



Otterbourne Parish Plan 2004

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1.0 Purpose of the Document

The purpose of the document is to provide the Countryside Agency, Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council with a perspective on how the residents of Otterbourne wish to see local issues that affect their quality of life managed over the period October 2004 to October 2009. It will give Otterbourne Parish Council, once they have formally adopted the Parish Plan, the consensus of the village and should give emphasis to the Parish Council's input to the wider future of the community.

2.0 Introduction

The Government introduced a Rural White Paper - *Our Countryside: the future* - in November 2000 sponsored by the Countryside Agency, with the aim of encouraging local communities to take a more active role in deciding what is important to them and how each community sees itself developing over the following few years. The aim of a Parish Plan is to allow everyone in the Parish to have a chance to say what they think about the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting their community and how they would like to see it improved for the future.

The proposal to prepare a Parish Plan was presented to the village at a meeting in July 2002, supported by the Countryside Agency and Winchester City Council. The meeting concluded with a request for volunteers to assist in the project. In September 2002, Otterbourne Parish Council notified the Countryside Agency of its intent to commence with the preparation of a Parish Plan.

In March 2003 the inaugural meeting of the Otterbourne Parish Plan and Village Design Statement project team took place, by which time 40 volunteers had come forward to offer their assistance in a variety of roles from Project Leader to "Foot Soldiers" who were prepared to distribute letters and collect surveys. Subsequently a steering committee was established comprising 7 members including a representative of the Parish Council. The steering committee meet monthly. The project team also meet monthly at a public meeting. All project meetings are advertised, minuted and published in the Parish Magazine and on the Parish Council website.

The project team agreed that the best way to assess the needs and aspirations of the village was to conduct a comprehensive survey of the views of every household. It was also agreed that to develop a set of topics and questions it would be necessary to seek the views of the public and interest groups first. This was done at the monthly public meetings and in direct consultation with the various interest groups in the village. It resulted in a survey of 160 questions covering 12 key topics. The survey was carried out in May 2003 with questionnaires delivered to approximately 600 households and businesses within the village. The response far exceeded the expectations of the project team with a 54% return.

The analysis of the responses forms the body of this Parish Plan.

3.0 Summary

Otterbourne is a village of approximately 1500 people and is located to the south west of Winchester. The village has an established history dating back to the first millennium with a more recent history as a quiet ' traditional English village'.

The Otterbourne Parish Plan has been developed from the responses to a detailed questionnaire of 160 questions that covered all aspects that had been identified as being of concern to the parishioners. The survey also explored attitudes held within the community to issues such as transport, health, safety, community and the overall amenities available within the village, such as shops, services, rural pathways and community facilities. The survey was designed to establish the current 'personality' of the Parish and the parishioners' thoughts and preferences for the future.

The response to the survey was outstanding with 315 replies to the questionnaire that was delivered to the 600 households and businesses within the Parish making the findings of the survey statistically significant and rich in information.

In summary, the findings are as follows:

The community spirit in Otterbourne is strong, but rarely on show as many villagers participate in activities that are not available within the village. We have an opportunity to galvanise the willingness to participate in village life, in a more open way, with more village based activities and events. The local church has a role to play, with many respondents wanting the church to become more involved with the community.

The demographics of the local primary school are such that 65% of the children are from outside of the village. However, this is inconsequential to the school's standing within the village, which is widely seen as the centre of village life, with active and healthy community links.

Otterbourne Parish is rich in country pathways and open spaces. These are popular among residents and visitors alike, with the parishioners keen to see the standard of maintenance of these areas, which are subject to overgrowth, dog fouling and litter, rise. The village also has a conservation area supported by an active conservation group.

Healthcare facilities were of concern, as none exist within the Parish. Fifty per cent of respondents indicated that they wish to see such facilities established; this is seen as both a commercial and an infrastructure issue. It should be noted that this was seen as a problem when the last appraisal was done in the 1980's.

As expected, housing was a hot issue with the majority of the respondents stating that the village had grown to capacity and that further development would only further destroy the character of the village and exacerbate the traffic and drainage problems within the village. The exception was that many supported the concept of affordable housing in Otterbourne.

Many parishioners enjoy an active lifestyle with sport and active pastimes being important to them. Due to lack of facilities within the village people have to travel. However, the youth and elderly who tend not to have transport or are unable to drive are restricted. There is a need to create opportunities to pursue activities within the village, with the youth expressing a strong desire for a skateboard facility.

Generally, the majority of the respondents felt Otterbourne was a safe place to live with the main areas of concern being inadequate street lighting and heavy traffic, and with personal safety when travelling on the buses at night also being highlighted.

Spiritually, the Parish is centred on St Matthew's C of E church, although many parishioners attend places of worship of many faiths outside the Parish. Responses indicated that people wanted to see the Church and its Priest-in-charge take a more active role within the local community as a whole.

Economically, Otterbourne has high employment with the majority of the people being employed outside the Parish. The survey did reveal that there are in excess of 30 businesses within the Parish, most being small and mainly working from home. There was an overwhelming rejection of the creation of new business premises within Otterbourne, with the exception of additional local shops, healthcare facilities and bed and breakfast accommodation. Responses also indicated that people would like to see mobile shops selling fresh produce. However, the majority of the respondents wanted the village to remain as it is; predominantly residential.

Another area that was the subject of many comments was the road infrastructure with three main issues dominating it; the noise from the M3, the excessive volumes of heavy goods vehicles travelling through the village primarily to the Integra Project in Poles Lane and the perception that the Main Road and Otterbourne Hill are more dangerous now that the traffic calming measures have been done. Only 1 % of the respondents felt that the latter had improved safety. The survey highlighted the fact that parishioners felt their views were ignored in many aspects of transport and road safety. However, a key point for inclusion in a transport strategic plan was the need for a safe crossing in the vicinity of William's Garage, as that is now the only shop and Post Office within the village.

Otterbourne has a large under 18 population; they represent 25% of the populace of the village and the survey indicated that they feel poorly served by current facilities supplied to and within the village. In addition, while the majority of the adults have access to private cars, it is the youth, as well as the elderly and disabled, who suffer most from a poor public transport network. The results showed a significant demand for places where the youth of the village can meet and socialise. There was also demand for a skateboard park. It was also pleasing to note that the youth would like to have representation on the Parish Council.

