

Weston under Wetherley

Parish Plan, May 2013



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This Plan was produced through a Community Effort by the residents of Weston under Wetherley, facilitated by a Steering Committee:

Stephen Evans, Chairman
Peter Haine, Secretary
Mike Fairbotham, Treasurer
Rob Atkinson
Sue Chambers
Sue Foster
Chris Garden
Sue Garden
Tracy McCallan
Paddy Taylor
Nick Wylie

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Our thanks are also due to Rita Holland for some historical information, and to many villagers for permission to publish their photographs and, not least, for their enthusiastic input and ideas.

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1. A Brief History

Weston under Wetherley lies 3.5 miles to the North East of Leamington Spa - between two river valleys, the northern part extending over the watershed into the River Avon and, just to the south, runs the River Leam. In days gone past, Weston Mill stood on this river

seen here in this pencil sketch by Richard Gibbs Henry Toovey in 1881.



Sadly this building is now demolished, but in its time it represented a key element in what historically was a farming community, centred around the church of St Michael. Built of red sandstone, the church dates back to the 12th century, and has been rebuilt and added to over the centuries. Of simple, yet pleasing style, it is included in the list of buildings of historic and architectural interest in Warwickshire.

Building on its agricultural heritage, Weston was chosen in 1856 as the site for the Warwickshire Reformatory School for boys - the history of which was recounted in 1964 by a one time resident of the village, Derek Smith (now deceased). He

wrote in his degree dissertation of the actions of Lord Leigh, and notably Lord Palmerston, in Parliament in the 1850's to bring about changes in the treatment of young offenders. Their 'Young Offenders Act' of 1854 aimed to replace deterrence and retribution (largely through prison sentences) with reformation and restoration to a useful place in society.

Having significant land holdings in the village, Lord Leigh envisaged a school where practical agricultural and horticultural skills would be imparted to inmates, as well as shoemaking, carpentry and metalwork. He and Lady Leigh donated 982 guineas and 30 acres of his land - along with 51 guineas per year for maintenance, and this enabled The Weston Reformatory School to be built. At its height, it housed 80 inmates who 'did their time' of up to five years before being placed back in society. In fact many were employed on the local farms or joined the Armed Services. It is said that in 1857, boys trained in carpentry put a completely new roof on the Grade 1 listed St Michael's Church. The Reformatory School closed in 1928, and in 1929 it was purchased by the Warwickshire Health Authority who converted it into a hospital for non-violent, mentally retarded patients. The church still receives visits from ex-inmates of the School (from as far away as Australia,) and the war records show that many reformed young men from the school gave their lives for our country.

The significance of the hospital building, and its re-developed Old Courtyard (now the site of what has come to be known as Wetherley Rise) must not be under-estimated, having provided employment for many in the locality both when it was a school and then as a hospital. Now, many of the residents there and elsewhere in the village commute much greater distances to find employment.

2. BACKGROUND AND DETAILS OF THE STEPS INVOLVED IN CREATING THE PLAN

In the spring of 2012, a small group of villagers in Weston came together and made a proposal to the Parish Council that a community planning effort should be undertaken to determine the ambitions and aspirations of the residents for the future of their village. This would identify the things that mattered to people in the community, and seek to improve them in ways that would match their ambitions to whatever extent was possible. Part of the motivation was the Localism Bill that was given Royal Assent having in November, 2011. The main thrust of this was to shift power and responsibility for local affairs from Whitehall to local public servants, and from bureaucrats to communities and individuals. The bill removes the barriers that previously existed to enable local councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups to get things done for themselves.

Parish Plans are a key mechanism for gaining an insight into the needs and desires of the local community. In fact the concept of Parish Plans pre-dates the Localism Act by almost ten years, first being introduced in the previous government's Rural White Paper in 2000. Its aim was "to sustain and enhance the environment, economy and social fabric of the English Countryside for the benefit of all". It was a clear, and some would say, bold statement of what the government wanted for the countryside at large. However, the White Paper proposed few changes to the structure and mechanism of government that would enable communities within the countryside to become the masters of their own destiny in achieving that aim. So, whilst communities were encouraged to create Parish Plans - bringing about any significant change to their social, environmental or economic circumstances was still subject to the enormous burden of national, regional and even district level rules and regulations. The Localism Act was designed to change that.

The Parish Council responded to our proposal with little enthusiasm. Two factors, however, led us to believe we should proceed:

1. Advice we were given by the Warwickshire Rural Community Council that Parish Plans are seen by local communities as delivering significant value;
2. The clear message from the Warwick District Council that Weston, not being a potential development area for the foreseeable future, would be unlikely to consider participating in a broader, neighbourhood-based plan, also proposed by the Localism Act.

