

PANGBOURNE
PARISH COUNCIL
PANGBOURNE VILLAGE
PLAN
REFRESH 2011



October 2011

Refresh Objectives

This Refresh 2011 document presents our vision for the village and will assist in shaping its development during the next 5 to 10 years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Special thanks go to:

- Members of the Village who completed the Questionnaire distributed in the summer of 2009 and those who contributed at the Drop-in Event in March 2010.
- Parish Councillors who delivered the Questionnaire to all dwellings within the Parish.
- Pangbourne Post Office for collecting the completed Questionnaires.
- Greenham Common Trust – for their assistance with the Questionnaire from its design to content, production and data analysis.
- West Berkshire Council - in particular Sarah Ward of The Community Council for Berkshire. Without her support and guidance this would not have been possible.
- The Village Plan Steering Committee – June Hughes, Fiona Hope and Heather Leighton-Jones.



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PANGBOURNE VILLAGE PLAN REFRESH – 2011

Background

The purpose of the Village Plan is to help the wider community of Pangbourne to develop for the benefit of all those who live and or work within the Parish and those who use the village amenities.

The Pangbourne Village Plan was adopted in 2003 by the village and West Berkshire Council (WBC). Pangbourne was one of the first villages in West Berkshire to be involved in the village planning process; it is, therefore, now one of the first to undergo the 'Refresh Process' to ensure that the Plan moves forward and builds on its achievements, looking to the future.

The 2003 Plan identified the vision for the Village as follows

"Our vision for the future of Pangbourne is one where the essential character of Pangbourne as a compact, caring and socially varied community in an attractive and accessible setting is sustained. The vision is to maintain Pangbourne as a pleasant, thriving village in which to live, work, shop and play, while not being afraid to confront and challenge the future, coping more effectively with the impact of cars and lorries on the environment of the village, ensuring a continuing bus and rail service, and promoting the needs and priorities of Pangbourne through an informed and active public."

Achievements since 2003:

The original 2003 Action Plan led to a tremendous number of changes and improvements within the Village. Some are certainly more visible than others but they all play a part in ensuring that Pangbourne continues to thrive.

The original Plan identified eleven priority proposals to achieve our vision for Pangbourne. These are listed below:

	Proposal	Achievements
1	Resurfacing of car parks. Road surfaces and pavements. Street lighting.	Station Road and Dolphin Centre car parks resurfaced. Reading Road largely resurfaced, and some pavements. All street lights in conservation area replaced.
2	Improved overall appearance of the village.	Provided hanging baskets etc. and encouraged businesses to look after them. Improved public refuse bins and recycling. Litter awareness days. New signage.
3	Continued availability of sheltered accommodation and respite care.	Liaising with Pangbourne Pyramid Project, Sovereign Housing Association & Rural Housing Trust, ongoing.

4	Ensure Public toilets open all year.	Yes in Station Road Car Park and 8 months in Recreation Ground.
5	Improve information services.	New Parish notice boards. Parish Council Website. Pangbourne Amenity Leaflet
6	Increase traffic calming and safety for pedestrians and reduce congestion.	Vehicle activated speed signs. Improved street lighting in the Wharf/Ferry Lane area. Improved pedestrian crossings. Improved road safety at a) Pangbourne Hill/Tidmarsh Rd junction, b) Shooters Hill crossing to station, c) Whitchurch Road crossing to surgery. Traffic Management Survey. 20 MPH Zone.
7	Traffic and parking restrictions.	Parking survey.
8	Extension and refurbishment of Village Hall.	New small hall extension and improved entrance hall; refurbishment on-going.
9	Prepare a Village Design Statement.	Completion & adoption of the Village Design Statement in 2005.
10	Protect and conserve wildlife habitats in countryside.	Instigation of tree management programme on River Meadow/Recreation Ground. Pang & Sul flood alleviation work.
11	Increase Library opening hours.	Hours increased.

Other notable achievements since the 2003 Plan are:

- 1 New playground facilities at the Recreation Ground – identified in the Plan as the number two asset in the village after the River Meadow.
- 2 Installation of cycle racks by library/village hall car park.
- 3 Installation of CCTV cameras.
- 4 Creation of the Business Forum (not active in 2010).
- 5 Introduction of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Boathouse Surgery.

