

WIDDRINGTON STATION & STOBWOOD PARISH PLAN 2011



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From June 2011 all Parish Councillors.

Supported by Julia Plinston, Community Development Officer, Community Action Northumberland

MAP SHOWING STATUS OF
FOOTPATHS IN AND AROUND
WIDDRINGTON STATION
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- Parish Boundary
- Public Footpath
- Treadden Path
- Alternative Way
- Litter bin (precepting nearby)
- Woodland

This map has been produced by UK Coal Mining in response to a recent consultation held with local people at the Widdrington Station & Stobrook Park Fair 2015.



Stobrook Safaris site
is undergoing restoration

112d
Stubwood

East Coast Main Railway Line

To Widdrington Village / A65

Widdrington Station

Remybods Farm

Co-op

Group View
Primary School

Garden
Centre

Kara
Woodcraft

Stubwood

Stubwood
Welfare

To Upton

To Blyth

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1 Introduction

1.1 *What is Parish Planning?*

Parish Planning or Community Led Planning is a step-by-step structured process, through which local people are actively involved in creating a vision for their community; together with an action plan developed in order to achieve that vision. The process is led by a parish planning group comprising mainly of volunteers from within the community itself. The Parish Planning Group works closely with the Parish Council, and it is usual for up to 3 parish councillors to sit on the group. Representatives of community groups and also of local service providers are often included in the group.

The process involves using a mix of evidence collection, different types of consultation and debate at the very local neighbourhood level. It is designed to be a process in which each and every citizen can participate and each community will choose a range of methods which are most appropriate for their local situation. The resulting vision covers the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community and all those who live and work there.

A good plan will identify a wide range of actions that can be taken to work towards the vision, including:

- actions the community can take for itself,
- actions that the community can take with support,
- actions which need to be addressed as part of the wider strategic plans driven by local authorities.

A well written plan can feed into local area plans and strategies and is therefore an important way of ensuring the parish voice is heard.

The idea of community led planning is nationally recognised and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) has produced a toolkit and website giving ideas and resources to support local communities in carrying out the process. At the time of writing more than 4000 communities have already created their own plan.

Community planning closely links in to current Government policy. For instance, '**The Communities in control: real people, real power' White Paper** was published in July 2008. This document expresses the Government's commitment to ensuring that local communities have more control of their own lives, are able to say what they want in their own community or parish and are able to work with other organisations to get it done.

1.2 *Why a Parish Plan for Widdrington Station & Stobswood*

The idea of carrying out this Parish Plan for Widdrington Station & Stobswood was first raised during the course of 2007. Local people had already been consulted about the future of Widdrington Station and Stobswood on 3 separate occasions since 2000. However in each case the exercises were carried out by external consultants commissioned by a variety of agencies. Useful documents were produced with positive suggestions for the future of the area, and a number of significant developments for the area have taken place over this period including building a new health centre, and development of the People's Park. However there was little sense of local ownership of these initiatives, and many concerns remain unaddressed.

The aim on this occasion was to carry out a community led exercise which would build on previous initiatives, but also enable local people to take action on their own behalf, identifying resources, developing skills and building confidence to make a real difference within the parish.

Another benefit to carrying out the parish plan at this time was that it would help the Parish to prepare for the changes in local government with the formation of the new unitary authority in April 2009. It was

felt that, more than ever, it would be essential to develop a strong local voice to influence the future of the community within Northumberland.

A meeting was held to discuss the idea, which resulted in 18 people volunteering to form a steering group. This included 3 parish councillors 10 other local residents as well as representatives from 5 key local organisations. Four sub-groups were also formed leading on different aspects of the plan, namely Homes, Buildings & Businesses; Community Groups; Green Spaces; and People. A fifth group took on responsibility for Communications, within the steering group and with the wider public. The group was supported by Lucy Armstrong, a business consultant from outside the area who took on the role of independent chair, and by Julia Plinston, a Community Development Officer from Community Action Northumberland.

The Parish Council supported the Parish Plan Group, not only through its representation on the group, but also by applying for a DEFRA grant to support the process, and by providing a small amount of additional funding from the precept. The Forum and Parish Council have kept in touch throughout the process.

In order to ensure that the plan is realistic and achievable, the steering group aimed to identify short term, medium term and long term goals:

- Short term – things that can be achieved quickly (within a year) to demonstrate the plan has an immediate and practical application. It was envisaged that some of these actions could take place within the initial consultation period to demonstrate that the process was effective as early as possible, and to maintain the public profile of the plan.
- Medium term – Small scale projects that perhaps involve recruiting volunteers and acquiring some additional resources, but which can be achieved within 2-4 years.
- Long term – Important issues that are complex and can take longer, (eg 4 years or more), and which may depend on influencing other agencies or raising significant funds.

The production of the Parish Plan marks the end of the work of the Planning Group. The document was produced as guidance to the Parish Council as to the priorities of local people. The ownership of the document now passes to the Parish Council, who will consider putting the recommendations into action. However the small group of Parish Councillors cannot be expected to carry out all the work without support, and the success of the plan will depend on involving local people in community action. Some members of the Planning Group are interested in taking particular issues forward, and are willing to take on new roles, such as membership of an editorial group to produce a community news letter.



Parents view the map of Widdrington Station produced by local school children

2 The History of the Parish - From Deer Park to Coalfield

2.1 The origins of Widdrington, the name and the place.

From at least the 1150's the Widdrington family had a house and lands to the west of Druridge Bay. They built a large, probably fortified tower house first then a substantial castle before 1341. In 1691 whilst the Widdrington family was away from home, it was looted by a French raiding party anchored at Druridge Bay. In the same raid, the nearby Chibburn Preceptory of the Knights of St John and the Widdrington family's Dower House were razed. Now you can only see the ruins of these and the outline of the moat can only be seen from the air.

The Catholic Widdrington family lost their estate fighting for the Jacobite cause in 1716 and it was confiscated by the Crown. This ended 500 years of the Widdrington family living on their Widdrington Estate. Then it was sold to Sir George Revel and passed via marriage to Sir George Warren in 1720.

The new owners of the Widdrington estate turned away from its traditional uses as a deer park, agricultural land and forests. It was known as early as the 1600's that the farmland and forests were lying on top of coal seams and by the 1720's the Castle Colliery was being worked. The Castle Colliery was between Widdrington Village and Houndalee farm and was probably a collection of bell pits.

Between 1720 and 1770 the castle fell into disrepair and Sir George Warren pulled it down, only to rebuild it in almost the same design. Just as it was nearing completion, it was gutted by fire and again demolished. He built a third castle nearby on a much smaller scale but this was demolished in 1862 and the stone used to rebuild Widdrington Village.

In the years between 1720 and 1965 several larger, more profitable pits than the small Castle Colliery were sunk.

In 1847 the Newcastle and Berwick Railway had opened to the public. This advantageous combination of railway access and vast coal reserves in the area must have made quite an impact on the local landowners who realised they had a fortune beneath their feet.

2.2 Widdrington Colliery

In 1868 the Isabella pit south of Widdrington Colliery was sunk but it was abandoned in 1890. The Sisters pit was sunk to the east of the colliery in 1873 and continued to produce coal for nearly 50 years.

In 1871 the Widdrington Estate, including Widdrington Colliery, changed hands again when it was bought by Hugh Taylor of Chipchase Castle.

A report in the *The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 11 Oct 1873" mentioned Widdrington Colliery being "about a mile and a half to the west of the old village, a new population gathered around it, houses were built, and a new village formed, which for size and importance far outstrips the ancient village of the Widdringtons" ¹.

For 50 years the colliery was a thriving little community with several streets of colliery housing of differing quality, a school, a Primitive Methodist chapel, a Mechanics' Institute, a pub called the Bus Inn (later the Junction Inn) and several shops run from peoples houses. By 1920 the pit was run down, and in 1923 the Widdrington Coal Company went into liquidation". ² The colliery housing was condemned and demolished in about 1940.

2.3 Stobswood

Most histories of the area write that centuries ago there was a large forest in the Stobswood area; the name came from Stobas – stumps of old trees. Before the introduction of the colliery at Stobswood, there were 3 farms and acres of agricultural land but no industry or villages.

However in 2007 Northern Archaeological Associates made some excavations, on behalf of UK Coal Mining Ltd. They concentrated on the area north of the Stobswood Surface Mine site and they found a mound potentially of prehistoric date but containing only one fragment of fired clay. They also found eleven fire pits scattered over the site, thought to have been used for small scale charcoal burning. Radio carbon dating gave an age between AD 860 and AD 1030. Their third finding was remains of post medieval fields and ploughing, similar in location to those on the OS map of 1860.

Stobswood Colliery was the third pit on Widdrington land, the royalty bought from Mr Taylor of Chipchase. The first shaft was sunk in 1875. Mr J H Burn was the owner and he had colliery housing built as the pit progressed. Strangely the pit was on one side of the East Coast Railway line and Stobswood's housing and amenities on the other. There was at least one collision between a coal lorry crossing the track and a train.

Mr Burn built a brick factory in 1923 alongside the pit and railway line. His pit supplied the raw materials for the brick factory kilns until the pits were nationalised in 1947. The Burn family bought a pit at Causey Park and later at Ulgham to supply the brick factory until it closed in 1999.

