

LETCOMBE REGIS COMMUNITY LED PLAN



2016

A vision for the future

INTRODUCTION

Letcombe Regis is a beautiful downland village nestling at the foot of the Berkshire Downs in the valley of the Letcombe Brook. It was for many years a Royal Manor of the Kings of Wessex but was formally made a Regis in the reign of Richard II. The village has seen gradual expansion and development over the years but its demography has changed radically since the last Parish Plan was published in 2006. A major increase in population and age profile has resulted from the occupation of the Richmond Retirement Village since this was first opened in 2010. Furthermore, recent Government targets for the construction of new housing in Oxfordshire have resulted in the village being threatened by housing development schemes despite its location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and with a part of it being in a Conservation Area.

These factors led to Letcombe Regis Parish Council setting up a Parish Plan Steering Group to formulate a revised Parish Plan with a defined objective: *“To develop guidelines for the social and economic development of the village over the next 20 years, which are acceptable to, and agreed by the village community, taking into account District and County Council requirements”*.

The Steering Group was set up in 2013 and a number of villagers were involved including Murray Charlton (Chairman), Jeanne Lapsley (Chairman of the Parish Council), Ken Peach, Sophie Beauchamp, Sue Hannon, Derek Maurice, Diane Ockwell and Clive Philips.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

In March 2014 the Steering Group invited each household to contribute to a new Community Plan which will help to shape the future of the village. A general questionnaire was distributed to every dwelling asking if the household was prepared to participate in the Survey. Those who responded were asked to provide address details, number of persons living in the household and a breakdown into two age groups, under 18 years and 18 years and over. Detailed questionnaires were distributed and those households who did not initially respond were contacted and further questionnaires issued. An on-line facility was also offered for the subsequent questionnaires. The Steering Group was particularly keen to have the views of persons under 18 years and as a result they received separate Youth questionnaires. Great care was taken in the design of the questionnaires and the Steering Group wishes to acknowledge the advice received from the District and County Councils. Special thanks also go to the District Council for the collation of the Survey data at no cost to the village.

A draft version of the plan was presented to the Parish Council meeting on 16th March 2015 and all residents of Letcombe Regis were invited to a presentation of the plan on 18th May 2015. In addition, the draft plan was sent to the District and County Councils and ORCC for comment.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

The consultation process generated requests from 502 individuals representing 72% of the population, estimated to be approaching 700.

441 adult questionnaires were requested and 225 (51%) were returned.

61 youth questionnaires were requested and 32 (54%) were returned.

The overall response rate represents 37% of the village population. Responses were identified only by a random code number to ensure anonymity and data protection. Further details of the responses can be found on the village web site and are available in hard copy from the Parish Clerk upon request.

Of the 225 responses from adults:

6 were aged between 18 and 25 years of which 4 are male and 2 female

19 were aged between 26 and 45 years of which 9 are male and 10 female

71 were aged between 46 and 65 years of which 43 are male and 28 female

41 were aged between 65 and 74 years of which 21 are male and 20 female

88 were aged over 75 years of which 53 are male and 35 female.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM ADULT RESPONSES

The Survey dealt with a range of key areas which are summarised below. The totals recorded will vary according to the number of responses.

Population and Employment

Recognising that the composition of Letcombe Regis population has changed radically since the last Parish Plan was published, residents were asked why they chose Letcombe Regis as a place to live as this gives an indication of the appeal of the village and the factors which should be considered in its future development. In the 217 replies, the main reasons given were:

- 81 enjoyed village life
- 55 retired here
- 24 lived in the village for family reasons.

Significantly, for 98% of residents, Letcombe Regis is their main residence.

The Survey sought to identify how long residents had lived in Letcombe Regis. Of the 225 replies to this question, analysis showed that:

- 40 people had lived in the village for more than 20 years
- 62 people had lived in the village for between 5 years and 20 years
- 123 people had lived in the village for less than 5 years.

