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Introduction

This document reviews the effectiveness and progress of the Loppington Parish Plan and Action Plan 2004 and forms The Loppington Parish Plan 2012 – 2017.

The Review Document and Parish Plan have been produced by a group of volunteers from the various areas of the parish, some of whom also have connections with the Parish Council and many of the voluntary groups within the parish. It has been funded by a grant from Shropshire Rural Community Council.

It is based on evidence gathered from responses to a parish-wide questionnaire in late 2008, a public meeting and subsequent written responses submitted to the Parish Council in connection with Shropshire Council's SAMDev consultation, a Community Testing Event in the summer of 2010, and a Supplementary Housing Needs Survey conducted in April/May 2012.

It was adopted by Loppington Parish Council on 12 September 2012 as a document representing the views and aspirations of the residents of the parish of Loppington.

Parish Plan History

The Loppington Parish Plan process started in 2003 with a public consultation that led to the publishing of the original Plan, with its accompanying Action Plan, in 2004. Many of the issues raised in that Plan have since been acted upon either by Shropshire Council or other relevant bodies, in accordance with the opinions expressed by the people of this parish.

Response

In the 2008 review, 214 questionnaires were distributed, one to every household in the parish. As with the original 2003 questionnaire, the responses were anonymous, except for questions where the respondent chose to identify themselves over particular issues, or for purposes of volunteering. Even where this was the case, other responses in the questionnaire remained anonymous.

214 questionnaires were distributed. 83 households returned a response. Of these, 40 were from Loppington village, 26 from Burlton, 7 from Noneley, 7 from Brown Heath, 2 from Commonwood & Ruewood, and 1 from elsewhere in the parish. It is thus considered to be representative of all areas of the parish.

Of the 83 households that responded, the largest comprised 7 people, the smallest 1 person, and in total covered 205 people, of whom 101 were male and 104 female. About one third of the respondents declared themselves to be "45-60", another third "over 60", with about 16% each "under 18" or "25 to 44"; only 9 people were in the "18-24" bracket.

Likes and Dislikes

Almost everyone who specified what they liked most about Loppington said that they valued the peace and tranquillity of our rural parish, We like the low level of crime, the friendliness of our neighbours, and the strong sense of community spirit, with so many activities revolving around Loppington Village Hall, the pubs, and the churches. Almost all respondents said that they felt a part of that community in some way.

The great majority of those who specified what they liked least about living in this parish bemoaned the loss of Loppington's village shop, and the lack of public transport that necessitates reliance on the car. There was also mention of the dangers of meeting large vehicles travelling at speed on our narrow rural roads, particularly if one is on foot or on a bicycle; though this has possibly been alleviated somewhat since the questionnaire by the closure of Hawk's site in Noneley Road, there remain concerns about other lorries "passing through" and large agricultural vehicles driven incautiously. The sparse provision of safe footpaths (or even verges to retreat onto) is a recurring concern.

Whilst we like living in a rural situation, there is a feeling that we get a poor deal in terms of amenities and services from the county's Council in return for a relatively-high level of council tax, when compared to those who live in less-rural communities in North Shropshire.

These frequent concerns and others are dealt with in detail in the following pages.

Communities and Community

At the time of the Parish Plan survey in June 2003, the parish had approximately 576 inhabitants, concentrated mainly in Loppington proper and in the hamlet of Burlton, two miles to the west and south. The village of Loppington was classed as a "Main Service Village" in the North Shropshire District Local Plan, as it had a shop, church, pub, public meeting place, and a garage. Burlton was designated an "Other Village", as it could supply a limited range of services. These designations have now been superseded by Shropshire Council's Core Strategy LDF 2011 and SAMdev proposals 2012 which classify the whole parish as "Countryside".

Brown Heath consists of fifteen dwellings and is about half-a-mile west and north of the main village. The small community of Noneley, to the south of Loppington, together with the nearby scattered settlements of Ruewood and Commonwood, consist of 24 dwellings. There are other scattered dwellings in the parish, notably in an area between Loppington and Burlton known simply as "The Wood".

It was encouraging to note that over 90% of those who responded felt that they were included as part of their local community.

Burial

The Parochial Church Council has resolved the question of the requirement for additional burial spaces (identified in 2004) by deciding to re-use part of the old churchyard. All but three of those who commented in their questionnaire were satisfied with this outcome.

Action: No further action required.

Existing Commercial Amenities

The Burlton Inn and The Dickin Arms

The 2004 Parish Plan survey revealed that two-thirds of responding households use the public houses within the parish, although a significant number indicated that, for a variety of reasons, they were not “pub people”.

The Plan stated two initiatives: That the Public Houses should continue to be recognised as important social amenities which help to sustain the community spirit within the parish; and that residents should be encouraged to continue to support these two commercial enterprises.

The usage of the parish’s two public houses seems stable since the initial Parish Plan questionnaire. Of those who responded, 38 said that they visited the pub as often or as rarely as they ever had; of those who indicated a change, 20 respondents said they went more often, and 18 said less, so collectively these businesses would appear to be reasonably consistent.