Many of these projects have taken a number of years to deliver, relying on financial support from and discussion/agreement with WBC and other partners. Some have been easier and quicker to achieve with enthusiastic committed support from local organisations and individuals.

NB None of these projects would have been achieved without the evidence shown in the Village Plan, which has been an essential fund raising tool.

In total over £240,000 has been raised since 2005 including:

Village Hall: SEEDA - £60,000, WREN - £20,000, Biffa - £40,000,

WBC Members bid- £20,000, Greenham Common Trust - £12,870

Recreation Ground: Playbuilder Funding - £49,500, WBC Members bid - £20,000, Heart of Pangbourne - £2,000

And several grants of £5000 from the WBC Parish Plan fund towards various projects at Village Hall, Cycle Racks, Street Lighting, CCTV cameras & Finger Posts.

On-going Projects:

1. Sheltered accommodation and affordable housing – plans for the development of sheltered accommodation in the village have not been successfully progressed. In 2008 Sovereign Housing Association (SHA) was refused planning permission to build new sheltered housing accommodation to replace the bungalows in Purley Way and the present sheltered accommodation in Pages Gardens. The PC is also liaising with the Pangbourne Pyramid Project, SHA & the CCB Housing enabler.

In 2009 a Housing Needs Survey was carried out for the Parish Council by CCB's Rural Housing Enabler, Arlene Kersley, which indicated that there is a requirement for affordable housing, particularly for younger residents. It has not yet been possible, however, to identify land for this type of housing.

2. Disabled access to Railway Station – capital projects which require input and financial support from Network Rail, First Great Western, WBC and others can take many years to develop and there is on-going dialogue with these key organisations. Improved access to the north bound platform remains a vital issue, which is also being looked at by the Eastern Area Vision Task Force of WBC.

3. External signage on commercial premises – unsuitable signage is regularly reported to WBC Planning Enforcement Team and action is taken when due process can be applied.

4. Parking – a Civil Parking Survey was undertaken by WBC in 2009. Regular efforts are made by the WBC Community Enforcement Officers to monitor and address parking issues. Double yellow lines in key hot spots and the introduction of Residents Parking Permits have also assisted towards alleviating the problem, for example in lower St James Close and Horseshoe Road. Bollards have been installed outside the Londis shop.

5. Speeding – use of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and regular liaison with WBC Highways Department and the police continue to make temporary improvements to the situation. Regular articles included in the Parish Magazine draw attention to speed limits. Speeding is an item discussed regularly at the Pangbourne Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). The reduction of the 50mph limit to 40mph on the A340 between Pangbourne and Tidmarsh has been approved by the WBC Speed Limit Committee and, after public consultation, has now been implemented.

6. Planning Policies - Pangbourne Parish Council continues to uphold both national and local guidelines on Planning Policy. The Village Design Statement is deemed to be a material consideration by WBC planners when considering local planning applications and making decisions.

7. Flood/Emergency Group – In March 2007 the Parish Council set up a Flood Group on the advice of WBC. Work had started on this when the village was badly affected by the floods of 2007. The fact that there was a plan in place, if not complete, was a great help. Since then the Group has worked closely with WBC, the Environment Agency (EA) and Thames Water and a great deal of work has been done on the Sulham Brook and the Pang to help alleviate further flooding.

8. Refurbishment of Village Hall – continue with improvements to facilities for the benefit of residents and other users, eg. Rear car park, kitchen units/equipment, flooring, renew toilet facilities, replace heating boilers.

The Village Plan Refresh Process

These Plans should be living documents and to this end WBC now requires communities to revisit and refresh them every 5 years. The purpose of this process is to update the Action Plans following extensive consultation with their communities. This ensures that the documents are relevant and up to date to meet changing populations and emerging topics of interest.

The Parish Council initiated our Refresh process with a drop-in event in the Village Hall in March 2008. This was a very successful day, attended by about 200 residents who were asked to comment by means of post-it notes on their various concerns/opinions and views for the future of the village.