In summary, the exercise has highlighted a strong sense of community within Otterbourne and the desire for people to have a say in how their future and that of the village is developed. The body of the document expands on what has been said above and considers the actions that need to be taken to fulfil the wishes of the Parishioners of Otterbourne.

4.0 A Short History of Otterbourne

The first historic record of Otterbourne can be found in the Domesday Book, compiled and published at Winchester in the year 1086, on the direction of William I (The Conqueror). The Domesday survey contained a comprehensive inventory of each settlement, including a reference to whoever held it before the coming of the Normans.

England was divided into administrative areas known as Hundreds. Otterbourne is recorded as being part of the Buddlesgate Hundred; a somewhat fragmented area centred somewhere north west of Winchester. In 1086 it was held by Ralph of Mortimer and was clearly an extensive settlement, having land for 8 ploughs, 50 acres of meadowland, a fishery and a church. Prior to the Norman Conquest, Otterbourne (Otreburne) was held by one Cheping of whom we know nothing. However, there was a thriving Saxon community before the coming of Ralph of Mortimer. The location of the Saxon/Norman settlement is likely to have been in what is presently known as Kiln Lane although whether the site was on that of the old churchyard is open to speculation. Recent archaeological studies of the church site have revealed little that is earlier than the 13th Century.

Otterbourne has been a close witness of great events and changes for possibly 2000 years. Both Southampton and Winchester were major Roman centres and the evidence of the road that linked them, still clearly seen in Otterbourne Park Wood, was trodden by Roman Legionaries and merchants, possibly by the Emperor himself.

The body of William II (Rufus) will have passed through the village, probably along Kingsway and through Cranbury Park, on its melancholy journey to Winchester Cathedral following his death in the New Forest in 1100. Three hundred years later Otterbourne witnessed the passage of Henry V and his army to Southampton for embarkation to France and immortality at Agincourt.

Otterbourne has also had associations with a number of prominent personalities: Charlotte M. Yonge, Victorian historian and novelist, who lived for many years at "Elderfield"; John Keble, religious reformer, who was Vicar of Otterbourne from 1836 until his death in 1866; William Cobbett, social reformer, was a frequent visitor and designed the gardens at Otterbourne House, and last but not least, Sir Isaac Newton, philosopher and scientist, who lodged at Cranbury House for 7 years.

The shape of Otterbourne appears to have remained generally the same until the end of the Napoleonic Wars when major changes took place stemming from necessary improvements in transportation. The Itchen Navigation, remains of which can be seen between Allbrook and Otterbourne, had already been built to serve the wool trade and passage of other goods between Winchester and Southampton. Then a more efficient road system was required to serve the stagecoaches, which were becoming the main form of long distance travel. Charlotte Yonge recorded the hazards of coaches fording the Itchen at Brambridge. The present main road is more or less on the line of a turnpike road that was eventually constructed along with a chain of coaching inns of which the "White Horse" was one. Gradually the centre of

Otterbourne gravitated from the old village in Kiln Lane to its present position. Very little of the old village remains.

Later the stagecoaches were themselves eclipsed by the opening of the London and South Western Railway in 1840. This saw the demise of the old St. Matthew's Church. All but the chancel was demolished in 1847, when the religious centre of the village moved to its present location. The chancel remained in sporadic use until the outbreak of World War II. It was finally demolished in 1972. The outline of the church can still be seen in the old churchyard in Kiln Lane.

The 20th Century brought more momentous events to which the village bore a silent witness. In 1912 the boat train to Southampton sped by Otterbourne carrying travellers on their way to America whose luggage was labelled 'Not Wanted on the Voyage - RMS Titanic'. Only a few years later columns of men marched or rode through Otterbourne on the way to their destinies in Flanders and Picardy. During that war, Cranbury Park was used as a vast remount depot for spare horses for use in France. Again in 1943 it was filled with troops and vehicles preparing for the invasion of Normandy.

The late 20th Century saw significant changes to the village with the M3 Motorway removing much of the through traffic. However, housing development, which saw the village double in size in the mid 1980's and the creation of the incinerator plant and latterly the recycling facility in Poles Lane has more than replaced the reduced traffic advantages created by the M3 Motorway.

Today Otterbourne has grown beyond anything our forebears could have imagined, but it still remains a village. There is a village church and a thriving school; there are pubs, small businesses, a shop and a Post Office; there is the Village Hall that serves many different organisations and activities. But above all there is a community spirit that is worth protecting and developing further; that is what this Parish Plan is all about.

5.0 Subject Areas:

5.1 Communications

In Otterbourne today communication with the community is via a number of formal ways: notice boards, the Parish Magazine, the Otterbourne Parish Council web site and local newspapers. Informally it is by word of mouth through friends and neighbours.

There are 7 notice boards throughout the village, the majority of which are under the ownership and management of the Parish Council. The responses indicated that over three quarters of the village obtained information from the notice boards. This was comparable to the number who said they also obtained local information from the local newspapers. Most of the space on these boards is devoted to local authority information, with very little taken to advertise village events. This is most probably because keys have to be obtained to gain access to the Parish Council owned boards. There is however a board located next to the village shop, which is part of Williams garage. It is located at the northern end of the village, but is well used to advertise village events and nearly 70% of the respondents said they read that particular board.

Otterbourne has a Parish Magazine, which is produced by St Matthew's Church and published monthly at an annual charge of £6 (for 2003). This is read by 68% of the respondents. It was noted, however, that newcomers to the village may not be aware that the magazine not only covers church activities but parish and village activities as well as advertisements for local tradespeople.

The Otterbourne web site is organised and maintained by a parish councillor. Parish Council reports and local information can be found on the site. The responses indicated that only 33% of the respondents are aware of the web site. The web site address is: **www.otterbourne.parish.hants.gov.uk**

Local newspapers, although a source of some local information, are excluded from the report as they are outside of the control of the village and cover many local communities.

The clear message that came out of the responses to the questionnaire was that although the village has a number of vehicles for communicating, better and wider communication that will reach the community as a whole is still required.

Looking Forward:

Over the next 5 years of the current plan, there are areas where people would like to see improvements.

- More notice boards, with easy access for both displaying and reading about information that is pertinent to the village. Feedback suggests that villagers would like to see notice boards located at: Otterbourne Church of England School, adjacent to the 'Otter' public house at the top of the hill, in Otterbourne recreation ground, at all bus stops and in the vicinity of the 'Old Parsonage' nursing home.

