

# HALSTOCK PARISH PLAN 2006



*Produced by Halstock Villagers on  
behalf of their Parish Council*



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## Summary

This Parish Plan is based upon information gathered during a period of consultation within the village and the advice of the relevant local authorities.

The result is a vision for the future of Halstock which has three principal elements:

- ❑ **Retain the current character and make up of the village**
- ❑ **Continue to improve facilities, especially for the young**
- ❑ **Make the village safer.**

The action points have been collated into a separate action plan which will be taken forward by the Parish Council. Copies are available from the Parish Clerk.

## Introduction

The purpose of this parish plan is to identify the issues of importance to villagers so that they can have a voice in how the village should develop. The Plan enshrines these views, seeking to preserve, enhance and develop our parish so that our prosperity, well being and quality of life are maintained. It is also an important vehicle for telling our District and County Councils about our social, economic and environmental concerns, so that local and area plans and decisions take our needs into account.

It is based on information gathered from effective consultation and community involvement, identifies which features and local characteristics people value, identifies some local problems and opportunities and ways to solve them, and spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future. It includes a plan of action and says who needs to be involved to achieve this vision with a realistic programme for funding and delivery.

The parish plan will be used as a reference in the preparation of the Local Area Plan for the market town area in which the parish lies, and also the Community Plan for West Dorset. It provides a valuable source of information that can be used by service providers to ensure needs of local people are recognised and acted upon where appropriate, either through direct action or through changes in policy.

## Halstock Parish

Halstock is a relatively remote rural community lying on the extreme north western border of Dorset, 6 miles south of the Somerset market town of Yeovil and set in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Although close to Yeovil, it is further from Dorchester and county support, has no pub, no school, and only 3 scheduled buses per week. On the other hand, it is a vibrant community with a thriving village-owned shop, village hall, community room and privately-run bakery, nursery, golf course and restaurant. It is still primarily an agricultural village, although the 23 dairy farms of the 1950s have dwindled to 4 and the pubs have reduced from 2 to none. The village is now home to an increasing proportion of older retired residents, although recent building developments house a number of people who work in Yeovil and other nearby towns. There are 203 households, containing 405 electors. The village is seen by residents as friendly, quiet and rural, and this survey shows that the majority of residents do not want the character of the village to change.

The parish shares a parish council with Corscombe and the Chelboroughs.

## **The History of Halstock**

There was an Iron Age settlement here from about 50 BC, and Common Lane was part of a prehistoric trackway heading towards Beaminster Down where it joined the Great Ridgeway which runs from east to west of the country. The round thatched huts of these early inhabitants near Common Lane were later replaced by the grander stone Roman villa, now buried beneath Common Lane and the golf course, which flourished for 300 years or so, as the centre of a large agricultural estate. It was quite wealthy judging by its fine mosaic pavements and bath suite.

We don't know when the Anglo-Saxons arrived here, but there was a settlement well before 847 AD when the land at Halstock was granted to Sherborne Abbey by King Ethelwulf. This grant mentions that there was a little minster or monastery here already at that time. Perhaps this accounts for the name "Halstock" which means "holy place". On the other hand it may refer to Saint Juthware who was martyred here, being beheaded by her brother, Bana, for her Christian beliefs and actions. Many miracles are said to have taken place at her tomb, which was removed to Sherborne Abbey where she became a popular local saint. A former pub "The Quiet Woman" owed its name to her.

Halstock remained in the hands of Sherborne Abbey until the Dissolution, when it fell into lay hands. In 1551 the manors of Halstock and Netherstock were granted to Richard Fermor, in compensation for land taken from him by Henry VIII. The manor of Halstock passed to Thomas Hollis in 1741. He bequeathed it to Thomas Brand and, upon his death, it passed to Dr. Disney. In 1820, half of the estate was sold to the Earl of Ilchester and thereafter it was gradually fragmented.

Prior to 1930, life in Halstock hadn't changed much for several hundred years. It was a self-contained dairy farming community with twenty-three dairy farms within the parish. The farms and the services which supported them were the principal source of employment. There were two shops, two pubs, a post office, a blacksmith, a carpenter, a baker, a cobbler and an undertaker.

Electricity, mains water and sewage came to the village in the 1940s and 50s, and developments in transportation made it much easier for people to live in the village and commute to the towns for work. This brought about a gradual change in the make-up of the local population. This has also been affected in more recent times by the impact of rising house prices on the ability of local folk to purchase property in the village.