2.4 Ferneybeds Colliery

Not far away from Stobswood and 34 years later, another pit was sunk at Ferneybeds, south East of Widdrington Station. It was to prove short-lived as the shaft was sunk in 1909 and the coal ran out in 1924, but in that time, four colliery "raa's" were built, a so-called model pit village. Lambert, Liddell, Sanderson and Palmer streets were named after the directors of the Widdrington Coal Company. "Elmwood" was the name of two large semi detached houses for the two under managers and "Fernwood" a detached house for the mine manager, set back near The Straight Mile, furthest away from the Station and the pit. (The Straight Mile, now called The Mile was the drive for the Creswell Hall family to Widdrington Station).

In those 15 years that the Ferneybeds pit operated, a Colliers Institute was built opposite Sanderson Terrace; a redundant tin shed from the colliery became a Methodist chapel at the bottom of Palmer Terrace. A Social Club was first held in a wooden hut in the 1920's, and then replaced by a brick built building which caught fire in 1969.

Now all that remains of the former pit village are the four rows of former colliery housing, the station masters house and three cottages originally for railway staff, all now in private ownership. The churches continue in different venues, the Colliers Institute has been replaced by the Community Centre and library.

3 Widdrington Station & Stobswood Today

3.1 The Local Area

Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish comprises an area of 806 hectares and encompasses the two small communities of Widdrington Station and Stobswood together with surrounding countryside. It is located to the South of the area widely known as the Northumberland Rural Coalfield and lies 3 miles inland by road from Druridge Bay, 5 miles from the nearest south bound access to the A1, approximately 6 miles from Ashington and 7 miles from Morpeth. The Parish is divided by the main North East Coast Railway, and dominant landmarks are the level crossing and station which lie in a prominent position on the main route through the Parish which connects Widdrington Station to the main coast road on the East and leads to Morpeth to the West.

The Parish lies within the political ward of Ulgham, and is divided into two local Super Output Areas: 001F covering most of the land and housing to the West of the railway, and 001G covering a smaller area to the East of the Railway, and the rest of the ward. (A Super Output Area (SOA) is a geographical area designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics that is widely used in Government population studies). The figures from the 2001 Census which are most relevant to the Parish are therefore those for the Super Output Area 001F. This area is ranked 8537 out of 32,482 in terms of overall deprivation. Particular indicators of deprivation were those related to employment and education

- 62.7% [of the population] described their health as 'good' compared to 64.1% for Ulgham ward as a whole, and 67.8% for Castle Morpeth District Council
- 45% of 16 – 74 year olds had no qualifications

Deprivation was less evident in terms of health, environment and barriers to housing:

The area has for centuries been shaped by the coal mining industry, with settlements growing up around the numerous pit sites, and subsequently declining as individual pits reach the end of their working life. In recent years the coal industry in the area as a whole has been in decline and the last deep mine in Northumberland at Ellington closed in 2005. The Stobswood Open Cast site, which borders on the parish, finally ceased coal production in 2009 and is currently undergoing restoration. There are also proposals for a new site adjacent to Mile Road, although a formal planning application has not yet been made.



Stobswood Opencast

The massive impact of the loss of this traditional employment in the area has led to the Northumberland Rural Coalfield being recognised as a priority for regeneration in local, county, and regional development plans, and has opened the doors to a variety of funding sources including European funding, and funding from UK Coal and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

The 2003 Castle Morpeth Local Plan, which set out plans for the period up to 2006 identified Widdrington Station & Stobswood as a key site for strategic development within the area:

'Widdrington Station is an important settlement as it is the most central of the former mining settlements in the northeast part of the Borough and is well located within the road network serving that area. Accordingly the Council considers that Widdrington Station is the settlement where it is most appropriate to concentrate the provision of sub-regional economic development and recreational facilities, together with improved commercial and community facilities. Widdrington Station benefits from good communications, having a commuter rail service to Morpeth and Newcastle and frequent local bus services.'

Accordingly there has been much interest in development in the area, primarily significant housing development, but also with a view to providing more community facilities and small-scale employment and commercial improvements. This has brought both opportunities and challenges for the local community. The hope is that new development will improve the sustainability of the villages, protecting the future of the first school, shops, businesses and other community facilities, and that as new facilities are built, the range of employment, recreation and shopping opportunities will increase. However recent consultation exercises with local people have shown that they value the village way of life, and the fear is that the character of the parish will be lost as new developments grow up.

3.2 The Changing Political and Economic Environment

This Parish Plan is written against a background of significant changes in the local political and economic environment which may have a significant effect on the future of Widdrington Station & Stobswood, and on the implementation process for the plan.

In April 2009, the old Northumberland County Council and six District Councils were wound up, and a single unitary authority for Northumberland was established. The Castle Morpeth Local Plan provided the context within which much local development took place. The new authority has started on the process of harmonising local plans from each of the district councils to create the new County wide Local Development Framework, and it remains to be seen whether policies for developing the coastal area will change significantly. The change in local government has had a knock on effect on other local organisations. For instance the former local strategic partnership for Castle Morpeth is no more, and instead a wider reaching Northern Area Partnership is emerging, covering a much larger geographical area extending from the border with Scotland in the North, to Morpeth town in the South.

Another feature of local government re-organisation, has been the introduction of 27 Community Forums. The Northumberland County Council Website describes a Community Forum as follows:

- ‘- It is a gathering of people and organisations who are willing to work together to improve the quality of life in their towns, villages and neighbourhoods, for the good of all residents.
- Forum work is an attempt to link the views and ideas of local people with the decision-making processes of the local authority, parish and town councils and those involved in delivering services.’

Widdrington Station & Stobswood is part of a Community Forum area including the neighbouring parishes of Ulgham, East Chevington, Cresswell and Widdrington Village. Although the County Council has a strict protocol for Community Forums, it is largely the responsibility of local people to work out the detail of how the forum will work. In this area, the process has proved controversial, and work is ongoing to establish an agreed way ahead. However it is hoped that the Community Forum will become influential in the future and that the findings of this plan will be able to feed into wider plans for the whole Forum area.

There have also been changes in the fortunes of local organisations in the area. In the past a driving force for change in the area has been ENRGI (East Northumberland Regeneration Initiative), who were involved in a wide range of initiatives such as the development of the People’s Park, and the provision of youth services. However, at the time of writing, ENRGI’s future is in doubt, and many of their projects have been wound up or transferred to other organisations.

On the other hand, Widdrington Regeneration Partnership has emerged as a local force. The partnership comprises representatives from 5 local parish councils and 5 residents associations, working closely with UK coal. The Partnership aims to promote the economic regeneration of the area in the wake of the closure of the local open cast mine. A key initiative of the partnership is the ‘Blue Sky Forest Project,’ an ambitious plan to redevelop the extensive open cast site, to provide a wide

range of tourism and recreation facilities, including hotels, golf clubs, fishing lake as well as a facility promoting renewable energies. These ideas are intended to link into County and regional plans to further develop the tourism potential in Northumberland. The landscaping work required will be funded by UK coal, and the hope is to attract large scale inward investment from large national companies.

3.3 Population

The 2001 Census records the population of Widdrington Station & Stobswood Parish at 2386 and the 2003 Castle Morpeth Local Plan showed 2270 living in Widdrington Station with 120 living at Stobswood. However as there has been significant building in the parish over the intervening years, the population has no doubt increased considerably. The 2010 electoral role records 2205 residents registered to vote.

3.4 Housing

Previous consultation documents have estimated that there were approximately 900 households in the Parish in 2001. However considerable building has taken place since then, in line with the housing policy set out in the 2003 local plan which states:

'There have been continuing housing developments at Widdrington Station and there are still several sites available for development within the existing boundary. A site at Mile Road was recently approved on appeal and the settlement boundary is modified to take account of this decision. Despite the level of existing provision it is considered, due to Widdrington Station's location within easy commuting distance of the principal employment centres, that there is potential for additional residential and employment growth and additional land outside the existing settlement boundary has been identified for these purposes. The settlement boundary for Widdrington Station is accordingly modified to accommodate the new allocations. It is proposed that the boundary to development for Stobswood shall remain substantially unaltered, retaining the individual character of this community and protecting the woodland between it and Widdrington Station.'

A development of 29 homes on land opposite the school/ community centre was built between 2001 and 2002. At June 2002 planning permission had been granted for 185 dwelling units to be built on 16 sites within the parish, including a large development of 138 units at Grange Moor Park. The building at this site and many of the others is now complete, and further permission has been granted for sites at Stobswood Brickworks, Karva, and the Willows.



Housing at Grangemoor Farm



Pre-war Terraces

The housing stock varies widely from pre-war terraces built as part of the original mining villages to modern estates with a range of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, as well as a number of single homes and two farms. There is also a care home, Avala Park which houses 35 retired people. Approximately 330 houses in the Parish were previously council houses belonging to Castle Morpeth District Council. These have now been transferred to Castle Morpeth Housing Association to manage.

3.5 Public Services & Facilities

There has been considerable spending on community services in the parish over the last twenty years, in line with aspirations to see Widdrington Station and Stobswood as a centre for sub-regional regeneration.

3.5.1 The Community Centre

The Community Centre was built in the 1990s and provides a large hall suitable for indoor sports a smaller meeting room, together with a kitchen and toilet facilities. The building is owned by the Parish Council, run by a small management committee and used for a variety of purposes including regular badminton classes, mother and toddler group, Women's Institute meeting, Citizens Advice Bureau and Credit Union sessions, Parish Council meetings, monthly dances run by the Resident's Association, public consultations and other events. The Widdrington Methodist Church also use the Centre as a base to hold their regular services. Recent improvements to the Centre have included a kitchen re-fit and the installation of Photo-voltaic panels to reduce the energy requirements.



