

Winsham Parish Council

Parish Plan -2014

Introduction

The purpose of the Parish Plan is to provide a basis for policy and activity undertaken by the Parish Council in the years ahead. It is informed by the Parish Survey carried out in October 2013, when some 60% of all households responded to over seventy questions relating to their views about aspects of Parish life and the facilities and resources available to them. Full details of the information gathered in this survey can be found on the Winsham Parish Web Site.

The main elements of the Plan relate to the following:

Housing

Resources

Environment

Travel & Transport

Sports & Leisure

Economic development

Communications

The Parish Plan does not cover resources that are independently managed, such as the Winsham School, The Shop & Post Office, The Churches, Jubilee Hall and the Sports & Social Club. However, the Parish Council may have influence with these organisations, and it must be hoped that their managements will take into account any proposals resulting from the Parish Plan and the Parish Councils.

When considering the proposals in the plan, the question of affordability of some elements must be taken into account.

Projects and related expenditures are likely to be spread over a long period, and will not be started until general approval is apparent and **nothing is for nothing!**

- Everything has a cost in terms of money, time, physical or mental energy.

- If something is really wanted and money is needed, it can be often be raised, through grants, voluntary contributions of money and time, and loans repaid through the precept.
- It must be remembered that existing facilities, i.e. Playground equipment, Bus Shelter, etc. need maintenance, refurbishment and sometimes renewal, and this also has to be funded.

THE PLAN-THE CORE CONSIDERATION

Central to the thinking of the Parish Council in preparing the Parish Plan is the data gathered in response to the question relating to why people enjoyed living in Winsham.

Quiet spot	55.0%	99
Not crowded	40.6%	73
Pleasant rural surroundings	87.8%	158
Harmonious community	37.8%	68
Proximity to coastal resorts and facilities	37.8%	68

This information lies at the core of all proposals made.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

HOUSING

Housing policy is a major concern. In reality real power lies with central government and South Somerset District Council, but we are led to believe that the voice of residents in Parishes will be listened to, if it can be demonstrated that they truly represent the views of everyone.

This was a driving motive behind the Parish Survey.

Survey Question: How many properties would you like to see built?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Up to 10	41.01%	57
10 - 20	39.57%	55
20 - 50	17.27%	24
50 - 100	2.16%	3
100+	0%	0
Total		139

The amount of development that people would like to see...

1. Development of up to ten affordable housing units
2. Development of up to ten private homes in small scale development
3. Keep development as in-fill where possible
4. Young person's Focus Group suggested an emphasis on small unit community housing

Survey Question: What type of accommodation would you like to see built?

Answer Choices	Responses	
None	18.52%	30
Affordable housing	68.52%	111
Private rental	11.11%	18
Private development	29.63%	48
Sheltered housing	18.52%	30
Accommodation for the disabled	17.28%	28
Single occupancy accommodation	21.60%	35
Total Respondents: 162		

The type of development that people would like to see...

- Allow people to stay within the Parish by developing affordable housing
- Allowing people that want to stay the option to downsize releasing family housing back to the community.

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Housing is as follows:

1. Encourage development of up to ten affordable housing units, and encourage the building of up to ten private homes in small scale development
2. Keep development as in-fill where possible
3. Young person's Focus Group suggested an emphasis on small unit community housing

PARISH RESOURCES

Living in Winsham is not only about the housing but also the resources that support people living there. According to the Survey:

- The Parish appreciates that it enjoys a significant amount of resources for its size.
- They facilitate community life, and this came across very strongly
- Shop & Post Office (83% visit at least weekly)
- School - important to village life (94%) even though most don't have kids at the school
- Children's play area (76%)/ Footpaths & bridleways(71%) are very important
- 73% of parish use the Jubilee Hall.
- Churches / cemetery... 56% feel that they are very important

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Parish Resources is as follows:

The Parish Council should support all resources in their development and growth by:

- Sympathetic support where appropriate to planning
- Financial support where appropriate through the precept and fund raising
- Be pro-active in helping existing resources by seeking proposals from the managements of Jubilee Hall, Sports and Social Club, and the Churches for improving the resources for 'teen' age groups, young adults, parenting and working age groups
- Continue and extend support for children's play and Games Area
- Support the ongoing maintenance of the cemetery area by sponsoring voluntary and Community Service working parties
- Facilitate maintenance of Footpaths
- Be watchful for threats to the rural integrity of the Parish and take action if necessary

ENVIRONMENT

Winsham Parish is blessed with chalk, greensand, ridges and sweeping vistas across to the English Channel.

Added to this there is....

- Richness of wildlife & Habitats
- Hedgerows

- Farmland / animals
- Woodlands

Residents want to keep it that way!

