



LEEK WOOTTON & GUY'S CLIFFE
PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Plan





Parish plan

Introduction

Welcome to the Parish Plan for the parish of Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton and Guy's Cliffe. The plan has been developed by a Steering Group, formed in November 2009, at the request of the Parish Council, to consult the community and identify the needs and wishes of the residents.

The Plan is intended to be a statement of what the Parish does and does not want, identifying a number of 'Actions' to be taken forward for the Parish to develop and improve over the next few years or more, using the plan as a reference point.

Background to the development of the Parish Plan

The general consensus of the Steering Group, at the first meeting, was that "engagement" of residents was the key factor in developing the plan. A 'flyer' was produced to raise awareness in the Parish that a Steering Group had been formed to produce a Parish Plan; what such a plan was designed to achieve; how views of residents would be obtained and that results would be communicated to the Parish Council and subsequently to residents.

The Residents' Survey questionnaire was developed for distribution to all properties in the Parish with relevant specific questions agreed in Committee. The Residents' Survey was distributed throughout the Parish in early September 2010 with personal collections taking place some 2-3 weeks later. Residents were also offered a central 'post point' and some addresses of Steering Group members, should personal delivery be preferred.

Of the 470 forms issued, 178 were received representing a 38% return.

The survey responses were studied in detail by the Steering Group and an action plan derived with a final detailed discussion on 20th June.

An open weekend was held on 9th and 10th September 2011 in the Village Hall, when the action plans were displayed with comments and questions being encouraged. Members of the Steering Group were in attendance to encourage debate.

The open weekend was also intended to be an opportunity to encourage volunteers to form small groups to examine certain actions, such as a village store and recreational activities in the Parish. Some nine people volunteered their services at the Open Weekend across a number of the issues raised; however more volunteers will be required to get involved in bringing the action plans to life, which in conjunction with the Parish Council, Warwick District and County Councils, will enable the Parish plan to be realised.

A summary of the main action plan areas requiring engagement are:

- Housing and Planning – ensure changes at Woodcote achieve a beneficial outcome for the Parish.
- Community Services - Look at the feasibility of introducing a village store. Some real interest was expressed with volunteers keen to examine the idea.
- Traffic management - Improve road safety at key points and ensure traffic along Warwick Road in Leek Wootton does not exceed 30mph. Widen pavement towards Kenilworth for pedestrians and cyclists. Ensure continued access to paths through Woodcote.
- Public transport – examine potential for bus services later into the evening.
- Crime and Disorder - Revitalise our neighbourhood watch scheme. The local PCSO attended the open weekend and advised us on how to generate interest in the scheme so we are already part of the way towards reintroducing it.
- Education and Training – look at what further youth activities and facilities for pre-school children can be provided
- Sport and Recreation – examine the provision of allotments, and expand our sport and recreational activities, for example how facilities at Woodcote, such as tennis courts, could be made available to residents.
- Environment – examine any further avenues to improve access to Gaveston’s Cross.

The Plan that follows looks at the detail behind these points to understand where we are and how the Parish would like to develop.

Feedback or comments are welcome via:
leekwootton.parishplan@gmail.com

The Plan

Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton and Guys Cliffe

Description of the Parish

The Parish includes the village of Leek Wootton and the communities at Hill Wootton, Chesford Grange, Guy's Cliffe, North Woodloes, plus outlying properties. The boundary extends from the River Avon in the east to the outskirts of Warwick and Kenilworth to south and north and the Wedgnock and Goodrest areas to the west. Administratively the Parish comes under Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council. For activities such as the Community Forum the Parish is within the Warwick Rural West area.

Parish Electorate

Some 840 names appear on the Register of Electors for 2011/12. The area covers 1089 hectares and there is a total population of approx 1100, occupying some 400 properties.

Housing and Planning

Any expansion of the built areas of the Parish is opposed by residents keen to maintain the character of the Parish and to avoid any sense of being 'joined' to the towns of Warwick and Kenilworth which are both relatively close and at some points only a few fields away. Hence any large scale or 'green field' development is precluded and will not be considered.

Individual new property proposals within the built area will be considered on a case by case basis, but few suitable locations are likely to be available.

Within the Conservation area, development of existing properties should be entirely in keeping with this area. In the more modern (post war) areas, extensions and modernisation are common and are accepted within limits of neighbourliness, consistency with surrounding properties, and the planning rules applied by Warwick District Council.