A fair amount of building has taken place in the village centre over the past fifty years - Bransford in 1951, St Juthware Close in 1962, Meredith Close in 1990, Bulbridge Mead in 1991, Hollis Way in 1992, the Village shop and Bransford redevelopment in 2001, and the Marriotts Farm Cottages in 2002. Of great significance to the village in the past twenty years was the loss of the school and the pub, both of which had made a considerable contribution to village community life. The village shop and Post Office would also have been lost were it not for the enterprise of the community in enabling a new shop to be built under co-operative ownership.

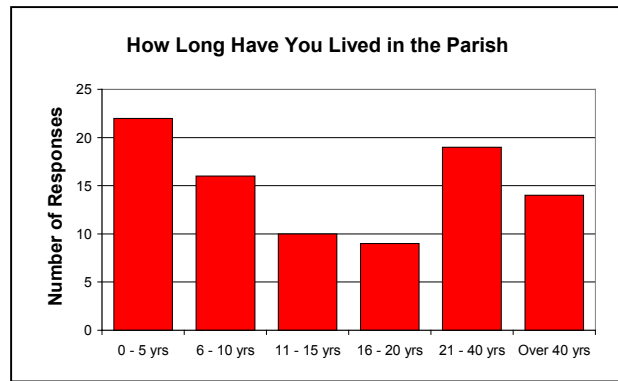
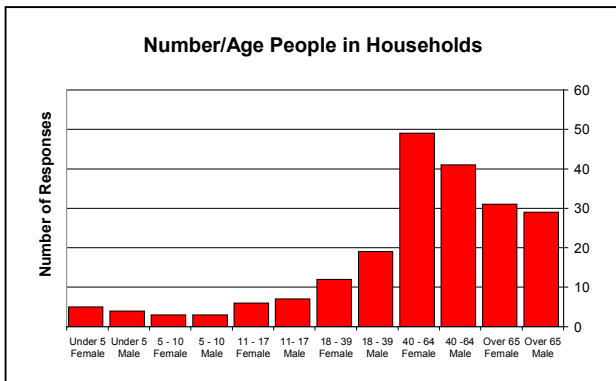
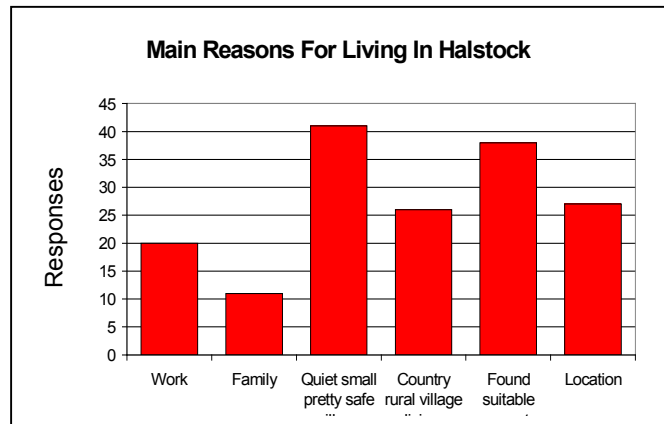
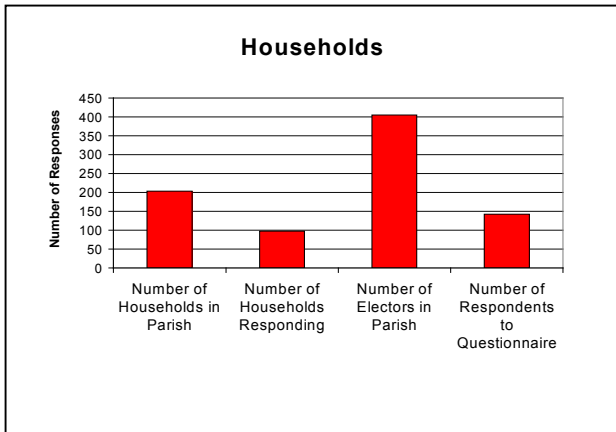
## **How the survey was conducted**

Inspired by the Parish Meeting and run under the auspices of the Parish Council, and having taken advice from Dorset Community Action, a staged approach was taken. Firstly an action committee was formed, and funding obtained from the WDDC. Then two copies of an anonymous questionnaire were circulated to every household, with a separate questionnaire to young people. Information from the 90 questions was then analysed. This was presented in outline to the Parish Meeting, where other ideas and comments were sought. In parallel, a letter was sent to each village group and village business, asking if they had any further needs or comments as a business/group. The WDDC co-ordinator was then consulted to see if anyone else needed to be consulted, and all the results are summarised in this Plan.