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Environment is as follows:

Form and encourage voluntary groups to help with high cost areas such as:-

- Maintaining Foot paths
- Clearing Himalayan Balsom from River Axe on parish boundary
- Maintaining cemetery and church yard
- Name and shame dog-fouling culprits(prosecution if necessary)

TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

- One of the challenges for a rural settlement is giving people options when it comes to moving around...
 - Speeding within Winsham village, Speed limits, Speeding within the parish
 - Dangerous junctions
 - Bus services (50% use it, 60% think it is inadequate)
- More support for people who work with alternatives to private vehicles was consistently raised as an issue

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Travel & Transport is as follows:

- Give on a continuous basis, active consideration to traffic calming methods suitable to the village, including use of Traffic Watch Groups.
- Lobby on a continuous basis, for improved bus services
- Promote on a continuous basis, vehicle sharing

SPORTS & LEISURE

On balance, most respondents believe there are already a significant number of opportunities

Survey Question: Do you think that there are sufficient leisure and recreational facilities/activities within the parish

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	76.69%	125
No	23.31%	38
Total		163

- Further findings indicated
 - Lack of provision for people in work or teenagers, both of whom would benefit from structured activities being provided within the Parish.
 - Broad support for all the activities currently offered.
 - More should be done for its young people and professionals.
 - Benefit of a rural settlement is the expanse of nature surrounding it that people seem to be enjoying. (65% walk every week)
 - Increase the frequency of certain activities e.g. Youth Cafe
 - Winsham Parish seems to have done very well for children and retirees, but needs to do more for young adults, young parents and working people generally

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Sports & Leisure is as follows:

- Encourage the development of the Sports & Social Club into additional sports.
- Develop Cycling, Walking, trekking and canoeing groups for younger people, with events arranged for the evening and weekends.
- Installation of Multi Use Games area for use of teenagers

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order for any community to survive it has to be able to support itself, this requires a certain level of economic activity to take place. Winsham is rural and the most obvious form of economic activity is agricultural. There are many activities that would fit within a predominantly agricultural landscape, but they require reliable and robust communications. 13% of respondents currently operate a business within the parish. This was a surprisingly high number.

The main thrust of opinion was directed as follows:

Bring in more tourism - maintain the existing natural assets of the Parish and promote them.
Allow for limited development to provide accommodation for visitors, make it easy to find and enjoy Winsham...

- Improve communications (Mobile & Broadband)
- Increase public transport options
- Increase accommodation available

In view of the above the Parish Plan for Economic Development is as follows:

Parish Council to lead in the formation of working party made up from local businesses to explore ways in which the Parish can help in their development, which can then be integrated into the Parish Plan.

COMMUNICATIONS

Winsham is fortunate in having good internal communications

Survey Question: What are the most popular ways to find about what is going on in the parish?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total	Average Rating
Joint Parish Magazine	8.28% 14	11.24% 19	11.24% 19	69.23% 117	169	3.41
Winsham eLetter	27.14% 38	15% 21	13.57% 19	44.29% 62	140	2.75
Winsham Parish Website	25.36% 35	34.06% 47	22.46% 31	18.12% 25	138	2.33
Winsham Parish Museum	35.66% 46	37.98% 49	16.28% 21	10.08% 13	129	2.01
Shop notice boards	2.34% 4	22.81% 39	43.27% 74	31.58% 54	171	3.04
Jubilee Hall notice boards	14.65% 23	35.67% 56	31.21% 49	18.47% 29	157	2.54
Parish Council notice boards	21.83% 31	36.62% 52	23.94% 34	17.61% 25	142	2.37
Fly posters	10.88% 16	39.46% 58	29.25% 43	20.41% 30	147	2.59
Leaflets through your letter box	8.02% 13	27.78% 45	28.40% 46	35.80% 58	162	2.92

Survey Question: What are people most interested in hearing about?

	No interest	Hardly interested	Neither	Quite interested	Very interested	Total	Average Rating
Parish Council	3.25% 5	6.49% 10	9.09% 14	53.90% 83	27.27% 42	154	3.95
Pre-School	25.19% 34	17.78% 24	27.41% 37	21.48% 29	8.15% 11	135	2.70
School	15.60% 22	10.64% 15	19.15% 27	36.88% 52	17.73% 25	141	3.30
Social events	5.23% 8	4.58% 7	11.11% 17	52.94% 81	26.14% 40	153	3.90
Sports events	9.86% 14	14.79% 21	26.76% 38	41.55% 59	7.04% 10	142	3.21
Fitness events	10.07% 14	10.79% 15	26.62% 37	38.85% 54	13.67% 19	139	3.35
Learning events	10.56% 15	4.93% 7	19.01% 27	52.11% 74	13.38% 19	142	3.53
Village organisations	5.13% 8	4.49% 7	8.97% 14	58.33% 91	23.08% 36	156	3.90

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS ARE ADEQUATE, BUT NOT GOOD

- Telecommunications
 - 84% of respondents have Broadband
 - Mobile coverage is very patchy -only 27% have satisfactory coverage in their home. Are there community projects that can improve telecoms for the whole parish?
 - 77% have Broadband speeds in excess of 2mbs, but with only 32% enjoying faster download speeds

In view of the above the Parish Plan for improved communications is as follows:

- Press for improved Broadband speeds
- Press for improved mobile phone coverage
- Further develop the Parish Web Site, with a 'blog' facility to encourage expressions of opinion.

CONCLUSION

On reading this Parish Plan, some residents may be disappointed that it does not contain many, if any, clearly defined projects. We do not believe such commitment is the purpose of a Parish Plan. Every four years a new Parish Council is elected or formed. For a Parish Plan to be successful, it must leave the decisions as to specific projects to the parish council of the time.

It is also likely that future parish council's will wish to update the 2013 Survey results, by surveys of their own.

Having said this, the Plan does provide a positive sense of direction to the current and future parish councils, to implement as they feel best.

Bryan Goodman

Chairman,

Winsham Parish Council