Business/Commercial

Significant business/commercial sites in the Parish are 'Woodcote' (Warwickshire Police HQ), The Warwickshire Golf Club & Health complex, the Chesford Grange Hotel & conference centre, and Broadlane Caravans. Significant changes to these sites or the use of these sites would have corresponding impact on residents and the nature of the Parish, particularly as they sit in greenfield areas, hence comments in the previous section apply that no extension to the built up areas will be considered.

Woodcote

A significant change is currently being proposed for the Woodcote site that has been the HQ for Warwickshire Police for many years. It is expected that the site will be vacated and sold to a developer. This will have significant impact on the Parish. The site is currently the subject of an application for outline planning permission. The retirement village concept as exhibited by the Police is felt to be an acceptable and encouraging use of the site, however a purchaser may have other proposals within the limits permitted by any planning permission. The key elements for the Parish are that:

- Parkland, trees and woodland etc are maintained
- Pathways commonly used through the site remain accessible
- Redevelopment should be carefully blended into the Woodcote environment
- Traffic movements are not increased, preferably reduced
- Car parking is not increased, preferably reduced

The sympathetic development of the Woodcote site provides an opportunity for the provision of affordable housing and recreational amenity for the Parish.

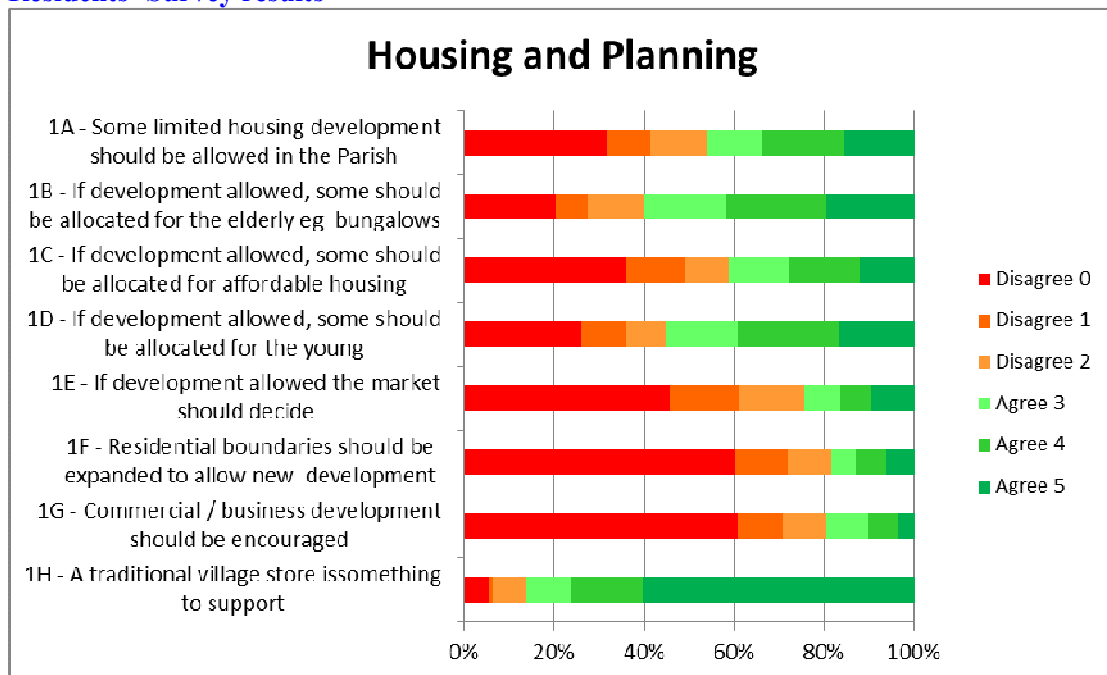
Pubs

The Parish is served by the Anchor in the centre of Leek Wootton, and the Saxon Mill at Guy’s Cliffe. Both are popular and form part of the character of the Parish. Many rural pubs in other parts of the area have had difficulties or closed altogether, so it is hoped this will not occur in this Parish.

