

West Bergholt Parish Plan -

Moving forward together



Parish Plan fact file

- > The plan started its gestation period in 2005 at the Village Fayre
- > A steering group was formed following a public meeting in 2006
- > A grant was made available through application to the Rural Community Council for Essex
- > Consultations on issues followed on in autumn 2006
- > Priorities were established in spring 2008
- > The plan was finalized in summer 2008

Parish Plan Published

After three years of preparation the Parish Plan for West Bergholt has been assembled and published.

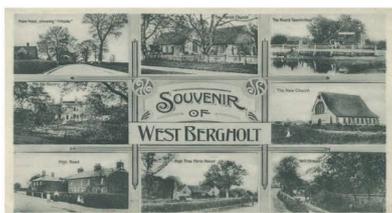
The Plan was formally unveiled at the Annual Parish Meeting in June and a presentation was made describing the plan's evolution and its main features.

Parish Plans help communities in a number of ways: firstly they document a process of allowing the community a chance to put forward its views on a variety of issues; secondly they provide for the first time a focus on what matters to a village and what aspects of village life are important; thirdly Parish Plans prioritise those projects or initiatives which need attention. Lastly the published document represents our plan for the

village in a way which allows the Parish Council and other organizations to articulate their views in more formal situations such as Local Plans for Colchester, or when applying for grant aid funding for projects.

The old saying that "a plan is nothing planning is everything" is very applicable to Parish Plans.

Although we can be pleased that a Plan has been produced, the acid test is of course how is it influencing village life, what projects start to come to fruition and how is it involving local people. These key questions will now begin to be answered through the plan's action planning sections, which are featured on the pages of this newsletter.



West Bergholt Parish Plan

First Issue July 2008

Moving forward together



The plan is available at www.westbergholt.net or contact the Steering Group for a paper copy

All the Fun of the Fayre

By way of publicizing the completion of the Parish Plan, a stall was set out at the Village Fayre in June.

The stall contained a mini exhibition of the plan's progress, together with the results of the March edition bulletin consultations.

As a fun element, prizes were on offer for the best name for the plan, or as an alternative, to add a caption to the front cover which emphasizes the special quality of our village.

A separate competition also challenged people's knowledge of

the village through a photographic quiz featuring well known buildings but from an unusual or close up perspective.

The Steering Group has reviewed the results of the competitions and decided that the best way to emphasise the Parish Plan document was to add the caption "Moving forward together" to stress the community-led nature of the plan. The caption was based on an entry made by David Kay of Mumford Road.

The competition to correctly identify the locations of the photographs was won by Pat Kay in the adult section and by Thomas Williams in the young people's section.

Prizes have been awarded to the lucky

winners! We are still searching for a title for the plan. The front runner at this stage is "West Bergholt Future" but if you have other suggestions then please email the Chairman.



Visitors to our stall ponder the future!

Inside this issue: The Action Plan

Action Plans	2
Community & Village Environment	2
Amenities, Shops and Businesses	2
Planning for our Village	2
Safety Matters	3
Transport for our village	3
Parish Council liaison	4
Steering Group	4

Eight Themes - One Plan!

As many readers of the Village Bulletin will already know the Parish Plan is built around eight themes which try to capture all aspects of our village life. These are:

- Social and Community
- Environment
- Public Amenities
- Shops and Businesses
- Housing and Planning
- Community Safety
- Transport
- Democracy

Planning for Action

All Community Plans greatly benefit from the inclusion of an action plan! The West Bergholt Parish Plan contains a table of actions for each of the 8 themes of the plan. Clearly these plans once progressed or re-researched quickly need revising, so this is why the plan is referred to as Issue One! Subsequent issues will be published as time goes by.

Your Community



As a community we inter-react in so many ways. The age of the parish pump may be over, but its place has been taken by a whole range of village organizations and clubs. Additionally being a village where there are many young people, the activities which surround the thriving

school, the scout and guide association, the sports cubs and many others offer plenty of opportunities for residents to meet and interact

with each other.

The action plan concentrates on the areas which arose during the consultations and include:

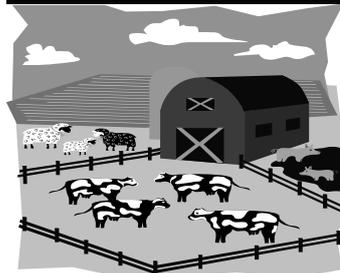
- Facilities for young people
- Provision of information about village activities

• Preservation of Village Life
High on the priorities being investigated are:

- Provision of a youth club and meeting place
- Improved web and paper based information
- Production of a Village Appraisal to document village character

Work is already underway on the first two items and a village appraisal will be commissioned next year.

Your Environment



West Bergholt may not be the prettiest village in Essex, but it has a lovely setting being on a hill with good access to the local countryside including our own "Bluebell Wood".