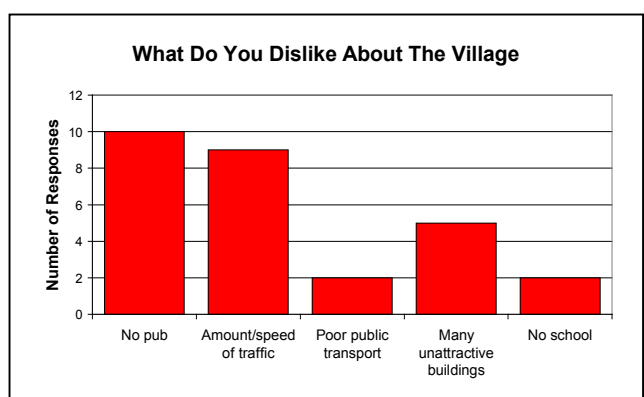
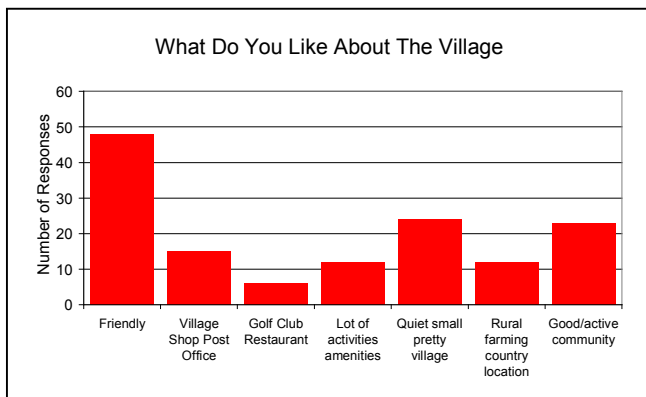
# The Results

There is a full analysis of results available from the parish clerk and these will be posted on the village website. In this section we will concentrate on aspects needing action.

## □ Village Data.

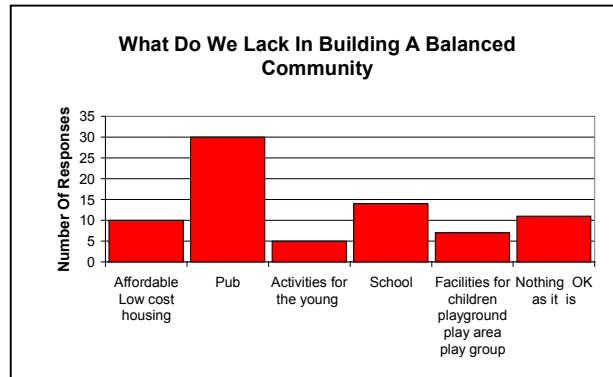
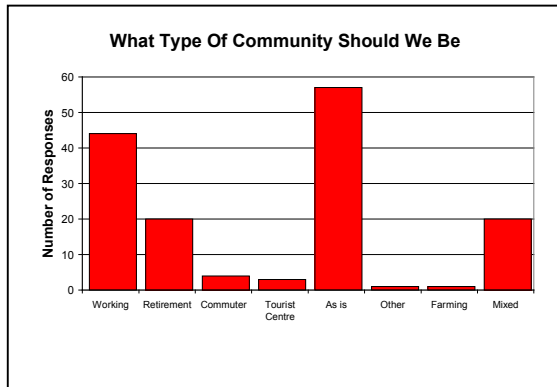


- There were responses from 48% of the 203 households in the parish. Of these, the majority of respondents lived in houses (61%), bungalows (24%) or farms (12%). 87% were owner-occupied, and 98% were their only residence. One can see that the majority are in the 40-64 bracket, which corresponds closely to the normal age distribution in Dorset.
- Apart from those who were born here, the majority chose Halstock because it is a quiet, rural, small, pretty, and/or safe village (34%), because they found a suitable property in this area (20%), because of its ideal location (14%) or because of work here (10%). Thus the majority chose Halstock, rather than had to live here for any other reason.