Community services

The survey indicated a desire for a village store. There was a Post Office / Village store that closed many years ago. The premises (on the corner of Home Farm) are currently let, recently as a Beauty Salon and then a Wool shop. Leek Wootton is easily accessible to shops in both Kenilworth and Warwick, so it is difficult for a commercially run ‘village shop’ to succeed. A shop as a community service may be an opportunity to explore, however the availability of suitable premises, funding and personal involvement by residents were all seen as significant factors mitigating against such an enterprise from succeeding. The open weekend brought forth comment with offers of volunteer support and these individuals should now get-together to examine the issue further.

Residents’ Survey results



Traffic Management

This subject prompted the most vigorous response both in the survey and at the open weekend.

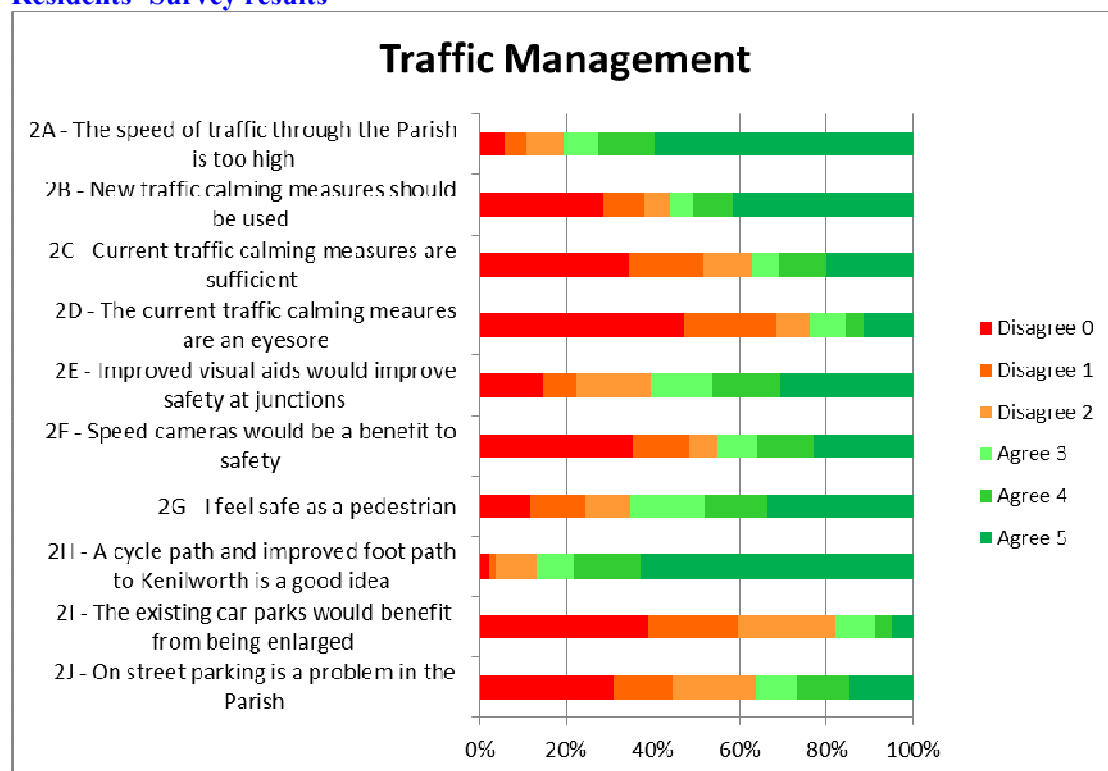
Speed of traffic through the villages is seen as the most significant issue. There is a need to develop an action plan and prioritise solutions for:

- Improved safety at the Anchor junction
- Improved safety at the crossroads under the railway bridge
- Significant improvements in measures to reduce traffic speeds.

The speed of traffic along Warwick Road (30mph speed limit) in Leek Wootton is known from speed surveys that many motorists drive well in excess of the limit. It is used as a commuter route between Kenilworth and Warwick so traffic is very heavy at peak times.

The current traffic calming measures of pedestrian crossing and flashing speed sign have not been sufficient to counter speeding. They are situated in the centre of Leek Wootton, so traffic is already travelling at speed and the flashing speed sign only faces one way, in the Warwick direction.

Residents' Survey results



The main road through Guy's Cliffe into Warwick now has a 40mph limit which has significantly reduced accident risk around the Saxon Mill.

There are no speed restrictions on the road through Hill Wootton, though the sharp bends and narrow carriageway naturally restrict speed. There are dangers to pedestrians as there is only a narrow path in the centre and no path at all at either end of the hamlet.