Of those surveyed, 72 were either employed or in full-time education and, of these, 23 people worked or studied from home; 53 people had to travel more than 5 miles to work, their main destinations were Abingdon, Oxford and London, followed by Harwell, Didcot and Swindon. The increase in the elderly population of the village has significantly altered the proportion of residents who are of working age or in full time education.

The high number of people moving into the village in the last 5 years is explained by the development and occupation of Richmond Retirement Village.

Housing and Development

Despite being designated as a 'smaller village' and within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area, Letcombe Regis is threatened at various times by housing development schemes which could change its whole nature. The overall subject of more housing and development is a major concern for residents. The advent of Richmond Retirement Village on a single site has had a major effect on population, traffic throughput, parking and residents' needs and mobility. Consequently, an important aspect of the questionnaire was to determine residents' views on what they consider acceptable development for the future.

The Survey asked residents to indicate what support they would give to the following types of additional housing and development. More than 205 people responded as follows:

- The conversion of barns etc. into living accommodation:
80% of people were in favour and only 8% against with 12% unsure.
- The in-filling of spaces between existing houses:
38% of people were in favour but 41% were against with 21% unsure.
- The conversion of barns etc. into business use:
66% were in favour, with 34% against.

Several questions in this section sought to obtain views on future small scale development either within the village boundary or outside. 57% were against 5 or more dwellings on one site unless it was a development for people with a strong local connection.

Village Amenities

Mobility and Transport

There is much concern in the village about the increase in the volume of traffic, inconsiderate parking, the local public transport and the needs of elderly residents.

Mobility

The Survey sought to identify mobility problems and of the 225 replies:

- 45 expressed a difficulty. Of these, 38 were aged over 75 years
- 191 said they were still able to drive, with 60 aged over 75.

Positive suggestions were made:

- 21 people wanted a more frequent bus service
- 14 people wanted better maintained and readily accessible pavements.

Parking

The Survey sought to identify car ownership and of the 177 replies:

- 81% indicated ownership of one vehicle
- 19% owned more than one vehicle.

Parking on the roadsides directly correlates to the lack of off-road parking in the vicinity.

The parking of cars and vans on the highway came in for much criticism with many roads becoming single lane, generally clogging up the village and highlighting an overall inadequacy of parking.

Of the 66 comments made:

- 7 wanted restrictions placed on Richmond staff parking
- 6 wanted planning authorities to insist on adequate parking arrangements on new housing
- 19 identified the Village Hall, Pavilion and Pub as locations that might be used for additional parking.

Other interesting suggestions were:

- residents with garages or parking spaces should use them
- the shop/café area parking should be reserved for customers
- the provision of a bicycle rack outside the Café.

The use of the Millennium Green for parking is not legally possible because it is officially registered as a 'village green'.

Bus Service

The Survey sought to identify bus usage and of the 225 replies:

- 10 used the buses weekly
- 50 used the buses occasionally
- 165 never use the bus.

People indicated they might use the bus more if:

- buses ran more frequently, 102 persons
- buses ran at more convenient times, 96 persons
- bus shelters were provided, 27 persons
- buses had easier disabled access, 20 persons.

Other suggestions included better and more direct access to Didcot and Oxford. However, there were complaints that the bus timetable was not readily available and that the bus stops were not identified.

St Andrew's Church

St Andrew's Church dates back to 1195 in the reign of Richard I and is a valued feature of Letcombe Regis. Of the 222 replies:

- 15 people attended church services weekly
- 16 people attended church services monthly
- 88 people attended church services occasionally
- 103 people never attended church services.

Of the comments, a small number questioned the convenience of access, heating and timing of services but there were a significant number of suggestions for increasing attendance and widening usage of the church as a village asset including:

- use for concerts, recitals, visiting choirs, talks, charity events, Christmas tree festivals etc.
- promoting involvement of young people in the choir and bell-ringing
- arranging special services for specific groups e.g. disabled, elderly, children, families, working people, for blessing pets, a Christingle
- engaging children to lead services
- greater participation of the church in village events
- services more suited to modern way of life
- services with familiar hymns and hymn tunes.