- A magazine to appeal to all villagers should be developed. This should include a monthly newsletter either within the existing publication or as a separate issue that will give details of forthcoming events or items of special interest. A newsletter of some form was supported by over 80% of the village, with over 60% willing to pay a small subscription and 12% willing to help with its production.
- It was clear that the Otterbourne web site needs to be promoted and its content expanded. However, to achieve an active web site will require someone who has skills, enthusiasm and moreover, the time to head the project.
- A clear 'must have' that came out of the responses is the need for a village 'Welcome Pack'. Sixty-six per cent of respondents stated that they would have welcomed such a pack when they moved into the village. Copies should be readily available so that newcomers to the village can be contacted and given a personal and informative welcome to the village. The general view was that the pack should include the following information:

Details of local doctors, dentists, pharmacies, hospitals and clinics.
 Local libraries.
 Schools, pre-schools and nurseries.
 Local places of worship covering all religions and denominations.
 Village organisations with contacts and telephone numbers.
 Local transport details: trains, buses and airport.
 Local authority contact addresses and telephone numbers.

5.2 Community

The overall response to the Community section of the plan was good with the majority of the comments being of a positive and constructive nature. Otterbourne is seen as a friendly village with a majority of the responses confirming that people talk to other villagers at least once a week, although it was noted that approximately 30% did not.

As can be expected, the people of Otterbourne have a wide range of interests and it would be impractical to run clubs for some of them, e.g. sailing clubs, within the village. However, interest was shown in running some additional clubs within Otterbourne. These included pre-school, after school and youth clubs, a wide variety of health and fitness activities including sports, martial arts, dance and aerobics, as well as local history, yoga and gardening. Sufficient interest was shown in attending and assisting with the running of a youth club to make this realistic. A high level of interest was also shown in starting a tennis club and an arts and crafts club, with 11 of the respondents willing to attend a bowling club.

Events run by the school, the Church and the Village Hall Committee all received positive feedback. Twenty per cent of the responses indicated that the household had attended the Otterbourne Village Pantomime, which was highly praised. Other well attended events included the Old Time Music Hall, Jubilee Jazz Concert and Brass Band events, Christmas Market and School Fete, all of which were commended.

Significant interest was shown in attending an annual craft fair, carnival and live musical events with *jazz* being the most popular followed by classical and then rock and pop. An annual BBQ and Car Boot Sale also received enthusiastic support.

Williams Garage and the Post Office were seen as being very important to the village with 86% of the respondents using the Post Office on a weekly basis, although the survey showed that the cash point within the shop was used infrequently, on average every other month as people tended to travel to banks or building societies outside the village on a weekly basis. The Post Office is used to collect pensions and allowances, and information leaflets. However, the survey did indicate that people would use the Post Office for passport applications, licences (. . . Fishing) and car tax.

In response to questions on the need for mobile services, 18% of the households would use a baker on a weekly basis, as they would a mobile bank, whereas a fishmonger and fast food service would be popular as a monthly service. Of interest was the fact that more people did not know of the mobile library service than those who said that they used it. This suggests that better communication of this service is required.

A high percentage of respondents supported the need for additional recycling facilities within the village with 80% identifying the need for a bottle bank, closely followed by that for garden waste, and textiles. A book recycling facility was also identified as being needed. Although the village does have a recycling facility through a fortnightly City Council collection, the feedback suggested that the present service is inadequate. Respondents felt that the service was too infrequent or that the recycling bins should be bigger to compensate.

Although the majority of the respondents did not support the need for a local village information office, mainly due to the cost of maintaining such a facility, the need for additional local information was identified. Typically: local events, local walks, places of interest, local tradespeople, bus timetables, church services and local services such as dentists, doctors etc.

The appraisal contained questions which specifically targeted households where people were aged 65+. From the replies, there appears to be the desire for both coffee/tea and lunch clubs. However, transport will be needed to allow the scheme to be accessible to all who would like to attend. Replies to setting up a 'Good Neighbour' scheme were positive with 61% of the respondents willing to help. The project team found that several elderly parishioners of the village felt that they were too old for their answers to be of relevance - this from the very section that was targeting them. Five per cent of those who replied would welcome assistance with gardening and house maintenance, with others needing help to get to healthcare facilities and with shopping.

The village is seen as easy to move about in. However, there are problem areas. Fourteen per cent of the respondents identified problems in crossing the road, with the majority of these being the Main Road in the vicinity of Williams Garage. Lack of maintenance and obstructions to pavements were also a cause for concern, mainly

noting intrusive undergrowth and overhanging brambles restricting the width of the pavements. Cyclists using the pavements, since the traffic calming scheme is perceived as dangerous, were also a problem, as are cars parking on the pavements in Cranbourne Drive and Cranbury Close due to lack of off street parking.

Looking Forward:

In the near future, Otterbourne should aim to introduce an annual event, including music, crafts and activities to appeal to all generations within the village. This year the Parish Church will be organising a small scale village event in mid-September as a precursor to the proposed annual event.

The responses indicated that the current recycling service is well received and should be increased in frequency to meet the increasing demands of the village and help the county meet recycling targets set by the government.

The youth surveyed also indicated the desire for a youth club. Further research needs to be done to establish the viability of establishing a village youth club. It should also identify the age groups that would be interested and the type of activities that could be offered.

The responses indicate a desire for coffee/tea and/or lunch clubs. In order to ensure sustainability it is relevant that a venue and help be sought from an established set up.

There is a clear indication that villagers would be willing to help with a good neighbour scheme. This will need researching in order to judge the implications both physically and financially.

The responses highlighted the need to clearing the undergrowth overhanging pavements and footways and more importantly the need for a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Williams' Garage.

5.3 Education and Early Years

Otterbourne Church of England Primary School lies within the centre of the village and provides an essential community link. There are other educational facilities available within the village; these can be found in the village hall and range from toddler groups to various craft classes.

The perception of educational facilities within the village is very good. Otterbourne's school provides excellent education for the children and is seen to be a very important part of the community enabling families to mix and encouraging younger families to integrate into the village.

Responses also indicated the desire for additional facilities, with over a third saying that there was a need for a pre-school and a holiday play scheme. An after school club and adult education classes teaching computing and languages were among the favourites that villagers wished to see organised within the Parish.