Paths

Paths between Leek Wootton towards Kenilworth and Warwick are well used by walkers and runners as the distance to either is easily attained. Teenagers attend school outside the Parish and often have a social network in Kenilworth or Warwick, so independent access on foot or cycle is a significant benefit to them.

Because of the above, footpath widening and improvement both towards Warwick and into Kenilworth were significant issues raised in the survey and at the open weekend. Some improvements have already been achieved in widening the footpath towards Warwick/A46 roundabout and providing a slurry coating on the footpath to Kenilworth. The latter is however still too narrow, for example when walking with children, particularly as the traffic speed is unrestricted.

Cyclists are catered for by a good cycleway through Guy's Cliffe toward Warwick. There is however no facility towards Kenilworth. This issue was apparent in the survey, hence addressing the width of this pavement for both pedestrians and cyclists will significantly improve access. There are already a number of commuter cyclists as the distance from Kenilworth to Warwick is easily achieved – if this is encouraged it will mean less traffic volume through Leek Wootton.

The public footpath network is well used by walkers - particularly with dogs. Much of this is over the golf course, between Hill Wootton and Leek Wootton, and from the Saxon Mill towards Old Milverton.

A key issue has been access over Police HQ land to the footpaths that have been commonly walked by residents for many years. These access paths are subject to applications for public footpaths. This continued access is very important to be maintained through any new ownership of Woodcote.

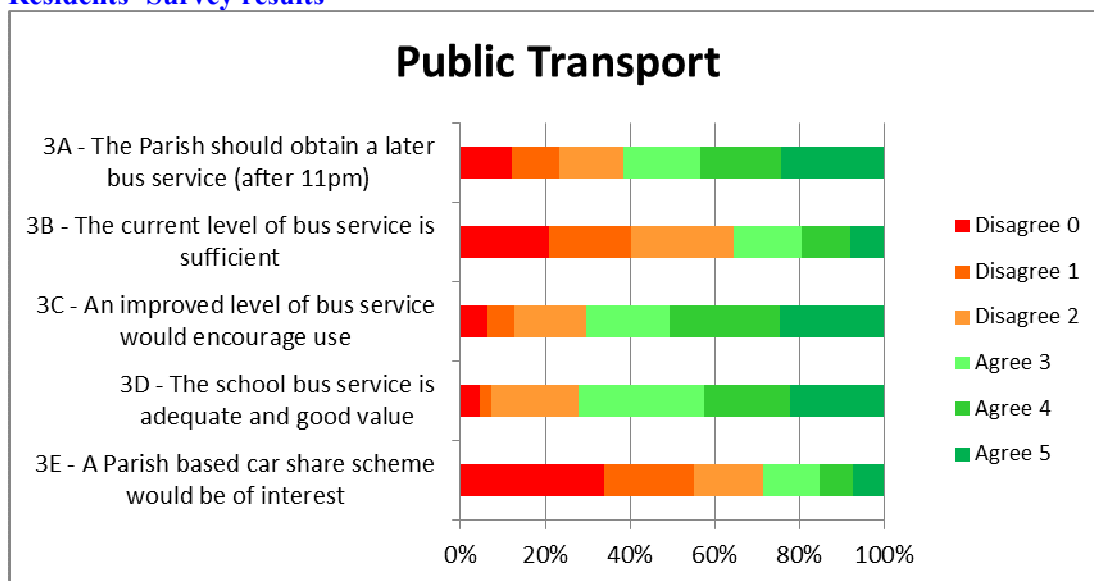
Cutting back growth on the banking and hedgerows is an ongoing task that is necessary to maintain footpath safety and encourage greater usage.

Public Transport

There is an hourly service from Leek Wootton toward Kenilworth and Warwick. Hill Wootton has no bus service. Usage of the current service can be encouraged by publishing the timetable in the LINK magazine. School buses take teenage children to Kenilworth and other local secondary schools from the bus stop in Leek Wootton.

The survey favoured an improved frequency of service and a late evening service after 11pm. This should be examined further by volunteers together with the service provider - to see what improvements in service could be achieved and how much such services would be used.