People indicated how often they attend existing events:

- 33 people attended frequently
- 114 people attended occasionally
- 77 people never attend events.

Of the 174 people responding to the question asking if they would like to see more events in the church, 113 said yes and 61 said no.

Of those who commented on widening the usage of the church, 75 wanted concerts, choirs and music recitals, 11 a Sunday school and 9 lectures, talks and poetry readings.

Parish Council Burial Ground

The Parish Council Burial Ground serves the village for internments and is situated beside the Recreation Ground entrance, on the Bassett Road. As the village population is continuing to grow, an extension to the burial ground is planned and the questionnaire asked residents what factors should be considered for its future development.

Of the 222 replies:

- 20% said they were likely to use it
- 45% were unlikely to use it
- 35% were uncertain.

The significant majority, 92%, felt it already presented a good environment. However some further suggestions were to remove or prune the overgrown dark leylandii trees; plant more shrubs; improve landscaping and have fewer artificial flowers; provide easier access at the entrance; extend the burial ground; provide more seating and an improved water supply.

Shop and Café

The village shop and café was opened in 2011 as part of the development of the Richmond retirement complex. The Survey sought to identify the importance and use of the shop. Of the 225 replies, 96% considered the shop and café to be an important community facility.

- 57 people used the shop weekly
- 34 people used the shop monthly
- 124 people used the shop occasionally
- 10 people never use the shop.

Of the 110 who commented on using it more:

- 40 wanted the shop to stock a wider range of items
- 24 felt it was too expensive
- 17 wanted better or longer opening hours
- 11 wanted the shop to sell newspapers
- 10 wanted it to sell fruit and vegetables.

Other suggestions were to use it for evening bookings for events and the introduction of a limited Post Office facility.

Most people seemed happy with the Café facility although 10 wanted a greater variety of food.

The Greyhound

At the time of the Survey, the pub had been sold by the brewery to a group of private individuals who had plans to refurbish the premises and we discussed with them what information might assist them.

Of the 223 people who commented on the pub, 97% considered it to be an important community facility. When it was open:

- 35 people visited the pub weekly
- 46 people visited it monthly
- 109 people visited it occasionally
- 26 people never visited the pub.

In reply to specific questions about would encourage more frequent visits, there was considerable support for traditional pub food, more upmarket food, theme nights and bed and breakfast facilities and improved access for disabled persons. There was no support for team games or sporting events on TV.

However, there was a clear message from the 98 suggestions made that a cosy decor and a warm welcome from the staff was very important. There was little support for the serving of coffee and tea which was viewed as unnecessary competition with the Café.

Since the Survey, the ownership of the pub has changed hands again and the present owners have undertaken significant refurbishment and The Greyhound reopened in November 2015.

The Millennium Green

The Millennium Green is officially registered as a village green. The Survey sought views on its usage. Of the 183 responses, 25% considered it a well-used facility. 84% felt that they would use it if more village activities were held there and 80% indicated they would use it for picnics if suitable seating was available.

Of those who commented, further ideas included; Art displays or sculptures, comfortable seating, improved maintenance. Some views were expressed that it was hardly used so had no practical purpose or that it could be used as a car park but, as its use is restricted, this is not possible.

Healthcare

Primary healthcare for most villagers is provided by two surgeries in the Mably Way Health Centre, Wantage which is located about 2 miles away. The Wantage Community Hospital offers maternity services and respite care. Currently, out-of-hours services and minor injuries are provided at Abingdon Hospital which is 10 miles away. The nearest A&E is in Oxford 25 miles away.

The Survey asked if people were satisfied with the local healthcare and medical facilities and of the 218 responses, 83% were satisfied with the healthcare service.