These views were analysed and provided the basis for the questions asked on the Refresh Questionnaire. The Parish Council also included questions to help with on-going issues and measure residents' views on communication by both the Council and WBC. Over 1,000 questionnaires, one for each household, were delivered by hand to every property within the Parish during the summer of 2009. Residents were asked to post them back to the team or drop them in at key points in the community, namely the Post Office or village hall.

The number of completed responses received was 285. These results reflected the views of 25% of the households and 21% of the Parish population.

The Parish Council and the Refresh team were very grateful for the expert help received from Greenham Common Trust, not only with the analysis but also the design and production of the questionnaires.

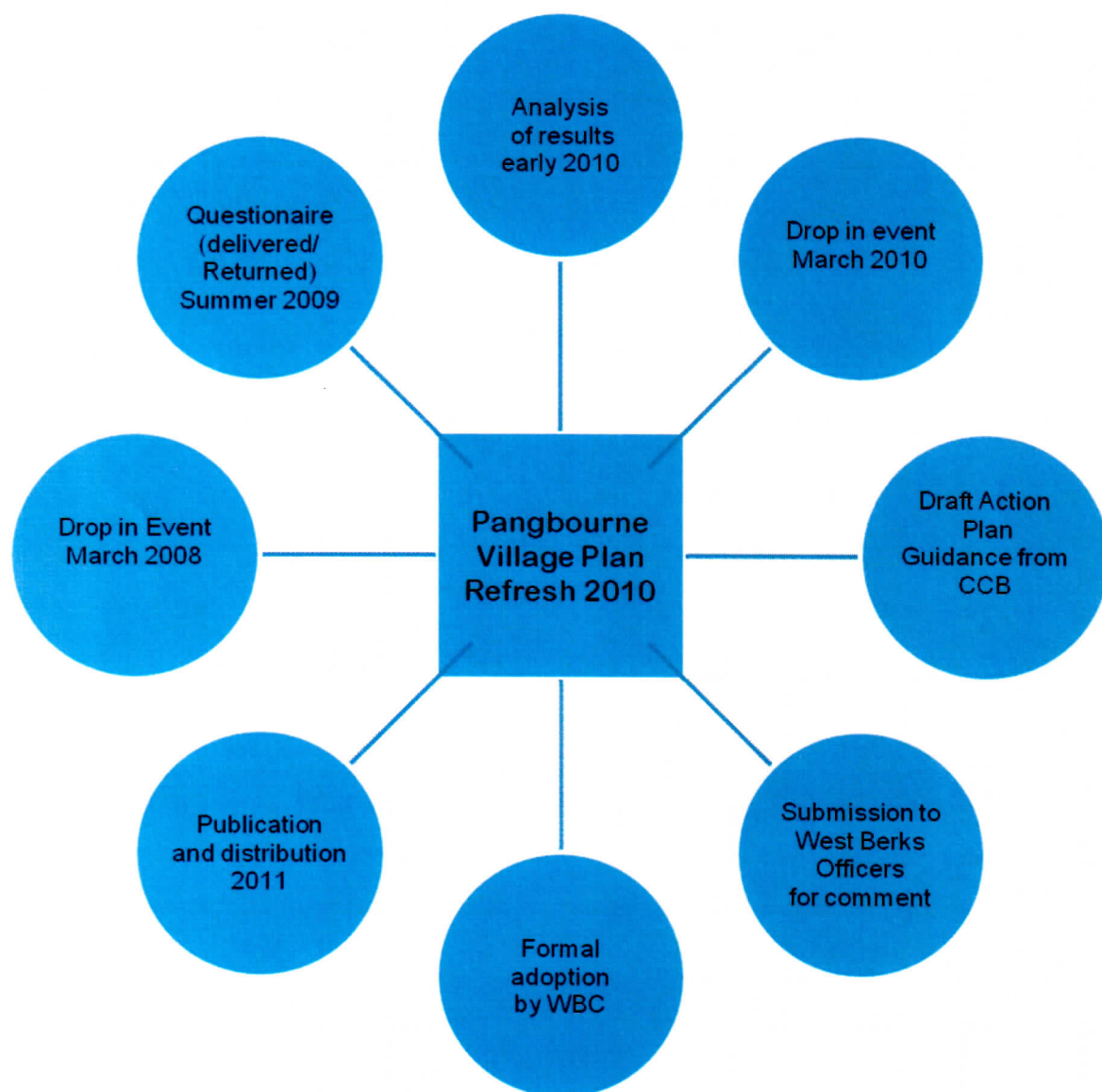
The responses received did not reflect the demographics of the Parish, with over 40% of respondents being aged 60 years or more, and this needs to be taken into account when reviewing these responses.