Residents' Survey results

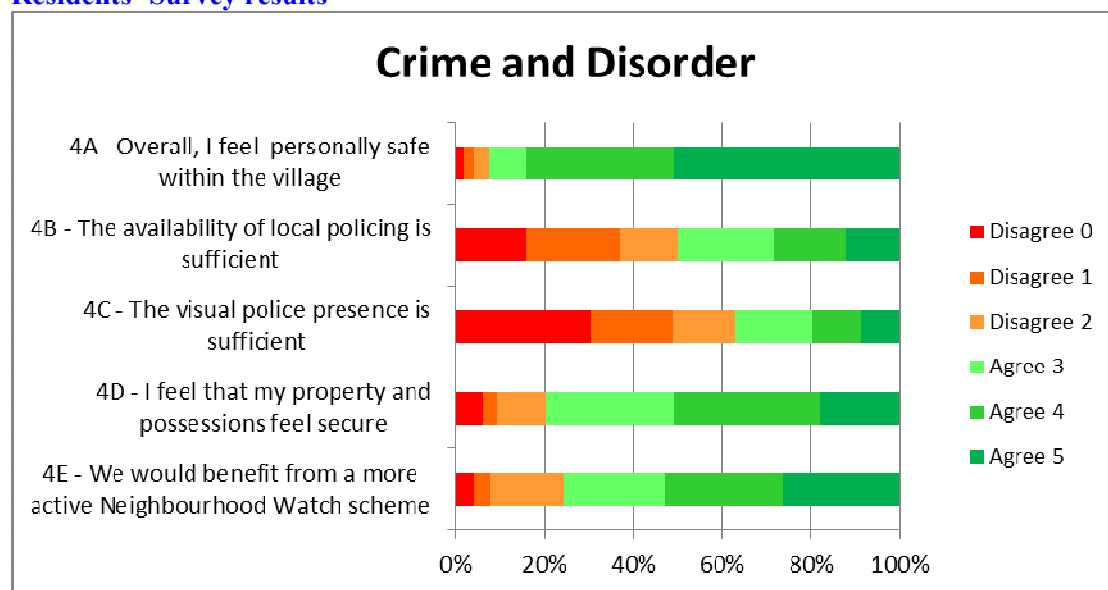


Crime and Disorder

A more active neighbourhood watch scheme was at the top of survey requirements. The open weekend was supported by the local Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team, who advised on how the neighbourhood watch scheme could be revitalised. Volunteers will be sought through the LINK magazine to collect e-mail addresses from the residents in their area. The PCSO would then keep in contact with the residents through e-mail. Full security of individuals e-mail addresses would be assured through the use of the 'bcc' facility.

Overall residents felt safe, both personally and for their property and possessions, but the closure of police headquarters raised the question of continued security and improvements to the neighbourhood watch scheme would help to alleviate any concerns that may be perceived.

Residents' Survey results



Education and Training

Leek Wootton has a highly regarded Church of England voluntary aided primary school housed in a new building on the edge of Leek Wootton. Most Parish children attend the school, and the survey reinforces that it is absolutely a key facility for the Parish. The perception that the school should be more involved with the community needs some attention. The school is active in the community and more publicity should be given to that involvement. Recent completion of 'The Hub' provides more flexible accommodation with potential for outside groups to use the school.

Youth Groups

Organised activities in the Parish for younger age groups include Sports (see Sport section), Scouts & Guides, and Church led groups. The school provides both pre and post school day activity groups. Further activities may be arranged by willing and enthusiastic volunteers and where suitable facilities don't exist this should be raised.

