

3.0 REVIEW OF PLAN PROCESS

Leigh on Mendip Parish Council initiated the concept of asking parishioners what they wanted when they undertook a detailed questionnaire in 1993. This recorded the response to a wide range of questions on the fabric of life in the village, covering the subjects of Housing, Services, the Parish Church, Emergency Services, Health and Social Care, Environment, Landscape and Appearance, Footpaths, Environmental Services, Information and Communication and Social, Sport and Entertainment as well as General Matters. 100 forms were returned and the results published by the Parish Council in 1994. Over the coming years this was used to inform and develop village activities and services.

In 1998 the next stage in the process of determining how the village and surrounding area should develop was documented in the Village Design Statement. This detailed document described the village as it was then and set out the vision for future development of buildings and boundaries (walls and hedges). The Village Design Statement was adopted by Mendip District Council in 1998.

In autumn 2005, the idea of creating a formal Parish Plan was formulated and circulars were distributed throughout the village asking for help. In December 2005, under the auspices of the Parish Council, a successful bid was made for a grant to undertake the Plan with funding from DEFRA and SCC working through the Somerset Rural Community Council, based in Taunton. The bid provided money, primarily for the promotional stages and printing of the plan, with the work to be undertaken by volunteers from the parish. A Steering Group was formed and whilst the membership changed over the lifetime of the project, a considerable amount of time was devoted to develop and complete the Parish Plan. Work on the Plan began in earnest in February 2006, with information provided to the parish through circulars and information in the parish Village Connections magazine.



The Plan was conducted in two main stages – a **Call for Ideas** – circulated in early March, which produced a response from around 20% of the parish. These ideas were then reviewed, collated into a number of themes and presented at an Open Day in the Memorial Hall on 12 May 2006 prior to the start of the second stage of the plan – **the Main Questionnaire**.

The second stage involved a detailed questionnaire of 18 pages, which was drawn entirely from the ideas put forward by the village in the first stage. The Parish Plan Steering Group's main task at this point was to act as a facilitator and to structure the main questionnaire around the topics and ideas suggested. After several meetings, the final questionnaire was printed. It was made available to anyone attending the 12 May Open Day and then distributed to every

other parish household, through a personal visit from a member of the Steering Group and whenever asked, help was given in filling in the form. As part of this process, individual clubs in the village were offered a presentation and a display was set up at the Country Fair in June.

In addition, a “cheesy chip” evening was held in The Bell Inn, supported by SCC Youth Service, to seek the thoughts and needs of the youth of the village. The Headteacher at Leigh on Mendip First School discussed the plan with Eagle class and produced a summary response from this group (age 7-9 years).

Over the period July to early September we had the task of collecting the completed questionnaires. Every effort was made to collect as many of the completed forms as possible, so if there was no answer on the first call, further visits were made; generally up to three calls were made over several days and more at some properties. Even then unfortunately no answer was obtained from some households and a note put in the parish Village Connections magazine advised how further returns could be made.

There was an excellent response from all corners of the parish – 138 forms were collected, representing the interests and wishes of 339 parishioners (68%), with 66% of the parish households completing the questionnaire. Additional responses were received from Leigh on Mendip First School and a number of businesses. It was interesting to note that many villagers did not realise the extent of Leigh on Mendip parish. It actually includes a property in Ham, properties part way down the hill to Vobster, up on the Old Wells Road and eastwards to Knaphill (see map on page 9). Lots of leather was used by the collectors over the summer!

All the questionnaires returned were entered into a database over summer 2006. This produced a six page spreadsheet report for each, which amounted to over 800 pages of detailed data! An assessment of errors arising from entering the data was undertaken over three long summer evenings. Some 25% of the returned forms were checked against the data entered – the error was less than 1% and any errors observed were corrected, thus reducing the magnitude of the error. In addition three completed questionnaires were further checked with the named person to clarify some of their answers and any corrections noted were undertaken. The final database was ready in early September for the next stage of the detailed analysis.

The analysed results were presented to the full Steering Group with a detailed presentation in mid-September. These gave a full understanding of the issues in the village, where there was consensus and where no clear agreement emerged. The results were prioritised over the following weeks to identify the key areas where recommendations should be made – thus forming the basis for the Action Plan.

The next stage was consultation with the external bodies that had supported the development of the plan and/or provided resources. These included Gloria Cawood - Somerset County Councillor, Mendip Strategic Partnership, Somerset County Council Youth Service and the Somerset Rural Community Council. The results of these consultations were built into the Action Plan. The draft results were presented to the Parish Council meeting on 20 November and the final Plan to the parish on Saturday 16 December at a second Open Day in the Memorial Hall.



