



Employment and Our Local Economy

Consistent with the information about age groups in the Parish, 37% of respondents are retired. Thirty-four per cent work from home. Two per cent are unemployed.

As far as promoting local tourism was concerned, 26% were opposed, 33% had no opinion, and 41% felt it should be positively encouraged. Ideas for visitor activities which received support were walking and rambling, horse riding, nature study, photography, painting, farm visits or “trails”.

Questions about interest in using a mobile Post Office service and setting up/using a community shop both received only muted support. There was, however, greater support (54% of respondents) for a few more small-scale light industrial workshops. Twenty-two per cent were positively opposed to the idea.

Summary of Action Points:

- The provision of further small-scale light industrial workshops or studios/offices.
- Improve opportunities for home working.

Transport

Not surprisingly, in view of the public transport limitations, the survey revealed a high level of car and van ownership. There is nearly the same number of vehicles as households in the Parish, with a number of households possessing two or more vehicles. Twenty-one per cent of people reported difficulties finding parking spaces and a similar percentage reported difficulty



travelling outside the Parish. Fifty-four per cent of respondents use their vehicle to get to their place of work or study. For 33% the public bus service is either essential or important. This figure may well increase in the longer term if the average age of the population increases, or a ‘good neighbour scheme’ may become even more desirable.

Local Government and Services

Insofar as crime and safety are concerned, the main concerns of respondents in order of importance were speeding traffic, burglary and lack of police presence. With regards to the emergency services there was very little criticism of fire and ambulance services but, perhaps reflecting the concerns about police presence, 15% felt that police services were poor.

There also seemed to be a general view that the further away elected local government representatives were from the Parish the less aware they were of local concerns and feelings

Action Points:

- Address ‘fear of crime’ issues.

For further information please contact

Ashreigney Parish Plan 2011 - Residents’ Summary Document produced by Ashreigney Parish Plan Group.

Original photographs kindly provided by Andrew Barrett and Jasmine Spencer.

The Parish Plan Steering Group would like to thank everyone for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Without you this project would not have been possible.



Ashreigney Parish Plan 2011

Residents’ Summary Document

Foreword

by David Lausen - Torrridge District Councillor

The Ashreigney Parish Plan Steering Group is to be commended for producing a holistic document that clearly shows the socio-economic and environmental issues of the community and some proposals to increase everyone’s quality of life. The Plan shows a community that not only has a number of concerns but also has a number of things that are valued and make Ashreigney special.

The Plan has been structured to make it an evolving document, with Action Points that the community needs to undertake over the next ten years. Hopefully the Plan will not only help Ashreigney to be more integrated into local planning but it should also inspire more volunteers to get involved in making Ashreigney a community that increasingly makes things happen for everyone’s wellbeing.

Introduction

by Steve Johns - Parish Plan Steering Group

The Parish Plan Steering Group wishes to thank those households who helped to make the production of the Ashreigney Parish Plan possible. Approximately two thirds of the community contributed to the project by completing the questionnaire, providing comments at



public consultations and/or volunteering time and effort to the production of the published Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is to reflect in a formal record the current views of the community on a number of issues affecting everyone; and to use those views as a baseline upon which to propose action points. There is of course no guarantee that all the action points will or can be achieved but we have gone a long way towards democratically identifying the consensus of opinions within the community. This is the first step in the process and it now remains to realise as many of those action points as possible over the course of the next few years.

I cannot emphasise too strongly, however, that - as pointed out by David Lausen above - responsibility for developing these action points from proposals to achievements rests entirely in your hands as members of the local community. In fact it pleases me no end to have already witnessed some progress with the formation of the Ashcombe Community Garden Scheme - a project inspired by individual members of the community and set up by a group of like-minded people. This is a prime example of what can be achieved with sufficient will and determination.

Following up the publication of the Ashreigney Parish Plan, The Ashreigney Parish Plan Group has now been formally created. This organisation has its own banking facilities and is able to access grant funding which is not available to Parish Councils, thus enabling community projects to be realised. The Group is in need of volunteers to move forward with implementing the action points in the Plan, so please get involved - it really is up to you. [More information about the Group and a contact point will be published shortly in The Ashcombe newsletter.]

For those of you who might wish to see the full Parish

Plan copies are available via the clerk to the Parish Council. Copies of the full Plan have been submitted to our Parish Council, Torridge District Council, Devon County Council and other relevant authorities whose decision making process affects our Parish. This will give us a much better opportunity to influence those decisions both at local and national levels, and will place us in a much better position to attract grant funding for community projects.

People

The survey responses indicate that the number of children in the Parish has decreased significantly since the national census in 2001 and, conversely, the number of people over 65 has increased significantly. If this pattern continues, there are important longer term implications in terms of providing appropriate housing, health and social care.