Community Centre & Library

3.5.2 Library

The small branch library is located in a purpose built, spacious, modern and fully accessible building adjacent to the Community Centre. It is open 3 mornings and 2 afternoons a week, offering facilities including books & magazines, books on tape, CDs, DVDs, public access computers, story times & events and videos. It also offers reading facilities for children during school holidays and has plans to offer film facilities at a future date.

3.5.3 ATAC, (Area Training and Activity Centre).

The ATAC Centre provides a second community building for the parish, offering a range of services with a strong focus on youth work. The building is run by a small charity managed by a committee of local residents. Facilities include a meeting room and kitchen, IT suite, kitchen, toilets and office. ATAC has been highly valued by local people in the past, and has been well supported with grant funding. The building, which is attached to the former Willows Pub is owned by the charity. However more recently, ATAC has struggled to gain further funding, and is hampered by the dilapidated state of the surrounding site. In the past ATAC directly employed Youth Workers but was unable to find the funding to continue this service. Subsequently ENRgl provided some youth work which is now no longer available. Currently youth services are provided at the centre through the Coquet Partnership Extended Services and there is potential to develop further services as an outreach from the successful Amble Youth Group. Other activities at the centre include Residents' Association meetings and a weekly Bacon Butty morning, during which Internet access is available.

3.5.4 Schools

There are a good range of schools in the surrounding area. Grange View C of E First School is located within the parish. The current building was purpose built in 1974 and is located at the heart of the parish near to the Community Centre, Library and Surgery. It received an overall 'Satisfactory' rating at the last Ofsted inspection in January 2007. In September 2009 it became a Church of England School. The school caters for children aged 3 to 9 years of age. Facilities including an IT suite, library, outdoor play areas, playing fields wildlife garden, and a forest classroom within the nearby Grange Wood. Activities include a wildlife club, kickboxing club, swimming, tuition in violin, guitar and keyboard, and art activities supported by an artist in residence. Older children normally go on to Druridge Bay Middle School in South Broomhill and thence to Coquet High School in Amble.

Some local children also attend Ellington First School, moving on to Bothal Middle School and Ashington High, or Tritlington First School, moving on to Morpeth Chantry Middle School and King Edward VI High School, Morpeth.

3.5.5 Places of Worship

Widdrington Methodist Church and Widdrington Catholic Church hold services in the parish.

3.5.6 Widdrington Surgery



Widdrington Surgery

The local GP surgery is a small friendly practice, housed in a purpose built facility which was opened in the early years of the new millennium. This provides excellent accessible facilities including a dispensary, children's play area, baby changing area, accessible toilets and a range of consultation rooms, and has a large car park. A wide range of services and clinics are on offer, including Mother & Baby clinic, Well Woman Clinic, Child Health Surveillance, Chronic Conditions Clinics, (for instance High Blood Pressure, Asthma Diabetes & COPD), Dispensary Service, Maternity Services, Minor Surgery, Obstetric List, Well Man Clinic, Family Planning Clinic, Antenatal Clinic, Travel Clinic and help with smoking

cessation. The staff team includes GPs, practice nurse, district nurse, podiatrist, physiotherapist, health visitor, dispenser, phlebotomist and administration staff. Additional services are provided by visiting counsellors, audiologists, optician and dentists

3.5.7 Stobswood Welfare

Stobswood Welfare is a facility originally provided by CISWO (Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation). It is now run by a local committee and houses a cricket club and football club who run a number of junior and senior football teams competing in competitions throughout Northumberland.

3.6 Open Spaces

The parish is located in a rural area with open countryside on all sides. Within the parish boundaries there are a number of public spaces which are highly valued by the local community.

3.6.1 The Peoples Park

The People's Park was opened on 30th August 2003 as a space for public recreation at the heart of the community. The park includes a play area, BMX track, wildlife area, stone amphitheatre in the shape of a giant sundial, pathways and large open areas. It is directly managed by the Parish Council.



The Sundial at the Peoples Park

3.6.2 Grange Wood

Grange Wood has been identified as an important site in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan 2003 which described the area as follows:

'Grange Wood, which straddles the Newcastle-Edinburgh railway line, is an area of mixed woodland with an interesting field layer and associated scrub vegetation. The site, which separates the two communities of Widdrington Station and Stobswood, is an important landscape feature to be protected. The site is designated by English Nature as an Ancient Semi-Natural

Woodland and as an Ancient Replanted Woodland with the main aim being to conserve the existing tree cover and field layer.'



The play park in Grange Wood

Furthermore the plan states that 'It will be important to include proposals for a landscape buffer zone to protect Grange Wood which is designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland and the Council has negotiated a Section 106 Agreement to ensure its provision.'

The wood includes a play area, the First School's forest classroom, a small pond and a number of pathways.

3.6.3 Green spaces in residential areas

In addition to the main sites, there are a number of small pockets of green space within the village. An area opposite the community centre on Grange Road has been designated as a Village Green, and there is room to develop this as a way of improving the overall appearance of the Parish. Other significant sites include the existing allotment site at Margaret Street which is owned by Castle Morpeth Housing, and an area at Edith Street that could be developed to provide further allotments.

3.7 Businesses & Employment Opportunities

The Parish has a small range of shops and businesses within its boundaries, including a Co-op & Post Office, Dansers Dance Studio the Widdy Chippy Fish & Chip shop, The Grange Garage, Hairdressing Salon, Sun Trap Tanning Studio, Fir Tree Nursery, a small general store / newsagent on Ferneybeds Rd and Karva Woodcraft furniture factory. Employment opportunities within or near the parish are limited and the two major employers in the area have closed down over the last 10 years with the Brickworks closing in 1999, and the Opencast site closing in 2009.



The Co-op Building

The 2003 Castle Morpeth Local Plan identified the need for economic growth alongside housing development, and also the need for more shopping facilities, and efforts have been made to fulfil this need. The development at Grangemoor Farm therefore included a number of new shop units, and the Co-op building was updated in 2008. Unfortunately there has been limited success in attracting and retaining businesses to occupy the new retail units, 7 of which remain empty. This may be in part due to the current economic situation, but may also indicate a lack of demand for the services on offer.

3.8 Transport



The Station

3.8.1 Trains

Widdrington Station lies on the main North East Coast Line. However only one train stops in the morning and one in the evening in each direction. These are at peak times, primarily serving commuters going to work in Newcastle upon Tyne.

3.8.2 Buses

Buses run throughout the day to Morpeth, Ashington and Alnwick, and there is also a regular service to Newcastle.

4 Consultation



Part of the Model of the Village built by children at Grange View C of E First School

The first challenge the Parish Plan Group faced in carrying out the Parish Plan, was that of getting local people involved. It was essential to gather in the views of parish residents, but local people had been consulted several times in recent years about their priorities for the future of the Parish and might be weary of such initiatives. Another questionnaire through doors was likely to result in a poor response. It was decided to build on the existing data and use a relatively 'light touch' method to update this, achieving a snap shot view of what has changed, and which priorities are still important for the area. We therefore chose to employ the 'Planning for Real' approach, a nationally recognised process for community consultation which was developed by the Neighbourhoods Initiative Foundation.

Planning for Real is a full consultation process, which involves staging one or more open events which focus on the display of a 3D model of the village. The Neighbourhoods Initiative provides a resource pack to help with creation of the model and additional materials including packs of suggestion cards. The cards come in 8 different colours each covering a different theme –eg local environment, health etc. Within each theme are a wide range of suggestions that are based on the kinds of comments that have been forthcoming in Parish Plans across the Country such as 'trees planted here' or 'well woman clinic required here.' Local residents are encouraged to place comments and suggestions on the model wherever they would like to see new facilities introduced, or a problem solved. There are also blank cards which can be used to add ideas of their own.



Hard at work on the Model

The benefits of the technique are that it is more fun than a questionnaire, less threatening than a public meeting, and accessible to all groups within the community including children.

The Parish Plan Group approached Mary Rothwell, head teacher of Grange View First School, to ask if the school would be willing to support the plan, and were overwhelmed at the enthusiastic response.



One child's vision of the future of the Parish
'Shar's Funky Cafe'

UK Coal provided a scale map of the parish created in sections on a strong polystyrene base. Over the course of half a term, the oldest children at the school worked in pairs on each section painting the base and adding scale models of the building, using the Planning for Real resources. In addition each child created their own individual model of a facility they would like to see in the ideal Widdrington Station & Stobswood of the future, and wrote a piece about what a difference such an innovation would make to parish life. On Friday 6th June 2008, the results of their work were revealed to the children's families. Then on Saturday 7th June 2008 the doors of the school were opened to the wider public for an event focusing on the model.



Viewing the model

In order to appeal to as many people as possible, the model was shown as part of a larger event, organised by the Parish Plan Group with the support of young people from the local youth group at ATAC (Area Training & Activity Centre), and other community groups and local agencies. There were fun activities, including archery and a bouncy castle. Ice-cream and burger vans were on hand to provide refreshments. Local community groups mounted displays to highlight the voluntary activity already going on in the parish, and there was a chance to meet service providers who offered advice and practical support in the area with an emphasis on employment opportunities. However the highlight of the event was undoubtedly the colourful, imaginative art work of the children.

