercia Police	None
Public Transport	Liase with bus company to seek to influence bus services	M	2004	UBPC	Bus company HC	
	Investigate other village transport options – car sharing, shared shopping, etc	L	2005	UBPC to appoint volunteer to identify needs of specific groups in the parish		

7. Young People's Interests

Introduction

Currently few specific facilities are provided within the parish for young people. However, the 2001 Census recorded 114 persons aged 5-18, which is approximately 20% of the population. Today there are at least 20 children under 7 years of age in the Parish, which indicates a continuing requirement to provide for young people during the next 10 years.

A "young people's" survey was sent to houses with children recorded in the Census - some 50 in total - of these, 24 were returned. (6 from children under 10; 14 from 10-14 year olds; and 4 from 15-17 year olds). 67% percent of the responses were from boys. Some comments were also received in the main survey relating to the needs received by parents in relation to their children.

Issues Raised

The young people who replied to the questionnaire currently spend a high proportion of their free time watching TV, visiting friends, playing computer games, or engaging in sports. Small numbers enjoy local Scouts, Guides, BMX biking, skateboarding, church activities and fishing. Most rely heavily on family members to drive them to destinations outside the parish for swimming, cinema, libraries, sports halls and shops in the neighbouring towns.

The key concerns for the young people included:

- The future of the countryside and environmental issues - most quoted the peace/ activities of the countryside as the best things about living in Upton Bishop
- Stress at school, including examinations - might warrant facility for local counselling
- Traffic and speeding vehicles
- Shortage of things to do/ no friends locally

21 of the 24 questionnaires suggested that young people wanted more choice of things to do in the parish. However, when questioned more closely during the focus group, the children had planned activities (school or club related) on most weekday evenings. The gaps they needed filling related to ad hoc/informal things they could do locally just with friends and, in particular, activities for the holiday time. This was reiterated in the comments from parents.

Action Plan

The Plan summarises the key actions from the Young Peoples' Questionnaire and the Focus Group meeting:

Issue	Action	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resource
Access to hall facilities	Investigate use of a keypad entry system to the site to widen access for <i>ad-hoc</i> use	H	By Summer 2005	Upton Bishop Millennium Hall Committee (UBMHC)	UBPC	<£200
	Install bicycle rack at the Hall to encourage/enable young people to cycle to the Hall	H	By Summer 2005	UBMHC	UBPC	£500-£1000?
	Address issue of road traffic speed past the Hall (see Traffic, Transport & Crime Action Plan)	H	2005/06	UBPC	Hereford Council	
Sports/ Games Facilities	Investigate development of sports infrastructure on the Hall site - Include in the Millennium Hall site plan	M	Summer 2005	UBPC Sports and Social Club UB Youth Group	UBMHC Individuals	£5-20k
	Investigate development of young peoples' "play" equipment - include in Millennium Hall site plan	M	Summer 2005	UBPC Individuals UB Youth Group	UBMHC	£2-10k
Activities	Instigate a village summer event and look at other "family" events	M	Summer 2005 onwards	Individuals and clubs etc.		None

8. Leisure, IT and the Millennium Hall

Introduction

Upton Bishop is a rural community and residents responding to the questionnaire generally support activities that enhance/appreciate the countryside. Over 50% of respondents to the questionnaire support historical/cultural activities, nature/woodland events or activities, open gardens, horse riding, walking, crafts and cycling. Over 50% of respondents were against shooting, with further development of golf, holiday homes and adventure holidays also being seen as less favourable.

The parish has a modern purpose-built “Millennium” Hall. The Millennium Hall Committee has current plans to extend the Hall and is seeking to develop a plan for the enhancement of the field surrounding it (a copy of the plan is attached as Appendix II). It is already clear that demand for the use and facilities at the Millennium Hall has outstripped the present facilities and there is an urgent need to extend the Hall to provide an additional meeting room, toilets and storage facilities, with small-scale accommodation for specialist needs. Attendance at social and other activities at the Millennium Hall was generally occasional (57%). 11% of respondents to the questionnaire use the Hall weekly and 9% monthly but 21% never use the Hall. Of the latter group, 44% said it was due to unsuitable timing of events, 35% claim not to know what is going on and 25% are not interested in the current activities.