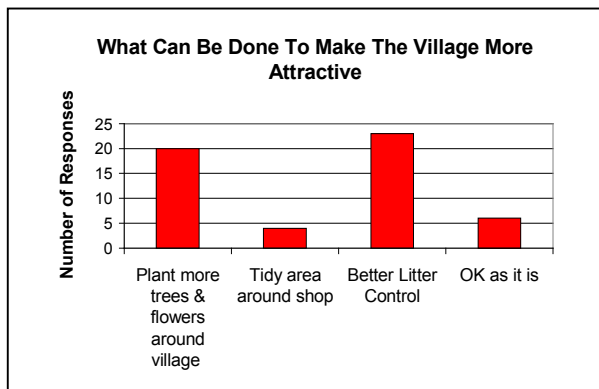


# Village Character and Overall Vision

- Villagers value the friendliness and quality of life in a small rural village, but concerns include the lack of a pub, speeding traffic and the poor planning control which has led to unattractive and out-of-place building



- People mainly want to keep the village as it is, with a mix of working and retired people

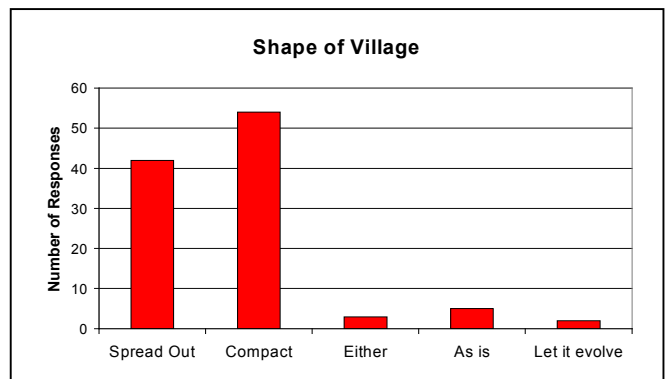
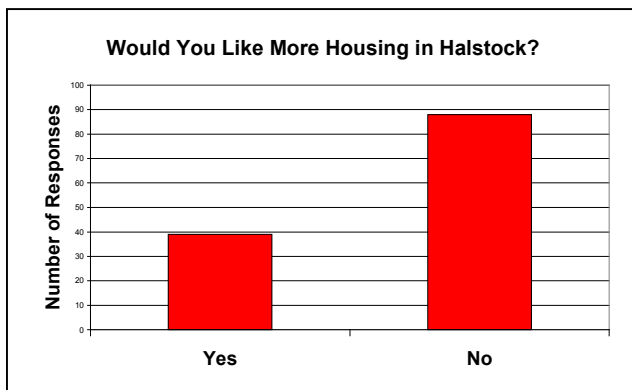


- Planting trees and flowers, and better litter control are the important issues, and will be taken forward by the Parish Council.

**Action:**

- Influence WDDC planners to retain the character of the village as much as possible and to listen more to villagers views.
- Plant more trees and flowers.
- Introduce better litter control measures.
- Examine ways of providing a pub.

# Planning and Housing



- More housing is not favoured by 69%, but if it had to happen, there is a clear majority preference for low-cost housing. There are also differing views as to whether to keep a compact village centre, or spread further out. Compact wins it by a short head.

- When asked where housing could take place, there was mix of responses, covering various parts of the village - 'near the village centre' (34%), Yeovil/Corscombe Road(10%), in-fill (9%). Essentially, it backed up the need for a compact village. Building material favoured stone (44%) or a mixture of materials (29%).

Action: - Influence WDDC planners with regard to new housing applications

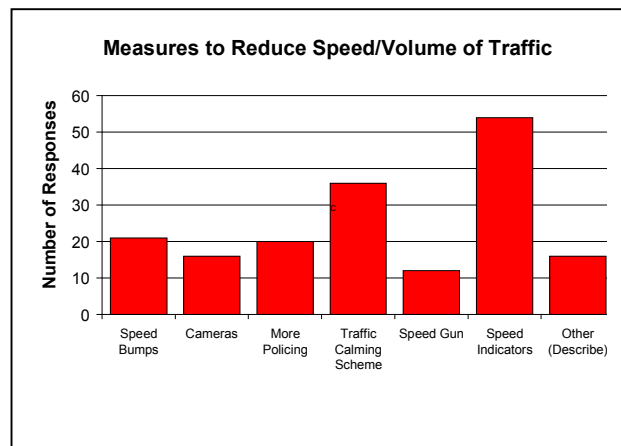
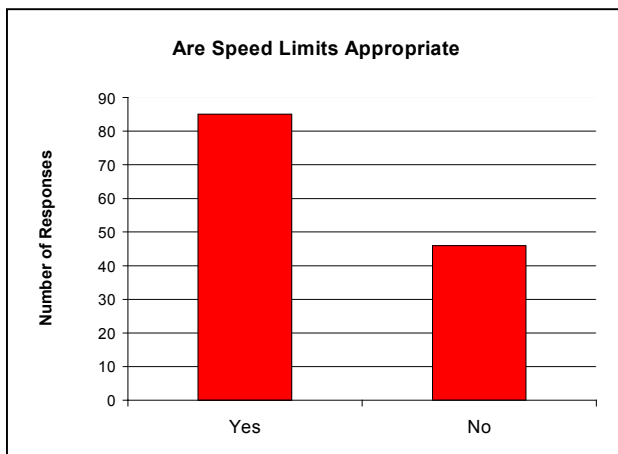
## Jobs and Business

- 43% of respondents were employed or self-employed, 36% retired, and 7% semi-retired. Of those working, 28% work at home or in the parish, 41% within 10 miles (eg Yeovil), and 25% outside 10 miles. In 11% of the households someone was looking for work.
- A majority (58%) felt that we should encourage more jobs in the village, giving a mix of ideas – small businesses, agricultural, part time, care for elderly. 14% felt they would consider starting a business here.