The event was promoted using a wide range of methods, including direct invitations to a wide range of local community groups, services and businesses, posters displayed in local venues, an article in the local press, and a widespread leaflet drop to houses throughout the parish.

We were delighted at the enthusiasm that people showed in responding to the event, and the time many visitors took to place their suggestions on the model. Additional detailed comments could be written on post-it notes for display on boards around the room. These focused on issues the Steering group had identified as important locally. Over 150 people contributed more than 300 comments and ideas, covering a wide range of issues. The data gathered has been analysed, and together with evidence from previous surveys, used to inform the action plan at section 7 of this Parish Plan.



Planning for Real open day

5 Issues

In this section we have attempted to summarise the feedback from the Planning for Real event. A wide range of suggestions were put forward on the day, covering all aspects of Parish life. In many cases there were just one or two people proposing a particular idea, but often there were a range of similar ideas on a particular theme. For instance there were separate suggestions that, at The People's Park, a security camera should be installed, lighting should be improved and more regular police patrols should take place. Where this has happened we have grouped the suggestions together as a theme - a security problem at The People's Park - and will seek to identify which if any of the suggestions is a viable solution. In this case, as with many others, our ability to respond will depend to a great extent on negotiating with other agencies – such as the police. In the action plan we have tried to identify all those people who can contribute to addressing an issue.

We have analysed the feedback under the 8 general headings used for the Planning for Real Event, which were:

- Community Facilities
- Crime & Safety
- Health
- Housing
- Leisure
- Local Environment
- Traffic & Transport
- Work, Training & Education

In addition, we found that three cross-cutting priorities emerged from the day which merited separate headings of their own:

- Communications
- The Willows Site
- The Community Centre, ATAC and other Community Venues.

In practice, we found that the Leisure section broke down into 2 distinct areas which would more easily be considered within two of the other sections within the plan. Indoor leisure activities will be considered within the section on the community centre, ATAC and community venues. Outdoor leisure facilities & activities will be considered within the section on the local environment.

5.1 Communications

As we looked at the responses, it became clear that there was much potential to improve the communications across the parish. Many of the suggestions we received were asking for activities or facilities that were already available (for instance a request for badminton when there are already 3 different badminton groups using the Community Centre on a weekly basis). Also there were several issues which the Parish Council was already working hard to address, but people seemed unaware of the good work going on. For instance there were many requests for dog poop bins. The Parish Council had already started on a programme of adding labels to existing bins encouraging people to use these for this purpose, but the public were not fully aware of this progress.

Possible Way Ahead

- Parish newsletter
- Parish website
- Booklet of local services, businesses and community groups
- More notice boards (currently at the Community Centre, by the Co-op, Stobswood & Ferneybeds)

These are high priorities which can be addressed in the short to medium term. Indeed the Forum has already produced a first edition of a Parish Newsletter.

5.2 The Willows Site

The single issue that drew the greatest response was that of what to do with the site of the closed Willows Pub. This site is in a prominent position at the entrance to the Parish from the coast, and the main pub building has been disused and boarded up for some years. The site not only looks depressing and unattractive but attracts petty crime problems such as vandalism. 25 people placed post-it notes on the boards requesting that the existing buildings at the site be demolished and the ground cleared, and a total of 66 comments placed on the model related to a range of ideas as to how the site could be improved or used, from crime reducing measures to opening a new pub (8 suggestions) and building affordable houses (9 suggestions).



The Willows pub

There were also 7 suggestions related to the Willows Site which came up in the section 5.9 Leisure - outdoor facilities. These included Floodlights (2 people), Dog walking area (1 person), Picnic area (1 person), Paved area with seats (1 person), Village Green (1 person), Local Information board (1 person). Considered together these might suggest an alternative approach to dealing with the Willows site. If it is not possible to reinstate the pub, or to develop the site for housing, another option may be to develop a pleasant outside area.

Possible way ahead

- This is a complex issue. Any possible way ahead for the site is dependent on working with other agencies such as; a developer, Northumberland Council's planning department & the police. It will require considerable investment. It has not been possible to attract anyone to manage a pub for several years as this does not appear to be economically viable. Planning permission has been granted for housing on the site making this the most likely option, but in the current economic environment, no developers have yet been willing to make a firm commitment to any new building work.
- In the short term the pressure needs to continue to enforce the compulsory demolition order that is in place which will involve demolishing the pub and making good the attached ATAC building.

This is a high priority but unfortunately fully resolving the situation remains a long term aim. Some small interim steps may be possible in the shorter term.

5.3 The Community Centre & other community venues.

The Community Centre is a key resource for the parish and at the planning day a separate board was put up for post it note comments about the centre. The responses identified this as an excellent resource which should be better used and better promoted. There were a wide range of responses across themes such as community facilities, leisure and recreation and employment, training and education, which either showed a lack of knowledge of what is currently available at the centre, specifically asked for additional activities, or identified needs that could be provided for here. There is clearly potential to make even better use of these valuable facilities.

The ATAC Centre is a second community building, which is also currently underused and could be developed further, although there are issues with the location of the building adjacent to the Willows site. An ideal solution would be to sell the building as part of the redevelopment of this site, and acquire an alternative building which could be used to house activities which cannot be accommodated at the main community centre.

There are also a number of other buildings which may have rooms that could be used for a wide range of community purposes, subject to negotiation with the owners / management teams, including, the

library, school, surgery, Stobswood Welfare, and the Dance Studio, as well as a number of shop units that Grainger Plc is currently unable to rent out.

5.3.1 Activity Groups

Approximately 23 suggestions were received for activities that people would like to see in the parish but no one activity stood out as being of particular interest. Ideas included a wide range of physical activities including various sports, keep fit, dancing and martial arts, cultural activities such as a reading group and a local history group, and specialist activities for children. The vast majority saw the Community Centre as the natural setting for these. Some of the requested activities already exist.

Possible Way Ahead

- Support the Community Centre committee to maximise the use of the building by better publicising both the activities that are already taking place, and free times when new activities could be arranged
- Discuss with Council Sports and Leisure whether it would be possible to arrange some taster sessions of various activities, or holiday courses for children.
- Offer support to local people who want to set up new activities – eg financial support with room hire / booking coaches for a trial period, free publicity for new activities in newsletter or on website.

High priority – short term.

5.3.2 Leisure Centre



Several children wanted a bowling alley in the Parish

5 people used post-it notes to suggest the need for a leisure centre including swimming pool, gym and cinema. Similar ideas featured highly in the children's aspirations for the village who also wanted to see facilities such as a swimming pool, ice skating and 10 pin bowling.



Several more asked for a swimming pool

Possible Way Ahead

- Such large scale facilities would normally be impractical for such a small parish. The 2003 Castle Morpeth Local Plan did recognise the need for more indoor sports facilities in the rural coalfield area which could be located near to the Parish, but no progress has been made on this issue, and policies for the area will be reviewed by the new Northumberland Council.
- However the Blue Sky Forest Project aims to build a wide range of leisure facilities very close by. If these are made available for local people to use (rather than just to tourists and hotel residents), this would largely address these needs. The Parish Council should link closely with Widdrington Regeneration Partnership to ensure local interests are provided for in the project.

5.4 Community Facilities

5.4.1 A Social Venue for the village,

Whilst 7 people asked for the Willows Pub to be demolished, 12 asked for a new pub and a further 3 asked for a community or internet café.

These issues were also raised on the post it notes where 3 people asked for a family pub or wine bar, 1 a coffee bar, 1 a café for week day meetings, and another a café for adults.

1 suggestion pointed out that a café might support other businesses in the area.

Possible Way Ahead

It has proved impossible over a long period of time to find a new proprietor for the Willows pub. It appears that the venture is not financially viable, and even if another site is identified for a pub this may not prove any easier. However if we take together the requests for pubs, bars and cafes, it is clear that there is a need for a place for people to socialise and relax. This issue has been a significant one for a considerable time. In 2006, when local people were consulted about Grainger's plans for further housing development on the Willows site, a desire for a pub to be reopened was widely expressed.

If the proposed Blue Sky Forest Development goes ahead, this may well impact on the need / desire for such a facility depending on how welcoming the new facilities are to local people.

The Stobswood Welfare has the potential to become a social venue for the whole parish, although currently it is used only by members. It may be worth approaching the committee to discuss whether they would be interested in developing a wider role in the community.

If there is sufficient local support, a community café may be an option, possibly occupying one of the empty shops near the Co-op, or linked with other developments in the area. This could be a social enterprise with links to training and employment, but would be a major undertaking. (The idea of a cafe alongside the People's Park was floated as far back as the 2002 Planning for Change document).

A shorter term approach may be to organise more social opportunities such as drop-ins or one off events to foster local community spirit. ATAC has for some years run a 'bacon butty' drop in on Wednesday mornings regularly attended by 15 – 20 people.



How one child imagined a local cafe

It might be worth offering a range of other similar sessions at different times of the day to try and meet the needs of all sections of the community. Maybe it would be possible to arrange a temporary liquor licence to arrange monthly social nights with a bar at the community centre or ATAC, or to negotiate with Stobswood Welfare Club to hold regular events. This would provide evidence of need for a permanent venue.

A high priority, but to create a permanent venue remains a longer term issue requiring considerable financial resources, local commitment, and negotiation with a range of agencies.