Current leisure activities which take place regularly at the Millennium Hall, include:

- Keep fit, yoga, pilates, badminton, short mat bowling and dance classes
- Regular social mornings/afternoons; W.I. Group
- Children’s activity sessions - mainly for pre-school children during the week
- Evening entertainment - concerts, dances, parties, talks - on an occasional basis

Issues Raised

The residents’ questionnaire, the open meetings and the Focus Group indicated serious concerns regarding leisure activities designed to bring tourists to the area as it was felt that this would detract from the community. Other significant issues raised include the following:

- 41% want more clubs and social activities - the top 5 suggestions being gardening, walking, photography, history and the arts
- More outdoor sports/fitness facilities (fitness circuit, picnic/ barbeque area, and facilities for soccer, cricket, tennis & boules)
- A children’s playground
- Development of circular walks and more information on local features (62%)
- Need for more family-orientated events, including use by young people of all ages at the Millennium Hall
- Need for improved access provision for pedestrians (56%) and cyclists (16%) which impacts on leisure activities in the parish.

The Young People’s survey, specifically, indicated the need for a wider choice of things to do (88%) and more activities at the Millennium Hall (79%), including suggestions for an internet café at the Hall (38%). Other suggestions included a multi-use wall and hard surface, which could be used for a number of sports such as tennis and netball.

Action Plan

The following action plan was developed following the Young People's and the Leisure/ Millennium Hall Focus Groups. (See also section 10 on "Other Services")

Issue	Action	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resource
Field development at Hall	Develop a prioritised plan for Hall site e.g. by holding a "Planning for Real®" event to facilitate appropriate development of the Hall site (potentially at village fete event)	H	2004/05	UBMHC	UBPC Community First, Hereford Voluntary Action, Hereford Council, Hereford Wildplay	External funding will be required
	Investigate sources and seek funding for sport-related and other development	H	2004/05	UBMHC Sports and Social Club	Hereford Council; Hereford Voluntary Action; Community First	
Millennium Hall	Enlarge Hall to provide more accommodation and facilities	H	2004/05	UBMHC	UBPC	Grant Funding
Information	Collate and communicate information for residents (and young people) on leisure activities both at the Hall and throughout the parish	H	2004/05	Chimes Reporter	The Chimes UB website	
Village Activities	Assess current footpaths and determine if more circular walks can be established	M	2004/06	UBPC	Parish Paths Officer; Hereford Council	
	Identify residents keen to set up clubs for photography, history, art, walking and gardening	M	2004/05	UBPC	HUB	
Internet	Scope use of IT facility at Hall	L	2004/06	UBMHC	UBPC	

9. The Church

Introduction

The church of St John the Baptist is by far the oldest and most significant building in Upton Bishop. Now standing isolated along one of the lanes, the twelfth to fourteenth century building contains much of the history of the community inscribed in its memorials, and its two-acre overgrown churchyard is a haven for wildlife.

While attendance has declined, as in most parishes, the church remains a focal point in the community for weddings, funerals and baptisms as well as the feasts of Christmas and Easter. The Parochial Church Council contribute much to the social life of the village through the organisation of the annual village fetes, the Harvest Festival Supper and other events. The small church community faces growing financial strain. It now has to finance clergy salaries and office expenses, in addition to the routine care of the Grade 1 listed building, without any help from the Church of England. In particular, flaking stone on the church tower will shortly need expensive attention.

The PCC has recently been awarded a Heritage Lottery grant to cover:

- The restoration and display of a stone sculpture fragment, thought to be a very rare Roman Christian piece
- The building of a toilet to help diversify the possible uses of the building
- To encourage the ecological aspects of the wildlife of the churchyard, and
- For education and information

Issues raised

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire considered the church a significant asset, both as an historic building and as a peaceful sanctuary. The church's environmental interest and its importance as a place of worship for festivals and particularly for weddings, funerals and baptisms were rated very highly. There was a wish to see the church involved more in organising care for those in need, in educational activities and in charitable events. 71% of respondents thought that the churchyard, currently running out of space, should be extended rather than closed and, to this end, a majority of respondents thought the village should be involved in funding the purchase of more land. The Focus Group discussed issues around the ongoing financial pressures, the need to involve lay people in running services and the potential wider role of the building and churchyard as a sanctuary and a place of peace in a stressful world.