On this basis we convened the **Weston under Wetherley Parish Plan Steering Committee**, and set about researching how the Parish Plan should be constructed, and how it could be funded. We were fortunate in obtaining a grant from the Warwick Rural East Community Forum for the task. Though the Steering Committee coordinated the planning effort, much of the process was community led. The Steering Committee acknowledges their help, and pays tribute to the tremendous

enthusiasm shown by many people in every part of the village in contributing their ideas. At the survey stage, 140 questionnaires were delivered of which 106 were completed and returned. This represented a 76.4% response rate, which is almost unheard of in this kind of exercise. It was very clear that villagers felt the need to express their views on how the village could be improved, although it was, at the same time, noticeable that most were already very happy living in our community.

Steps in Preparing the Plan

i) Our first goal was to engage the interest of our residents in a Parish Plan, exercise, and having them guide us as to its scope. With this in mind we held a public meeting on July 14th, 2012 where Sarah Brooke-Taylor from the Warwickshire Rural Community Council outlined the typical steps in creating a Parish Plan and the benefits other villages had gained from doing so.



We then set about capturing, from the 50+ residents who had come to the meeting, what they believed the priorities should be. These covered a wide range of topics from issues around road safety, footpaths and the environment, to sports and social activities, public transport and other local services, and communications.

They told us, by posting their ideas on the wall, by discussing their issues and, in the case of some of our younger members, by drawing pictures of their hopes for the village!



We gathered some 130 ideas through this process.

ii) Based on the input from these residents we created a survey questionnaire, and had 8 volunteers 'test-drive' it. Their responses enabled us to refine the survey and we delivered it to every household, with a view to getting input from as many villagers as possible. The questionnaire covered the major issues raised at the public meeting, had a special section for younger members of the community to give their views, and gave an opportunity for additional matters to be raised.

iii) Out of the 140 questionnaires that were delivered, we had 106 returned - a higher rate of return than we had considered possible! Residents gave us very detailed input and set us quite a challenge in analysing all the data to reach some conclusions.

iv) To verify that we were on the right track, we held a second public meeting on April 2nd, 2013 and were rewarded by an even better attendance than at the first public meeting. We presented our findings, and received significant endorsement for them, as well as some additional insights that we have been able to carry take into account in this report.

v) The report now contains the findings based on community inputs, and a set of recommendations for action. Some of these are underway, and you will read about the early steps in the relevant section of the report. Others will require help from our Parish Council, as well as from other agencies and Service Providers. The report will be delivered to, and we will engage with everyone, who may be able to play a part in putting the recommendations into action.

vi) The story doesn't end here – this is a living document and it will be kept under review as the needs of the community changes and develops, and revised proposals brought forward for discussion and agreement.

3. A Summary of the Plan

This plan was the brainchild of a group of villagers in Weston under Wetherley who felt strongly that the local community lacked a voice. So we gave them one - we asked them what improvements they would like to see in our village. And, happily, they answered in their droves! 106 out of the 140 homes took the trouble to respond in detail to our survey questionnaire, and our public meetings were packed!

With the help of the Warwickshire Rural Community Council, and financial assistance from the Warwick Rural East Community Forum, we have developed this plan. We believe it represents the wishes of all our residents, covering the following main areas:

ENVIRONMENT: how we should maintain the village in a way that gives overall pleasure and convenience to the many groups of people who live in, and visit, our village.

HOUSING: ensuring that our modest housing needs are met without undue development, and in keeping with the greater housing needs and policy of Warwick District Council.

TRANSPORT AND SAFETY: an issue of perennial concern that has already resulted in some improvements, but with key actions still requested.

SPORTS AND LEISURE: an area that yielded many great ideas and enthusiasm for improvements to sports facilities, entertainments and events that will bring benefits to all.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: Surprisingly few suggestions for additional services, but a plea to provide better information for residents about available services and how to access them.

COMMUNICATIONS: residents considered themselves generally well informed but asked for improved communication from the Parish Council, and that the village gains a presence on the World Wide Web.

IDEAS INTO ACTION

Now it is time for the plan to become a reality, and already we have teams working on a village website, on improving and enhancing the footpath network, on practical ways of enhancing sports facilities, and on achieving the right balance between safety, tidiness and sustaining the biodiversity of our rural landscape. There is much else to be done. It will take time, needs funding, and relies on the continued enthusiasm and interest of many parties both within and outside of our village.

This plan is for everyone who has already been involved has an interest in the aspirations of the villagers, and who may be able to help us achieve our ambitions in the years to come.

Thank you for your interest to date, and please continue to help us in the future.

4. The Parish Plan

We now present the plan – covering each of the main areas. For each we document:

- an appraisal of how things are today, and the particular issues raised by respondents
- the possible improvements that were proposed and the level of support given for them
- other suggested improvements proposed
- the priority attached to them in the overall scheme of things
- the actions proposed to bring about requested improvements that had greatest support

Some of the actions are ‘quick wins’ and can be achieved with little effort or cost. You will see that some of these are already being worked on, and you will hear more about them in the months to come. Others will require help from external groups – whether that is the improvement of services currently provided by the District or County Council, or from other Agencies. Some will require external funding, as well as considerable effort by the community, if they are to be achieved.