5.4.2 Youth Club / Drop In

4 people commented on the need to keep the youth centre / drop in at ATAC. However this low response rate seems unlikely to fully reflect local feeling on the subject. The section of the plan looking at Crime highlighted that there is significant concern about youth related crime, an issue which could be partly addressed by better youth provision.

Most significantly, the consultation did not include a specific exercise with the young people of the parish. It was hoped that the results of a consultation that the Coquet Partnership Extended Services carried out with local young people regarding recreational and leisure activities would be available in time to be included in the plan, and this could be viewed as supplementary evidence when it is complete.

The need for better support for young people has featured in many previous consultations for instance the Widdrington Station and Stobswood Village Millennium Strategy listed a weakness of the Parish:

'lack of training, employment recreational and sporting opportunities especially for the young.'

The consultation document produced by Grainger in 2006, identified that

'ATAC is seen as a vital resource in the community' and that 'Young people are also very supportive and indeed would like to see the facility open for longer periods'.

The need for better youth support is also a theme that is shared across the rural coalfields area and has been the subject of a special meeting of the Druridge Bay Community Forum. There is potential to work with neighbouring parishes on this issue.

Since the Planning for Real Day, ATAC has faced a difficult time losing its permanent staff including youth workers, and subsequently losing the input of Youth Work from ENRgl.

A Youth worker from Coquet Partnership Extended Services now runs regular sessions, and more outreach may be available through the Rural Coalfields Youth Project which is now managed by Amble Youth Group.



Young People from ATAC join in the clean-up day in the People's Park, 31st October 2009

Possible way ahead

- Further consultation exercise with Young people and parents to analyse extent of need
- Link with ATAC, Amble Youth Group, and Coquet Partnership Extended Services to address
- May be an issue to take forward through the new Druridge Bay Community Forum for a coordinated approach with neighbouring Parish Councils.
- The fate of ATAC is linked in no small degree to the fate of the Willows site as a whole, and consideration should be given as to whether the building is the right place for a youth service.

A medium priority needing financial input and agency support, could be addressed in the medium term.

5.4.3 Financial Advice & Support

Suggestions included a credit union, an advice and information shop at the library, a money advice bureau in the community centre area, and for extended library opening hours, especially on Saturday.

Possible way ahead

- There is now a newly formed branch of Northumberland Credit Union which is now open between 1pm-3pm at the Community Centre during term times.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau also offers regular sessions at the community centre
- Although there was only one person supporting each of these suggestions, taken together, they suggest there may be potential to better use or advertise the library and community centre buildings as an information resource.

In itself a low priority, but links with many suggestions in the work, education and training section for work related advice, and with the leisure section which identifies the need for an internet cafe . It may be possible to identify a solution that brings all these issues together.

5.4.4 Other

Single requests were also received for accessible toilets, a cash point, local shops at Winneycrook and a place for Church of England worship. There is already a cash point in the news agent on Ferneybeds Road. It is not proposed to look at these suggestions in any further detail in this plan, but will be borne in mind when considering larger developments. The issue of a church building could be addressed to the Parochial Church Council.

5.5 Crime & Safety

In general there was a fairly low response on issues around crime and safety, and the local police liaison officer has confirmed that the Parish is considered a relatively safe area from a police point of view. The comments could be largely grouped into the following areas:

5.5.1 Youth related crime

This includes youths 'hanging around' taking drugs and drink in public places, graffiti, vandalism and inappropriate use of fireworks. Particular areas identified where such problems exist include the Willows site, Peoples Park & De Merley Gardens, Mile Road Bus Shelter, The Co-op area, and East Acres. In total 29 cards on these themes were placed on the map.

5.5.2 Feeling Unsafe

Another set of comments related to feeling unsafe and the need for security measures such as security cameras, better lighting, more police patrols, and overgrown areas to be cut back. The main sites of concern were the Willows Site and Peoples Park, but Chibburn Court, Edna Street, the end of the Gables, Ferneybeds and Grange Road were also mentioned. Overall 17 cards referred to these issues.

5.5.3 Derelict and Unprotected Land



Land to the rear of East Acres

5 comments mentioned Derelict land at the Willows and Stobswood with a particular reference to illegal dumping at Stobswood and the Brickworks. It was also suggested that protective fencing should be erected along the railway (presumably to prevent children and adults getting onto the line, illegal dumping or use as an access route for criminal activities).

Comments related to crime also arose under other themes, and will be dealt with separately. Littering and dog mess were raised by 17 people in response to the Local Environment section, and speeding was a major issue in the Traffic and Transport section raised by 22 people.

Possible way ahead

- These issues are closely related to each other and also to other themes addressed elsewhere in the plan, namely redevelopment of the Willows Site, Improvements at the People's Park, and provision of Youth Facilities. Effective measures in these areas should have a significant impact.
- In the shorter term discussions with the police and Parish Council are required to assess the viability of some of the prevention measures suggested. Police support and activity is needed to address the concerns about speeding in various parts of the village.

5.6 Health

One of the lowest response rates was on the theme of Health with only 17 comments in total being received in this area. This may well reflect the high level of service that is already available at the modern health centre which was completed in 2003. Since the Planning for Real Event, the importance of the Health Centre was highlighted when a planning application was submitted for an independent pharmacy in the village. The GP practice runs a dispensary which contributes significantly to the financial viability of the services, and there were concerns that services may have to be reduced if this development went ahead. However, although planning was granted, this has now lapsed, and the Practice has made its own application to protect against a similar threat arising in the future.

No single overriding need was identified, but there was a general interest in maintaining existing services at the surgery and clinic including GPs, dentists and opticians. Other services suggested included well men & women's clinics, diabetic clinic and hearing tests / hearing aids all of which are now available, and cancer screening (prostate), minor accidents clinic, which are provided through the Primary Care Trust, and may not be practical to provide at such a local level. Finally there was a suggestion for a sexual health clinic. There is already a family planning clinic at the centre, and further work with young people, are more likely to be successful if integrated into local youth services.

5.7 Housing

Only 15 people raised issues relating to Housing.

5.7.1 Affordable Housing

Of these, 10 people suggested there is a need for more affordable housing in the parish – 6 for older people, 2 for disabled people and 2 for first time buyers. All but one suggested that the best site for this would be the Willows site, the other suggesting Parkside Garden.

Possible way ahead

- This is a significant issue, and the suggestion that the Willows site should be redeveloped for housing was the single most popular suggestion for the site – just ahead of the suggestion to re-open a pub on the site (which does not appear to be feasible). The demolition of the Willows could become a catalyst to resolving other issues that have been identified. Depending on the overall size of a development - the developer may also provide some community benefits, which might support other activities arising from the plan (eg provision of a social venue for the village, or support for ATAC Youth Club).

A high priority. However this will be a long term objective – requiring significant investment, and the support of the Planning Department, a housing associations developer and the Parish Council

5.7.2 Building on Green Spaces

One of the Boards for post-it notes raised the issue of whether building should be allowed on the green spaces in residential areas, and particularly the allotments site on Grange Road where proposals for housing have been suggested. 14 people responded who were unanimously opposed to building on such sites, and highlighted the need for green spaces within the village.

Possible way ahead

- Recommend that the Parish Council carefully evaluate any such proposals, and that information about any such proposals be widely publicised to give local residents the chance to comment.

5.7.3 The Brickworks Site

The Brickwork Site has also been identified as a site for housing development. There were no comments relating to this at the planning event – just two comments that fly tipping is a problem here, and that the area needs to be cleaned up. Subsequently, planning permission has been given for 130+

dwellings to be built on the Brickworks site. Space will also be available for allotments and a Community Office.

Possible Way ahead

- Northumberland County Council is aware of this and is dealing with this as an ongoing issue.

5.7.4 Other

Four people asked for improved refuse collection – mainly collection of larger items from the Grange Road area but also more wheelie bins at the end of Gables. Another suggested that a recycling facility at the car park behind the Co-op would be useful.

One asked for the garage block at the end of the Gables to be removed.

One suggested forming a residents association at Parkside Garden.

Possible way ahead

- These remain low priorities as the suggestions attracted little support. However there may be some low cost simple solutions to these issues – eg: the move to improve communications could include more publicity regarding the existence of a Parish Residents Association, and about how to access refuse collection services. It may be that a clean-up day could come out of the local environment issues – eg litter picking, clearing derelict sites, and the clean up could include Grange Road. It might be possible to arrange a monthly skip collection to dispose of larger scrap items and waste.

5.8 Local Environment & Outdoor Facilities

More than 83 cards were placed on the model relating to the local environment and outdoor facilities themes. In addition 5 of the post-it note boards were related to outdoor environment, reflecting the importance of this subject to the steering group. Four themes emerged that have an impact across the Parish: The Cultural Centre and appearance of the Village, Footpaths, Pavements and Cycle Tracks, Green Spaces in residential areas, and littering/ dog fouling. In addition a number of individual sites were discussed in some detail as areas for action.

5.8.1 The Cultural Centre and Appearance of the Village

One of the post-it note boards was dedicated to the question of whether it would be beneficial to develop a clear centre to the village. There were 9 comments posted on the board. Responses to the question 'Should the true centre be identified?' demonstrated the issue and the potential benefits from establishing such a centre:

- 'If possible as village is higgledy piggedly & needs a focal point.'
- 'could be good for fundraising events – includes villagers, encourages pride in their environment'

Three sites were suggested as possibilities – the Willows site, the Co-op area and the green area around the community centre, and desirable features included a piece of artwork, seating, and a public recreation area that could be used for fundraising.