Future Policy and Action Plan

The church and churchyard represent a precious resource and their loss through closure would be a sad diminution of the life of the parish. The Church of England itself is no longer able to fund either the staffing or the maintenance of its churches. Thus, while the pastoral and ministry role will increasingly have to be provided by the church community themselves, the burden of the upkeep of the building and the churchyard will fall on the whole community. While the Heritage Lottery grant will give the church community the tools to diversify the uses and appeal of both church and churchyard, it is also imperative that the church community strengthens the partnership with the wider community through adapting to meet as wide a range of spiritual and community needs as may be possible.

Issue	Action	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resources
Extend the churchyard	Negotiate with owners of neighbouring land to purchase extension area	M	End 2005	PCC	UBPC	Price of 1/3 acre; fundraising
Restoration of church tower	Await architect's decision; then seek external funding as appropriate	M	By 2008	PCC	Diocese & charities	At least £50,000; charities and fundraising
Safeguard church as historic centre	Restore sculpture fragments & tombs, provide educational material and build toilet,	H	By summer 2005	PCC	Heritage Lottery	£50,000 grant and PCC funds and fundraising
Maintain church & churchyard as a sanctuary	Enhance churchyard as wildlife haven	M	By 2006	PCC	Heritage Lottery, "Caring for God's Acre"	HL grant and fundraising
	Make a Garden of Remembrance					
Care for the needy in the parish	Evaluate how to establish a network to identify, and provide help, to those in need	M	2005	PCC and Clergy	Everyone	None

10. Other Services

Introduction

In the last 30-40 years, Upton Bishop has lost most of its central village facilities (schools, shops, Post Office). However, a modern Millennium Hall has replaced the old parish hall and there is a pub-restaurant at Crow Hill (*The Moody Cow*). Upton Bishop has a regular daily bus service to Ross-on-Wye and Gloucester and a weekly bus service to Hereford. Other weekly services include:

- Mobile library
- Shopping bus to Ross-on-Wye for those 60 and over
- Mobile pensions advice service

The Chimes, a free monthly parish magazine, is distributed to all households and 88% of questionnaire respondents felt that the information available about what is going on in the Parish is good. Upton Bishop has a web page although this is not currently up-dated.

Issues Raised

The main services identified by the residents' questionnaire to need improvement are as follows:

- Mains gas (63% would be prepared to pay for connection if affordable; 30% would not pay)
- Mains sewage disposal (35%);
- A more reliable electricity service (31%);
- Broadband Internet (34%) with 20% requiring this for business use;

(Section 6 also records the need for significant improvements to road and verge maintenance and to public transport)

Although little concern was expressed generally about accessing health services, there were some concerns regarding access to doctors (33%), dentists (6%), and chiropodists (3%). There are also occasional problems for individuals needing access to pharmacists, physiotherapists and other health services. In considering the provision of health services, it is worth noting the profile of the population, with 20% under 18 and 20% over 60.

Opportunity to provide the following community facilities received widespread support:

- Post office - 79% indicated that they would use this regularly
- Community shop - 69% indicated regular use if available
- Internet centre (38% supportive) and a need for general computer training (30%)

In ranking topics of overall importance, respondents indicated that improving local services was 4th, health and social services 6th, and information technology 9th out of 10.

Action Plan

The following is proposed:

Issue	Action	Priority	Timescale	Lead Responsibility	Partners/ Dependencies	Cost/ Resources
Community services and facilities	Investigate provision of community Post Office and Shop	H	2005/06	UBPC	UBMHC	Grant to extend Hall
	Investigate provision of community health services locally or of specific help for individuals as need arises	M	2005 on	UBPC	Primary Health Trust	
	Investigate feasibility of providing Internet use at Millennium Hall and encourage IT training	H	2004/05	UBMHC	UBPC Education Providers	
Infrastructure	Carry out feasibility study of provision on mains sewage disposal and gas	M	2005	UBPC	Service providers	
	Investigate reliability of electricity service with view to improvement	H	2005	UBPC	Service providers	
	Promote need for Broadband Access in the area*	H	2004	Local Interest Group	Service providers	

* BT Broadband access has been available from September 2004.