In order to address this issue further, public consultation was undertaken at a further drop-in event on 20th March 2010, also in the Village Hall.

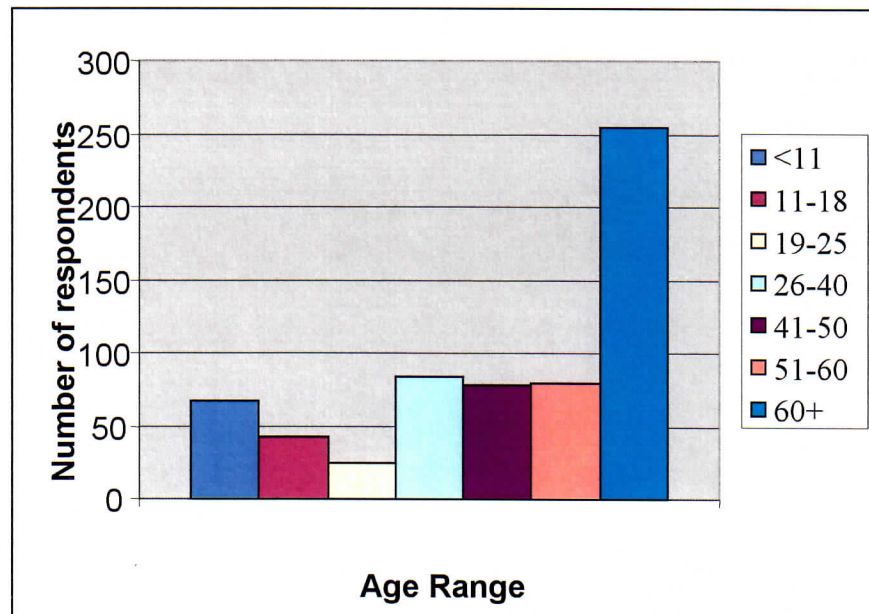
The purpose of this event was to summarise our initial findings, highlight some of our achievements since 2003 and get further input and comment from a wider cross-section of the community.

Recognising that the Refresh process has not yet reached all areas of the community and achieved a wider feedback on the issues raised within the questionnaire, our Action Plan will identify those groups within the community whose views have not yet been received and we will address this matter.

The diagram below illustrates the steps the team took to produce this report:



The following bar chart shows the age ranges of the 285 people who responded to the questionnaire and answered the question relating to 'age'.



66% of respondents have lived within the Parish for more than 10 years and the average number of occupants per household is between 1 and 3.

NB: Throughout this report all percentages (%) referred to are, unless otherwise stated, the percentage of people giving a response to a particular question, based on the number of people who answered that question.

Some interesting findings emerged from the Questionnaires but overall the views of the community had not changed greatly from the original consultations for the 2003 Plan; indicating that, on the whole, Pangbourne was a strong village with a good sense of community which should retain and enhance its rural nature while remaining a viable centre in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Although communication can always be improved, the survey showed 85% felt the Parish Council, through the Pangbourne Magazine and the new website, was communicating effectively with residents, and WBC members were also communicating well.

The Questionnaire asked if residents were prepared to pay an increase in Council Tax of up to £10 per household to employ Neighbourhood Wardens; of respondents 75% said either "Yes" or "Possibly".

The Village Plan Refresh Action Plan – Outline Framework

The process of Parish planning has developed extensively since the Council published its first Village Plan in 2003. Establishing best practice from the experiences of many communities, WBC has now developed a template for communities to use when formulating their individual Parish Plans.