Of the suggestions made:

- 16 people wanted to see more and improved services
- 14 people wanted a closer A&E, minor injuries or x-ray unit
- 10 people said that transport was a problem.

Of those who commented many felt the Wantage Community Hospital could be developed and services expanded to meet local needs.

The Mobile Library

The Mobile Library comes to Letcombe Regis every two weeks and parks for 50 minutes in the Richmond reception car park. Of 225 responses on usage, only 19% used the mobile library the majority of whom are Richmond residents.

Rubbish Collection

Food waste is collected weekly and recycling, garden or land-fill waste collected on alternate weeks. The Survey asked if people were satisfied with the present arrangements for the collection of household and garden waste and of the 215 responses, 93% were satisfied.

Of the comments made by those who were not satisfied, a weekly collection of garden waste (brown bin) was suggested as was the return of bins to the correct house.

Crime

The Survey sought to identify if residents felt the village a safe and secure place to live. Of the 217 responses, only three people felt it unsafe.

Social and Recreational Facilities

Local Organisations

People were asked to indicate which local organisations they attend or use and the membership and age profile is shown below.

Age Profile of Club Members

	Number	18-25	26-45	46-65	66-74	75+
Book Buffs	13	-	-	6	2	5
Gardening Club	24	-	1	13	5	5
Knitwits	5	-	1	1	-	3
Letcombe Singers	17	-	-	1	7	9
Letcombe Women's Institute	19	-	1	6	1	11
Cricket Club	16	2	1	3	4	6
Football Club	5	1	-	-	2	2
Riding Club	11	-	3	4	3	1
Table Tennis Club	3	-	-	1	-	2
Tennis Club	30	-	4	16	5	5
Childrey Parent & Toddler Group	3	-	1	-	1	1
Childrey Pre-School	5	-	4	-	-	1
Ridgeway C of E Primary School	8	-	3	-	4	1
Toddlers Music Group	3	-	2	-	1	-
Bell-ringing at St Andrew's Church	11	1	1	6	2	1
Ridgeway Handbell Ringers	4	-	-	-	2	2
200 Club	65	-	6	22	20	17
Allotments	20	-	2	10	5	3
Over 60s Lunch Club	36	-	-	-	9	27

The figures are based on the responses given in the Survey.

Village Hall

The Village Hall is one of the most well used assets in the community. In 2010, money from the developers of Richmond was provided for various projects within the village, giving the opportunity to consider refurbishment or a new build. Since the survey the village has been awarded a Big Lottery grant for a new hall which will be built in 2016.

The Survey sought to assess the actual usage of the present hall to find out whether improved paths and pavements would encourage target groups such as children and the elderly to make more use of it. Of the responses, varying from 185 to 205, the frequency of use for the following was:

- A group event – at least monthly by 39 people and by 73 occasionally
- A village event e.g. a race night – occasionally by 135 people
- A private function e.g. a family party – occasionally by 66 people.

Of the comments made, 35 people said they would make more use of the hall if there were improved facilities for the disabled and 45 people if there was improved pavement access for the disabled.

Recreation Ground

The Survey sought to identify what usage was made of the Recreation Ground.

Of the responses, varying from 169 to 186, the frequency of use for the following facilities was:

- the sports pavilion – at least monthly by 9 people and occasionally by 71
- the cricket pitch – at least monthly by 3 people and occasionally by 11
- the children's playground – weekly by 12 people, monthly by 13 and occasionally by 58
- the football pitch – at least monthly by 4 people and occasionally by 14
- the horse riding area – at least monthly by 9 people and occasionally by 4
- the tennis courts – weekly by 16 people, monthly by 7 and occasionally by 13
- the other recreational activities – weekly by 22 people, monthly by 7 and occasionally by 43.

In answer to the question of what would encourage more usage of the facilities:

- 77 people said if there were additional classes for hobbies and interests
- 46 people said if there were greater encouragement and opportunities for young people, the less skilled or beginners to join classes or teams
- 43 people said if there were improved play areas for children and more frequent updating of the playground equipment
- 32 people said if there were better practice facilities for games and sports.