Cards laid down on the model also included a suggestion for a piece of public art, a maypole and 2 requesting a village green.

A final suggestion was that a village trust should be formed to obtain and manage funding for developing such a centre, and to coordinate with the local Council regarding maintenance and repairs.

Possible way ahead

- The Green area opposite the community centre has now been designated as a village green and there is potential to develop this area to meet this need.

5.8.2 Green Spaces within the Residential Areas

One of the post-it note boards at the planning event was dedicated to asking about how important green spaces in the residential areas were to residents, and in addition some comments were placed on the map on this topic.

Several comments emphasised that such green spaces are very important:

- ‘Villages need green spaces to be nice places to live.’
- ‘Yes very important, sitting in peaceful locations, growing organic produce. Having native flora to encourage natural fauna’
- ‘It is important to see green fields instead of bricks’

As already mentioned in section 5.7.2 on housing, 14 people also specifically objected to building on proposed building sites amongst the green spaces, most notably the site at Grange Rd. Subsequently, this open space has now been formally adopted as a village green which effectively removes the likelihood of any future housing being built on it.

5.8.3 Allotments & local food growing

There were 6 comments in support of keeping or extending the availability of allotments, and the importance of local food production:

- One card on the board asked for the reinstatement of the allotments at Margaret St
- One post it note said: Do not build on existing allotments. There are only 15. We need more
- Give an allotment to the school so young children can see where the vegetables they eat come from. [In fact the school is already involved in growing its own produce].
- Another comment asked for an area to be dedicated to growing organic produce.

Possible way ahead

- There has been an ongoing issue with the existing allotments which were discovered to have asbestos on site, which could be expensive / difficult to clear. Castle Morpeth Housing who own the land have recently agreed to return it to use as allotments, but £20,000 is needed to remove the threat of contamination. The Parish Council has made a grant of £5000 towards this cost.
- Currently the Parish Council does not own any other land on which allotments could be sited, but it is hoped that abandoned plots in Edith Street will be made available for this purpose.

5.8.4 The People’s Park

The Forum considered the future of the Peoples Park to be one of the most significant local issues and therefore put up a post it note board on this subject for detailed comments. The park received significant funding through the lottery some years ago, and for a while was maintained by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. However more recently the level of commitment has dropped. Some of the comments on the boards reflected current problems for instance:

- ‘Either get rid of it or maintain it. It’s a disgrace at the moment’
- ‘Needs more care taken of it.’
- ‘Planting areas are a mess & need tidying up’
- ‘Wild area is too inaccessible’
- ‘Rubbish problem in the park’
- ‘Older children are using area for under 6’s’
- ‘Young people driving cars fast & noisily in area of DeMerley Gardens for access to park. There is a car park behind the co-op!’



The play area at the People’s Park

However there were a large number of positive ideas both on the post-it notes and on the 28 cards that were placed on the map related to the People's Park. Many people wanted to see more facilities integrated into the Park including:

- Sports facilities - Tennis courts (4 comments on the map and 1 on the post it notes), Football pitch /astro turf area (3 comments on the map and 1 on the post it notes), Bowls (indoor) (1 person).
- Garden areas – sensory garden (2 comments on the map & 1 on the board), flowering beds (1 on the map and 1 on the boards, community garden (1 person)
- Seating area with planting around them. (3 suggestions on the board)
- A picnic area (1 suggestion on the map and 1 on the board + 1 suggestion of a picnic area at the Willows. May only be needed in one site?).
- Measures to benefit wildlife (planting wildlife 2 people), planting trees (1 comment on the map and 3 on the board referring to replanting), wild flower meadow (1 person), and nature trail (1 person).
- Area for community events (3 people) + 1 suggestion for a maypole.
- Landscaped park area (1 person)
- Zones for dog walking (2 comments on the map & 1 on the boards asked for dog walking areas and 2 people asked for dog free zones) The issue of dog fouling also arose on the environment boards.



One of the children wanted a crazy golf course

- Play area for 6 – 12 year olds (1) (this may relate to the comment on the notice boards that the area for under 6s is being used by older children).

Another group of comments focused on the need for better security in the park.

- 6 people felt there was a need for a park keeper or warden to make the park a safer place and improve maintenance. 1 wanted regular patrols.
- 2 suggestions on the board and 1 on the map asked for railings / security fencing and gates to restrict access at night.

A final group of 3 comments focussed on getting the community involved in maintaining the park. All thought there would be a benefit to young people and children involved and 1 suggested adults and children should work together to this end.

Possible way ahead

- Organise regular volunteering days for local people to take on maintenance tasks in the Park. The Planning Group has already organised one such day which proved to be very successful with 40 volunteers of all ages taking part, who were keen for more events to be held in the future.
- There is already a sub group of the Parish Council with responsibility for the People's Park. This could be opened as a working group involving other members of the community to develop a management plan looking at which of the many suggestions for new facilities could be achieved.



Children join in the clean up day at the People's Park

A high priority that could be addressed within the short term.

5.8.5 Grange Wood (semi-natural woodlands)

The woodlands have the potential to be another significant community resource, with potential both to provide educational and leisure facilities and to offer enhanced support for wildlife. A range of issues were raised, both on the dedicated post-it note boards, and on the village map.

As with the People's Park there were several comments on the need for better maintenance: eg

- General tidying up, replanting required
- Litter picked up. More care taken of wildlife & plants

Suggested measures to protect particular species were as follows:

- 7 people supported measures to protect red squirrels
- 6 people supported putting up bat and owl boxes
- 3 people felt that the wood should be managed to encourage native plant species
- In addition one person asked for traditional management of the environment to be maintained: 'Don't let old management systems die out. Stop hacking back hedges. Lay them instead'.

The steering group asked whether there should be access for the public to the woods or whether they should be preserved for wildlife:

- 1 person felt very strongly that the whole area should be preserved for wildlife and gave a detailed response: 'Part of woodland has been completely destroyed in an attempt to put a footpath through a naturally boggy area. Stobswood is a rare historic woodland. Disturbing & destroying it is not going to benefit anyone, Careful planning should be used to encourage natural species to remain / return'
- 3 other comments on the board and 2 on the map supported keeping part of the wood as a wildlife reserve with limited access.

There is already an outdoor classroom for school children sited in the wood. Other specific features and facilities that were suggested at the planning event included:

- 1 comment on the map asked for a small pond – which does already exist but may need maintenance. Another on the post it note boards requested that there should be sympathetic planting around the pond to make it more natural
- 1 person suggested an adventure playground for 6 – 12 year olds.
- 2 people requested nature trails
- 1 person asked for access for disabled people.

A final group of three responses focussed on the need for someone to actively maintain the site:

- 1 suggesting that someone should be employed, and
- 2 suggesting organising volunteers to pick litter, and discourage vandalism.

Possible way ahead

- As for the Park: a management group could be formed and volunteering days organised.
- Permission would be needed from the landowners, Grainger Housing to take any plans forward.

A high priority that could be addressed in the short term.

5.8.6 The Willows Site

7 suggestions related to the Willows Site, and these have been discussed in section 5.2 above which looks at the Willows in detail.

5.8.7 Grange Rd

There was a request for floodlights at Grange Road.

Possible way ahead

- These have already been installed by the Parish Council

5.8.8 Open Cast Site

There was a suggestion for a fishing lake at the Open Cast site.

Possible way ahead

- This idea has already been incorporated in plans for the Blue Sky Forest.

5.8.9 South End of Gables

Six people asked for children's play areas including adventure playground for 6 – 12 year olds (3), a 'muck about' area (1), and a playground for under 5's. (1). Of these, 3 people suggested the South end of the Gables as a potential site for this.

Possible way ahead

The Parish Council has already investigated using the site for this purpose and found that this was not possible because of the land type, its topography and safety issues. The need for children's play areas will be explored along with other suggestions for the 2 alternatives sites, the People's Park and Grange Wood.



Existing play area at the People's Park

5.8.10 Footpaths, Cycle Paths

Walking and Cycling in the parish are important both as ways of going about daily business and as a low cost recreational pastime that is available to all. 26 suggestions were received on the subject of footpaths, cycle paths and pavements

14 comments suggested possible extensions to the network of footpaths. Possible routes included:

- Grange Rd
- Mile Road to Widdrington Village
- Mile Road Junction
- Mile Road Bottom
- Additional footbridge over railway near to Co-op to Mile Road side of village
- Footpath needed from top of Mile Road to Ellington Hagg Farm
- Footpath needed from top of Mile Road to roundabout @ A1068 (new road)
- Footpath from Widdrington Station to river & meadow at Ulgham
- Footpath from top of Mile Road to Hagg Farm
- A footpath from Widdrington Station to parkland at Ulgham
- Footpath – Stobswood – Karva – rest of village
- Bridge over railway from the Gables to other side
- 3 requests related to accessible pathways for disabled people with suggestions of an accessible path through Stobswood, one through the People's Park and a circular route of 2 – 3 miles suitable for an electric wheelchair.

A single request was made for cycle lanes at Mile Rd.

Awareness of footpaths – 2 suggestions focused on increasing awareness of the availability of the paths, by producing a leaflet with a map of local paths and by putting up better signage.