Looking Forward:

Over the next 5 years the primary school would still be at the heart of the village continuing to provide an excellent standard of education to the village along with its service to the community. In parallel, time should see the establishment of the extra activities so desired. However, further surveys and village meetings will be needed to establish the detailed need and ongoing support for the services requested. Proper planning can then commence with interested parties as well as the Parish Council, the local authorities, and the Otterbourne Village Hall Committee who could provide many of the services and facilities.

5.4 Green Spaces and the Environment

Of the 315 responses to the Questionnaire, 304 had completed this section. The section was divided into three broad headings; Footpaths, Public Open Spaces and Favourite and Least Favourite Locations.

The current assets that the village has are as follows:

- **Public Footpath Network:**
The village is served by a network of 13 public footpaths, supplemented by a number of permissive paths, which are in the ownership of Southern Water. The Southern Water paths are mainly in the vicinity of the Recreation Ground. The path network tends to radiate westwards from the Itchen Navigation towpath. Public footpaths are way marked and are also shown on the local 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Map (Pathfinder 1264).
- **Recreation Ground:**
Otterbourne Parish Council leases 2 hectares of public open space from Southern Water, of which 1.8 hectares are devoted to 2 football pitches and a pavilion. Otterbourne Sports Club, under a licence granted by the Parish Council, administer these facilities. The remaining 0.2 hectares is devoted to a children's play area and general leisure space.
- **Southern Water Cricket Ground:**
Otterbourne Sports Club use this area (1.6 hectares) by agreement with Southern Water. It is not public open space.
- **Sponder's Mede Local Nature Reserve:**
0.2 hectares of public open space owned by Otterbourne Parish Council and located in the village next to Williams Garage. Maintained as a nature reserve by Otterbourne Conservation Group, the area supports a wide diversity of plants and animals, including a breeding colony of water vole, now becoming a rarity due to the depredations of escaped mink. The reserve includes a stretch of the Bourne Stream, a pond, grassland, several stands of trees and a small wet area. A public footpath and a permissive path for the use of the residents of Old Parsonage Court cross the reserve. Access to the public is limited to marked paths to protect the wildlife.

- Cranbourne Drive Green Area:
0.5 hectares of public open space is owned by Otterbourne Parish Council adjacent to Cranbourne Drive. One portion, to the west of Cranbourne Drive, is fenced and set aside for ad hoc ball games.
- Elderfield:
1.5 hectares of grassland is used by the village 'Top of the Hill Cricket' for junior cricket matches and training sessions by agreement with the owners, Langley House Trust. It is not public open space.
- Otterbourne Hill Common:
10.1 hectares of public open space which is partly owned by Chamberlayne Estates, partly by Southern Water and partly by Otterbourne Parish Council. Access is unrestricted but subject to the provisions of the various Commons Acts post 1896 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Use of the Common is regulated by Winchester City Council, which owns certain manorial rights. The area is a mixture of grassland and deciduous woodland.
- Otterbourne Park Wood:
23.9 hectares of ancient woodland which is owned and maintained by the Woodland Trust. While technically private land, access is unrestricted in accordance with the Trust's policy. There is, however, a small area on the southern edge of the wood that is not owned by the Trust and not therefore open to the public.

Sixty one per cent of the respondents said they used a public footpath at least once a month, whereas the figure for the use of open space was much higher at 96%. It was clear from the survey that more people use the open spaces for dog walking than use the public footpath network. Additionally there is considerable use of the Recreation Ground for playing and watching sport and for supervising small children in the play area. Of those who gave a reason for using either open space or footpaths, 43 stated dog walking, whereas 100 stated general recreation. Several comments indicated a concern that the existing open space should not be subject to any further encroachment for development.

There were a number of adverse comments on the maintenance of footpaths, some of which can equally apply to open spaces. Some footpaths are subject to seasonal flooding and overgrowth such as nettles and brambles, and it was felt that not enough is done to keep them in good order. The survey highlighted that there is not enough known about the extent of the public and permissive footpath network within Otterbourne and its environs.

The questionnaire endeavoured to establish what were the favourite and least favourite areas within the village.

Of the favourite areas identified, 32% were for the Itchen Navigation and its environs, followed by Otterbourne Park Wood and Otterbourne Hill Common (15% each), Oakwood Copse (9%), the Recreation Ground (9%) and St Matthew's Church (8%).

There were also several 'minority interest' areas, which came in at lower figures. This seems to reflect the use and indeed the need, for the preservation of the countryside and the recreational facilities in general.

The least favourite areas which respondents chose to identify were in the main predictable and are of ongoing concern within the village. The most prominent were: The Main Road through the village with its attendant noise and difficulty in crossing (25%), the new traffic calming scheme on Otterbourne Hill, seen as obtrusive and a waste of money (20%) and the intrusive noise from the M3 Motorway (18%). There were also a number of other 'least favourite' locations that reflected individual concerns or interests.

Looking forward:

Although it was clear from the survey that there is a general satisfaction in the level and availability of footpaths and greenspaces within the village and its surrounds, there is a strong view that Otterbourne has reached saturation point as far as development is concerned. Further housing, especially on 'greenfield' sites, should be strongly resisted. This is also reflected in the responses received on the 'Housing' section. There are also issues over the development of 'brownfield' sites, with many respondents deploring the planning permission granted in 2003 for development on the site of 'Brooklyn'. The development is seen by the village as being out of character and detrimental to the rural ambience of the village. Although not a green space issue, it does reflect an environmental issue and the concern that the village is in danger of losing its identity and becoming a rural suburb.

It was also made clear that more must be done to maintain the public footpath network. The maintenance of the public footpaths is the responsibility of the appropriate landowner, but there is much that can be done by the Parish Council to encourage good maintenance. Local volunteers can be used and the responses indicate that nearly 25% of the people were willing to help. The most common reference to poor maintenance related to the Itchen Navigation towpath. The ownership of the footpath is unclear, but the Environment Agency, as the body responsible for watercourses, is trying to obtain a lottery grant for a major refurbishment programme on the Itchen Navigation. The village should offer its full support on this.

Of note in the responses was that many lacked awareness of the local footpaths. This can be rectified by the production of a local footways map, which could be offered for sale and/or displayed on the village notice boards.