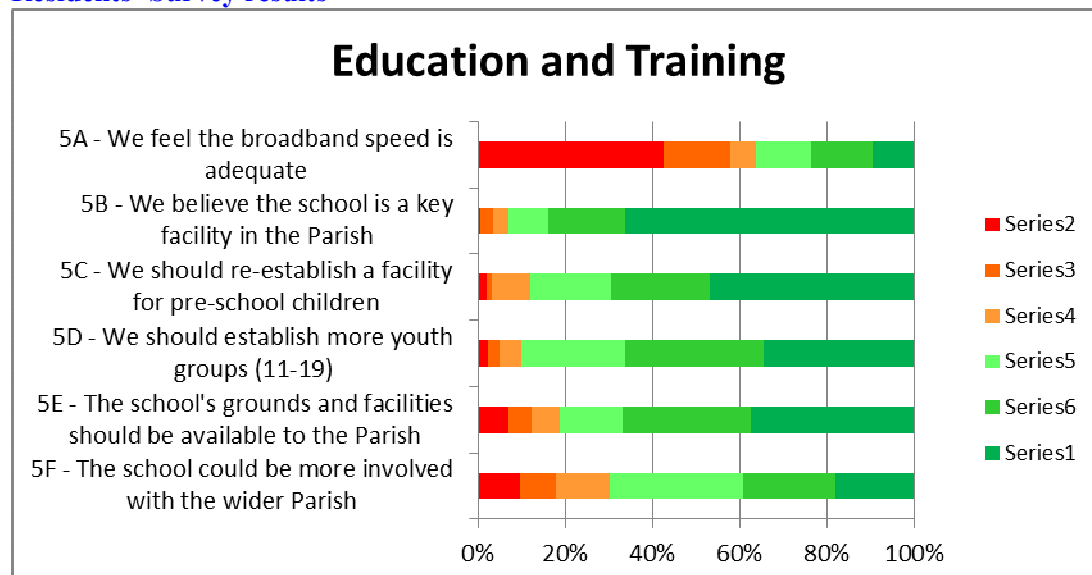
There is no Nursery or Preschool in the Parish since the Preschool closed a few years ago. There was considerable support in the survey to re-establish such a facility. This will need volunteers to come forward to plan how this may be achieved.

Telecommunications

BT Openreach have standard telephony and also higher speed 'Fibre to the Cabinet' available in the Parish. There are various providers of the standard service, but as yet only BT for the higher speed service. Cable services are not available. Improvements in broadband speeds were an issue for residents. To address this may require:

- Better explanation of the services available in the Parish, eg via the Link
- Ensure awareness of factors (interference) within a house that can affect broadband connections
- Investigate whether cable or other new services could be provided.

Residents' Survey results



Sport and Recreation

The Leek Wootton recreation ground is a key facility for the Parish. It enables a thriving Sports club, particularly well known for cricket, but also supporting football and other sports. This includes sports for younger age groups.

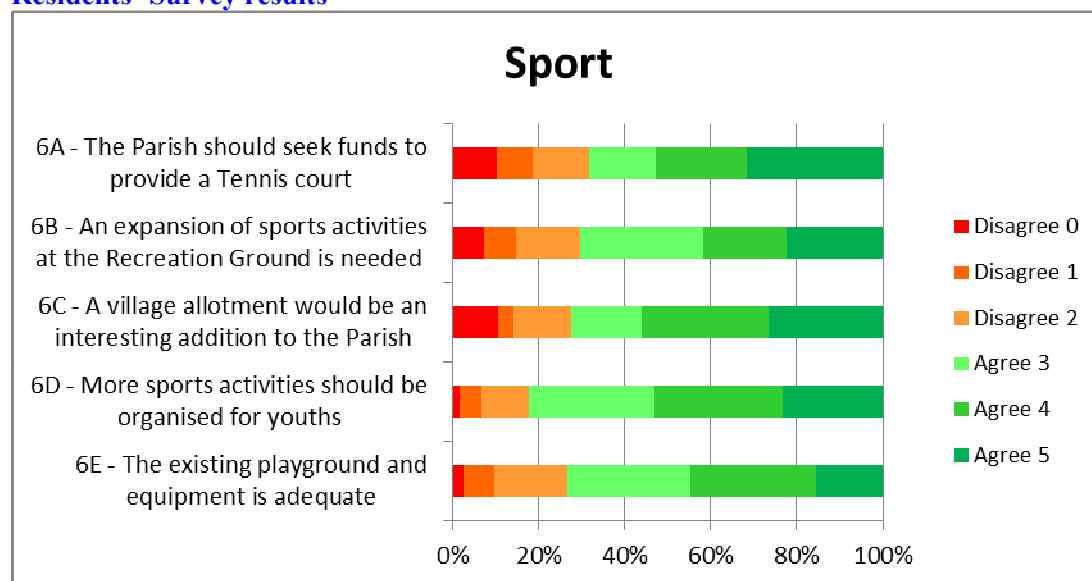
This was a section of the survey that received a significant level of comment and this was supported by views expressed at the open weekend. In particular there was interest in other sports being organised. Volunteers would again be required to examine all the issues that covered:

- Expansion of sport activities at the recreation ground
- Provision of tennis and bowling facilities
- Provision of allotments

The change of usage and ownership of Woodcote potentially provides scope to find solutions to these issues.