Village Profile

In describing the **Unique Nature** of the village, the most popular of the 203 responses were:

- Friendly
- Quiet
- Peaceful.

Also listed were: Attractive, Pretty, Beautiful, Rural, Convenient or accessible for Wantage/M4/Trains, Small, and Picturesque.

In describing the **Most Attractive Features** of the village, the most popular of the 196 responses were:

- Church
- Diversity of architecture
- Recreation Ground and its facilities.

Also listed were: Nature Reserve, Letcombe Brook, Lovely Setting, Attractive Views, Shop and Café, Proximity to Countryside, and Tranquillity.

In describing the **Least Attractive Features** of the village, the most predominant of the 175 responses were:

- Traffic issues
- Flats near the church
- Poor state of pavements and footpaths.

Also listed were: Village Hall, Lack of Pub, Inappropriate Developments, Old Bakery Cottages, Richmond Retirement Village and the Garages in Chapel Street.

Volunteering

The distribution of the Survey was seen as an opportunity to advertise the need in the village for more volunteers. Residents were asked if they could help and to indicate their interests.

26 people responded and these individuals have been contacted by existing village organisers. Many of those who replied were merely indicating the nature of their interest or that they were already a volunteer. However a number of new recruits were added to such activities as helping at children's parties and in the Nature Reserve. The advancement of an Arts & Crafts movement is proving a success.

Changes to the village

In seeking to identify what might be done to change or improve some aspect of the village, four specific actions were identified and residents were asked their views on whether they should be considered or encouraged.

- 109 out of 189 responses would support a public car park
- 105 out of 180 responses would support an Arts and Crafts centre
- 63 out of 167 responses would support facilities for tourists
- 49 out of 170 responses would support more light industry.

The most popular suggestions for location of car parks were the Village Hall or Recreation Ground. There was no consensus where a craft centre or light industry could be located and this will require further consultation.

Other suggestions included an attractive pub and more bed and breakfast facilities, improvements to the roads, pavements, footpaths and bridleways.

Communications

In the Survey, residents were asked if they regularly read or had access to local sources of information. Of the 221 replies:

- 95% read the Letcombe Register
- 73% read the notice board near the Greyhound
- 63% read The Ridgeway Benefice Contact
- 25% accessed the Parish Council web site
- 13% used the Thames Valley Police web site.

50 comments were made on what would encourage more use of the information sources. 30% were satisfied with the information available while 20% thought the information on the web site should be updated more frequently and subscribers should be notified of an update. The unsatisfactory broadband connection was also mentioned.

Community Support

The Survey sought views on community and voluntary support schemes in the village. Of the 150 responses, 38 people said they would like assistance with a variety of tasks such as shopping, transport and using computers.

Richmond Retirement Village

Richmond Retirement Village was completed in 2010 and consists of 80 independent living units and a main building catering for 66 assisted living units plus a care floor for people requiring nursing or dementia care. The development has provided a shop and café facility and is generally seen to be of benefit to Letcombe Regis as more Richmond residents become involved with local activities. The main issue appears to be the increased traffic and parking problems.

The survey sought to identify the extent to which the Richmond Retirement Village had integrated into the community. The questions were directed firstly, to non-Richmond residents and then to Richmond residents.

143 non-Richmond residents commented on whether the development has been of benefit to Letcombe Regis and of these:

- 88% answered "Yes"
- 11% stated that it had caused a significant increase of car and lorry traffic
- 5% said it had caused parking problems
- 5% said that Richmond staff and visitors speed or ignore road markings.

140 non-Richmond residents replied to the question on whether they attended any events in the Retirement Village and of these:

- 36% answered "Yes".

The remainder of the responses commented that the events had no appeal for them, were at the wrong times, were age related and they were not in that age group or the events were not publicised enough.