4.1 Environment

It was clear from the initial community engagement event in July 2012 that the village environment is very important to residents. Residents really care about the village and value the rural location with access to the countryside, as borne out in the response to the questionnaire. Here are the responses to the main issues raised:

Village Approaches

We asked if residents felt that the approaches to the village are welcoming and whilst there was a fairly balanced response, there were lots of ideas about how the signage on the approaches could be improved through the use of flowers, planters, gates and walls.

Maintenance

We asked if residents felt that the village, its open spaces, pavements and footpaths are tidy and well maintained. A clear majority of respondents to the survey agreed that broadly, they are, though there were suggestions for improvement:

The most frequent comments were about the maintenance of the hedges, with many responses mentioning the need to cut overhanging branches/brambles to provide wider footpaths for pedestrians, pushchairs and dog walkers, particularly on Rugby Road close to the entrance to Sabin Drive, and towards The Bull Inn.

The frequency of grass cutting was identified as an issue with more regular cutting required in some areas such as the playing field. The mess caused by

grass cuttings (possibly as a result of the infrequency of cutting) was also highlighted.

Several suggested that the car park area opposite the church should be levelled and improved.

There was recognition that there had been big improvements by Warwick District Council maintenance in recent months.

The need for Grit Bins at the top of Sabin Drive was identified.

A few dog related comments were made including dog mess in the play area and footpaths and loose dogs in the play area.

Areas for Wildlife

Nearly a quarter of respondents agreed strongly that consideration should be given to managing areas of the village for wildlife, and there were lots of comments about possible improvements, the most frequent of which was that grass verges close to hedgerows should not be cut any closer to hedges than required. A number of comments suggested that it would be good to identify and designate specific areas for sowing wild flowers. No respondents disagreed.

Footpaths, Cycleways and Bridleways

A clear message about the need for more footpaths and some cycleways emerged from the survey. 61% were in favour of a footpath from Sabin Drive/Alderman Way to Hunningham Road. This was underlined with a number of comments identifying the Red Lion in Hunningham as a popular destination!

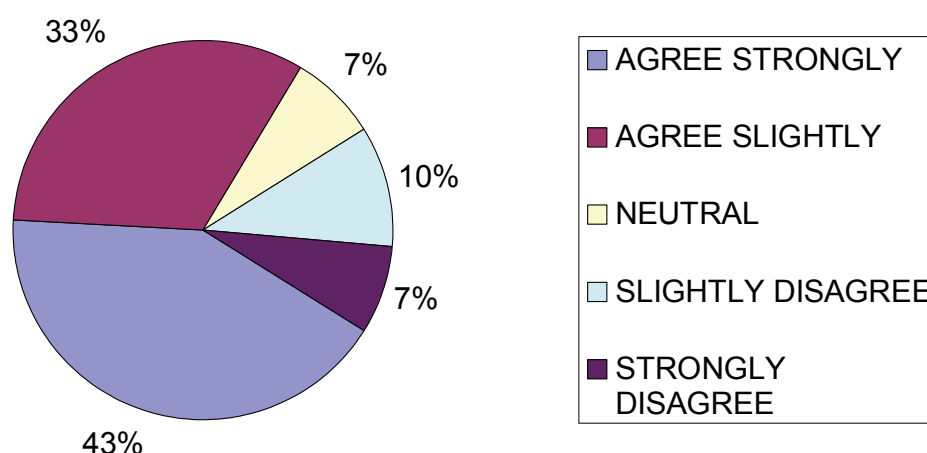
The poor condition of some footpaths across the fields was a matter of concern. There was also considerable demand for a footpath/cycleway from Weston to Cubbington/Leamington, with many suggesting that this would encourage cycling to school and/or work.

Also suggested was the need for pedestrian crossings across the Rugby Road at St Michael's Close (at the bus stop) and to Sabin Drive. One comment linked this need to the closure of the play area at St Michael's Close, as that meant that children from the Close had to cross Rugby Road to get to the play area at the village hall.

Recycling

We asked residents whether the current recycling/refuse collection services provided by Warwick District Council were meeting the majority of residents' needs.

Refuse / Recycling



Again there was a very clear message that the service is meeting the needs of residents. 80 respondents (75%) agreed with this view. 45 respondents (42%) strongly agreed with this view. That said, there were many ideas about how the services could be further improved:

Frequency of Collection - Several comments suggested weekly collection of both Grey and Green bins. For Green bins the suggestion was for either a weekly collection during the summer or that an additional bin be provided.

Care by Collectors – A number of comments suggested that the Collectors should take greater care with the Bins and Boxes, with many saying that boxes were damaged or not put back to where they were collected from. In addition there were a number of comments stating that there was more litter in the village since recycling started. Comments suggested that greater care should be taken by the Collectors.

Additional Wheelie Bin – A number of comments stated that they would prefer the red boxes to be replaced with an additional wheelie bin for all recyclable items as is the case in other Districts locally

Plastics and Tetra packs – Many comments suggest they want to recycle more plastics and tetra packs.