Several people said they went less often to the pub because of the advent of a young family since 2004, or because of problems with finding childcare provision while they were out; others cited a change of lifestyle.

Other Parish-based Commercial Services

It has been written that the parish is now a largely dormitory settlement. The survey for the original Plan revealed that 75% of responding households that included people of working age went outside the parish for employment. At the time, there were two major employers within the parish. By 2012 one of these had re-located elsewhere and the other had reduced the number of its employees. There were and are several small or sole-trader concerns within the parish, and the survey results showed that the majority of those who responded are in favour of encouraging this form of business. The Village Shop in Loppington has closed, although the Post Office has been retained. There was a strong feeling that households within the parish would like to make an effort to purchase goods and services locally where at all feasible and, indeed, we were in favour of allowing planning applications for change-of-use of premises to allow people to operate small businesses from their homes. Less than 10% of households said that they never used parish-based services. Everyone else used local businesses at least occasionally, with 60% saying that they used them more often.

The other question in this section of the review covered our use of the small businesses who advertise in *Loppington Village News*. 88% of respondents use the *Village News* to find commercial services when needed.

Our reasons for preferring local businesses were numerous, but the three most common reasons were a desire to promote local services (37%), the convenience of using people who live nearby (17%), and the feeling that you get a better job from someone you know and can keep in touch with (13%).

Action: *The Supplementary Questionnaire of 2012 indicated a desire for the shop to be re-opened in Loppington Village.*

Housing and future development

Supplementary Housing Needs Survey – April-May 2012

As the result of a Public Open Meeting attended by more than 30 parish residents held in March 2012 to explain the National Planning Framework and Shropshire Council’s SAMDev consultation a Housing Needs Survey was conducted during April and May. A questionnaire based upon a County prepared template was distributed to every household in the parish, with an additional copy being available on request to those households in multi-family occupation. At that time there were 47 units of accommodation in the parish with full planning permission awaiting either construction or the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into dwellings. 9 of these are Affordable Social accommodation, being a mix of rental and to buy.

227 questionnaires were issued with 77 being returned, which is a 33% response rate. Of these, 72 were from home owners, 4 living in rented accommodation and 1 who is staying with relatives.

2 households had friends or family living with them who were in need of independent accommodation. A further 6 indicated that their present accommodation was not adequate for their needs, on the grounds of: needing improvement (1), too large (2), in need of a different type (3), too costly to heat (1) and living with relatives (1).

Of those who responded to the question that asked what form of alternative accommodation was required, 3 indicated “open market to buy” and 1 “subsidised to rent”. There was a demand from 4 respondents for “sheltered housing” within the parish but there was no demand for “subsidised to buy” or “open market to rent”.

In response to the question “Do you see the need for more new housing in addition to that already planned in the parish over the next ten years” (there 47 units planned), 18 said “yes” and 59, “no”.

Of these, 10 thought they should be affordable to rent or buy for local people with 4 in favour of these being available for anyone. This is in variance with declared current need of alternative accommodation (1), above. 9 responses indicated that the additional housing should be open market to buy. No one thought that there was a need for more open market rental, sheltered accommodation, or provision for gypsies.

1 respondent in Brown Heath, 3 in Loppington, 2 in Burlton, and 1 in the Noneley/Commonwood/Ruewood areas owned property or land which they might be willing to see developed for social/affordable housing.

On the questions, which allowed for multiple responses, of size of the dwellings, eight indicated 1 – 2 bedroomed; twelve 3 – 4 bedroom; two 5 bedroom and twelve, bungalows.

Regarding the number of additional buildings, one was in favour of 1-5; six for 6-10; four for 11-20; four for 21-50, and one for more than 50. 9 respondents thought that these should be on the edge of the settlements; 9 as infill; 8 favoured conversions anywhere, with 6 indicating new houses could be “anywhere”. 11 responses indicated a willingness to see some open-market full-value housing in order to fund affordable/subsidised housing development.

An empty dwelling in Brown Heath was identified as one which could be brought back into use, and 14 respondents thought that bringing empty properties back into use should be treated as a priority.

The questionnaire also posed the supplementary question “Are you in favour of the building of wind turbines in the parish?”; 28 were in favour and 43 against.

(The Questionnaire is reproduced as an appendix to this document and a more detailed analysis of the responses broken down by parish area together with written general comments about housing development in general and those concerning wind turbines is available on request from Loppington Parish Council, c/o Shropshire Council, Edinburgh House, Wem).

Action: Shropshire Council to accept the Parish Plan including the results of the Survey as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Environmental Services

Mains Water

Just over an eighth of the houses in the parish have private, rather than mains, water supplies. Most households served by mains water were reasonably happy with the level of service they received but in 2004 many were unhappy about the taste of the water, which they felt was over-chlorinated.

The review questionnaire asked whether we perceived any change to the quality of the water since the original Plan. 19 households did not respond to the question, mostly because they either had their own private water supply, or couldn't comment because they weren't living here at the time of the original questionnaire. Those who did answer indicated that there has been no perceived change in the over-all quality of the supply – most of us have noticed no difference, and while 8 households thought it was better, 6 thought it had deteriorated.