Traffic, also an issue, will be a difficult problem to resolve, as growth both in and around the village will bring further traffic. There is concern about the safety of pedestrians, especially the elderly crossing the road in the vicinity of 'Williams Garage' to get to the Post Office and village shop. The highways authorities have resisted requests for a pedestrian crossing as being too close to the Poles Lane roundabout. In view of the responses, this issue needs to be reopened and a solution reached. Also of concern is the M3 noise. The campaign to bring forward its resurfacing with a quieter surface needs to be vigorously pursued. Finally ongoing concerns about the high volumes of heavy goods vehicles including those travelling

through the village to the Project Integra recycling facility operated by Hampshire Waste Services off Poles Lane need to be addressed. Local representatives must continue to urge Hampshire Waste Services and the local authorities to take steps to ease the traffic and ultimately remove the operation from Otterbourne.

5.5 Healthcare

Although a village of approximately 1,500 inhabitants, Otterbourne has no healthcare facilities within its boundary. The majority of the residents have to travel between 2 and 4 miles to attend medical or dental practices. While most have access to their own car to attend surgery, the survey highlighted that there are people, especially the elderly, within the village who rely on public transport for this. It is a necessity, but the service is not always reliable. The village has a scheme in current operation whereby prescriptions are collected and delivered daily from Twyford Surgery. This, however, is purely a neighbourly arrangement co-ordinated by the Parish Council.

It is the wish of 50% of the respondents, that healthcare facilities are established within the village. This includes a doctor, dentist, pharmacy and ancillary facilities.

Looking Forward:

Healthcare facilities will take time to establish but need to be considered within the lifetime of this plan. The local health authority must be made aware of the results of this survey. Emphasis must also be placed on the fact that since the early 1980s, when the last request was made for healthcare facilities to be established within the village, the population of Otterbourne has doubled and the frequency and reliability of public transport has deteriorated.

5.6 Housing

There were 310 completed responses to the Housing section of the Questionnaire.

Otterbourne is a village of approximately 600 dwellings with varied building styles. These reflect the style of construction at different periods, with dwellings ranging from the early 17th Century to the present day. The majority of development, however, has taken place since 1950, with small estates such as Oakwood Avenue, Oakwood Close and Regents Close being built in the mid 1960's, with housing in Meadowcroft, Greenacres and Cranbourne Drive in the 1980's, along with the conversion of Oakwood House into flats and the construction of the adjacent block. The majority of construction in the latter period has been of executive style housing with little or no affordable housing and has been mainly at the lower end of the village either side of Main Road.

Based on the responses over 95% of the population of the village are "outsiders" who have moved into the village, the majority of whom stated that they came to the village for the attractiveness of the location or for a particular dwelling. As reflected in the growth of the village, over half the respondents have moved into the village within the last 15 years, with more than 50% of those having moved here within the last 5 years.

It was also noted from the responses that over 95% of the properties are owner occupied. Property within the village is generally expensive. This combined with little or no private or council rented property available has resulted in approximately one third of the respondents confirming that they knew of someone who wanted to live in the village, but was unable to.

Of the 310 responses, over three quarters of the households had carried out major improvements since moving in, with replacement windows, kitchens and bathrooms heading the list. A third of those had also installed energy saving features.

Clearly the main issue raised in the responses was that of development within the village. The majority felt that the village had grown to capacity and that further development would destroy what character was left and would only result in further traffic and drainage problems experienced through the village, particularly at the bottom of the hill. Typical of the comments was "If the village grows any more it won't be a village". On average, 74% of the responses were against any further development of any kind with one exception, 30% of respondents supported the development of affordable housing.

Looking Forward:

If further growth is imposed on the village, then it should reflect the desire to include the provision of affordable housing. However, the infrastructure to support further development needs to be upgraded first. As well as drainage this should include roads and pavements. Further construction should not be to the detriment of the green space and surrounding countryside, a fundamental part of the character of the village of Otterbourne. It should also be noted that the appraisal indicated that nearly every adult owned a car. Therefore, further development, should it occur, must include sufficient off-street parking.

5.7 Leisure

There were 259 responses to this section of the questionnaire.

Sporting activities occupy time for many villagers. The most popular activities are golf, football, keep-fit and swimming, but others participate in sports as diverse as running, sailing and cycling. Lobbying by young people has resulted in a request to install a skateboard facility in the recreation ground; responses to the 'Youth' section showed great interest in this.

The most popular hobby in the village is gardening, reflected in the many beautiful gardens we are able to enjoy. While many hobbies are home based, such as music, art and crafts, villagers also enjoy bowls, fishing and attending to their allotments.

Visiting the theatre and cinema feature high on villagers' leisure time. Otterbourne is fortunate to be situated between two cities with excellent cultural amenities: cinemas, theatres and concert halls. The responses also showed that villagers travel to more distant venues to attend concerts.

Sporting opportunities available in the village consist of football, cricket and golf, with various body sport activities being held in the Village Hall.

Although the Hall is the venue for many diverse activities and meetings, 23% of the respondents would support a village club in order to promote their hobby.

Otterbourne is fortunate to have such a first class venue that could support such activities. The hall's close proximity to the school would also make it a good venue for children's activities.

Otterbourne is well situated in relation to municipal sports centres. Sixty per cent of respondents participate in regular leisure pursuits outside of the village. However, 8% could not access these facilities easily due mainly to inadequate public transport.

The present local sporting and leisure facilities are well supported and the responses to the questionnaire show that there is demand for additional facilities. It is, therefore, important that due support and consideration should continue to be given by the Parish Council and the local planning authorities.

Looking forward:

It is important that hobbies and leisure pursuits that villagers would like to see are identified and promoted. Local interest groups then need to be established with a view to forming and initiating these clubs. Advice and guidance on likely sources of funding and their funding criteria will need to be sought.

5.8 Fear of Crime and Safety

There were 311 responses to this section. It solicited people's views on how safe they felt in their homes, on the streets and surrounds within Otterbourne, travelling on the buses, adequacy of street lighting and views on Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

In general, Otterbourne is seen as a safe place to live. Less than 2% of the respondents felt unsafe in their homes, the majority of these being people over 60 years of age, with approximately 93% feeling safe at all times.

A similar response was given when asked if people felt safe on the streets of Otterbourne during the day or night. Less than 3% of the respondents felt unsafe at any time with 79% of the people feeling safe at anytime. The balance, 18%, feel safe only during the day.