The underlying requirement for communities, in accordance with WBC objectives, is to consider their needs and aspirations under the following five key

Sustainable Community Strategy Themes:

- **A Stronger Community** – actions in this category should seek to include everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, providing similar life opportunities and accessible services for all.
- **A Greener Community** – this will include reduction of the community carbon footprint, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encouraging consumption of local produce and increasing the diversity of local wildlife.
- **A Safer Community** - examples of this include reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads and planning for emergencies.
- **A Prosperous Community** - supporting the economy of the village and rural employment, and encouraging tourism.
- **A Healthy Community** – communities have been asked to think widely about health, including such issues as fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving the health and well-being of local people, including young people, and promoting the independence of those residents who are vulnerable.

The following pages give a summary of what Pangbourne residents have said through their responses to the questionnaire and comments at the subsequent drop-In event held on 20th March 2010.

A New Vision for Pangbourne

A Stronger Community

Questionnaire results and commentary:

1. Business Forum: re-establish a Forum to support and encourage local shops/businesses and help to prevent further closures in the village and Horseshoe Park, thereby strengthening the sustainability of Pangbourne as a local service centre.

2. Pangbourne Partnership: promote and enhance communication and involvement within the village, fostering greater community cohesion and commitment to its future.

3. Affordable Housing: Continue striving for affordable housing in the community for local people, a need highlighted in the Rural Housing Survey 2009.

4. Planning Applications: take into account the views of local people when determining planning applications in line with the Village Design Statement; emphasising that any proposed development should be in keeping with the local context, especially the AONB.

5. Railway Station: the questions relating to this mode of transport ranged from usage, accessibility, parking, information and litter and whether or not the Parish Council should investigate the implications of joining the 'Adopt a Station' scheme run by First Great Western.

There are a core number of regular users of the station – approximately 12% of respondents - although just under 64% only use the service occasionally or once or twice a month.

For those respondents who do not use the train service for journeys that could be undertaken by train, the main reasons include the cost of train travel, the time involved, poor access to platforms and insufficient parking provision.

Direct responses to the questionnaire from regular users suggest they are generally happy with all aspects of information, litter, parking and the overall appearance of the station. However, some of the comments received suggest otherwise, particularly relating to access, and reflect the need to consult further.

Disability audit undertaken and FGW has applied for improvement grants eg for lift. Car park is to be extended and improvements have been made to lighting and stairs.

With regard to investigating the implications of joining the 'Adopt a Station' scheme run by First Great Western – 59% said "Yes" and 27% replied "It depends". The remaining respondents said "No". The scheme aims to provide an attractive and welcoming station for users which will encourage people to make more use of train services.

6. Buses: 58% of respondents said that they never travelled by bus, while it would appear that many of the remaining users travel by bus only occasionally and very few use the service regularly. This could be because the service in the area is infrequent; certainly a majority of users felt the service was inadequate.

Vision for the Future:

To encourage, maintain and improve current public transport services and associated infrastructure and, where possible, help promote a greater usage of these services and reduce the dependence on cars.

Key actions:

PPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following:

1. Re-establishing a Business Forum.
2. Forming a Pangbourne Partnership with other active groups, for example, the Pangbourne Residents Association (PRA) and the Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability Group (PAWS).
3. Promoting affordable housing for vulnerable people in the area.
4. Defending planning applications which protect the semi-rural nature of the village in the AONB.
5. Providing more parking spaces for commuters and others at the station.
6. Investigating the actual usage of the bus service and seeking the provision of better timetabling information.
7. Understanding providers' plans regarding service patterns and future changes.
6. Identifying factors that would encourage more users of public transport, for example, the issues raised regarding station parking, access, litter, services etc.
7. Supporting local clubs and organisations such as football, bowls and tennis.
8. Finding out more about joining the 'Adopt a Station' Scheme.

A Greener Community

Questionnaire results and commentary:

1. Environment: in this section of the Questionnaire respondents were asked for their views on a variety of issues including graffiti, dog fouling, fly tipping, litter, street cleaning and fly-posting. From this list the main concerns for residents were litter and dog fouling. While not a significant problem in many areas, both were highlighted as a minor issue in many areas of the village. With regard to whether the dog waste bins are adequate, 72.5% replied "No" or that larger ones are required.

81% of respondents were of the view that the public toilets in Pangbourne are well maintained. The need for the Recreation Ground toilets to be open all year round was not supported.