**Action: Severn-Trent Water to be encouraged to repair water mains leaks more promptly.
Any initiative to provide a mains water supply to more premises should be supported.**

Tourism

Advertising the Parish

The original Plan noted that, though there were some visitors to the parish in the summer months, any provision for tourism was undeveloped and unexplored. We were generally in favour of encouraging tourists to visit the parish, although with a few concerns about increased traffic and litter, but we weren't sure what we could offer people as an incentive to come here.

Three initiatives were proposed in the 2004 Parish Plan, which were the setting up of a group to identify and advertise facilities in the parish, the provision of information boards for visitors, and the identification of sites where visitors might leave their cars. These have not yet been followed up, so the topic appeared again in the review questionnaire.

What to See in Loppington

There were 46 responses with suggestions as to what in the parish we might promote to visitors.

‘Outdoor pursuits’ were the most popular suggestion, with 34 people mentioning walking, and another 7 cycling.

The history of the parish was another frequent suggestion, with 18 respondents mentioning Saint Michael's church particularly, and 9 a more general history of the parish; there were 5 specific votes for the history and lore of the bull-ring, which is of course unique to us amongst Shropshire communities.

There were 6 suggestions of local events, either village-wide or based around the Village Hall.

Our local wildlife raised 4 suggestions, some making particular mention of Brown Heath Moss and the nature reserve at Ruewood.

16 respondents mentioned commercial ventures, with the majority (13) suggesting promotion of the existing public houses and their restaurants. Two people thought that the introduction of a farm shop selling local goods and produce would be a worth-while attraction, and 1 person mentioned a tea-room.

Travel and Transport

Existing Transport within the Parish

At the time of the original Parish Plan, Burlton had a regular bus service provided by the Shrewsbury to Ellesmere 'Bike Bus', and Loppington village had two buses a week, one being a return trip to Oswestry and the other a minibus service to Wem. Even with this variety, however, the infrequency of public services meant that almost all journeys within and to-and-from the parish were undertaken by private transport, the vast majority being by the motor car.

The situation has changed since that time. Burlton still has a regular service with a reduced frequency but the 'bike' facility is no longer provided. There is now no regular service provision to Loppington. This has been replaced by the Shropshire Link Dial-a-Ride service that was planned at the time of the Review which is in operation on Mondays and Fridays.

Across the parish, about 60% of respondents were aware of the existing bus service except, as might be expected, in Burlton, where this figure rose to about 75%. The 6 respondents who said they used this bus service regularly were all resident in Burlton, as were all but one of the 7 occasional users (the other person being from Loppington). Apart from these 14 respondents, 83% of the parish do not use Public Transport.

Favoured days to go to Wem

Residents who responded to the original survey for this Plan indicated that they would be happy to use public transport if it were reliable and regular, and more routes were available to the whole parish, but the predominant factor in the results was a frequency of service greater than one or two days a week.

In the review questionnaire we were asked which two days we would most use a dial-a-ride bus to Wem if one were offered, and the response perhaps reflects our shopping habits. The two favoured days from those who responded, with 22 votes each, were Thursday – Wem's market day – and Saturday, though with Friday a close runner-up.

Public transport from Wem

Apart from the one bus service through Burlton, the parish's nearest point of access to public transport is in Wem, where there are bus services between Whitchurch and Shrewsbury, and two-hourly trains to Crewe, Shrewsbury and beyond. Both bus and train services are provided by Aviva at the time of writing.

The great majority of those who returned questionnaires have never used public transport from Wem.

Action: When a review of the Shropshire Link service is conducted it should take account of the favoured days and alter the provision accordingly.

Roads and Verges

In the original Plan, we felt that the roads in the parish were poorly maintained; and that they were swept infrequently in the villages, and not at all outside them, to the point that litter-picking by parish residents was felt necessary. Whilst we understood and appreciated the seasonal need to leave hedges untouched at times to allow nesting birds some peace, we also felt that verge and road-side hedge cutting had been reduced to the point that we perceived some hedges as becoming hazards to walkers and road vehicles because of a reduction in visibility and in verge widths

Since then parts of the B4397 and A518 roads through the parish have been re-laid and more frequent cutting of the hedges has resumed.

Most of us responded to the review question about road quality by saying that we noticed no difference. Our perception of the condition of the roads since the original Plan is not better, despite the re-surfacing. Quite the contrary; while the majority of respondents thought the situation unchanged, more thought it had worsened than thought it improved.

More of us thought that the provision of road signs, and the cleanliness of those signs, has improved since the original Plan – though, as will be seen later, we are not in favour of road signs *per se*

Action: The Parish Council to continue to work closely with Shropshire Highways to rectify road defects.

Street Lights

In the questionnaire for the original Plan, more than two-thirds of the respondents said that they preferred no street lighting and considered provision of lights to be inappropriate for a country parish. There has been no actual change in street lighting between the original Plan and the review questionnaire – the only lights are in Hatchett's Close, in Burlton – but this question and the following one overlap, and 11 respondents thought the provision of lighting needed improvement. In particular, there was a suggestion by a number of respondents that the A528 between Burlton crossroads and the Burlton Arms should be lighted to improve safety.