Other Environmental Concerns

Residents also took the opportunity to comment on other environmental concerns. Many of these relate to similar issues identified above and in other parts of the questionnaire. Three comments were made about the threat of HS2 and 'the destruction of Cubbington Wood'. A similar number of comments were made about the need for litter picking, especially after Green Bin day. There was also a group of comments about dogs: no dogs in the play area; dog mess on the footpaths and

requests for more bins for dog walkers. And comments about surface water flooding and road drainage at either end of the main road into the village.

Proposed Actions on Environment

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Improve pavements and their maintenance on Rugby Road	PARISH/DISTRICT COUNCIL	Immediate
Establish a Project Team tasked with finding ways to improve the network of footpaths in and around the village	PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP	Immediate
Parish and District Council to continue to improve the maintenance of hedges and verges for access and wildlife	PARISH COUNCIL/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS	ASAP
Parish Council to review provision of Grit Bins at key locations within the village	PARISH COUNCIL	Immediate
Establish a Community Gardening Project to plant wild flowers and create/improve wildlife habitats	PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP/PARISH COUNCIL	Immediate
Improve grass cutting regime for the play area	PARISH COUNCIL	Immediate
Arrange a Community Litter Picking event	PARISH COUNCIL	Continuous

4.2 Housing

Housing requirements and Planning Applications are often emotive subjects, bringing out strong feelings of protection or opposition. In the mid 1990s, when Weston Hospital was running down and then closed, the Hospital Board proposed a redevelopment of over 300 houses. This was strongly opposed by the District Council, our Parish Council and most residents. After due consideration a healthy compromise resulted in 68 new dwellings, now known as Wetherley Rise, being approved. This doubled the size of the village. We also achieved a new Village Hall and Playing Field on former hospital land. In seeking residents' views on further development in the village, we set out in the survey questionnaire Warwick District Council's current declared policy for Weston:

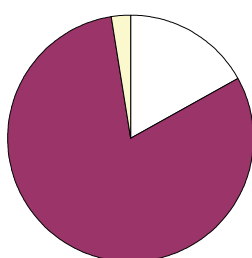
“Warwick District Council sees no additional land being allocated for development in and around the village. Such vacant land as we have has been designated either Green Belt or Public Open Space “

We asked residents to tell us whether they agreed or disagreed with this policy. Of the 153 responses to this fundamental question 119 (78%) strongly agreed and only 2 disagreed (1%).

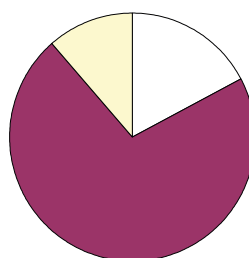
A number of residents strongly called for retention of the Green Belt and others questioned the viability of further development given the lack of public transport, village shop, etc. However there were a number of comments which indicated that some residents would be happy to see some limited infill with high quality houses, some affordable housing for young couples, and some sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Many made a plea for shop in the village!

We asked in the survey for residents’ views on the type of development which should be permitted and the results are shown in these charts:

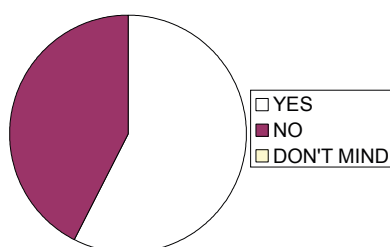
RENTED ACCOMODATION



SHELTERED HOUSING



SMALL SCALE INFILL



Actions on Housing

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
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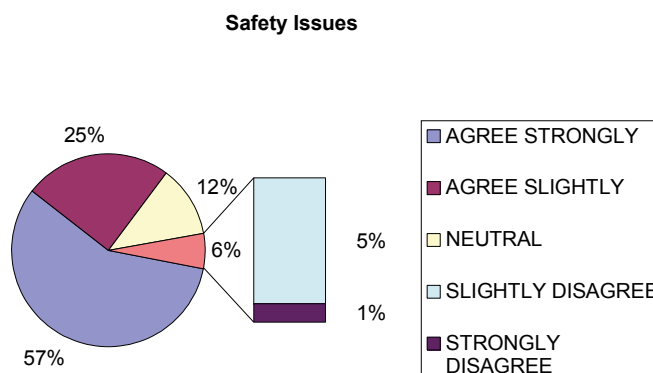
Communicate these views to Councillors and Planners involved in local housing policy	PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP	On publication of report
Keep specific housing needs under review	PARISH COUNCIL	Continuous

4.3 Transport and Safety

A glance at the map on the front cover of this document will confirm the extent to which the B4453 winds through our village, and this has given rise to an increasing number of road traffic accidents in recent years. The clear danger, despite the introduction of a 30mph speed limit, gave rise to a major section of the Parish Plan Questionnaire in which we sought residents' views on just how much of a risk they felt it presents, and what they thought about a variety of possible improvements that could be made to improve the safety of the road. Here is what respondents said in answer to the questions we posed.

We asked whether respondents agreed that there were safety issues:

Over 80% agreed that there are safety issues arising from traffic on the main, B4453, Rugby Road.