2. Conservation: 55% said they would not be willing to become involved (this could be due to the demographics of the respondents) but that all residents should be encouraged to take responsibility for energy savings.



Since completion of the survey some residents who had indicated an interest have formed the Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group (PAWS) in conjunction with the Church Environment Group and residents from Whitchurch. The Group meets regularly, with projects and activities successfully underway. PAWS is also considering some of the points covered in paragraph 3 below in relation to energy saving. The formation of PAWS underlines and supports the importance of the Refresh process.

3. Energy Saving: the responses to the question whether respondents would like energy saving measures to be investigated to improve the environment provoked a mixed response.

81% were keen to see a reduction in the number of plastic bags used. 66% agreed with a reduction in night time shop lighting but nearly 70% did not agree with a reduction in night time street lighting.

4. Allotments: while this issue was not directly addressed within the survey, there has been a substantial increase in interest and demand for allotments.

Vision for the future:

To work towards being an efficient and sustainable community.

PPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following:

1. Supporting sustainability of the village, working with appropriate partnerships including PAWS.
2. Targeting specific dog-fouling and litter problem locations with letter drops and other communication to address these issues.
3. Organising an annual litter-picking day.

A Safer Community

Questionnaire results and commentary:

1. Neighbourhood Wardens: the Questionnaire asked whether residents thought Pangbourne would benefit from joining the Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme which has been very successful in Purley and Theale. Almost 50% responded that they didn't know how the scheme works; just over 42% said "Yes", while 75% indicated "Yes/possibly".

The Questionnaire asked if residents were prepared to pay an increase in Council Tax of up to £10 per household to employ Neighbourhood Wardens and 75% said either "Yes" or "Possibly". A large number said they didn't know enough to answer.



Taking account of this response the Neighbourhood Wardens were asked to attend the drop-In event in March 2010 to offer further information about this service. The additional feedback from the event gave resounding support for this issue to be investigated further. At the Annual Parish meeting the following month, the Neighbourhood Wardens gave a further presentation, as a result of which it was proposed and accepted that the Parish Council investigate this matter in terms of funding etc. and to join the scheme in April 2011.

2. Cemetery Footpath: the response to this question was particularly high, with 75% of respondents supporting the idea of an investigation into the possibility of a footpath being created on Pangbourne Hill up to the cemetery. The construction of a footpath is strongly supported by Rector and PCC of St James the Less.

3. Speeding/Parking: this remains a real concern for many within the village. While it was not specifically addressed within the questionnaire, many comments were made highlighting the situation and this is an on-going issue. A variety of schemes and improvements have been introduced since the original Village Plan was implemented. Speeding is still an issue on Shooters Hill, Reading Road (by the School) Tidmarsh Road and Pangbourne Hill. Parking around the School and in Horseshoe Road remains a problem.

4. Street Lighting: continue working with WBC to improve Street Lighting on Tidmarsh Road and Pangbourne Hill. Funded by PPC with monies from WBC members bid due for completion Spring 2012.

5. Footpaths: 85% of respondents indicated that the existing footpaths are easily accessible, with only 7.5% disagreeing. Almost 74% agreed that they are in good condition.

6. Flood/Emergency: a working group will continue to monitor and oversee any possible flooding or other emergency in the future. Working with WBC, EA, Thames Water/ Pangbourne & Whitchurch Community Responders and residents to develop and expand the flood/emergency plan.

Vision for the Future:

To help make Pangbourne a safe place for everyone to live, work and enjoy, with drivers discouraged from speeding in the village and children and the elderly are able to negotiate the pavements safely.

Key actions:

PPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following:

1. Ensuring maximum benefit to community from joining the Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme.
2. Reducing/minimising parking problems around the school and ensuring safe crossing of Reading Road. An improved crossing has been installed.
3. Introducing speed reduction measures on Reading Road, Shooters Hill & Pangbourne Hill. Monitoring new speed restrictions on Tidmarsh Road.
4. Continue working with WBC to improve street lighting on Tidmarsh Road and Pangbourne Hill.
5. Investigating the possibility of creating a footpath on Pangbourne Hill from the Church to the Cemetery.
6. Continuing to work with WBC and the police to review speeding hot spots within the village and implement appropriate action.
7. Producing maps, walking guides to local footpaths. Cycle map produced 2011 by PAWS and WBC.
8. Continuing to work with the Pangbourne NAG (Neighbourhood Action Group) and other local partnerships.