Action: Shropshire Council to consult under the provisions of its Street Lighting Policy prior to approving any lighting scheme for the Hawk Housing development in Loppington.

Suggestions for improving road safety

More than half of those who returned questionnaires had suggestions for improving road safety in the parish, and those suggestions were almost as many and varied as the responses.

In answer to this question,

- 12 respondents suggested changes to the speed limits in the parish; this is covered in the next section. Specifically, some mentioned limiting farm vehicles to 20mph, but this would have to be on a voluntary basis by the vehicle drivers, such as is suggested to tractor drivers by small, non-Highways Authority signs through Ruyton-of-the-XI-Towns.
- Others mentioned limiting the size of farm vehicles allowed to use the road; sadly, while the modern combine (for example) is indeed a daunting vehicle, it is perhaps unavoidable (and combines are definitely unavoidable on a single-track lane) because that's the way they make them these days.
- 6 respondents suggested additional street lighting, though they weren't necessarily the same people as said so in answer to the previous question. Half of these responses from Loppington were to say that Burlton should have more lights on the A528.
- Some respondents suggested prohibiting large lorries from the parish's roads; to some extent, the removal of Hawk business to Prees has reduced this problem, but there are still too many other large vehicles travelling through our parish. One respondent mentioned feed trucks, but they must be permitted to some degree if they are to deliver to the parish's farms.
- Some respondents felt that the existing speed limits are not being sufficiently enforced, particularly during the "rush hour" periods in the morning and evening; two requested a greater police presence to this end. Another and possibly more affordable idea was the installation of solar-powered flashing speed-limit reminder signs.
- Some respondents suggested that storm drainage should be provided, and road-side ditches kept clear, to take away run-off water, particularly on the more ancient roads that are now below field level.
- A number of respondents suggested road widening, and the easing of the curves on the outskirts of both Loppington and Burlton, particularly where the roads wind along the ancient paths through the location of the mediæval strip-farming leans on the villages' outskirts. Two answers asked for more-defined passing places on single-track roads

Traffic, Speed Limits and Road Use

Existing Speed Limits

The major source of perceived nuisance in the parish in the original Plan was from the speed of traffic, which was considered inappropriate in relation to the narrowness of the roads. The problem related to both local and through traffic, and was perceived as an issue throughout the parish rather than just in the main built-up areas. Consultations with the County Council regarding the imposition of speed limits in Burlton and Loppington commenced during the preparation of the 2004 Plan and we now have speed limit signs in these two main townships.

The review questionnaire asked whether we felt that these speed limits were effective and the results were mixed. Across the parish, half felt that they were effective, and half felt that they were not. One household who voted in the second group commented that their perception was "yes, and no", which effectively describes the perceived effectiveness of the two speed limits – about half of us think that the one in Loppington works, whilst the one in Burlton is seen as ineffective by two-thirds of us, particularly where it applies to the A528

Further Traffic-Calming Measures

16 respondents thought that further traffic-calming measures were needed; 54 did not, and 13 didn't answer, which presumably means they felt there was no need.

Brown Heath residents would like to have a speed limit through their township, particularly through the sharp corners there, and particularly to constrain large vehicles on their way between Loppington and Cockshutt.

Burlton residents would like to see further, physical, traffic-calming on the A528, and would like to see the speed limit extended towards Shrewsbury as far as Yew Villa. Another suggested a 30mph limit rather than the existing 40mph

Residents of Noneley would also like a speed limit, and felt that the Loppington 30mph limit could be extended down Noneley Road, especially through the series of sharp bends between Loppington and the junction with Salter's Lane.

The residents of Loppington would like a restriction on the size of vehicles using some of the narrower lanes around the village, and there were two calls for traffic calming on Scholars' Lane. There was also a suggestion that, as with the sharp bends at Brown Heath, there should be a limit on the curvier bits of the road to Burlton.

Two respondents raised the issue of safety at junctions. One concern was the height of plants on the triangular island where the B4397 meets the A528 which impair visibility at that junction. Another respondent felt strongly that additional calming measures were necessary on the B4397 at Loppington, where it meets the Noneley Road; vehicles pulling out of Noneley Road to turn right towards Wem have little warning of vehicles on the main road coming from Wem because of the high garden wall of Loppington Hall, so this respondent felt that traffic on the main road needs slowing down – their suggestion was a change of priorities, so that traffic on the B4397 would be slowed to a halt to give way at the junction.

Road Use

In the original Plan survey, there was considerable feeling that roads through the parish were being used as "rat runs" by large and heavy vehicles travelling between points outside the parish. The latter practice had become more significant since the opening of the Wood Lane tip, and the nature of the loads being transported through the parish attracted adverse comment – particularly waste, including chicken droppings

In the review questionnaire, we were asked whether we perceived an improvement in the situation. In the returned questionnaires, 14 respondents did not give an answer to this question; of the remainder, 20 thought there had been an improvement, while 49 perceived no change.