Richmond residents were asked if they attended events outside the Retirement Village.

- Of the 72 who responded, 47 attended.

Village Environment

Roads, Pavements and Traffic

The Survey sought to identify if particular roads or pavements within the village were of concern. Of the 186 responses, 71% did not support a change in priorities at the junction of Main Street, South Street and Bassett Road.

The comments reflected a variety of concerns, but not all were in agreement:

- 30 people were concerned with obstructions on roads, poor parking and overgrown hedges
- 26 people were concerned with the general traffic management through the village; priorities at junctions, better road marking and signage, double yellow lines, pedestrian crossings and drop kerbs for wheelchair access
- 14 people were concerned with the state of the road surface, particularly potholes
- 13 people were concerned about speeding.

Of the 208 responses, 65% did not see any problem with dog fouling.

Public Footpaths

The Survey sought to identify the usage of footpaths in and around the village. There were 220 responses to this question. The public footpath to Wantage was used by 141 people at least occasionally with just under half of those using it weekly. The main reason for not using it was mobility, although there were also comments about the need for better lighting and maintenance, and some concerns for personal security.

Of the other footpaths in the village:

- 103 people used them weekly
- 23 used them monthly

- 67 used them occasionally
- 27 never use them.

Of those who used them, 73% found their condition and signage satisfactory.

Bridleways

The Survey sought to identify the usage of bridleways. Of the 218 responses:

- 86 people used them weekly
- 21 used them monthly
- 60 used them occasionally
- 51 never use them.

The suggestions for bridleways were the restriction of their use by motor vehicles (particularly 4x4s) and improved surfaces in wet weather.

Further comments were the need for better signage, notices about points of interest along the way and for more information or maps.

Bridleways within the village were considered to be better maintained than those outside the curtilage of the village.

Nature Reserve

The Nature Reserve is managed by The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on a 50 year lease from Richmond.

Of the 225 responses on the Nature Reserve:

- 96% considered it an important asset to the village
- 45% visited it weekly
- 7% never visited the reserve.

Of the 186 replies, 131 people wanted the Parish to continue contributing to its upkeep.

Of the 206 responses on what people valued most:

- 77% appreciated the wildlife
- 77% appreciated the walking trails
- 29% appreciated that it is child and dog friendly.

Other features were the peace and quiet, fresh air, flora and star gazing.

180 people would like to see more use of the reserve for education purposes.

In general, it seems that the reserve is highly appreciated by villagers. However, some would like to see it enhanced, made more accessible and to be used more, whilst others would like to see it remain secluded and quiet.

Letcombe Brook

The Letcombe Brook is one of the world's rare chalk streams, 85% of which are in the UK. It is an important habitat for many different plants and animals.

The brook was considered to be an important natural feature of the village.

The suggestions of how to find out more about the brook were:

- 73 would like to see more talks about the brook
- 59 would like to see guided walks
- 41 would like to see river dipping events
- 128 would like to see self-guided walk leaflets
- 122 would like to see information boards.

Of the 199 who replied, 160 people wanted the Parish to continue contributing to its upkeep.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE UNDER 18 RESPONSES

In preparing the current Survey, it was recognised that the information from the under 18s group was different from that required from adults; thus a different questionnaire comprising 17 questions was designed which would enable the Parish Council to judge the thoughts of, and what activities would engage, the under 18's.

The questions broadly covered three main areas; the first ascertaining facts on schooling and transport, the second enquiring about leisure activities and the third seeking opinions on the local facilities. The number of questionnaires returned totalled 32 though not all respondents answered every question.

Education and Transport

There were 11 children attending primary school, 11 in secondary school and 7 in the Sixth Form; there were also 3 pre-school children. Of those attending school, two were at boarding school, 16 at schools in Wantage, 7 in Abingdon and 4 at different schools in the area.

The transport to school question revealed that 21 travelled by car, 14 used a school bus, 6 cycled and 4 walked. Many used more than one form of transport.