The majority of people who responded to the questions about health care services found the standard of care to be good or reasonable but ten per cent of respondents confirmed that they had problems collecting prescriptions. This may be an area that could be helped by the introduction of a good neighbour scheme (see the section on 'Our Community' below).

Sixty-five households reported that they were unable to move into the type of accommodation that they needed for various reasons, affordability being the key factor in 28 cases. Assuming that these circumstances affect mainly families and the younger generation it would not be surprising to see an ongoing exodus of members of the younger age group from the area over a period of time. Although 46% of survey respondents supported the need for additional housing 'stock' to be made available over the next ten years (the majority advocating the need for up to 10 new dwellings), 33% did not wish to see an increase in housing 'stock' and 21% had no opinion on the matter. Insofar as the type of development which might be acceptable was concerned, the majority of responses was fairly evenly divided between 'none', 'infilling with single buildings' and 'infilling with small groups'.

A high percentage of survey respondents (65%) supported the idea of special open spaces in the Parish for local people to picnic and for local children to play.



Summary of Action Points:

- Provision of up to ten affordable homes for local families within the next five years, ensuring the existing community benefits from any developments.
- Address barriers to accessing quality health and social care.
- Address the needs of families with children, and young people in the Parish.

The Environment

A clear message evident from the survey results was people's enthusiasm for our environment, with 45% of respondents declaring it to be the most important aspect of the Parish to them. Indications are that public footpaths and bridleways are used at some time during the year by over 80% of the local population, the majority of whom were satisfied with the upkeep of these by-ways. Thirty-one per cent indicated a willingness to become involved as an active volunteer in environmental improvement schemes. Approximately a third of respondents felt that litter and dog mess were a problem. In respect of litter, 48% responded positively to the idea of participating in a specific 'clean up our Parish day' once or twice a year.

Just under a third of respondents identified the need to make visual improvements to the local environment, mainly 'tidying up' and enhancing certain public areas. Just under half of respondents liked a number of suggested activities, these being a drainage survey, a renewable energy source, a design guide for new development and a habitat/wildlife survey.

Traffic was identified as a major concern. The question about 'danger spots' generated the highest response of



all in the questionnaire with 55% of respondents saying they think there are danger spots; the areas around the War Memorial in Ashreigney and Bush Corner were highlighted in seventeen responses. There were also a number of general comments expressed about the need for careful driving and considerate parking to reduce the accident risk.

Summary of Action Points:

- Protect our high quality natural environment.

Our Community

Community life came a close second to the environment as the most important aspect of the Parish, receiving 41% of the survey responses. Twenty-five per cent considered that the quality of life in the Parish had deteriorated compared to ten years ago. Five per cent felt there had been an improvement and 29% felt there was no difference. Approximately half of respondents looked upon a place of worship as an important part of Parish life, albeit not necessarily just for worship or religious ceremonies (a significant third of respondents regarded both the Church and Chapel as important historic buildings). There were evenly mixed views on whether the Church and Chapel should be used for non-religious purposes.

Just over a third of respondents never use the Village Hall and 47% never attend the monthly Saturday market there. Seventy-eight per cent read every issue of The Ashcombe, the remainder indicating that they read it less frequently, with 5% saying that they never read it.

There was a positive response to the question about how well the Parish Council publicises its decisions and

activities: 61% thought the Council did very well or reasonably well, 15% took the view that they did not do very well. There were evenly mixed views on whether the Parish Council makes good use of its budget, 6% being totally satisfied and 6% unsatisfied and the remainder somewhere between or of no opinion. Just over a quarter of respondents said they would be prepared to pay a slightly higher Council Tax if it benefited the community.

In response to a question about volunteering activities such as a 'good neighbour scheme', a significant majority (77%) expressed a willingness to help.

Summary of Action Points:

- Encourage, recruit and retain volunteers to support and manage Parish organisations and activities.

Education, Keeping in Touch and Leisure

A question about preferences for vocational training attracted a limited number of responses. But the most popular selections were skilled/craft related, rural and agricultural skills and training in new technology and computing skills.

Responses, not surprisingly, highlighted the importance of broadband and telephone services to the local community and a degree of dissatisfaction with the level of service provided in some areas. Eighty-one respondents confirmed that they have satellite television.

Thirty-nine per cent of respondents never look at any of the noticeboards. Nevertheless 79% of respondents considered the amount of information available about what was going on in the Parish to be good or reasonable, with only 5% of the view that it was poor.

Fourteen per cent of respondents expressed interest in Parish allotments and progress has already been made on this with the creation of the Ashcombe Community Garden Scheme. A range of activities - badminton, skittles, Keep Fit, archery, tennis and outdoor bowls - also raised interest.

Summary of Action Points:

- Develop the community fruit garden and allotments and link to the Saturday market.