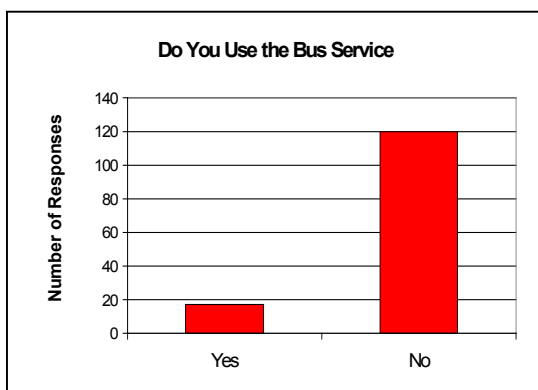
Action:

- Examine the need to promulgate how to find Business Start-up advice

## Transportation and Roads



- **Speed limits.** Whereas the speed limits themselves are considered correct (65%), it is clear that more needs to be done to enforce them – Speed indicators (31%), traffic calming measures (21%), speed bumps (12%), more policing (11%), speed camera (9%), with only a small number wishing to extend the limits themselves.



- **The Bus.** The low numbers of bus users is linked to a very infrequent and limited service, and high car ownership (95%).
- The main incentive to use it more would be a more frequent service, including more destinations (Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport & Beaminster), but the increased usage may not justify the extension to other areas.
- The on-call bookable service is little known.

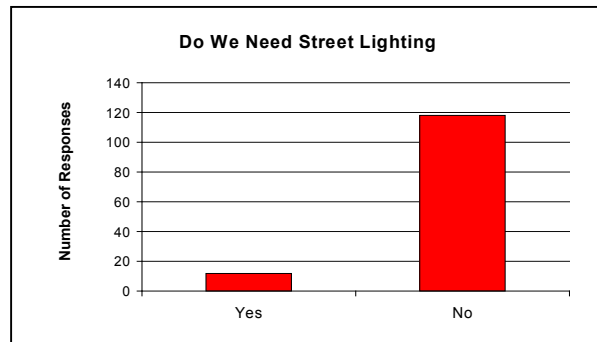
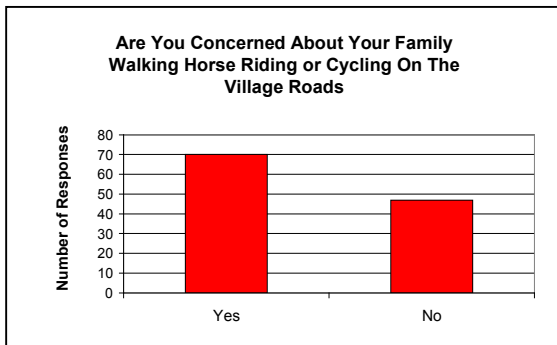


- ❑ **State of the Roads.** A majority 57% feel that the roads are not adequately maintained and suitable for the volume of traffic. They would like to see – filling in potholes (30%), better maintenance (23%), resurfacing (11%), widening narrow parts (6%), imposing size/weight restrictions (5%). [Note: We are all encouraged to 'Call Clarence' on 0800 232323 or on line at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com). to report road defects]
- ❑ People were generally satisfied with the state of pavements (83% rated Good or OK), Fencing (82%), Hedges (88%), verges (78%) and signposts (73%), but there were suggestions to improve each, which will be passed to the Parish Council.
- ❑ 80% use the public footpaths and 77% said they were adequately maintained and signposted.
- ❑ **Parking.** Although 64% found no problem, 36% did. And the main areas of concern are around the shop, the village green, and the bakery.