The footpath to Wantage was used by 21 young people, though not necessarily to go to school and all but one of the rest did not need to use it.

Leisure Activities

In reply to the question "what do you do in your spare time" the answers were wide ranging. Most of the respondents met their friends in either Letcombe Regis or Wantage and were equally divided as to whether there was enough importance given to providing enough things for children and teenagers to do in the village. The suggestions for additional activities included better play equipment, a basketball hoop, a swimming pool, a skate park, badminton, mini golf and free tennis.

When asked about their use of the following facilities, the numbers using them, either often or occasionally, were:

- 16 used the Village Hall
- 27 used the Recreation Ground
- 22 used the Children's playground
- 19 used the Millennium Green
- 11 attended St Andrew's Church.

Local Facilities

The suggestions for improvements that would encourage greater use of the facilities listed above included:

- more events (and not just for the 13+)
- better equipment in the playground
- cheaper tennis, a tennis ball machine, roller skating and a better village hall.

In reply to a similar question asking "What activities would you like to see in the village":

- 9 wished for opportunities to participate in sports and involvement with village clubs
- 7 wished for better play equipment including a zip wire, a skate park and dirt jumps.

A number of attempts have been made over recent years to start up a Youth Club based in Letcombe Regis; they have not succeeded either because not enough young people were interested or because no adults were prepared to assist in the running of a Club. There were only 2 young persons in favour of a Youth Club.

The last two questions asked the under 18's what they liked and what they disliked about Letcombe Regis. Seven said there was nothing about the village they did not like, the remaining 18 identified many topics, for example: not much to do, not a good bus service, isolated, a dilapidated village hall,

nowhere to meet others not at the same school, not many young children, no pub!, church bells in the morning and no ice cream van in South Street. These comments reflect the different ages of the respondents.

There were 29 comments on what they liked about the village: 22 liked the peacefulness, the countryside and the Nature Reserve; 9 mentioned the tennis courts and one kindly person said the “older residents were nice”.

COMMUNITY LED ACTION PLAN - 2016

The Survey has highlighted a number of areas where action is required either to improve existing village facilities or to ensure that we can preserve the character of Letcombe Regis for future generations.

The Parish Council believes that significant progress on these actions can be achieved but it will require community involvement and commitment. This belief is supported by the results achieved following the 2006 Survey which is set out in the Appendix. The Parish Council intends to involve local groups from the community to implement the actions proposed in the Survey.

The Council will follow up progress on the Action Plan on a regular basis and will use The Register and the Parish Council web site to advise residents of such progress. It will also make a full report on achievements at the Annual Parish Meetings.

There are, of course, many instances where the Parish Council does not have the authority for direct action but it will actively seek to influence the relevant responsible organisations by bringing to their attention any shortcomings identified in the Survey.

Housing and Development

Report to the District Council that villagers are in favour of modest development such as barn conversions but the majority are against further small-scale housing unless it is for persons with a strong local connection.

Action Parish Council

Mobility and Transport

1. A survey of pavements is required to identify improvements needed and for access to Village Hall.
2. Police co-operation to be requested to prevent illegal parking at road junctions.
3. Richmond to be asked to provide a cycle rack at the Shop & Café.

Action Parish Council

Bus Service

1. Bus companies to be asked to produce localised timetables for Letcombe Regis.
2. Notify Bus companies that better disabled access is needed.
3. Investigate possible sites for bus shelters.

Action Parish Council

St Andrew's Church

Communicate Survey findings to the Parochial Church Council to encourage increased attendance at services and wider use of the church for secular functions.

Action Parish Council

Burial Ground

1. Remove overgrown trees.
2. Investigate possible extension of the burial ground, landscaping and improved parking facility.

Action Parish Council

Shop and Café

Findings to be notified to Richmond management with a request to enable the sale of postage stamps in the shop.