The action plan concentrates on the following areas:

- Conservation of open spaces
- Enhancing public rights of way
- Reducing nuisances such as litter

Priorities to be investigated in the coming months are:

- Audit of open spaces and management plans to enhance these
- Production of guides to local walks
- Campaigns to contain litter

Much of this work will pick up on the work of the Parish Council and that of local groups who already promote these activities.

Public Amenities, Shops and Businesses



Our investigations often blurred any artificial dividing line between these various aspects of village life, so we have combined them here.

The main aspects that the action plans pick up include:

- Maintenance of facilities for playgrounds and sports fields
- Verge/hedge maintenance
- Improvements to range of shops

- Promotion of village business activity

A range of specific actions are being investigated to examine how the range of facilities can be extended and improved across the village.



Housing and Planning

Parish Plan Issue One



Unsurprisingly residents feel threatened by the pace of development they see all around them.

Possibly we are worrying unnecessarily, but behind this fear lies a pragmatic approach that seeks to

keep the size of the village to a manageable level with controls placed on the following:

- Infill housing
- Larger areas of development

At the same time there is a need to examine:

- Social and sheltered accommodation

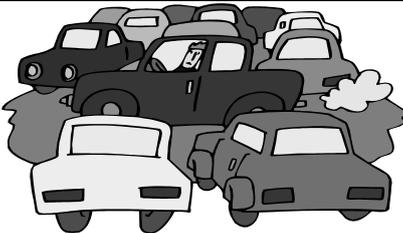
So bearing the above in mind the action plans concentrate on:

- Producing a village design statement to improve quality of development
- Producing guidelines on infill development
- Examining case for location of affordable housing

Many of these areas can be taken forward by the Parish Council which already receives information from the Borough Council on new development plans and planning applications.



Transport



The Steering Group are constantly amazed at the volume of comments and issues raised about traffic or transport!

Whilst it is not the main priority for the village, our surveys revealed that there

is a huge amount of interest in making our transport environment better than it is!

Our action plan for transport covers:

- Bus routes and services
- Cycling environments
- Pedestrian facilities
- Traffic calming

Clearly neither the community nor the Parish Council provides mainstream transport services or infrastructure, so our action plan is

concentrating upon:

- Dialogue with bus operators to get better information about services
- Drawing up traffic calming ideas for discussion with the highway authority
- Examining how we can promote cycling more bearing in mind that Colchester is now designated as a Cycling Town with funding available

We are considering drawing together a new group of people to examine transport issues in greater detail.

Community Safety



Our surveys showed that there are a number of areas where residents have concerns mainly to do with road safety and fear of crime.

Whilst accidents are rare in the village and crime level are low the following areas feature in the action plan

- Levels of crime
- Policing
- Road safety and speeding traffic

We plan to work with the Police and utilise the excellent Neighbourhood Watch network which exists in the village to:

- Make information available about

crime levels

- Introduce speed reduction measures
- Create a better environment for everyone in the village so that safety is built-in to the village layout

Work is already underway to obtain a speed indication device (or "SID") to reduce speeding in Lexdon Road and it is proposed to examine other areas for similar measures to reduce traffic nuisance.

Democracy

West Bergholt parish
Plan Group



As a village we are fortunate that we have a Parish Council (PC) and through it links to Essex and Colchester Councils and the Primary Care Trust who provide many of the services we rely on.

We need to ensure that service

levels in our village are the best that can be provided and in this regard this section of our plan concentrates upon:

- Good levels of communication with the PC
- PC forward plans for our community
- Better links with our service providers

Many of these actions fall to the PC to develop and it has already introduced a communication plan

for the village which has seen improvements in the way in which PC business is advertised, better means for residents to become involved and through the web service ensure that information is easier to obtain about a whole range of services and village activities.

Through the Parish Plan these ideas will be expanded further such that over time community involvement in planning and managing our village becomes a virtuous circle.

WHO ARE WE?



We're on the web!

To find out more about the Parish Plan, simply visit www.westbergholt.net and follow the links!

The web pages document everything we have done over the past 2-3 years and include a full copy of the first issue of the plan to download or browse.

The Steering Group is made up of volunteers but does have a constitution. The Group varies in size and presently comprises 6 people, who are involved in all aspects of the plan from publicity, carrying out surveys and of course writing the plan itself. The Group meet monthly and liaise with the Parish Council through the monthly PC meetings. Our contact details appear below.

Parish Plans take a fair amount of organization to prepare, and with the completion of the formal plan, the action plans that now follow, will involve even greater amounts of work for the Steering Group.

Join in with our Work

If you are interested in finding out more about the Parish Plan, have a skill or expertise in one of the plan's areas or simply want to register your interest, then we would love to hear from you!

Although the steering group is set to continue we need help with publicity, newsletter writing as well people to lead on the many actions outlined in the plan.

Following the last consultation

earlier in the year we already have several people who have expressed their desire to help with the plan's roll out across the village. After the summer holiday period we plan

to hold another public meeting so look around the village for details of this on notice boards etc.

Until then feel free to contact either the Chairman or the Secretary whose details appear on this page.



How to contact us



Chairman: Chris Stevenson
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