We were also asked whether we perceived following of Satellite Navigation systems was leading people onto the parish's roads unnecessarily. Those who answered this question (82% of respondents) were almost-equally divided over whether this was the case or not, though slightly more of us were in favour of the provision of additional signs to tell sat-nav drivers that the roads were unsuitable through routes for heavy vehicles. Conversely, by an almost 2:1 margin, we were generally unhappy with the proliferation of a lot of new signs of any sort, as we regarded them as detrimental to the countryside.

The final question in this section asked for other concerns about mis-use of the parish's roads by through traffic. 35 respondents raised points. The great majority of these comments concerned the speed of traffic (12 comments), and the unsuitability of large vehicles using our narrow and winding roads (11 comments). Mud on the roads was also a cause for concern (8 comments), particularly as caused by very large or long vehicles running over verges. Hedgerows were also a concern (3 comments), especially in the Noneley area, but also on other routes where cyclists can't see over them to take avoiding action in the face of oncoming (large) traffic.

Action: The Parish Council to continue to explore with Shropshire Council means to improve traffic calming measures throughout the parish.

To encourage Shropshire Council to adopt any Government legislation which will enable reduced speed limits on country roads.

Public Footpaths (Rights-of-Way)

At the time of the original Plan survey in 2003, only a limited number of households in the survey said that they used the network of footpaths in the parish. Many said that they did not know where the paths were, and even those who did expressed difficulty tracing the correct route of the right-of-way because of inadequate sign-posting and way-marking, or because the paths were overgrown and obstructed by vegetation.

Some were deterred by the height of stiles, coupled with the danger of slipping on ageing wooden stile steps in wet weather, or because of the state of footbridges along the paths. The replacement of stiles with kissing gates was requested at two specific locations in Loppington village, but comments at the Plan Drop-In Day indicated that this provision would be welcomed throughout the parish.

These problems with the path network prompted comments that those who wished to walk for pleasure in the parish were forced to use the roads, which in this Review has been noted by some to be of questionable safety due to the size and speed of vehicles and the height of hedgerows above the road surface.

Since 2004, Shropshire Council has repaired or replaced stiles and renewed footpath markers throughout the parish. Also, since then, the Parish Paths Partnership – known as LARFers – has been established to organise local walks, perform small-scale footpath maintenance, and has produced a series of local walks leaflets.

In response to the questionnaire for the Plan Review, about 60% of us said that their use of footpaths was unchanged since 2003. 21% of respondents said they used the paths more, while only 7% said that they used them less.

In this review, we were asked what one thing would encourage us to make increased use of the paths; leaving aside the respondents who said “nothing”, and those who said they needed more time for walking (which the Parish Plan can’t change), there were 38 suggestions for improvement. That most frequently suggested was the provision of dog-friendly stiles, to ease the difficulty of lifting large dogs across the stile.

9 respondents suggested leaflets (or guides) to the walks around the parish. These have now been produced.

5 respondents asked for more paths and bridleways, or safe passage between sections of footpath where the right of way is along the public highway. One respondent commented that their dog has twice been struck by cars (even though the dog was on a lead) while walking along the road between one section of footpath and the next.

4 respondents complained of hazards and obstructions on public rights-of-way; respectively, these were cows in fields with rights-of-way, because they react alarmingly to dogs even when the dog is on a lead; and 2 respondents complained of the placement of electric fences across footpaths.

Action: Shropshire Council to be asked for dog gates or kissing gates to replace stiles on the most popular walking routes.

Crime and Safety Neighbourhood Watch

As a result of the Plan, start-up funding was obtained from the late North Shropshire District Council for a parish-wide Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Currently, 25% of households belong to the scheme. In the Review Questionnaire, we were asked whether our perception of our safety had improved because of the scheme, and while the great majority (83%) of us felt the same, 15% of respondents did say that they were less frightened of crime as a result., 4 households said that their fear of crime had increased as a result of the introduction of Neighbourhood Watch to their area.

Policing Policy

The 2004 Parish Plan included an action item that asked for a review of policing policy in this area. West Mercia Police have done so, and have introduced a dedicated Local Police Team which shares this area with other nearby rural areas of North Shropshire. The police visit the parish more often, and have made themselves more available by getting to know us and the area better, by attending parish events such as the Parish Fête, developing links with The Youth club and by publishing their contact details in the *Loppington Village News*. They now also keep in closer contact via the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

Action: Encourage more households to join Neighbourhood Watch and maintain the close working relationship with Wem Rural Local Police Team.

Litter and Dog Fouling

In the 2003 Plan questionnaire, our perception of litter fell into three areas: Domestic refuse that was scattered by animals whilst it awaited collection; litter – especially take-away cartons – thrown from vehicles; and fly-tipping.

While most dog owners in the parish are responsible and remove the problem when it occurs, the original 2003 survey indicated that there were areas of the parish where this consideration was not being exercised. It was felt that more bins should be provided in specified locations, and the Plan had an action that the number and positioning of both litter bins and dog-waste bins should be reviewed.

The results gathered from the Review Questionnaire are encouraging. Some 88% of us thought that the litter situation had improved, or at least was no worse. Only 5 households perceived the litter situation as being worse than it was in 2003.