A Prosperous Community

Questionnaire results and commentary:

1. Residents views: the Questionnaire asked whether residents thought local government (Parish Council and WBC) were sufficiently aware of their views and concerns. The response was an overwhelming "Yes" with almost 85% in agreement.

2. Communication: Residents were asked whether they felt communication between the Parish Council and residents was adequate. Almost 80% agreed that it was adequate, while 17% said it could be improved.

3. Overall appearance of the Village: asked whether they thought the general appearance of the village centre was satisfactory, 82.5% of the respondents said "Yes". In view of the current economic climate and the on-going changes within the village centre, e.g. shop/retail closures, we would expect this figure to fluctuate.

Vision for the Future:

To continue ensuring Pangbourne residents' views are well represented within WBC and seek to maintain and improve modes of effective communication between the Parish Council/WBC and the residents.

Key actions:

PPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following:

1. Promoting the re-establishment of the Business Forum.
2. Continually reviewing how information can be transmitted effectively by the Parish Council to residents.
3. Improving communication through the Council's website.
4. Building good relationships with the business community.
5. Maintaining and improving the overall appearance of the village centre to encourage locals and visitors to shop there.
6. Continuing improvements to the Village Hall for all users.

A Healthy Community

Questionnaire results and commentary:

1. Recreation Ground Play Area: when asked if there are sufficient recreational facilities in the village, bearing in mind the high number of respondents over 60 years old, it was not surprising to receive a response of 72% saying "Yes".

Prior to the Questionnaire a survey was undertaken with younger residents and actual users of the Recreation Ground via the School, Mothers and Toddler Groups, Brownies and other local neighbourhood groups. As a result, and as an on-going action from the original Village Plan, the old Recreation Ground play area has been removed and replaced with new equipment, a new surface and considerable improvements in terms of accessibility.

It has been identified through the responses that the majority of users walk to the Recreation Ground. Although comments were received that on occasion there is a lack of parking space due to non-recreation ground users using this free parking facility. However, 92% of respondents did not believe there was an issue with parking in the Recreation Ground Car Park.

2. Chiltern Walk Play Area: is an area of public space within the village that requires attention. 76% of respondents advised that they did not wish to see improvements to the Chiltern Walk Play area – this may be due to the disproportionately high number of respondents who are over 60 years old.

3. Cycle Facilities and Routes: comments and feedback received on this proposal from the questionnaire and drop-in event indicate there is evidence of strong support for the Pangbourne to Theale and Pangbourne to Purley cycle routes to continue to be considered by the Parish Council and WBC.

Vision for the Future:

To support the continued provision and development of appropriate recreational and leisure facilities to improve Pangbourne as a 'healthy' place to live.

Key actions:

PPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following:

1. Chiltern walk – working with residents within the immediate vicinity to establish the need for improvement and investigate the feasibility of such a project.
2. Cycle routes – working with WBC and other partners to establish the feasibility of such proposals, i.e. from Pangbourne to Theale and Pangbourne to Purley. In WBC Eastern Area Vision plan.
3. Further consultation targeting young families and working with young people to address issues relevant to them.
4. The provision of more facilities for young people, especially the 11 – 16 age group, eg. new Skateboard Park.

Village Plan Refresh Implementation

The following steps will be undertaken by the Parish Council, who will monitor implementation of the Action Plan;

- Required Working Groups will be identified and established
- Key individuals and Organisations will be approached
- Liaison with existing Groups as necessary
- Partnerships formed
- Linking with the current Parish Council activities being progressed, for example:
 - Highways and speeding issues
 - Parking
 - Neighbourhood Wardens
 - Proposals for Chiltern Walk
 - Village Hall Refurbishment
 - The Neighbourhood Action Group
 - Allotments management

Community-based projects will only be achieved if there is support within the community.

If any of the projects are of interest; residents, businesses and others who would like to become involved should please contact:

Mavis Law
Clerk to the Parish Council
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Email: clerk@pangbourne-pc.gov.uk