Action Parish Council

Greyhound Pub

Survey findings to be notified to new owners with the request to incorporate villagers' views in the redesign and facilities planned for the pub.

Action Parish Council

Millennium Green

1. Investigate potential for improved and more comfortable seating.
2. Investigate potential for art displays on the green.

Action Parish Council

Healthcare

Communicate Survey findings to appropriate health authorities. In particular the views that the Wantage Community Hospital should be developed and services expanded to meet growing local needs.

Action Parish Council

Mobile Library

Discuss with library authority the possibility of a second location for the mobile library facility more central to the rest of the village.

Action Parish Council

Rubbish Collection

No action required

Crime

No action required

Village Hall

1. Report findings to Trustees to progress plans for a new hall.
2. Investigate possibilities for improved pavement access to hall.
3. Consider the appointment of a Manager to promote wider usage and series of interests.

Action Parish Council & Trustees

Recreation Ground

Report findings to Trustees, in particular the requests for:

1. Upgrading of children's play area.
2. Creating better sporting opportunities for youths, beginners or less skilled players.
3. All weather surface area for adolescents.
4. Promoting a wider series of interests.

Action Parish Council & Trustees

Changes to the Village

1. Organise further consultation on possible locations for developing an arts & crafts movement.
2. Investigate opportunities for further car parking at the Village Hall and at the Recreation Ground.

Action Parish Council & Trustees

Communications

1. Alter website design to incorporate a panel which identifies and links to recent updates on village activity and news.
2. Pursue better broadband facility.

Action Parish Council

Community Support

Explore the feasibility of re-introducing a community support group.

Action Parish Council

Volunteering

Continue advertising in the Letcombe Register for more volunteers for local activities.

Action Parish Council

Retirement Village

Communicate findings to both Richmond and non-Richmond activities groups to encourage greater integration and more participation in social events. The Parish Council to facilitate an annual meeting of the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council, Richmond Retirement Village and Trustees of the Recreation Ground & Village Hall to coordinate and promote community involvement in village events.

Action Parish Council

Roads, Pavements and Traffic

1. Request PCSO support in management of traffic issues and parking.
2. Request Highways action on road maintenance and overgrown vegetation.
3. Remind villagers to cut back hedges which obstruct pavement access.
4. Remind villagers to use garages rather than on-road parking. **Action Parish Council**

Public Footpaths

Ensure that regular maintenance is carried out by the County Council. **Action Parish Council**

Bridleways

1. Apply to County Council to make bridleways prohibited for vehicular access.
2. Contact Vale & Downland Museum regarding the production of a Site Plan and Village Guide to points of interest in Letcombe Regis. **Action Parish Council**

Nature Reserve

Communicate Survey findings to Conservation Group and BBOWT. **Action Parish Council**

Letcombe Brook

1. Communicate Survey findings to Letcombe Brook Project.
2. Request noticeboards and trail leaflets. **Action Parish Council**

Youth

1. Upgrade the Children's play area.
2. Consider an all-weather play surface area and additional equipment to encourage greater use by young people. **Action Trustees**

Appendix

PROGRESS ACHIEVED FOLLOWING THE 2006 PARISH PLAN

The 2006 Plan listed three major actions for which s106 monies from the Richmond development were available and six other areas for improvement. In summary they concerned:

- The Village Hall, which will be replaced with a new building in 2016 as sufficient grants have been awarded.
- The Sports Pavilion to which excellent alterations and improvements have been made.
- New tennis courts which have also recently been built and are well used.
- Setting up a village web site, this is up and running.
- Better bus service information.
- More dog bins installed.
- Traffic calming measures. A new 30mph speed limit has since been installed.
- Improvement to footpaths. These have yet to be addressed.
- Additional recreational facilities for under 18's. Much effort has gone in to this subject but, to date, no youth or parent has been prepared to assist in this venture.

**A copy of this Community Led Plan is held by the Parish Clerk
and is available on the Parish Council Website.**