Possible way ahead

- short term – the parish planning group has, with support from UK Coal, already been able to produce and distribute a map showing the existing pathways. (A copy is also included in this plan). This could be developed into printed permanent signage at several locations around the parish.
- Ensure that additional footpaths are included in the overall plans and design of the Blue Sky Forest project

- Medium term – identify the landowners where pathways are requested and discuss whether such paths are a possibility.
- Long term – identify resources to create paths (funding, materials and people to do the work).

5.8.11 Pavements

Improvements to the surfaces were requested to the pavements at East Acres, Ferneybeds, The junction of Gables / Ferneybeds, and Mile Road, and to the footpath at the Gables.

Possible way ahead

- Discuss with NCC Highways Department and the Area Countryside Officer, Community & Environmental Services Directorate, Northumberland County Council

5.8.12 Litter and Dog Mess

17 comments were received on the subject of dog fouling and littering in a wide range of locations, and 11 sites were identified where new litter / dog fouling bins were requested.

Possible way ahead

- As this issue was raised by a high number of people it could be seen as a high priority, but this was one area which highlighted the need for better communication. The Parish Council had already taken measures to address the issue by attaching stickers to existing bins explaining how to use them for this purpose, and by installing further bins. The Parish planning group was able to support the Parish Council early in the planning process, by surveying the impact of these improvements, and raising awareness of them in the first newsletter.

5.9 Traffic & Transport

There were 34 cards placed on the model on the subject of traffic and transport.

Although the need for better public transport has featured in previous consultations there were only 4 cards used on this subject. This low response may suggest that more residents in the village now have access to a car, and that an anticipated rise in demand due to new housing developments did not transpire. Of the four comments, one requested more trains, one said the bus service to the village was inadequate, and one suggested the 518 service should start from ATAC rather than the council estate, and a final request was for a better bus service to the school.



The Level Crossing

One person requested a community transport scheme.

Possible way ahead

- Better bus provision could be discussed with County Council local transport department and transport schemes could be discussed with ENRgl.
- Could liaise with South east Northumberland rail users group (a pressure group) regarding trains stopping at Widdrington Station
- It may be possible to provide better links to existing community transport schemes in the area.

5 cards related to problems with road surfaces, at Grange Road, Ferneybeds and along Mile Rd.

Possible way ahead

- Contact NCC Highways Department



However the majority of comments related to traffic crimes: 19 comments focussed on speeding problems and possible solutions, primarily along Mile Road (10 comments), but also East Acres (4), Maple Drive (2), Lambert Terrace, Junction (TCB), and Mews Shops. Possible solutions suggested included a 20 mph speed limit on Mile Road & East Acres, bollards at the Mews and general traffic calming measures. There were also 2 comments regarding parking problems (at the School and the DeMerley Gardens Junction on Grange Rd).

Possible way ahead

- A mobile 30 mile interactive sign is now available to be moved from location to location across a number of parishes. A pole has now been installed on Mile Road for this purpose, and the sign will be used here from time to time.
- Raise issues with NCC Highways Department, NCC local transport Department and Police
- Neighbouring parishes have bought a mobile speed camera, an option that could be reconsidered.

The final 2 comments requested that bus shelters be removed at Chibburn Court & Mile Road (due to kids hanging around?)

Possible way ahead

- Parish Council to consider

5.10 Work, Education & Training

Just 21 comments were received on the subject of Work, Education and Training, which could be divided between measures for children and measures for working age adults (including school leavers).

3 cards related to the primary school provision – 1 suggesting that measures need to be taken to encourage parents to enrol their children at the local village school rather than taking them elsewhere. 2 suggested there is a bullying problem at the school.

Possible way ahead

- Discuss with school,
- Further targeted consultation with parents to explore whether any measures would bring children back to local school.

Out of School Provision of children received a few comments:

- A nursery was mentioned twice – 1 request for a community nursery and 1 inviting people to drop in and see the existing nursery.
- 4 cards raised the need for activity clubs, an after school club and homework club and a summer club, which could be located in the school, library community centre or ATAC.

Possible way ahead

- Although this issue was given a low priority at the time of the Consultation event, this may have changed as the nearby provision at Coquet Children's Centre has lost funding. The nursery has closed and wraparound service is under threat.
- Further targeted consultation with parents, in conjunction with the Centre's action group may be worthwhile to assess whether people in Widdrington Station would support fundraising to provide places and transport at the centre, or would prefer more local provision.

5 comments related to help with searching for jobs, and included, counselling for young people and advice on apprenticeships (2), more general support for people looking for work including a job information point / job search club (3), use of a community fax / copier / computer, and internet training.

Possible Way Ahead

The low number of responses suggests that this is a low priority, but this situation may have changed as the impact of the recession has been felt. It may be worth carrying out further consultation.

1 person requested a Credit Union.

Possible way ahead

- Already exists – publicise better within other communication measures.

6 Recommendations

The parish planning process raised a large number of issues that are important to local people, all of which have been recorded in Section 5 of this plan. A full list of responses is available in a separate document. The planning group has spent considerable time analysing these responses to translate them into a viable action plan for the future of Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish.

We have considered which issues were raised by most people and who is responsible for any actions on these. For example, whether the Parish Council can solve the issue alone, or whether they would need to work with others such as Northumberland County Council, the Police, or other statutory agencies local groups or individuals. We have also considered whether a difference can be made in the short term, (for instance by a simple action such as installing a new rubbish bin) or whether action will need to take place over a long period of time (for instance to address a complicated issue such as redeveloping the Willows site).

Based on this analysis we have identified 20 priorities which we recommend to the Parish Council as key areas for action over the next three years. These are listed below and further suggestions on how to approach each priority are given in section 7 - The Action Plan.

6.1 Communications

1. To provide a community newsletter for the Parish
2. To provide a Parish website

6.2 Willows Site

3. To continue to exert pressure to carry out the demolition order on the Willows site, and in the longer term, to redevelop the site, ideally as affordable housing.

6.3 Increase use of the Community Centre, ATAC, & other public buildings

4. To encourage the provision of a wider range of recreational activities at key local facilities such as the Community Centre
5. To publicise existing information services available in the parish such as the weekly sessions with Citizens Advice Bureau and Northumberland Credit Union, and research the need for any further services.

6.4 Community Facilities

6. To recognise the need for high quality local youth services, and work with potential partners towards providing these. Such services should include recreational activities, health information and support with accessing to training and employment opportunities.
7. To work with potential partners to provide a Community Cafe, to address the need for a social meeting place in the parish. This could also provide public access to IT facilities, link with better quality youth services, and provide new training and employment opportunities within the parish.
8. To provide a programme of regular events to encourage a 'sense of Community' (for instance a bonfire night, annual dance or picnic in the park).

6.5 Crime & Safety

9. To work towards improving a sense of Community Safety within the parish.

6.6 Housing

10. To continue to actively monitor building applications with a view to protecting existing green spaces in residential areas, and to ensure any affordable housing within new developments is genuinely tailored to local need (eg at the Brickworks, Karva and Willows sites).
11. To address issues regarding the disposal of large items of rubbish, by publicising the range of options already available, and by negotiating with NCC to provide a free skip each month.

6.7 Local Environment

12. To Maintain and further develop the People's Park as the major outdoor recreational facility for the parish
13. To Maintain and further develop Stobswood Ancient Woodland (Grange wood) with a view to providing recreational activities but also with a strong emphasis on measures to protect and encourage wildlife.
14. To create a clear village centre – possibly by developing the area opposite the clinic that has been designated as a village green.
15. To work towards the provision of more allotment sites in the parish.
16. To liaise with UK Coal, emerging community forums and Sustrans to extend the network of footpaths and cycle paths in the area, bearing in mind the needs of disabled people.
17. To continue to monitor the success of recently introduced measures to address the dog mess problem in the village

6.8 Traffic & Transport

18. To monitor the success of existing measures to address speeding along Mile Road and Grangemoor Road, and consider further measures as required.
19. To monitor the need for additional public transport or community transport in the parish, bearing in mind that needs will change as more houses are built.

6.9 Work, Education & Training

20. To further research the need for more nursery places, after-school clubs, homework clubs and holiday activities for younger children, in the light of the closure of services at the Coquet Children's Centre.

6.10 Issues not carried forward in this plan

Whilst it has not been possible to include every suggestion we received in the action plan, this does not mean that any views have been ignored. All comments have been discussed in section 5 of the plan and a simple list of all the comments received is available as an appendix to this document. Ideas that are not included in the action plan largely fall into one of the following categories:

- Points that have already been resolved, eg, improve road surfaces at Ferneybeds, Grange Road, & along Mile Rd; the installation of dog-poop bins.
- Ideas that could be considered as subsidiary points to the main recommendations, eg, the provision of a handbook of local groups and businesses – this could be included on the website, and circulated once a year with a newsletter.
- Requests for existing services that need better publicity, eg, activities at the Community Centre.
- Ideas that were only raised by one or two people that could be further researched, eg, need for better parking, for instance at the school or near DeMerley Gardens.
- Ideas that are outside the scope of this plan but could be considered by other organisations, eg, the issue of bullying at the school – information passed on to the Head Teacher.

- Ideas that are not possible for legal, financial or practical reasons, eg, a new play area at South End of the Gables (the site is not suitable for this purpose), a footbridge over the railway

It is hoped that the community newsletter and parish website can be used as a tool to further explore some of these issues in the future, as a vehicle for providing better publicity, and as a way of inviting the public to comment further on issues that need more research.