Table 1 – Parish Plan events and tasks

No.	Task	Objective	Target	Timetable
1	Grant decision – liaise with Somerset RCC	Agree process for Parish Plan (PP) and confirm milestones.	To be in position to start plan	10 February 2006
2	Inception meeting of PP Steering Group Meeting (1)	Establish plan process and prepare pre-questionnaire and publicity note on PP procedure. Involve support from Somerset RCC, County Councillor and PCSO in process.	To form basis for questionnaire	Memorial Hall 7.30pm Friday 24 February 2006
3	Print (local printing) and circulate publicity note and initial questionnaire based on core topics to be considered in the PP	To act as an update to the topics examined in the 1993 Village survey and thus identify current key topics/issues to be developed in the PP.	All parishioners and businesses	Distribute by 8 March 2006, collect by early April 2006
4	PP Steering Group Meeting (2) Also meeting with Somerset RCC (25 April)	Assess pre-questionnaire results Decide post July meeting dates.	Determine issues for evaluation.	Memorial Hall 7.00 pm Friday 21 April 2006
5	Prepare main questionnaire – three sections: Main section plus Youth and Business sub-sections	This questionnaire will be used to identify the main issues in the parish	To distribute to all parishioners, youth and businesses	By E-mail and correspondence and sub-meetings by 28 April 2006
6	PP Steering Group Meeting (3)	Refine Main questionnaire and arrange local printing to be completed by 11 May		7.00 pm Wed 3 May 2006 Memorial Hall
7	Sub-meeting with Youth	To develop their interest in the plan and identify needs (in conjunction with Somerset Youth service)	Target youth addresses	Evening 8 May The Bell Inn
7a	Open meeting + PP Steering Group	To appraise parishioners of Plan process. Distribute Plan Questionnaire to attendees (note addresses)	Invite all parishioners	From 1.00 pm Friday 12 May 2006 Memorial Hall
7b	Sub-meetings with businesses	To appraise businesses of Plan process	Businesses	By 19 May 2006 Daytime
7c	Sub-meeting with school	To identify particular needs	School and children	By 19 May 2006 Daytime
7d	Sub-meetings with youth (in education and post education)	To identify particular needs and encourage interaction	Youth	By 19 May 2006 Various venues
7e	Sub-meeting with elderly	To identify particular needs and encourage interaction	Elderly	By 19 May 2006 Link to Coffee Morning on 15 May

7f	Sub-meetings with other village groups	To appraise of Plan Process and encourage interaction	Target WI, Rec. Field, Memorial Hall, short-mat bowls, table tennis, mothers & toddlers and other groups	By 26 May 2006 Their meeting dates
8	Circulate Main questionnaire	To seek consultation and identify needs	All target groups	To complete to all by 26 May 2006
	REPORT TO SOMERSET RCC			2 June 2006
9	PP Steering Group Meeting (4)	Review progress		7.00pm Thursday 6 July 2006 Rec. Field
10	Collect questionnaires – personal calling to seek to reach a 50% return target. Initiate collation of results.	To develop information and statistics required	Aim to complete collection by end August	June/July/August 2006 Three data entry check sub-meetings in August 2006.
	REPORT TO SOMERSET RCC			1 September 2006
11	Collate results	First draft of results		10 September 2006
12	PP Steering Group Meeting (5)	Review progress		Thursday 14 September 2006 Rec. Field
13	Report preparation/sub Steering group meetings	Prepare draft report		October 2006
14	Meetings with Somerset RCC, Mendip Strategic Partnership, Gloria Cawood and Somerset County Youth Service	Review draft report and initiate action plan		Early November 2006
15	Steering Group action	Update draft and identify key action tables		Early November 2006
16a	PP Steering Group Meeting (6a).	Agree Draft report		Wednesday 8 November 2006 Memorial Hall
16b	PP Steering Group – interim meeting (6b)			Tuesday 21 November 2006 Rec. Field
17	PP Steering Group Meeting (7)	Agree Final Report and print		Wednesday 29 November 2006 Memorial Hall
	REPORT TO SOMERSET RCC			1 December 2006
18	Disseminate PP Report	To all parishioners and businesses	Promote Plan	16 December 2006 Open Meeting Memorial Hall
19	Submit report to Parish Council		Adoption of Plan	Monday 18 December 2006
	FINAL REPORT TO SOMERSET RCC		Completion of project	By 2 March 2007