79% of respondents thought that the problem of dog fouling was better, or no worse, than was the case in 2003; 21% felt that it had deteriorated.

About three-quarters of those who responded thought that the dog-mess bins were now in the right place; one-quarter thought they were not – or, rather, thought that there should be additional bins. While only 14

people said that they thought the bins were in the wrong places, there were 16 responses indicating where they should be.

5 respondents asked for more bins on the “Loop” – the route from Loppington village to Brown Heath, thence past Old House and back past the west entrance to Loppington House to the Tan Pit. At present, there is only one, by the Tan Pit. Another respondent asked for a bin near the Post Office in Loppington, which is again on this route.

3 other respondents suggested a dog bin near the parish church, and another elsewhere on Noneley Road, though without specifying exactly where.

Action: Financial reasons prevent additional bins being provided, however a change in Shropshire Council policy now permits dog waste bags to be also disposed of in litter bins.

Communication Notice Boards

In the original Parish Plan questionnaire, the questions asked about the effectiveness of communication referred particularly to information that the Parish Council wished to pass on to the rest of the parish. The subject of notice boards, however, covered not only Parish Council information but also shared notices between residents of the parish. At that time, the board on the back of the village shop’s door was the probably most used location for personal notices, though the parish notice boards are for use by all of us.

In 2003, the general feeling was that the parish notice boards were not ideally placed, frequently displayed notices that were out-of-date, and those notices were felt to be of no relevance to the reader. As a result of those answers, 3 new notice boards, 2 in Burlton and 1 in Loppington, have been provided by means of grants and a donation, and volunteers have undertaken to ensure that notices are removed once they reach their “sell by” date.

The Review questionnaire revealed that we feel that the situation is vastly improved. 86% of respondents felt that the notice boards are now better placed and, on a 2:1 basis, we feel that the information they carry is now relevant to us; roughly 90% of us now look at the notice boards at least occasionally.

Only about 23% of respondents said that they would display notices on the parish boards.

7 respondents felt that there should be further notice boards. There were 8 comments, 7 suggesting new locations; the comments from Loppington were for an additional board at the Tan Pit, or on the Noneley Road; those from Noneley suggested Noneley itself, or “the pub car park”. Those from Burlton suggested the pub car park; and one respondent from Brown Heath suggested a board there.

The Loppington Village News

The *Village News* appears 10 times a year, the July-August and December-January issues being double ones.

The vast majority of the households in the parish subscribe to the *Village News*; some additional copies are sent to past residents of the parish who wish to keep in touch with Loppington, and also to local information points such as Wem library.

The review questionnaire asked for suggestions as to other articles or pages that should appear in the *News*. There were 13 suggestions:

- Dates of farmers market in Wem;
- Timetables for the bus service in Burlton (2 comments);
- Planning issues (though it is unclear whether this isn’t already covered by the Parish Council pages);
- Newtown School News (which was at one time a semi-regular feature and has since been reinstated);
- Local history of villages other than Loppington;
- Notes on wildlife, and the local countryside (2 comments);
- Pages for children and/or teenagers;
- A “welcome and farewell” section (for people moving into, or out of, the parish);
- A “letters to the editor” page, or a page for comments about previous months’ articles;
- More hints and tips on gardening, especially on vegetable growing;
- Notes on the local farming community, and how it’s doing.

The review questionnaire also asked us for general comments about the *News*. While some respondents commented on (the then) recent changes in the format – roughly divided in favour and against – more than half offered praise of the *News* as being informative, useful, amusing, and the best community magazine they had experienced.

Two comments suggested that the *Village News* concentrated too much on Loppington at the expense of other townships in the parish; another suggested that there should be Roman Catholic, Non-Conformist and Humanist pages as well as the Church of England pages.

Parish Website

72 households made suggestions for the content of a website.

These were: Parish History -67; "Whats On" / Events – 67; Visitor Information – 63; Parish Council Reports – 60; Parish Photographs – 59; Useful contacts/phone numbers – 59; Society Reports/Notices – 40; Local Discussion Forums – 35; Local email – 26; other – 7.

Currently three local groups have websites. Loppington Village Hall, St. Michael and All Angels Church and Loppington W.I. The Parish Council does not have a website.

Action: Renewed efforts should be made to establish a parish website.

Pedestrian Safety - Pavements

Whilst this subject has been touched upon in previous sections, as relating to the parish's roads and rights-of-way, this section dealt specifically with road-side pavements in the parish. In the initial Plan, it was noted that there was only a limited amount of pavement provision in the parish, and the survey revealed several complaints about pavements being obstructed by overgrowth, or blocked by parked vehicles. Specific comments were made at the time about pavements in some locations being too narrow, or completely absent.

Since the 2004 Plan, some of the pavements within Loppington village parish have been resurfaced, and there has been additional work aimed at increasing pedestrian safety in Burlton.

40 respondents said that they were pleased with the work that has been done; 6 said that they were not.