We suggested a number of safety improvements that might be considered to reduce the risks for residents and road users. As it happened, the Warwickshire County Highways team had secured a budget for a road improvement scheme coincident with our survey, so these results were submitted and used in finalising the scope of the scheme that has since been undergoing implementation.

Chicane/Pinch-point

This was one of the proposals in the County Highways draft plan. Almost 60% of our respondents were opposed to it. It was pointed out that in a farming community,

such obstructions seriously impede the harvest and transportation of farm products. Many felt that the proposed site of the chicane, on a straight stretch in the middle of the village, would only encourage 'boy racers' to try and beat opposing traffic through the chicane.

The level of opposition, and the cost of the proposed work, meant that this measure was dropped from the final plan. There was a similarly high level of opposition (62% were opposed) to Speed Humps through the village, and this ensured that these were not considered

Electric 'Actual Speed' Signs

This proposal received considerable endorsement, and was looked upon favourably by the County Highways Team. However, their advice was that a more effective measure is the use of flashing 'SLOW DOWN' signs on the approaches to dangerous bends. Hence, in the final plan for road improvements, it was proposed to place these signs at each end of the village, as long as suitable electrical supplies are available.

Improvements to Pavements

72% of respondents called for improvements to pavements that adjoined the B4453, and commented on the lack of pavements in some areas. Some areas of pavement (e.g. between Sabin Drive and The Bull Inn) are extremely narrow and are often overhung by hedgerows. There was a strong call for the pavements to be widened, and the hedgerow cut back to allow safe passage of prams and pushchairs and owners walking dogs, or accompanying young children.

Pedestrian Crossing

Over one third of respondents requested a Pedestrian Crossing that would enable them to cross the B4453 safely. It is recognised that this is an expensive item to install, but it would have the advantage that it is, in itself, a deterrent to speeding through the village. It would enable younger children to cross the road safely to catch the school bus, and to reach the play areas in Sabin Drive, as well as encourage the elderly to attend events in the village hall and on the playing field.

Improved Signage

The final suggestion was for improved road markings and signage. This was a focus of the County Highways proposals and widely supported by respondents to the survey, too.

Other Suggestions for Road Improvement

Many respondents suggested that much of the risk created by traffic using the roads in the village was due to careless and thoughtless drivers who seemed to have no respect for speed limits or other road users. It was felt that no amount of

warnings had much impact on such drivers. There was a strong call for increased Police monitoring and action against speeding and careless drivers

Other Safety Issues

It was very noticeable that few other concerns about the safety and security of living in the village were mentioned. A small minority called for increased police surveillance and a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, but the vast majority of respondents either didn't comment in this section, or said they felt generally safe and secure.

Actions on Transport and Safety

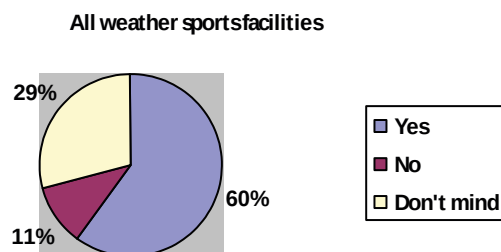
WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Negotiate with landowners and the District Council for hedgerows adjacent to pavements, and pavements themselves, to be managed for safe access and use	PARISH COUNCIL	Ongoing
Press for routine police action on speeding and dangerous driving through the village	PARISH COUNCIL/DISTRICT COUNCILLORS	ASAP
Lobby on behalf of villagers for a pedestrian crossing over the B4453	PARISH COUNCIL	Continuous

NB – See also proposed action regarding footpaths and cycleways in the Environment Section.

4.4 Sport and Leisure

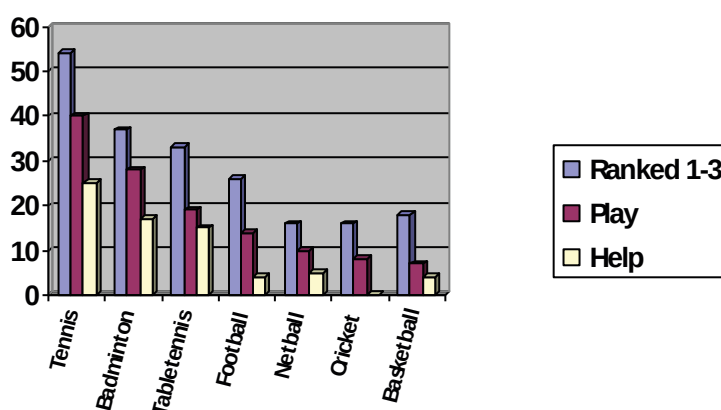
We sought residents' views on the type of sport, leisure and entertainment they would like to see in the village. In particular we were interested in any additional facilities that villagers might like to see in order to improve the range of activities available on the playing field and in the Village Hall, and also the level of interest amongst respondents in helping to organise different events. The overall aim was in enhancing a sense of community spirit in the village.

Respondents were asked to comment upon three issues. First, following the initial Public Meeting, we asked whether respondents supported the idea of all weather sports facilities on the playing field.