Again, when asked if there are places in Otterbourne that they avoid, less than 3% avoided places such as footpaths at anytime with 72% of the respondents feeling safe. Twenty-five percent of the respondents avoid certain parts of the village at night time. The major area for concern appears to be safety when travelling on buses, with approximately one third of those who use the buses feeling safe during the day but not at night.

In general, the majority of the respondents felt that street lighting within the village was adequate for the safety of the villagers. However, a number of concerns were raised over lighting in the more secluded areas of the village.

The majority of the respondents expressed interest in 'Neighbourhood Watch' schemes, with 35% already belonging to one.

There were a number of other areas of concern that covered the following:

- Unruly behaviour.
- Crime.
- Road traffic, particularly the number of heavy goods vehicle movements through the village.
- Late night fireworks.
- Door to door sales people.
- Elderfield, the charitable rehabilitation centre for ex-prisoners.

Although the number of people who raised the above as an issue was small, it clearly had an impact on their quality of life.

Looking forward:

Over the next 5 years there are a number of issues that need to be addressed.

- 1) The village itself has the ability to establish Neighbourhood Watch schemes.
- 2) The Parish Council or representative will need to discuss the concerns about safety on the buses with the local transport operators.
- 3) The Parish Council will need to review and raise, as appropriate with the owning bodies, the issues related to inadequate street lighting and traffic.
- 4) Although seen as providing a good service, the police will need to focus on crime and unruly behaviour problems to keep them to the present relatively low numbers.

5.9 Services, Business and the Economy

Otterbourne is neither a dormitory nor a retirement village as is often perceived. The responses show that 51% of people are in employment, with 17% in full-time education and 24% who are retired. Only 7% are in other categories, including housewives and househusbands. Significantly, 80% of households in employment have 2 or more people working.

Approximately 63% of people who reported the industry in which they worked are in the private sector with 37% working in the public sector.

The main occupational groups, constituting almost one half of the respondents giving this information, are retail [39], health [35], education [33] and manufacturing [30].

The next biggest categories are construction [21], financial services [17] and local government [17], constituting a further 20% of the total. Agriculture and horticulture, once significant, employ less than 2% of the respondents. Otterbourne has an urban focus, with a predominantly service-based income structure where unemployment is virtually non-existent.

The location of workplace was given by 337 people, with 17% working in Southampton, 15% in Winchester, 11% in Chandlers Ford, 9% in Otterbourne and Compton, and 7% in Eastleigh. The remaining 41% are widely distributed. Less than 5% work in London, less than 3% in Basingstoke with a similar number being based at the IBM Laboratory at Hursley. Only 2% work in Romsey. In total over 80% work within 10 miles of Otterbourne.

No information was gathered about personal incomes.

Enquiries made additionally to the survey revealed that some 30 businesses operate from addresses in Otterbourne. There is only one shop, no business unit, no hotel and no identified guest house. Most of the businesses are very small in employment terms, including several that are single self employed persons. Only a few in the village are believed to employ 10 or more people; examples are Hampshire Waste Services (recycling and waste disposal), Williams Garage (Spar/Post Office/filling station and related businesses), Brendoncare (residential care home), Southern Water and the Audit Commission.

Respondents reacted conservatively to 8 suggested possible developments. As one respondent put it 'Otterbourne is a village and it should stay that way'. Over 80% responded 'Definitely not' to the suggestions of small industrial units, large business, camping sites or caravans, whilst 64% said the same to tourism related development and 55% to small business development. Only two proposals gained any measure of support, with 48% in favour of local shops and 26% favouring bed and breakfast accommodation, guest house or an hotel.

It can therefore be seen that Otterbourne residents thrive by exporting their services, largely locally, or by receiving pensions and investment income. On the other hand little expenditure is made in the village with residents importing goods and services by purchase from elsewhere. This is made easy by the proximity of well-serviced urban areas close by, although, as will be seen later, Otterbourne is dependent on good roads and public transport to facilitate this.

Looking forward:

In summary, Otterbourne offers a congenial living space within easy reach of employment opportunities in growth sectors of the economy. This is its present and likely continuing role.

There is no strong demand from respondents for change to the elements of the situation, while there is some willingness to see small business development. New businesses dependent upon local trade need sufficient potential market to prosper, and be strong enough to compete against well-serviced opposition in

Chandlers Ford and other neighbouring places. An alternative approach might be increasing mobile shopping facilities operated by large store groups.

Otterbourne may benefit by some economic development consistent with the development of the area within, but also beyond, the village boundary. It will benefit in the long-run from the creation of projects that, like the school and village hall, serve an immediate local need but also reach out to provide service for other proximate communities.

5.10 Spiritual Welfare

The response to this section of the survey was good with approximately 22% of the respondents completing it. In recognition of a changing Britain, the survey aimed to be inclusive to all faiths and to assess the profile and depth of spirituality within Otterbourne.

Summarising the findings. For villagers with a faith, the faith is almost exclusively Christian with only a few people speaking of 'Spirituality' in a way that suggested other beliefs. In each of these cases, the respondent did not identify any other religion that could facilitate activity at a community level. Equally, there was a large number of responses, approximately 80%, where faith was either a non-issue or where a slightly negative view was held.

While St Matthew's, the local 'C of E' church, was cited as a place of worship for some villagers, a significant number of others travelled to Winchester or Chandlers Ford to follow other threads of the Christian Faith. In addition, the survey revealed that there are at least three Christian groups that meet in people's homes on a regular basis, which have no connection with St Matthew's Church.

Outside of regular worship, many of the villagers still hold regard for church centric events such as births, deaths and marriages. Significantly, the link between St Matthew's and the local primary school was seen in a positive manner. There was also a firm preference to see the local Priest-in-charge take an active pastoral and social role within the village irrespective of faith issues. This was tied in with the lament that the church was no longer seen at the centre of village life. It highlighted a community issue to be addressed.

Looking forward:

Over the next 5 years, the respondents expressed a desire to see the social and pastoral role of the church grow and move to a more central role within village life, but the 'church' itself does need to address its own identity within Otterbourne. In keeping with this aim, villagers would also like to see more use of the physical resources controlled by the church within the village. Over the next 5 years, the church in Otterbourne does have an opportunity to take a significant role in the revival of the 'community spirit' that the responses seem to indicate is desired and which needs a focal point.