11. Conclusion

The Action Plans described above are a combination of strategic and short-term tactical proposals based on the consultation processes undertaken by the Steering Group. But... how do we carry these plans forward so that there are real benefits for the residents of the parish of Upton Bishop?

It is **not** the function of the Steering Group to do this. Rather it is for the Parish Council and other local organisations to initiate, review, prioritise and, where appropriate, resource and implement the tasks proposed. Most importantly it must ensure that all residents are kept fully informed of progress. The PC cannot be expected to do this alone: every organisation and each individual resident of the parish need to play a part in this work. Real commitment is essential if issues are to be resolved.

There are also many organisations, both within Herefordshire and nationally, which are both willing and eager to share their knowledge, expertise and contacts. In addition, provided we take matters forward in an appropriate manner, funding may be available to assist in diverse ways.

Has the preparation of this Parish Plan been justified and was the money well spent? We believe this to be so – but the benefits will only accrue when actions are taken through to completion.

Our Vision statement said:

“Our vision is above all for a strong, engaged community; able to adapt and embrace new ideas to deal with whatever the future may throw at us. This means strengthening the various groups and activities that enrich our parish life, and protecting our communal buildings and spaces, so that we can all really feel that we belong to and value our own parish. A strong community values individuals and respects diversity; it sustains young families and has regard to the elderly and all those in need. Our vision is also for an increasingly sustainable community: one having a heightened awareness of our precious resources, both local and global, active in safeguarding the natural beauty of our environment and our rich historic heritage.”

Will you play your part in ensuring that this vision is fulfilled?

12. Acknowledgements

Upton Bishop Parish Council wish to acknowledge the inputs of all residents and others who have contributed to the preparation of this Parish Plan and in particular, wish to thank the following:

**The Parish Plan Steering Group
(In particular those who stayed the course)**

Basil Jarvis (Chairman)	Patrick Bailey
Ben Casson	Charles Curry
Vicky Eldridge	Jean Cornwall
Alan Major	Tessa McClean
Elaine Powell	Andrew Morris
David Price	John Stanier
Margaret Rigby	Richard Wainman
Jan Stevenson	The late John Sanders
Jacky Thompson	

Focus Group Experts:

Denise Bradley-Lloyd,	Herefordshire Council Energy Efficiency Unit
Cliff Brain,	Youth Worker, Ross-on-Wye
Richard Davies,	Marches Energy Agency
William Edwards,	Hereford Council, Voluntary Youth Services Leisure,
Ruth Jackson,	Hereford Council, Leisure Services
Ruth Lovelace,	Hereford Council, Housing Surveys
Trish Marsh,	Hereford Council, Environmental Coordinator
Charles Naylor,	West Mercia Police
Jan Perridge,	Hereford Council Sports Development,
Rev Nick Read,	Agricultural Chaplain, Diocese of Hereford
Laura Scotford,	West Mercia Police
Rachel Sharp,	Herefordshire Nature Trust
Richard Woodhead	Hereford Council Planning Department

Focus Group Facilitators:

Lorraine Boddington	Julie Johnson
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Upton Bishop Parish Clerk:

Jos Herath

Those who helped prepare, deliver and analyse the questionnaires and the Interim & Final Reports

Tony Cramp & the Hereford Council Research Team	Dominic Curry
<i>The Chimes</i> delivery team	Felicity Sang
	Gemma Whitaker

And anyone else who has been unwittingly omitted from the above lists

“My Ideal Village”

by Emily Misselbrook

I am woken in the morning by the cockerel crowing. I decide I want a bagel so having dressed I walk down the drive and cross the road on the zebra crossing where there's a pavement that leads me past the village post office, to the shop and café. I order a bagel with cheese and lemonade in the café, and enter the shop. In the shop is my friend Kirsty. We chat as I buy a magazine and sit down to wait for my bagel. When Kirsty sees mine she orders one for herself. As I eat my bagel she asks me whether I am going to tonight's film, 'Down with Love'. I am so I say I'll meet her there. Then I remember that it's my turn in the youth club rota to collect litter, but it doesn't take very long since hardly anyone drops any now.

I haven't gone very far when I meet one of my other friends, Amy, looking for someone to go to the new assault course with her. I say I will, then remember that it's quite far away so would be quicker and more enjoyable to cycle. This means fetching our bikes and taking the cycle path to meet there.