As this chart shows, around two thirds of respondents were interested in seeing an all-weather facility with only 11% of the 102 responses to this question against the idea.

Next we asked for views on the type of activity that villagers would be interested in, both as part of an all weather facility but also in the village hall. In their response we asked people to (1) rank order certain sports (2) indicate if they would like to play those sports and (3) indicate if they would be willing to help organise them.



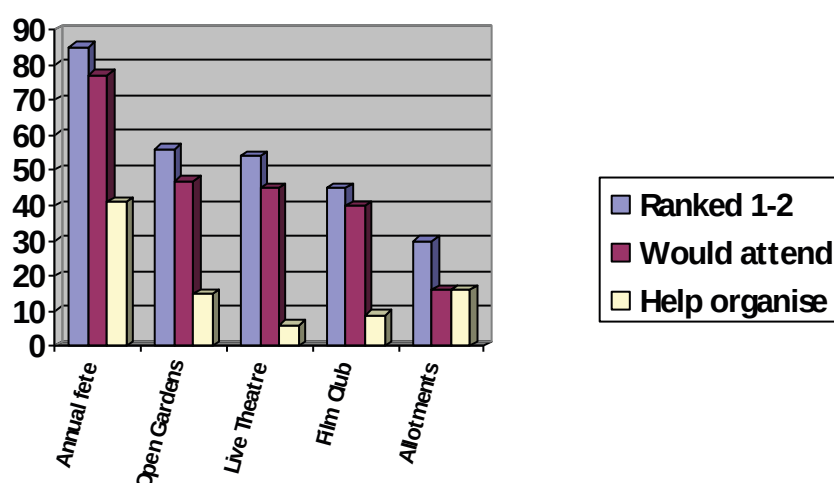
Tennis proved to be the most popular sport both in terms of those interested in playing (n54) and possibly helping to organise (n25). Other sports had lower response rates, but it was clear that an all weather facility could support a number of them.

We also asked what additional sports or facilities people would like to see in Weston. These ranged from archery and go-karting to a sports hall and swimming pool! The only additional sporting activity that attracted multiple adherents was for a skateboard ramp – there were 6 comments supporting this. A cycling club, fitness classes and some form of bowls or skittles also featured more than twice.

Entertainment and Community Events

In this section we tried to gauge the level of interest in different (non-sporting) community events and leisure activities. Again, drawing on comments made at the initial public meeting, five activities were proposed and respondents were asked to rank these from 1-3 (1=very interested, 2=some interest, 3= not interested), indicating if they would attend and also if they would help to organize.

These were the responses:



Once again there was widespread support across the village for more entertainment and community events. The idea of an Annual Fête was most popular with very strong support in all three areas – including over 40 people saying they would be willing to help organise this. Open gardens, live theatre and the Film Club all had between 40 and 47 villagers promising to attend with fairly high numbers also willing to become more involved.

We also asked for further suggestions and got a variety of responses including fireworks, rambling, a village choir, theatre group, summer clubs for the children and a quiz night. However, though none of these suggestions had a groundswell of support, the most popular were music groups and a community garden of some kind (although neither of these had the support of more than 10 respondents).

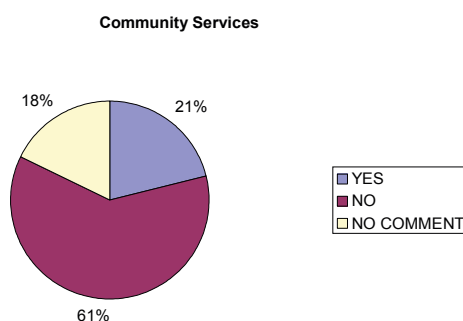
Actions on Sport and Leisure, Entertainment and Community Events

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Explore options/viability of an all-weather sporting facility	Sports sub-committee	Immediate
Progress idea of an annual fête, with an initial event in tandem with the NGS Open Gardens (June8/9, 2013)		
Establish standing committee to plan/organise future event		

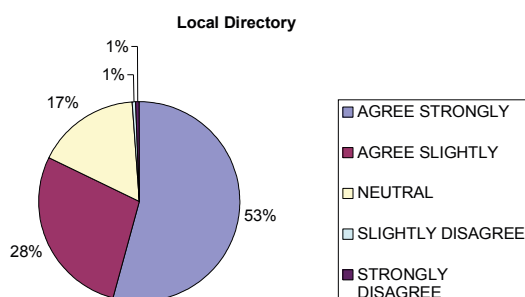
4.5 Community Services

This section explored residents views about the range and scope of services available in the village, and sought to identify additional services that might be supported.

We started by asking whether there were additional community services that should be provided in the village and only 21% replied in the affirmative.



Regarding specific services, a good percentage endorsed the idea of a Directory of local service providers being available to residents. There were calls for volunteers to offer help with simple tasks around the homes and gardens of residents who were not able to manage these for themselves.



A number of residents (particularly elderly) commented on the poor bus service that makes visits to the GP and other services very difficult for residents without their own transport. A surprising number seemed unaware of the Community Transport Scheme that is available for elderly residents of the community.