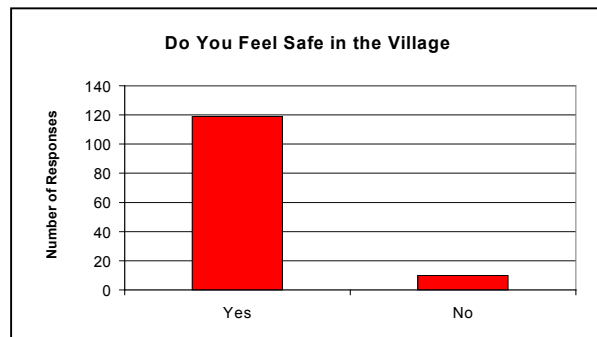
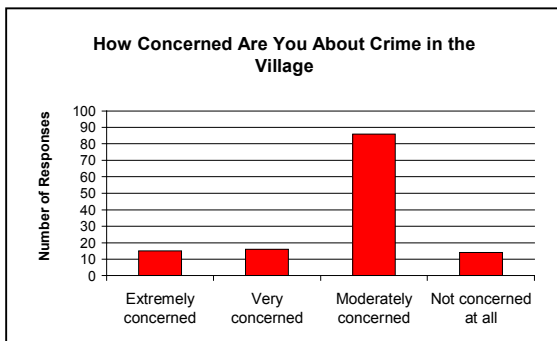
**Action:**

- Examine results of recent speed indicator trial, and propose further measures
- Promulgate the on-call bookable bus better, and see if it then meets our needs.
- Improve system of informing WDDC of road repairs needed and chase up when needed.
- Review parking in village centre.

## Safety and Security



- ❑ Measures to improve safety around the village focused strongly on the control of the speed of traffic (57%), with better warning signage (23%), some widening or extending of pavements and widening the narrow bends.
- ❑ Whereas a majority (55%) considered the pavements to be wheelchair/disability friendly, it is only the users or their helpers who really find out, so the relatively high minority (45%) is the important figure, and action needs to be taken in some areas.



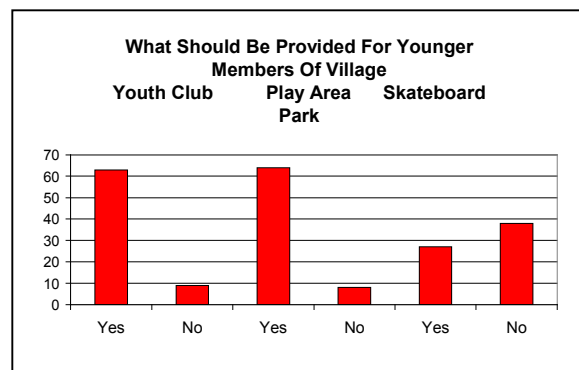
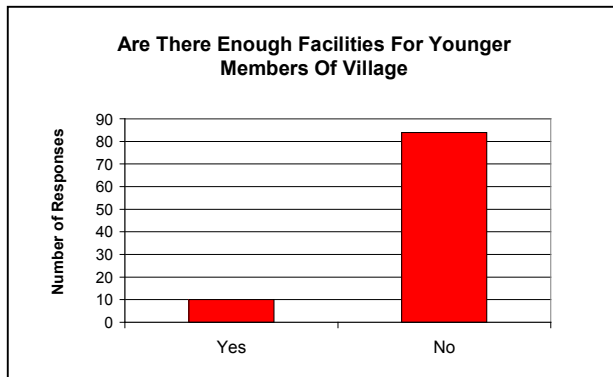
- ❑ **Crime.** These charts indicate that there is a clear concern about crime in the village, but not about violent crime. Burglaries are certainly increasing, and there have been more since the questionnaire. Victims of crime in the parish during the last 3 years run at theft from home or car 13%, vandalism 9%, anti social behaviour 15%, injury 2%. Villagers wish to see more police presence, or local community police officers, and extending the neighbourhood watch scheme. At the moment, 60% receive neighbourhood watch messages, and 94% of those think that they are useful.

**Action:**

- Consider need for warning signage and widening dangerous parts of pavements and roads
- Survey pavements for ease of wheelchair passage, with help of wheelchair user.
- Increase police presence.
- Expand neighbourhood watch and distribution of messages.

## Young People

- ❑ **Main questionnaire.** 89% feel that there are not enough facilities for young people. 87% would like a youth club and 29% would be willing to help.
- ❑ The perennial need for a childrens' play area was again raised, with siting favoured as - near the village hall (50%), St Juthware Close green (22%), the village centre (20%). The problem remains the identification of a site, and we still need someone to loan or let a site to the village. Grants are probably available for the equipment.



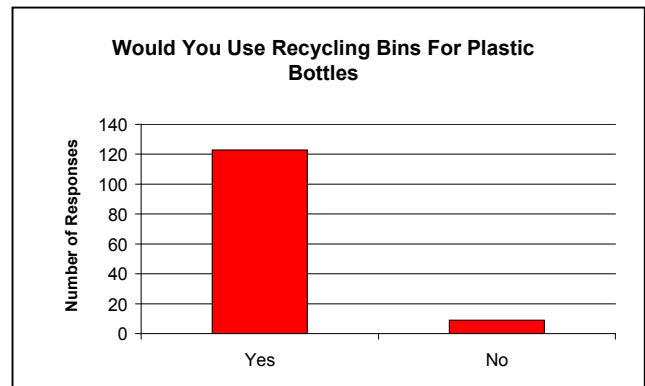
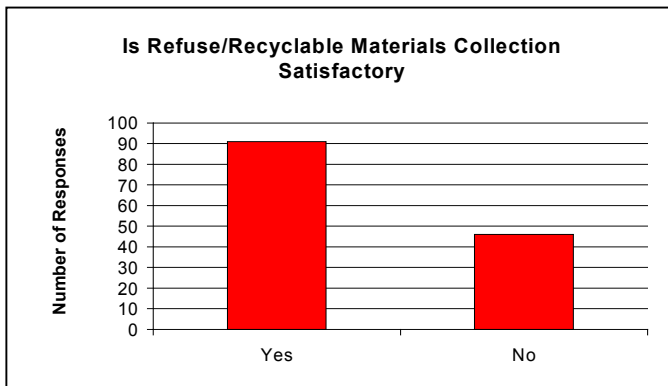
- ❑ A majority (58%) were against a skateboard site, but wanted more sports coaching (74%) in football, tennis, badminton, cricket
- ❑ **Youth questionnaire.** Of our thirty youths aged between 8 and 18, eleven responded, covering ages 12-17yrs. Most attend Beaminster school. They have a range of preferred sports, with the majority liking football or tennis. All of them have hobbies covering a wide range, but 5 of the 11 said that they could not pursue their hobby in the village. They reinforced the need for a youth club and a play area.
- ❑ Their main likes are that it is peaceful, with friends nearby, and that there is a shop. The main dislikes are the lack of public transport, especially at the weekends and the poor condition of the football pitch.
- ❑ Half of them would like to stay in the village as adults, but 80% felt that they would not be able to (due to housing etc).

**Action:**

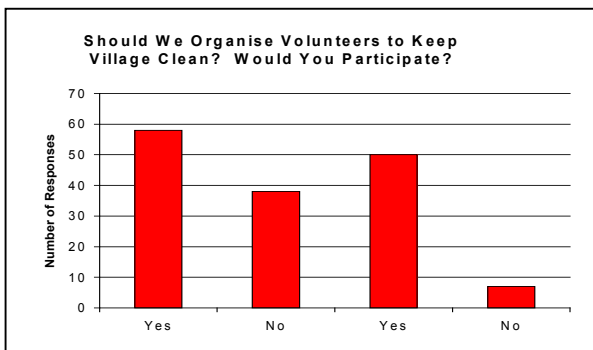
- Reinforce search for a site for a childrens' play area.
- Re-establish a youth club and use that as a focus for examining what other facilities are needed.

## Environment and Pollution

- ❑ **Refuse & Recycling.** There was a good response on recycling, with many suggestions, but the main issues are the need for a plastic bottle & plastic bag collection (62%), which 93% said that they would use, large item collection (11%) [note; this is already done if you phone WDDC], and garden waste (5%) There was also a call for recycling facilities to be re-instated in the village.



- ❑ **Litter.** The item that most thought would improve the attractiveness of the village was better litter control (32%).



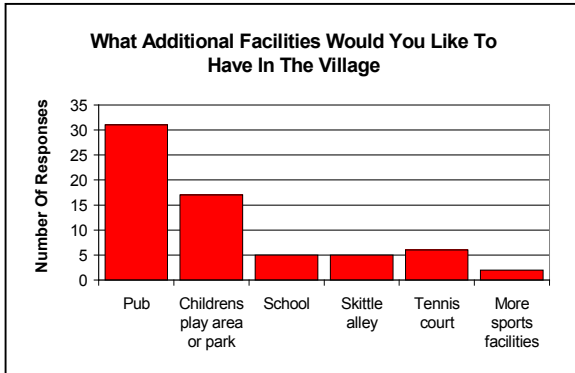
- ❑ A system of volunteers [already done to some extent] should be extended, with 50 people saying that they would help.
- ❑ 56% would like litter bins (village centre/ bus shelter/village green (35%), around shop (29%), village hall (19%), spread around (16%) ; who empties them will need to be addressed.

- ❑ **Dog mess.** Although the majority (56%) considered it not a problem, many of these may be dog owners, and the significant 44% minority needs to be noted. Education of owners, signs, fines and the provision of doggie bins all featured in responses.
- ❑ **Noise.** For the 33% who felt that noise is an issue, traffic and aircraft are the main culprits.
- ❑ **Light.** This is certainly area-dependent. 80% are not affected. For the 20% who are, the golf driving range is the main concern (57%), with Yeovil light also an issue (29%).

**Action:**

- Ask WDDC for plastic recycling facility and to re-instate Village Hall collection site.
- Extend system of litter volunteers
- Provide bins and collection, and doggie bins.
- Reduce traffic speed to decrease noise.

## Local Facilities



- ❑ The provision of a pub with a skittle alley is a significant issue.
- ❑ A play area has long been considered, and the letting, loaning or giving some land near to the village centre is still needed.
- ❑ A new school is highly unlikely at the current time but options for tennis courts can be examined.

### Action:

- Continue to examine means of providing a pub.
- Actively look for land for lease for a play area.
- Examine options for tennis provision.

**Village Facilities** were rated as follows: (numbers are as percentage of responses not total of inhabitants)

	% who use it at some time	% who rate good	% who rate OK
Village Hall	93%	67%	32%
Shop	100%	67%	32%
Post Office	96%	73%	26%
Community Room	65%	55%	40%
Golf Club (Private)	83%	84%	16%

Specific suggestions for improvement will be passed to the owners, managers etc

## Church

- ❑ Although only 25% use the church on a regular basis, and another 50% go occasionally, 86% considered it important to village life and 50% said that they would contribute regularly to keep it open. The PCC will surely be chasing this up and asking those people to come forward! The various ideas for extending its use will be passed to the PCC.

### Action:

- Pass ideas to PCC

## Public Utilities and Services

	Satisfaction level	Reasons for dissatisfaction
Power	84%	Too many power cuts
Telecom	89%	Poor/no mobile phone reception
Water	96%	Pressure surges, taste
Sewerage	73%	Mains drainage not available to many at edge of village

## Health and Social Services

- 88% are satisfied with medical and dental facilities. There was a high level of satisfaction with ambulance (80% good/excellent) and doctors (73%), but less so with the out of hours service (56%). Some would like a Beaminster practice to operate at the village hall, as does the Yetminster practice.
- 55% wanted a first-responders unit in the village and 13 people said that they would help.

### *Action:*

- *Contact Beaminster Practice*
- *Ask for Halstock volunteer to co-ordinate first-responders in conjunction with Corscombe*
- *Discuss the number of power cuts with Southern Electricity*

## Leisure Activities

- Additional leisure activities and facilities that people would like to see included tennis, cricket, a gym, and some that are already available, such as table tennis and keep fit, and fishing and sailing (at Sutton Bingham). A commendable 53% said that they would help to set up and run activities. The Horticultural Society would like some allotments and more storage space at the village hall.

### *Action:*

- *Advertise the activities that are available and*
- *Examine need for allotments and storage at village hall.*

## Communication within the Village

- 84% feel well informed about village activities, and there were various suggestions about how to improve it – more notice boards (there are already 3 and it is arguable if we need more or fewer), a village website (see [www.halstockonline.co.uk](http://www.halstockonline.co.uk)), more use of the Chimes (always read by 87% and occasionally by another 12%), posters, a village newsletter etc. The most read notice board is outside the shop, followed by the village hall, then the Community Room. However, it was also clear from responses that people do not use the facilities already available, and better promulgation of how things are advertised may also help.

### *Action:*

- *Draw attention to notice boards and the Community Room.*

## Tourism

- There was a 50/50 split on the need to attract more visitors to the village and to erect a tourist information notice board. For many, it ties in with the desire to retain the present size and character of the village.

### *Action:*

- *Examine provision of tourist information board, siting and content.*

## Next steps and action plan

The action points from this plan have been collated into a separate action table, which now becomes the responsibility of the Parish Council.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the action committee members for their work - Peter Brinck, Bridget Dearlove, Paddy Hester, Michelle Humphreys, Peter Lemmey, John Prior, Dave Wright, and in particular to Tony Woodroffe for his extensive analysis of results and Martin Manning as Chairman and Editor. Also to Simon Thompson of DCA for advice, and to all villagers who gave their views and participated in discussions.

We also need to acknowledge the work of the many people who give their time and effort to run or use village facilities or groups. Without them, there would be no village life. We also need to encourage all villagers to help in some way, as what you get out of life is proportional to what you put in!