7 Action Plan

7.1 Communications

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To provide a community newsletter for the Parish	Form a community group to collect information, edit and distribute. (NB 3 or 4 volunteers have already been identified)	High	< 6 months	Community Group.	Access to computer & printer Volunteers with writing & desk top publishing skills Ongoing funding for stationery printing & distribution costs NB: might be possible to attract small grants	
To provide a Parish website	Source IT expert to set up. Provide training for Parish Clerk / volunteers to update & maintain site. Possible content to include, PC minutes, local services directory, maps of local paths, newsletters & other issues of local interest / concern	Med	< 2 years	Parish Council – through working group which could include Parish councillors & others	Computer & printer IT skills (via volunteer expert or group) Initial grant to cover set-up costs NB: might be possible to attract small grants	

7.2 The Willows Site

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To continue to exert pressure to carry out the demolition order on the Willows site, and in the longer term, to redevelop the	Maintain pressure on NCC Maintain dialogue with owners. Liaise with other local agencies campaigning on this issue, notably ATAC, Widdrington Regeneration Partnership, Community Forums. Encourage further research as to the	High	> 2 years	Parish Council, Northumberland County Council, Widdrington Regeneration Partnership, ATAC, community forums	Very little as this is primarily an area where the Parish Council is influencing rather than acting in its own right.	

site, ideally as affordable housing.	specific needs for affordable housing in parish Seek developers / housing associations interested in developing site					
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7.3 Increase use of the Community Centre, ATAC, and other public buildings

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To encourage the provision of a wider range of recreational activities at key local facilities such as the Community Centre	Organise taster sessions for sports activities Offer incentives such as free room hire for an initial period to new groups in set up period Publicise existing & new activities in newsletter and on website, Promote activities through neighbouring parishes and community forums	med	6 >12 months	Parish Council or Community Centre committee linking with NCC sports development and other community groups	May require small scale funding to provide taster sessions or to cover free room hire NB: might be possible to attract small grants	
To publicise existing information services such as the weekly sessions with Citizen's Advice Bureau Northumberland Credit Union, and research the need for any further services.	Publicise existing activities such as Citizens Advice Bureau sessions and Credit Union through the newsletter & website Consult with potential providers, eg GP, school, & social enterprises re other potential services Use newsletter & website as a means to further research needs Support introduction of new services to meet needs	Med	>6 months 6<12 months 6<12 months <12 months	Parish Council. Newsletter group & website volunteers May appoint an experienced volunteer to lead on research	Little required in early stages May require small scale funding to cover start up costs in year 2 NB: might be possible to attract small grants	

7.4 Community Facilities

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To recognise the need for high quality local youth services, & work with potential partners towards providing these.	<p>Liaise with local providers who have a track record in youth work – eg ATAC, Amble Youth Project, Extended Services</p> <p>Build on recent consultations with young people identifying their priorities</p> <p>Seek support from Social Enterprise Northumberland or CAN to develop sustainable funding strategy</p>	High	< 6 months & ongoing	<p>Service provider (ATAC, Amble Youth Project, extended services or other)</p> <p>Supported by Parish Council & Community Forums.</p> <p>Potential funders.</p>	<p>Significant funding to pay youth workers</p> <p>ATAC building available for this purpose, but the fate of the Willows site will have significant impact on the suitability of these premises,</p>	
To work with potential partners to provide a Community Cafe,	<p>Identify partners to lead this initiative (possibly ENRgl &/or ATAC).</p> <p>Identify range of services that such a venue could provide</p> <p>Identify best venue and negotiate with owners to use for this purpose (possible options may include empty shop units near the Co-op, or existing ATAC Building).</p> <p>Create Development plan that identifies a pathway to sustainability.</p> <p>Seek start-up funding</p>	High	Initiate in <6 months with aim of opening within 2 years	To be identified	<p>Significant funding required – both capital & revenue to set up and run for initial period</p> <p>Acquisition of new building or adaptation of existing building</p> <p>Recruitment and training of skilled management team (trustees and staff).</p>	
To provide a programme of regular events to encourage a sense of Community	<p>Parish Council to liaise with management of existing facilities (eg Community Centre, ATAC, Dansers, Stobswood Welfare) other community groups, and interested individuals</p> <p>Establish an events working group</p> <p>Publicise through website and newsletter</p>	Medium	< 1 year	New working group	Moderate funding to subsidise events.	

7.5 Crime & Safety

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To work towards improved sense of community safety, by addressing youth crime and implementing appropriate security measures	<p>Liaising with Police, & Community Support Officers</p> <p>Encourage reporting of crime</p> <p>Promote neighbourhood watch</p> <p>Consider issues raised in Youth Survey & how they can be most effectively implemented</p> <p>Encourage Young People to become involved in tackling issues.</p> <p>Link with Community Forums re youth & crime prevention issues across the wider area.</p>	High	< 6 months	Parish Council, Community Police and Young People's representatives	To be identified, could be considerable depending on steps identified.	

7.6 Housing

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To continue to monitor planning applications, to protect green spaces in residential areas, and to ensure affordable housing is provided which genuinely meets local needs	<p>Continue to consider all applications at Parish Council meetings as a priority</p> <p>Use newsletter & website to raise public awareness of any new applications and encourage people to express opinions.</p>	high	ongoing	Parish Council	Minimal	
To address issues regarding the disposal of large items of rubbish	<p>Provide free skip on monthly basis</p> <p>Publicise existing Northumberland County Council services & raise awareness of freecycle through newsletter & website.</p>	Low (but potential quick win)	< 1 year	Parish Council & newsletter group	minimal	

7.7 Local Environment & Outdoor Facilities

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To Maintain and further develop the People's Park as the major outdoor recreational facility for the parish	<p>Arrange community action days to carry out maintenance work and encourage sense of local ownership. Liaise with environmental charities such as groundwork or BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)</p> <p>Form working group to review ideas for Park development and create a development plan.</p> <p>Continue to build basic maintenance costs into precept</p>	High	<12 months & ongoing	Parish Council with Park Group	<p>Small scale funding for action days (c £300 per day).</p> <p>Larger scale funding for development plans</p>	
To Maintain and develop Stobswood Ancient Woodland (Grange wood) providing recreational activities and measures to protect and encourage wildlife.	<p>Arrange community action days to carry out maintenance work and encourage sense of local ownership. Liaise with environmental charities such as groundwork or BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)</p> <p>Form working group to review ideas for Park development and create a development plan.</p> <p>Continue to build basic maintenance costs into precept</p>	High	<12 months & ongoing	Parish Council with woodland group	<p>Small scale funding for action days (c £300 per day).</p> <p>Larger scale funding for development</p>	
To create a clear village centre by developing the area that has been designated as a village green.	Consider installing low level fencing around the area, seating, and focal point such as art work or maypole. (further specific consultation may be required)	Low	>2 years	Parish Council	Dependent on final plans	
To work towards the provision of more allotment sites in the parish.	<p>Support Allotment Association to find additional funding to return existing sites to use.</p> <p>Continue negotiating with land owners re other sites available.</p>	low	< 1 year	Parish Council	<p>Minimal</p> <p>Subject to outcome of negotiations.</p>	

To extend the network of footpaths and cycle paths in the area, bearing in mind the needs of disabled people.	Liaise with UK Coal, Blue Sky Forest Project, emerging community forums and Sustrans and landowners to develop appropriate routes Will require ongoing plan to maintain.	Low	> 2 years	UK Coal & Blue Sky Forest	UK coal committed to funding development as part of the redevelopment of their site. May need funding for other areas	
To monitor the success of recently introduced measures to address the dog mess problem		Medium	Ongoing	Parish Council & County Council Dog wardens	May occasionally need small scale funding to repair, replace or provide new bins	

7.8 Traffic & Transport

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To monitor the success of existing measures to address speeding along Mile Road and Grangemoor Road, and consider further measures as required.	Pole installed for temporary flashing sign to be used periodically. Consider other measures if necessary – eg mobile speed gun, calming measures – as advised by police	Medium	< 6 months	Parish Council to liaise with Police, County Council Highways Department, and Community Forums (re shared approaches).	Immediate costs have been met Further costs dependant on need for additional measures	
To monitor the need for additional public transport or community transport to the parish, bearing in mind that needs will change as more houses are built.	Use newsletter & website as a means to promote public discussions as required Link with other local parish councils & community forums if transport issues impact on access to services If needs identified liaise with NCC local transport department, South East Northumberland Rail Users Group, and existing community transport providers	Low	> 6 months & ongoing	Parish Council with partners	Minimal. Additional provision will come from other partners budgets.	

7.9 Work, Education & Training

The Action	How it will be tackled	Priority	Timescale	Responsibility (Lead & partners)	Resource implications	Monitoring Responsibility
To further research the need for more nursery places, after-school clubs, homework clubs and holiday activities for younger children	<p>Liaise with primary school, and library re need, and availability of appropriate facilities.</p> <p>Liaise with neighbouring parish councils & Community Forums re linking together to meet wider needs across the area</p>	Medium	> 2 years	<p>Parish Councils with library & school.</p> <p>May need to identify partner to host staff.</p>	<p>Funding for staff and resources to support activities.</p> <p>Likely to be able to attract grant funding</p>	

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