33 respondents said that they believed that the footpath work that has been done has improved pedestrian safety in their area; 12 did not, and there was no response from 38 households. One respondent suggested that the pavement between the Post Office and the Village Hall should be wider, for safer use by children and families going to the play area; another commented on the fact that the footpath by the Dickin Arms fades away as it turns into Noneley Road, just where children need to walk. Other comments on this question were similar to points made previously, with several respondents mentioning the hazards caused by the lack of footpaths and the speed of traffic outside the two main townships.

In response to the question of whether there were problems with the existing footpaths in their area, 16 households said that they perceived a problem, 44 said they did not, and 23 made no response. 6 respondents commented on the fact that the pavement past Pear Tree Farm and Parish Farm in Loppington is too narrow; and two commented on the lack of a footpath at the top of Noneley Road between the Dickin Arms and the parish church. One respondent suggested extending the footpaths along the B4397 past Loppington Garage in one direction, and past the Tan Pit in the other. One Burlton resident suggested street lighting by the crossroads.

The Parish Council

To check on the perceived level of consultation with electors, there were three questions in the review that asked about our awareness of our Parish Council and its meetings. 84% of respondents knew who the members of the Parish Council were; 89% knew when the Council meetings were held; and 83% were aware that there is a public participation session at the beginning of each meeting where they can voice their concerns and ask for the Council's help.

Recycling

Only one respondent in the parish had experienced problems initially when kerbside recycling was first introduced.

With that one exception, our overall experience of the existing recycling collection is very favourable. We were also asked whether there was anything else that we would like to recycle. One respondent mentioned large items, and another, white goods – both of which must currently be taken to a Recycling Centre. – but the overwhelming response (from almost everyone who answered) asked for a plastic collection. Since the review questionnaire, Shropshire Council has provided us all with another recycling box for this purpose. The facility for the kerbside collection of cardboard has been withdrawn due to a change in regulations regarding the disposal of the recycled cardboard. The provision of Cardboard Banks in Wem and at the Recycling Centres is not a viable alternative for a considerable number of people.

Action: Shropshire Council is asked to explore a means of reinstating the kerbside collection of cardboard.

Broadband

In late 2009, 69 respondents said that they now use the Internet at home (it is estimated that this number has steadily increased since 2009); 13 do not, and 2 did not answer. More than half of those who returned questionnaires (50 households) do so daily, 13 “2 or 3 times a week”, 3 “once a week”, and 2 less often. 15 respondents did not answer this question.

The review asked whether there was any reason that we did not use Broadplace sessions in the Village Hall. Apart from 4 who said that they didn’t use computers, everyone who responded to this question said that they now had Broadband access at home. There is anecdotal evidence that some small rural enterprises which rely on the internet to work from home find the speed so slow that they have considered relocating. The slowness of the connection was mentioned by some respondents to the 2012 Supplementary Questionnaire and the issue was also raised at the Community Testing Event in 2010.

Action: Shropshire Council is urged to vigorously pursue its initiative to provide a minimum of 2 meg throughout the county.

The Village Hall

In the original Plan, the increased use of the Village Hall by the community was recognised as an action point. It is currently used by several local groups for meetings, including the Parish Council, and is regularly hired by local Voluntary Organisations, families for private parties, and for other celebrations including (for example) the Harvest Supper, The Summer Ball, the Christmas Fair The extra-large screen allows the showing of Flicks-in-the-Sticks, and it is a Broadplace.

In the review, we were asked what other community entertainments, events, or groups we would like to see in the Village Hall that would persuade us to use it more often. Four respondents suggested Tai Chi, yoga, or some other form of exercise programme, while two suggested dancing (particularly ballroom dancing) lessons. Two people suggested concerts. Another person suggested lectures and discussion groups. One person suggested additional parish-wide special events such as a Christmas Ball, and a parish bonfire party.

Finally, we were asked, if we never use the Hall, or do so only rarely, what prevented us from doing so. 8 respondents cited a lack of time; 6 said it was because they were working when the events that they’d attend were on; a 5 said they weren’t interested in the events held in the Hall. In other reasons, 2 people mentioned problems with finding child-care, while another said that they didn’t use the Hall because they had no children.

Summary of Action Points

Identified need	Action/initiative	Partners	Lead responsibility	Time scale	Notes
Shop	Re-open a shop in Loppington village		(1) The community (2) Commercial concern.	ongoing	Will probably only happen if an enterprising person forms a group to establish a Community Shop.
Housing	Adopt the Housing Needs Survey results as Supplementary Planning Guidance.	Shropshire Council Parish Council	Shropshire Council	October 2012	
Water	(1) Repair mains leaks promptly (2) connect more premises to mains water		Severn-Trent Water	ongoing	(2) Financial constraints will probably make this unachievable
Public transport	Alter days of Shropshire Link Service		Shropshire Council	ongoing	
Highways	Repair road defects promptly	Shropshire Council Parish Council	Shropshire Council	Ongoing	
Street lighting	Minimise light pollution from future housing development	Shropshire Council Parish Council	Shropshire Council	When lighting scheme for the Hawk Development is considered	Financial constraints will prevent street lighting in Burlton
Traffic and speed limits	(1) Continue to explore further traffic calming measures throughout the parish (2) Reduce Statutory speed limits in rural areas	(1)Shropshire Council Parish Council (2) Shropshire Council	(1)Parish Council (2) Shropshire Council	ongoing	(2) a consultation is anticipated Autumn 2012
Rights of way	Replace Stiles with kissing gates or dog gates	Shropshire Council P3 Group	Shropshire Council	ongoing	
Crime and safety	(1) increase Neighbourhood Watch membership (2) Maintain links with Local Police Team	(2) Neighbourhood Watch members Local Police Team	(1) and (2) Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator	ongoing	
Dog fouling	Provide more facilities to dispose of dog waste bags		Shropshire Council	ongoing	
Website	Establish a Parish website	Community Parish Council	Parish Council	Ongoing	Relies upon a volunteer Webmaster
Recycling	Reintroduce kerbside cardboard collections		Shropshire Council		
Broadband	Increase broadband speed		Shropshire Council	By 2015	