From an activity perspective, it is the consultation framework at several levels that needs to be established at this stage. The Christian community within the village needs to identify itself as 'The Church' under the representation of the local Priest-in-charge. Consultations as a community will be the seed bed for ideas that should restore the feeling of community and the spirituality which many see as important. The church should be open to fresh initiatives from the community in respect to the use of church buildings, grounds and resources. The Priest-in-charge must be included in any initiative by the parish council or local statutory bodies that may have social or community implications for Otterbourne. Efforts should also be made in all areas of the community to increase the engagement between the church and daily village life, particularly with youth members of the community, where the gap appears widest. Quick wins can be achieved by improving communications between local government, the church and the community at large. In particular, the survey highlighted that the role and format of the Parish Magazine should be reviewed.

5.11 Roads and Pathways

The roads section is split into three subsections:

1. The M3 and its effects on the local population.
2. Through roads; those which provide access to Otterbourne from the surrounding areas. They are; Main Road, Poles Lane, Kiln Lane and Boyatt Lane.
3. Residential Roads; those which give access to people's homes. Obviously there are homes on the through roads and the comments that were made on residential roads apply equally to the various through roads.

5.11.1 The M3

Over 90% of the respondents identified the noise from the M3 as having a detrimental impact on the quality of their life. Almost 40% identified it as a problem ranging from noticeable indoors to intolerable, with over 50% identifying it as a problem outdoors. It is a problem that is constant. Outdoors, virtually anywhere in the village, the noise of traffic on the M3 is a constant factor destroying the otherwise potentially tranquil setting that one would expect of a village such as Otterbourne.

Dust and pollution from the M3 were cited as a problem by 22% of the respondents. This is much more difficult than noise to identify as a problem, although the implications may be far greater. There does need to be a base on which comparisons can be made. However, some people have clearly identified excess dust by comparison with other places they have lived. As an example, one comment stated that the amount of dust deposited was 'much worse' than at their previous home in London.

5.11.2 Through Roads

The opening of the Chandlers Ford bypass, now the M3, some 30 years ago removed a significant amount of through traffic from the village roads. This particularly benefited Poles Lane, especially in the summer months, as well as Main Road. At approximately the same time the waste disposal/incinerator plant in Poles Lane opened bringing with it a noticeable increase in commercial traffic. Apart from the general growth in traffic volumes there have been no major changes over the last 30 years. There has, however, been a steady degradation in the quality of the roads, particularly their surfaces due to their frequent use by heavy vehicles and inadequate maintenance.

Poles Lane:

No particular additional problems were identified on the road with only 6% seeing the road as dangerous mainly because of its ability to cope with the volume and size of heavy vehicles using the road.

Kiln Lane:

The road is extremely narrow and potentially dangerous, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists: There are no pavements and two cars and a pedestrian cannot pass; one vehicle must stop. Traffic is often very heavy, particularly at peak periods. Vegetation and debris at the side of the road is encroaching onto the road surface and is reducing the width by up to 0.5m on either side. Hedgerows also grow out over the road, obscuring general vision and road signs when driving. Ten per cent of the respondents identified Kiln Lane as a major danger spot.

Boyatt Lane:

No particular problems were identified, apart from the narrowness of the road by the 'Otter' public house and the turn into Main Road.

Main Road:

The responses indicate that the current state of Main Road, especially Otterbourne Hill, is unacceptable and that the road is now perceived to be more dangerous than it was before the traffic calming measures were installed. The responses also indicate a perception that the authorities responsible ignored the views expressed by the village although extensive consultation did, in fact, take place. Only 1% of the respondents said that the measures had led to an improvement whereas 38% identified Otterbourne Hill as now being a major danger spot (*It should be noted that Otterbourne Hill has been resurfaced since the questionnaire was returned*). Additionally 15% of respondents identified the section of road near Williams' Garage as a **major** danger spot, especially to pedestrians.

Overall, approximately 8% of the respondents felt the through roads were unsuitable for cars, 12% for pedestrians and 20% for cyclists, but 55% of the respondents felt the through roads were unsuitable for commercial and service vehicles.

5.11.3 Residential Roads

The condition of these roads appears to be significantly better than the through roads, although they could be improved. The concern is lack of maintenance, especially the road surface. A basic level of maintenance is undertaken by the local authorities with occasional grass cutting and road sweeping, but it would appear that much of the maintenance to the verges and hedgerows is done by villagers themselves.

The general consensus on the suitability of residential roads for their intended purpose is similar to the views expressed on through roads. Six per cent of respondents felt that they are unsuitable for cars, 15% for pedestrians, 22% for cyclists and 53% for commercial and service vehicles.

Looking Forward:

The results of the questionnaire revealed that the majority of the households have their own private transport, deemed essential as public transport is both unreliable and expensive, to meet the basic needs of travel associated with work, shopping and leisure. Furthermore, the majority of the issues raised in the responses were directly or indirectly related to the poor quality of the roads through and within the village and the inadequate public transport links in the local area. This is reflected in a desire to have local services such as a doctor's or dental surgery within the village. This is especially true for those who depend on public transport; the young, the elderly, the infirm and those who are unable to afford their own transport.

What is required is a strategic policy commitment from the local government bodies and transport operators to address the issue of public transport in the area. In parallel there are a number of viable improvements that can be made to the roads in Otterbourne, all of which could be achieved within the life of this plan.

1. The through roads in Otterbourne provide significant access between the various local communities and carry a heavy amount of traffic. Given current trends, the traffic load will only increase, placing additional burden on roads that are currently inadequate for the present day needs. Two solutions are offered: first, divert the traffic around the village creating an 'access only' community, or second, significantly upgrade the existing roads and infrastructure to carry the additional load. This must form part of a local authority policy review.
2. Improve Kiln Lane. The roadway needs to be widened and a pedestrian footpath created. The hedgerows also need to be regularly maintained to stop their overgrowth of the road in order to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety. The road could be widened by removing the debris and weeds that have encroached onto the road over time. A gain of 1m to 2m could be made. In many places the distance between the edge of the road and the legal boundary is a minimum of 1.5m. This would provide sufficient space for a pathway or even a cycle path and would also make a significant improvement to safety

3. In many places, especially on Main Road, accumulated soil, rubbish and weeds encroach on the pavements reducing the space available for pedestrians as well as making the village look untidy and uncared for. A planned maintenance schedule, potentially with village involvement, needs developing and implementing. This would make a significant difference to the village.
4. The crossing point at Williams' Garage (Workshop, Filling Station, Post Office and Shop) is seen as dangerous. Additionally, the granting of planning permission for a development of 14 apartments and houses virtually opposite the garage will only aggravate the problem. Respondents expressed the desire to have a pedestrian crossing there as well as consideration being given to some road widening to improve access to the garage.
5. The noise from the M3 is a significant problem to the village and the M3 resurfacing appeal group should be encouraged to push for an early resurfacing of the motorway.