There were calls for a regular GP surgery to be held in the Village Hall if this were possible.

Actions on Community Services

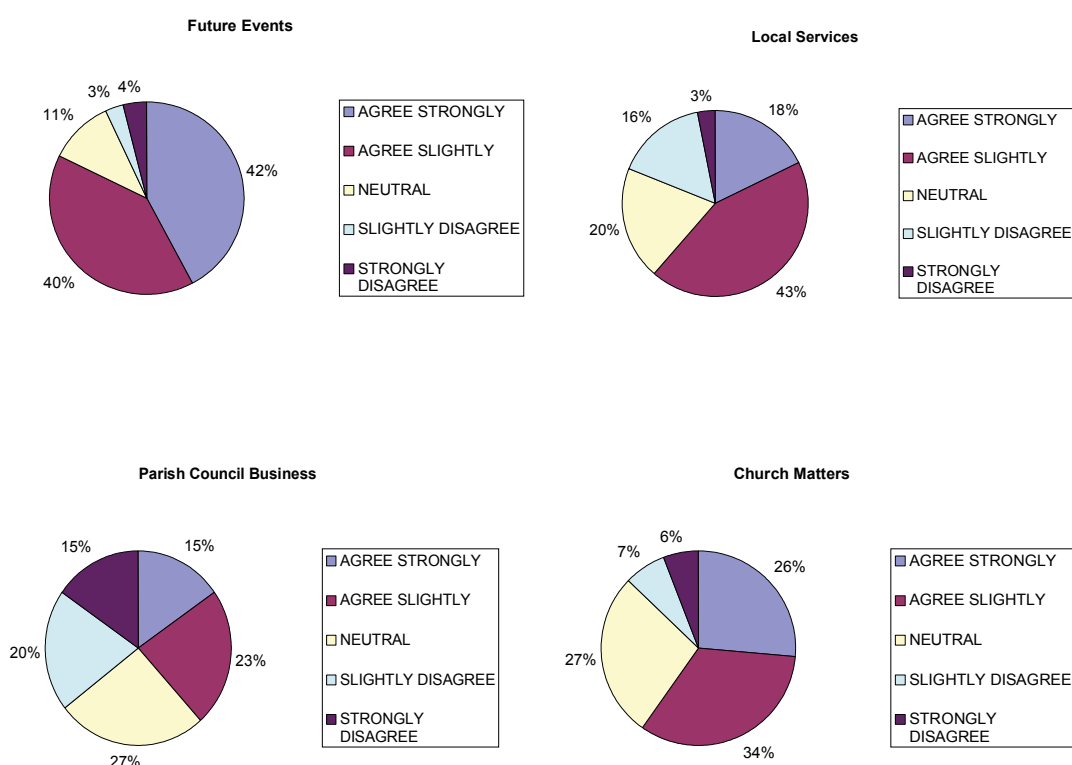
WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Directory of Local Services	Web site team	asap
Improve communication about Community Transport Scheme	Scheme administrators	Immediate
Explore feasibility of additional volunteer services for the elderly		

4.6 COMMUNICATIONS

We asked for views on how well informed residents felt about a number of aspects of village life. A majority of respondents believed they were kept adequately informed of future events, local services and church matters. However, there was less accord regarding the work of the Parish Council.

The following charts indicate how strongly people felt that they were adequately informed about each of the topics mentioned.

“I am well informed about”:



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Respondents were asked to give suggestions for how village communication might be improved, under the headings shown below:

a) Website

The majority of respondents (85%) told us they have access to the internet from home and that they would like Weston to have a village website.

Suggestions for content of that website included:

- routine posting of the minutes of Parish Council meetings

- an e-Bulletin board to post messages of general interest
- a text-alert service to inform villagers of upcoming events.

However, the point was also made that any village website would need to be kept current, if it was to be worthwhile and backed up by information on Notice Boards and the Newsletter

b) Notice Boards

The majority of respondents found the Village Notice Board to be a useful way of communicating. Suggestions for improvement included:

- the provision of a second board in St Michael's Close
- notice boards to be readable in the dark
- the facility for villagers to add notices themselves

c) Newsletter

The majority of respondents were in favour of keeping the current Newsletter, serving the four parishes, and spoke highly of it as a relevant and important communication tool.

Suggestions for improvement include:

- adding a letters page from readers
- expanding the content to include more topics specific to Weston, such as including a "FreeCycle"-style section, where villagers could advertise local produce and other items for exchange
- make the Weston content consistent with the style adopted for the website

d) Social Media

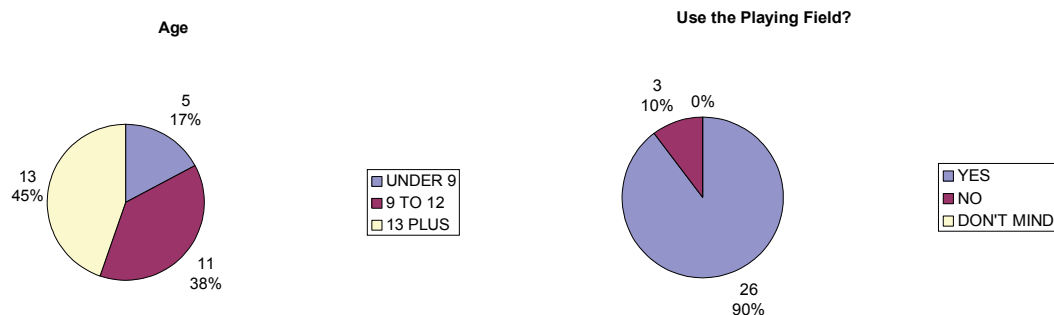
The responses for this were less positive with over 60% not supporting such tools as Twitter or Facebook as necessary channels of village communication.

Actions on Communications

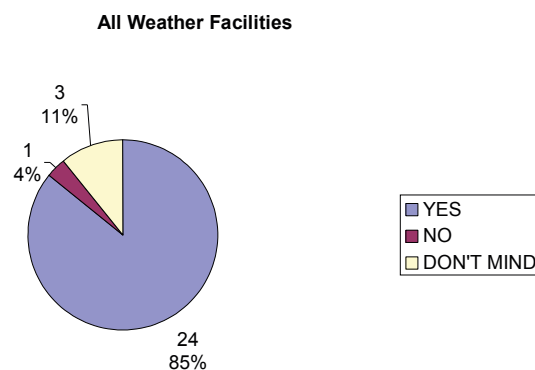
WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Implement a village website	Web site team	(Underway)
Consider suggested improvements to Newsletter	Editor	
Review Notice board Arrangements	Parish Council	

4.7 WHAT THE YOUNGER GENERATION THINK

The initial community engagement event in July 2012 was well attended by residents, but it was very noticeable that the younger generation of the village were under represented. The Parish Plan Steering Group took an early decision to address this and actively to seek the views of young people. A specific questionnaire was designed for this purpose and twenty-nine young people gave their views about how they would like the village to be improved, with the age distribution shown in the chart below



The playing field is clearly well used by young people. 90% of the young people that responded currently make use of the playing field, and the vast majority said that they would support the idea of all weather facilities.



We asked what sports and activities the young people would like an all-weather facility to cater for, and to rank their top three preferences. Responses indicated that Tennis (19) would be the most popular, followed by Netball (14) and Table Tennis (14). There was also good support for a Skateboard Ramp (13), Football (12), Badminton (10), and Cricket (8). There were several young people who indicated that they would be willing to help organise these activities, which is encouraging.

There were some suggestions by the young people about how the playing field could be improved to make facilities more attractive to them. These included better repair and maintenance of the goal and basket nets, a tarmac football pitch (perhaps this was suggesting an all-weather pitch?) and even a swimming pool in the summer!

There was a clear split in the opinion of young people about whether a Youth Group would be of interest. Of the 24 young people that responded 13 (54%) said that they would be interested in joining a youth group. Friday evenings after school was the preferred time if a youth group was to take place with 10 young people indicating this as their preference.

A number of suggestions were made about other things that young people would like to see. These included specific facilities, such as a village shop, a pool table/table football, a roundabout in the play area and a cycle path, as well as specific activities such as sport, fitness training, nature, arts, crafts, party, disco, dancing, and music groups. There was also general suggestion of village events.

Three separate comments were made by young people about dogs and, although this is a small number, it is perhaps worth noting as they are similar in nature. One suggestion was that there should be a 'fenced area for dog exercising', that 'the large children's play area should be fenced to stop dogs going on the woodchips' and that there should be 'a dogs only area – so they don't jump on us'.

Actions on what the younger generation think

WHAT	WHO	WHEN
Provision of an all weather sports facility		
Improve maintenance of play area and equipment.		
Involve young people in setting up village events		

5. IN CONCLUSION

What we have set out in this Parish Plan is the views of the village in April, 2013. But the world moves on, and new issues and concerns will come over the hill! HS2, surprisingly, wasn't mentioned as an issue by many residents, but is clearly seen across the wider community as a significant threat to our rural landscape. If it comes to pass, it will significantly impact our rural economy, damage our footpath network, and destroy significant wildlife habitats forever and cause massive inconvenience during its construction.

We are therefore glad that our County Council, and the Stop HS2 campaign group, are still fighting on our behalves to try to ensure that, if it comes to pass, damage is minimised and compensation is forthcoming. We, too, will look for opportunities to achieve benefits that may help mitigate the damage. The possibility of a cycleway from Weston to Cubbington is one such possibility that is actively being pursued.



We probably all wish we can continue to live amongst productive farmland, enjoy the bluebells in Cubbington Wood, and not say farewell to the famous, ancient Pear Tree!



Please look out for the launch of the village website and feed us your thoughts and ideas!

LIFE IN WESTON UNDER WETHERLEY



Lime Trees on Sabin Drive
Photo courtesy Jane Jones

BELOW: Springtime on Rugby Road



*Diamond
Jubilee
celebrations*

JUNE, 2012