At one side of the recreation ground is a playground, owned by the Parish Council. The survey largely agreed that this facility is adequate for the children. Ongoing renewal will be required, and the Parish Council is making plans for new equipment in conjunction with the school council. Progress with this should be monitored.

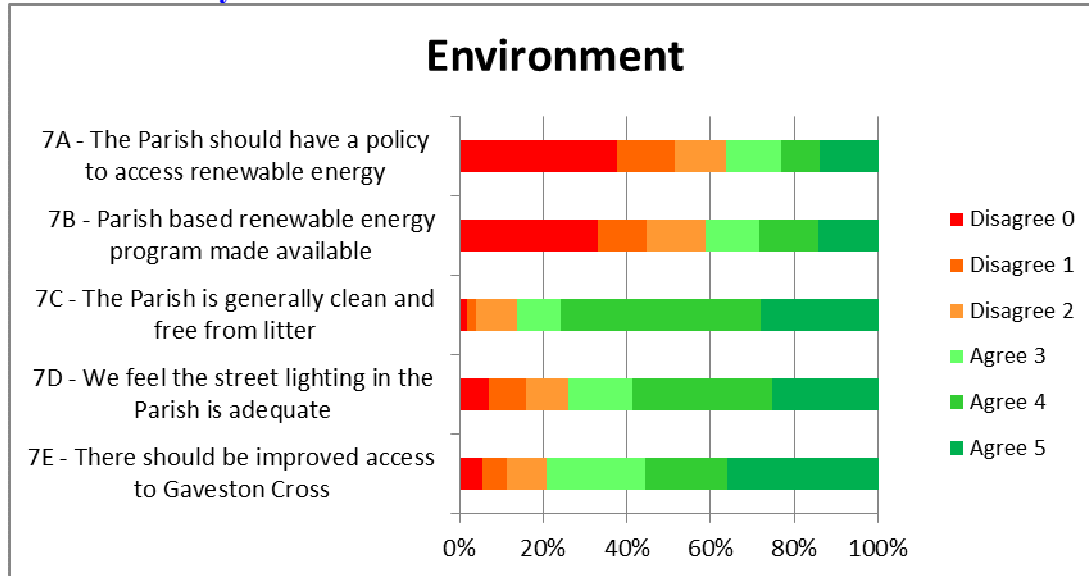
Residents' Survey results



Environment

The only action coming out of the survey was to improve access to Gaveston's Cross as it is of historical significance. Currently access is over a locked gate or gap in the hedge, and along the edge of a private field into the woodland where the Cross is situated. The state of repair of the Grade 2 listed monument is also a significant worry. The Parish Council has tried to secure improved access to the Cross for many years.

Residents' Survey results



Noise

In general noise is not currently a big issue in the Parish as was shown in the survey, however significant transport corridors pass through and over the Parish. Leek Wootton lies under the flight path of incoming aircraft to both Coventry and Birmingham airports. Coventry is closer and hence the aircraft are lower, and when regular commercial flights started flying into Coventry this caused very significant noise problems, resulting in an 'Action group' against the airport which carried out a large amount of work opposing the airport planning applications. Commercial flights have since stopped, but any resumption will cause the same noise issues and will most likely be similarly opposed.

The A46 is a 'noise nuisance', which affects large parts of the Parish, depending on the wind direction. Potential mitigation has been discussed with the Highways Agency, the outcome being that when the A46 through the Parish is next resurfaced (which is not expected for many years), a 'Quiet' surface will be laid. It is important that this opportunity is taken when it arises as it will be of significant benefit in improving the environment.

The Coventry to Leamington railway line also passes through the Parish. There is some noise depending on the wind direction. As a single track with limited traffic it is not a significant nuisance, however any plans for significant railway expansion would cause a noise issue.

Acknowledgements

Steering Group Committee Members:- Mrs Eileen Clayton (Treasurer), Mr Richard Coates, Mr Bob Cook, Mr Dennis Eassom, Miss Nicola Highton, Mr Robert Jones (Secretary), Mr Jonathan Kingston, Mr Keith Knott, Mr Brian Melling (Chairman), Mrs Mary Murdoch, Mr Peter Wartnaby. [Completed March 2012](#)