5.12 Transportation

Otterbourne is currently provided with a public bus service to Winchester, Southampton, Chandlers Ford and Eastleigh. These also connect with the railway stations in these areas. The main road through the village, which was the A33 trunk road, is the only viable diversion route if the M3, which runs parallel to Otterbourne, is closed or blocked between Chandlers Ford and Winchester. There are significant employers in the area, **IBM** and Southern Water to name two, many of whose employees drive through the village on their way to and from work.

The responses showed that 92% of the adults living in Otterbourne have access to their own transport: 622 adults with **575** cars. The majority of people within the village do not use public transport on a regular basis. **Of** the 186 respondents who said they used the service **85** found no difficulties, with the remainder experiencing occasional problems, although the analysis did show that those who used public transport found particular services inadequate with peak hour services often being full.

Those using their own transport are generally dissatisfied with the condition and safety of the roads, and in particular the traffic calming scheme that is almost universally seen as a hazard. This is addressed more fully in the 'Roads and Pathways' section.

Accepting that there will be some population growth and further development within the village and in the surrounding areas means that there will be a proportional increase in the numbers of private vehicles. The through roads are barely adequate for the existing traffic and are perceived to be hazardous due to the heavy transport. Any growth will only exacerbate the current problems unless the village is prepared to trade off some village aspects for transport improvement and unless there is a better than proportional improvement in public services.

Looking forward:

A number of actions need to be taken. Contact needs to be made with the bus companies so that we can share the detailed results of the survey with them with the aim of getting them to review their services in light of the comments of the villagers. In the longer term the village should examine with the bus companies further developments to their service that will encourage greater usage of the local public transport network in place of the private car for some journeys. Contact also needs to be made with the local authority to discuss the thorny issue of the Traffic Calming scheme with the aim of removing the perceived safety hazard that scheme has now created.

5.13 Youth

The results of the survey revealed that out of 825 people covered in the responses, 203 were aged 18 or under; approximately 25%. Thirty-eight were aged under 5, 66 aged 5 to 11 and 99 aged 12 to 18.

The general consensus of the Youth group is that the facilities for their use within Otterbourne, at present, are either poor or average, and that they would like access to new facilities. More importantly, they said that they would use them.

Currently, the only outdoor facility available to the youth of Otterbourne is a children's play area, sited within the Recreation Ground. This, however, is designed for young children only, although it is used by older youth as a meeting place at night, much to the concern of local residents and parents. The youth have provided themselves with an unofficial mountain bike track within the woods on Otterbourne Hill, but this attracts youths from other areas, notably Eastleigh.

The village does have a Brownie pack and a Scout Group, although technically this Group is within Eastleigh. There is also the 'Top of the Hill' cricket club that is dedicated to developing an interest in the sport for boys and girls up to the age of 11. This is very popular, although many members are from outside the village.

Generally, membership of clubs and groups is low among young people. However, the survey revealed that a number of young people, in all age groups, expressed interest in joining a Youth Club within the village. The numbers interested across the age groups would make this a viable proposition and allow for continuity. The result was surprising, as the village used to support a Youth Club, but this has not met for many years through what was seen as decline in numbers of children of a suitable age and a general wane in interest.

When asked what new facilities they would like to see, a skateboard park or tennis court seemed to be top of the wish list for the youth of Otterbourne. The latter was further refined to a combined tennis and basket ball court. They also suggested that 'grind rails' be provided for the skate boarders of the village. It is believed that it will be used by the village youth, but not attract outsiders.

An area of concern raised by a large number within the Youth section was the need for improvements in the local bus service. They, along with the elderly, represent the largest user group within the village. Improvements suggested were additional services at the start and end of school and college times, lower fares and more customer friendly.

It was also interesting to note that nearly 50% of the youth who responded believed that they should have a voice or a representative on Otterbourne Parish Council.

Looking forward:

Through the next 5 years, youth have raised a number of points that the village should be able to address:

- The Parish Council, together with the local Police Officer, is looking at the viability of a shelter and sports court to be added to the Recreation Ground that, if prudently chosen, will allow for use by all ages. This would require the involvement of other agencies for grants and planning permissions, but should be a realistic proposal to fulfil within 5 years.
- The Youth Club is a realistic proposition for the village providing a suitable venue and more importantly, a suitable leader with the relevant experience and desire can be found. Before this can commence, further work will need to be done to gauge the true desire for a club and to determine its usage.
- The issues on public transport will require discussion with the relevant providers and Hampshire County Council to assess the viability of additional services. The issues of lower fares and friendlier staff will also need to be taken up.
- Finally, the desire for the youth to have a voice or representative on the Parish Council is an interesting concept that needs pursuing. Potentially it would put the village at the forefront of local government and should provide Otterbourne with additional publicity that may draw in the investors to support other areas of need within the village.

CONCLUSION

When the parish first set out on their mission to produce a Parish Plan the unknown quantities were: Who would come forward to help and give support? What areas should be covered? How would the final document shape Otterbourne in the future?

The inaugural meeting brought an enthusiastic response from individuals and representatives from village organisations; the result some forty parishioners signed up to help and most of this original number still give both time and effort to the project.

At the end of the exercise the project has brought people, views and ideas together from all corners of Otterbourne. The aim to encourage villagers to work together for the good of the village, establishing links with other agencies and highlighting where villagers could help themselves, the project team feel has been achieved.

It is the Parish Plan project team's hope that in five years' time another team will review and make a Parish Plan for the village and by doing so ensure the life of the village of Otterbourne. The thanks of the Parish of Otterbourne are extended to: Countryside Agency, Otterbourne Parish Council and Hampshire County Council for funding and support;

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