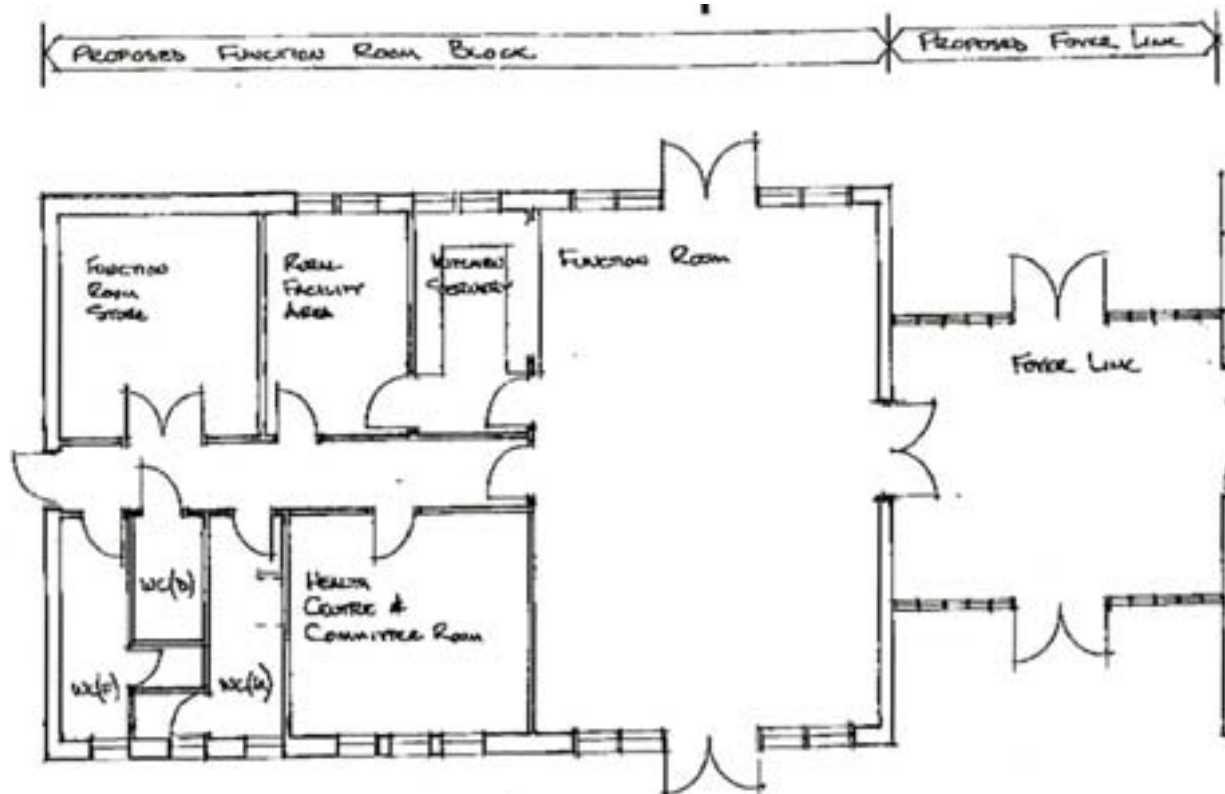
I am first there so I sit on a bench to read one of the books I checked out from the mobile library on the way here. Amy soon arrives and we have lots of fun on the assault course, even though I fall off the first bridge into the mud twice. Amy is equally as filthy so when I remember the painting course Amy agrees we should change and eat lunch before the 2 pm course. Mum has left me soup for lunch and a note. It says Mum and Dad have taken the weekly minibus from the post office to Cardiff for the day and will return at 5.30 p.m. so as not to miss the film.

I hurriedly change and walk to the village hall for the painting course which I am running with some friends and a few adults. The roads are perfectly safe even without a pavement, now there is traffic calming. The course is mainly for younger kids, but some adults come along too. It ends at 5.30 and the film is at 6.00 - this means I can leisurely head home and still have time to change and get to the film.

The film is wonderful and as I walk home I can't help but think I live in a perfect village for my lifestyle.

Plan of Proposed Millennium Hall Development

Appendix II



PLAN SHOWING EXISTING & PROPOSED 1:100