Appendix – Supplementary Housing Questionnaire

Loppington Parish Plan Supplementary Housing Questionnaire April/May 2012

There are currently a number of sites in the parish which have been granted planning permission for housing development. These are:

<p>In Loppington: The Hawk Yard site – 36 units 2 bedroom houses – 3 units. (2 affordable/subsidised) 2 bedroom bungalows – 2 units 3 bedroom houses – 21 units. (7 affordable/subsidised) 4 bedroom houses – 9 units 5 bedroom house – 1 unit</p>	<p>In Loppington: The Factory Farm site – 2 units 4 bedroom full value open market units – 2</p> <p>In Noneley/Commonwood 3 Barn Conversions totalling 8 units</p> <p>In Brown Heath 4 bedroom house under construction – 1 unit</p>
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The Shropshire Council Site Allocation proposals do not envisage any further open-market full-value housing development in the parish.

Please help us to shape our parish for the future by giving your thoughts on housing requirements for the area. For the purpose of this questionnaire, “**affordable housing**” means small, subsidised low-cost housing of the starter-home or retirement-home size. In rural areas, priority for any new **affordable/subsidised**, generally referred to as **Housing Association** or **Social** housing will be given to people with a local connection who are in housing need.

Your name/address if you wish to give it (this is optional and **will remain confidential**):

However, we do **need** to know which part of the parish you live in, so please tick the appropriate box:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loppington Village | <input type="checkbox"/> Burlton / Pickhill | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Heath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noneley / Commonwood / Ruewood | <input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere in the parish | |

Thinking about your own household circumstances...

Tick the most relevant box(es) for the following questions.

1. What type of accommodation do you currently occupy?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Rental | <input type="checkbox"/> Rented from Council/Housing Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | | |

2. Do you have friends or family living with you who need independent accommodation?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|

3. In your opinion, is your present housing adequate for your household’s needs?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Go straight to question 5) | <input type="checkbox"/> No (Please answer question 4) |
|---|---|

4.1: If, in your opinion, your present accommodation is not adequate for your needs, what are the reasons?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement / repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Too costly to heat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too large | <input type="checkbox"/> Too small |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is affecting the health of a household member | <input type="checkbox"/> Rent / mortgage is too expensive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need different type of accommodation (see Q4.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

4.2: If you need alternative accommodation, what do you need?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open-market full-value housing to buy | <input type="checkbox"/> Open-market full-value housing to rent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable/subsidised housing to buy | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable/subsidised housing to rent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered accommodation (incl. extra care) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

5. Are you currently registered on the Homepoint Housing Register?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No (or don’t know what Homepoint is) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
|---|------------------------------|

6. Do you own property or land that you might be willing to see built on or developed for affordable housing?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|

Thinking about how you perceive local housing needs...

Tick the most relevant box(es) for the following questions.

7. Do you see the need for more new housing, in addition to that already planned in the parish over the next ten years?

No (**Go straight to question 9**)

Yes (**Please answer question 8**)

8.1: What type of housing do you see a need for?

Affordable housing to buy or rent for local people

Affordable housing to buy or rent for local people and those from other areas

Open-market full-price housing to buy

Open-market full-price housing to rent

Sheltered accommodation for older people to buy or rent (incl. extra care)

Sites for Gypsies and Travelling people

8.2: What size of housing do you see a need for?

1/2 bedroom properties

3/4 bedroom properties

5 bedroom properties

Bungalows

8.3: How many dwellings might be appropriate (across the whole parish)?

1-5 dwellings

6-10 dwellings

11-20 dwellings

21-50 dwellings

51+ dwellings

8.4: Where should any housing be developed?

Edge of settlement, adjacent to built-up areas

In-fill between existing housing

Conversions should not be ruled out anywhere

New building should not be ruled out anywhere

8.5: Would you be willing to see some open-market full-value housing development in order to fund affordable/subsidised housing development?

No

Yes

9. Are you aware of any empty dwellings in your area which could be brought back into use?

No (**Go to question 11**)

Yes (**Please answer question 10**)

10. Should re-use of these properties be treated as a priority?

Yes

No

11. Are you in favour of the building of wind turbines in the parish?

Yes

Please clarify.

12. If you have any other comments, please make them here: