



# Little Dewchurch Parish Plan 2006



# Parish of Little Dewchurch

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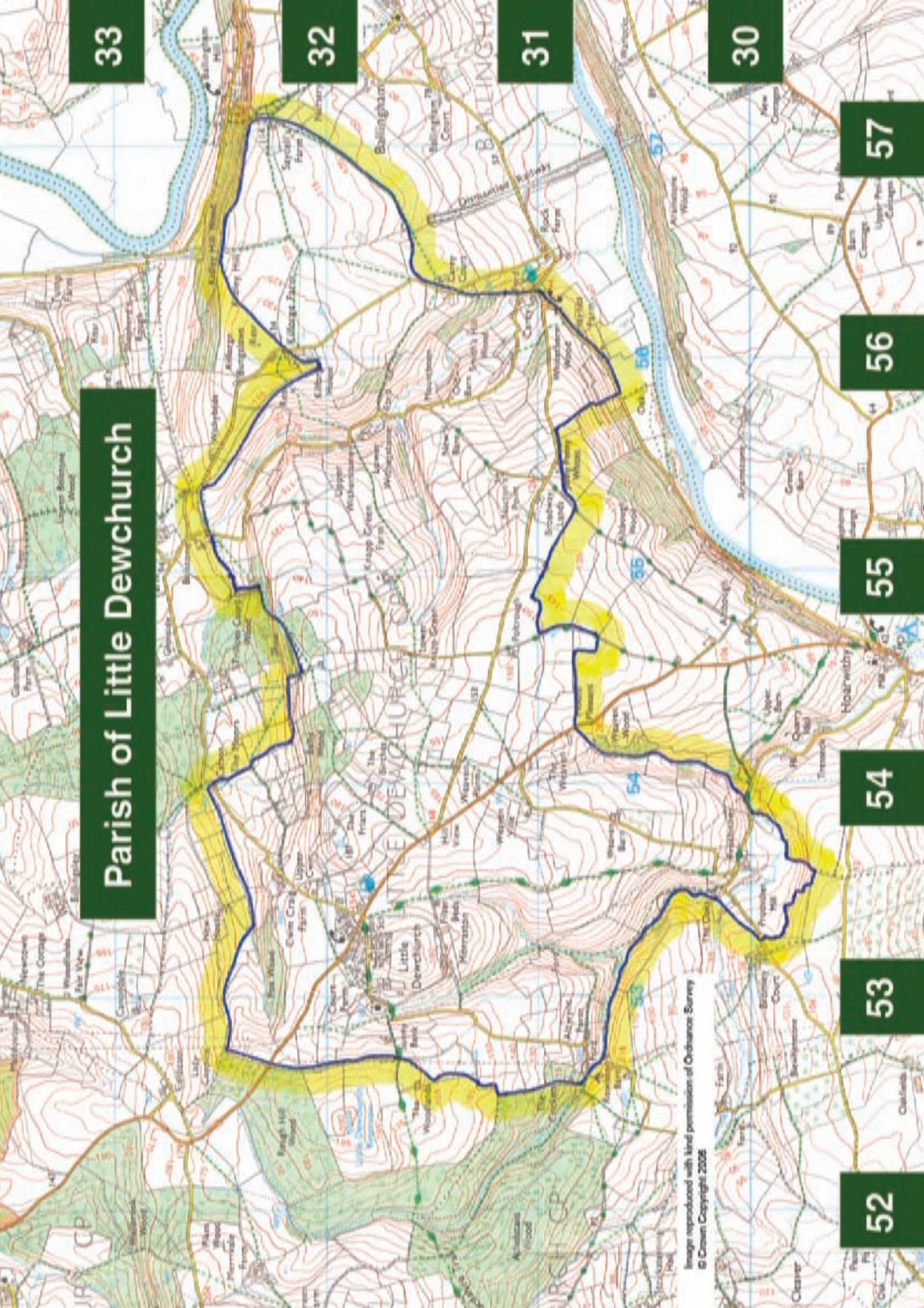
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# Little Dewchurch Parish Plan

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## Introduction and Background



The Government announced the Parish Plan Initiative in 2000. The purpose of the plan was for the local community to set out a vision of what was important for the parish, how to fit in any new development, how to preserve valued local features and to map out facilities needed for the future and identify the action required to achieve them.

Little Dewchurch Parish Council decided in May 2004 to propose the idea to the community, and two meetings attracted over 30 residents on each occasion, who showed much enthusiasm for the proposal. A small Steering Group was set up and has met frequently ever since. Angela Downing, Community Development Officer, has given much advice and support from Community First, and Herefordshire Council via the Herefordshire Partnership have kindly supported the process with a grant towards expenses, as has the Parish Council.

Little Dewchurch's Parish Plan presents the Parish's broadly agreed wishes, likes, dislikes and intentions. It recommends to the Parish Council what should be done, and sets out advice to Herefordshire Council on local housing development that it wishes to be accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

It should be noted that the Parish Plan is a living document that, with the help and participation of the community, will be reviewed and updated annually. All background papers used, including the survey results, are available for examination by arrangement with the Parish Clerk.

## A Brief History of the Parish

Records show that the village existed circa 1130AD and although Roman pottery was found during pipe laying in the 1990's, probably the oldest extant feature in the parish is the church tower, which dates from the fourteenth century. The rest of the church was rebuilt in 1870, six years after the building of its vicarage. The Plough Inn dates from the end of the eighteenth century, and the school opened in 1865, acquiring a teacher's house in 1888. The population in 1871 was 348, much the same as 2001.

Morraston appears in the "Book of Llandaff", there defined as "Cwm Meuric" and believed to have been bestowed to King Meuric in the 7th Century. The existing house was built in the 1760s.

Enid Wilkinson has kindly allowed us to make use of the excellent Millennium booklet, "In Those Days", and her introduction neatly sums up the Parish's more recent history:

Until the Second World War, the majority of people living in and around Little Dewchurch earned their living on the land, as landowners, tenant farmers or as agricultural workers. Small bakers, butchers and grocers supplied local needs. Horses worked the land and provided, with bicycles, the most common form of transport in the countryside, and tractors and motor vehicles were a rare sight in the early years of the century. The lifeline for most communities in the area was the railway between Ross-on-Wye and Hereford which stopped at Backney Halt (Bridstow), Fawley, Ballingham and Holme Lacy.

Little Dewchurch changed very little until 1964. Before then, there was no mains water and no electricity. Two public pumps served the village: one by the church and one opposite the village green (in what is now the garden of The Old Forge). Some cottages had wells and pumps, others stored water in underground tanks, and larger properties had bore holes. Fuel was mainly paraffin for lighting, and coal and wood for heating and cooking.

Life in the village changed dramatically after 1964, when the Rural District Council agreed to provide electricity and mains water in return for land behind the school on which they planned to build a council estate. The proposal was put to a full meeting of the Parish and eventually agreed. (It is worth noting, however, that the council houses in St. David's Rise were occupied for over a year before electricity finally came to the village).

There was a blacksmith's on the site of The Old Forge, and a small shop with Post Office and bakery on the Hereford road survived until the 1980s. Court Close was built mainly in the 1970s, and the houses around the green (Field Fare, Blackberry Lane etc.) were built around 2000. The new Village Hall was completed in 1996 at a cost of £150,000. Sadly, the railway line was a victim to Beeching's cuts in the 1960s.

## The Church of St. David

The church with its Norman tower is to be found on the west side of the village. Earliest records of the church are dated 1330 AD. The setting of the church in a small valley in a near circular churchyard with a preaching cross is most unusual, and is possibly why it is Grade 2 star listed.

Records of 1869 indicate that the church, named after the Welsh Saint David, was in a dilapidated state and could not be used for public worship. The Victorian architect Frederick Preedy, and a local builder were appointed to renovate the church. Using a considerable amount of original stone, the rebuilding of the chancel, nave and vestry were completed, and rededicated on 1st December 1870.



In recent times a window dedicated to the Millennium has been added, and the five bells introduced at the time of the rebuilding were increased in 2005 to a ring of six. St. David's is one of the churches within the Rural Group of the South Wye Team Ministry based in Hereford. There is a service most Sundays.

## The Parish Today

The Parish today comprises the village of Little Dewchurch with outlying farmsteads and cottages. The centre of the village is marked by the Primary School, a village green, bus shelter and the village hall. Near the centre is the Plough Inn offering accommodation, bar meals and Sunday lunches.

All roads to Little Dewchurch are uphill, often through wooded areas. Being set on high ground this commands lovely views of South Herefordshire and, in the distance to May Hill and the Forest of Dean on the Gloucestershire border, the Malvern Hills on the Worcestershire border, Clee Hill on the Shropshire border and the Black Mountains on the Welsh border. The undulating area of the parish which covers some 698 hectares (1725 acres) is farmed with arable crops, cattle and sheep and has many interesting walks. The eastern part of the parish is designated within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB).



The parish plays host to one of only two long distance footpaths in the county, the Herefordshire Trail. This joins from Hoarwithy via Prothither, passing Morraston on the left before arriving at the crossroads in the village. Following the road by the school and down to the church, the path then rises up past Sunny Bank and onwards over the top to Little Birch.

The Parish Council consists of seven elected members and a part-time paid Clerk. It meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except for August and December, and raises an annual precept for Parish expenditure (£5,500 for each of the last few years).

## Little Dewchurch Population Statistics

At the time of the 2001 Population Census, the Parish had a population of total 394 residents in 173 households. As can be seen from the chart below, Little Dewchurch has a slightly higher adult population and fewer children when compared to the county as a whole.

The Parish also has a lower population density at 0.57 persons per hectare, compared to the county average of 0.80 persons per hectare.

Age Group	Little Dewchurch	County of Herefordshire
0 - 15	15%	19%
16 - 44	33%	34%
45 - 74	45%	37%
75+	7%	10%

The number of residents with long term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work is slightly higher than the county average at 19.5% compared to 17.9%. However, that percentage increases when looking at those within working age only, with 17.4% in the parish compared to 12.9% in the county. There are a total 173 households within the parish, of which 24.2% are single occupation (12.1% lone pensioner and 12.1% lone other) compared to 28.7% in the county.

The number of households without use of cars or vans in the parish is 9.4% compared to the county average of 18.2%.

Although Little Dewchurch is set in a rural area, only 6.8% of economically active residents are employed in land based industries. Areas of employment appear to be very similar to that of the county with the majority being employed in manufacturing (18.8%), wholesale/retail/repair of motor vehicles (17.0%) and health and social work (11.9%). Unemployment in the parish is 4.2% compared to the county average of 2.7%.

All information given is taken from the Population Census 2001.



## The Consultation Process and Results

Two initial open meetings were chaired by the then Chairman of the Parish Council, on 5th and 21st July 2004. These attracted over 30 residents to each, and those present at the first meeting contributed suggestions of priorities on slips of paper.

Using these issues, a questionnaire was drafted for adults and another for children in the 5-15 age range. These were amended following expert advice from Herefordshire Council staff, and distributed in February 2005. Two adult questionnaires were sent to each household, and one children's questionnaire was sent to each family with a child in the 5-15 age range. Information was provided on how to obtain further questionnaires if necessary.

About 50% of those receiving questionnaires (170 adults and 24 children) returned them; a very good response. The results were analysed by Herefordshire Council staff, and were displayed and discussed with about 40 residents who came to an Open Afternoon event organised by the Steering Group on Sunday 17th April 2005. Many written comments and suggestions were made and recorded. Each Parish Councillor was personally invited.

A further questionnaire was circulated to 20 households around or near the Village Green, asking questions about the use of the Green and possible improvements, in August 2005 and 16 returns were collected, door-to-door, by two members of the Steering Group. Residents of the sheltered housing bungalows were visited on 7th January 2006 to discuss with them the proposal to create an access to the playing-field through their grounds.



## The Consultation Process and Results (continued)

The Steering Group had a stall and display with Group members in attendance, in the village hall on the day of the Fete and Soap Box Derby (11th September 2005). This was advertised in the parish magazine and through posters around the village, and about 45 residents dropped in. Again, many comments were received about the various proposals.

In addition, the parish magazine has included a report on progress with the Parish Plan, including information about proposals, in each edition since the beginning of the process. Names and contact phone numbers of members of the Steering Group have been listed from time to time.

Finally, a summary of findings and recommendations was circulated to households in late April 2006, with a return slip for comments, and a public meeting to discuss these held on 7th May.

What follows are the summaries of responses extracted from both questionnaires and open meetings.



# Issues of Concern or Interest

Issues of concern and interest were:

- Children and young people
- Environment.
- Housing and other development.
- Public services and crime prevention.
- Recreation, sport and community.
- Roads and transport.
- Village green.

## Children and Young People

From the outset it was recognised that the youth of our Parish deserved special consideration and warranted a separate survey. This was based on their probable unique outlook and attitude which could be different to that of the Adult Survey. In the event there were a number of related topics that proved to be of concern to both Adults and Youths alike.

The survey on Youth covered 5 to 15 year olds. Over 15s were deemed to be Adults and they were asked to complete the Adult Survey. Of the 40 questionnaires distributed amongst the Parish, 24 were completed and returned:

Girls	10
Boys	14
5-7 yrs old	5
8-11 yrs old	10
12-15 yrs old	9

Many felt that Little Dewchurch was “friendly but boring” with frequent comments of “nothing to do”. 67% indicated they would like more sports facilities. Most considered that cars drove too quickly through and around the village. Some of the suggestions given to improve life in the village were:

- A play area or park be provided e.g. a safe place to ride bikes with a “proper playing field” as the current field is “all mucky in winter” and “not flat, easily gets water-logged”.
- Provide sports and play equipment e.g. climbing frames, slides, swings, table tennis, pool tables and skate park.
- Activities in the Village Hall for children e.g. drama, creative activities and sport.
- A shop would be desirable for buying goods and as a focal point.

## Environment

Firstly and not surprisingly, some 95% of the respondents enjoy the rich patchwork provided by the rolling countryside and mosaic of woodlands, orchards, hedgerows and farmland with views of other parts of Herefordshire and beyond. Conservation featured highly as did habitat diversity and making the village attractive for both people and wildlife.

The environment is regarded as the single most important issue in the survey, over and above services (90%), parish communications (89%), housing (87%) and crime and disorder (86%). Sensitive planting of new trees and preservation of existing and veteran trees featured in 75% of the responses with high positive percentages also for woodlands (95%), orchards (79%), hedgerows (93%), meadowland (91%) and ponds (84%). With the introduction of Defra's new Environmental Stewardship Scheme and England Woodland Grant Schemes, there seems to be great potential for local landowners and farmers to take advantage.

The key issues highlighted from the survey are:

- Improving access for enjoyment of the local countryside.
- Litter and dog mess.
- Storm water and poor drainage.
- Roadside verges: needing protection and enhancement.

At present there is no nominated Parish Council Footpath Officer. However, many respondents expressed a wish to become more involved and the Plan points to a number of opportunities. Footpaths were regarded as familiar to 78% of the respondents although there were lengthy statements as to how they could be maintained and improved for the better enjoyment of the local countryside. Included were suggestions for better signposting and interpretation; shorter routes that are pushchair/wheelchair friendly; better access for dogs; and better maintenance of overgrown paths. More seating at locations and viewpoints, and more planted verges, trees, wildflowers and shrubs were also highly recommended.



## Environment (continued)

A significant 39% of the respondents believe that there are places in the village where litter and dog mess is a problem. Lack of attention to litter clearance on roadsides and verges generates a feel-bad factor for local residents and it was suggested that a modest amount of self-help could improve matters considerably. Particular areas nominated in the survey included roadside verges and outside the school, the bus stop and village green, and down towards the church.

Storm water drains become silted up during heavy rain, leading to places becoming impassable on foot. This is a problem both within the village boundary and outside, with examples given as including Nunnery Corner, Carey Lane, and the junctions with St David's Rise and Bolstone Road. A routine schedule of maintenance for ditch and drain clearing would considerably help alleviate the problem.

Likewise, roadside verges needing protection and enhancement featured highly. Although there is recognition that the countryside is also a workplace, taking a little more time and care was advocated. Again, a routine schedule of maintenance has been suggested with additional wildflower and shrub planting where appropriate.

Another area that gained suggestions for improvement was the small triangle of land next to the church wall. This site is overgrown with grass and weeds at present, but it has been suggested that it may benefit from levelling, planting with shrubs and spring bulbs and the placement of seating as the view from this site is particularly attractive. The site is designated as a verge by Herefordshire Council and therefore a licence to cultivate it would be required (at nil cost).



## Housing and other Development

As has already been mentioned, while Little Dewchurch undoubtedly has been a human settlement for perhaps a thousand years or more, it was very much a hamlet for most of that time dependent entirely on agriculture. As the area is extremely attractive and many residents have expressed the desire to protect and enhance the environment it is felt that any future property development should be sympathetically managed.

55% of the response to the questionnaire (93 individuals) thought the village had enough homes for the current population and 54% (92 individuals) felt the current mix of homes was right. Furthermore, 25% of the respondents felt there was no additional accommodation required in the future. For the 45% of residents who responded to the question on additional accommodation required, the following statistics illustrate that affordable homes to rent or buy and small family homes were considered the most needed.

Future Additional Accomodation Required	People Interested
Affordable homes to buy	84
Small family homes	62
Affordable homes to rent	56
Single person homes	30
Retirement homes	22
Homes for disabled	16
Campsite	9
Executive homes	8
Larger family homes	8
Additional Bed & Breakfast	3



## Business Activities

Many residents, both adult and youth, indicated a desire for a village shop. There are several possibilities in this regard. Other villages have instigated a non-profit outlet for local produce and other basic items run on a volunteer basis. In some areas the local public house has included a small shop. As the idea of a shop of some sort appears to have support it is an aspect that requires further review, particularly to find out if there would be enough custom to make it viable.

With regards to any other type of business development in the future, the Steering Group felt that it would be most appropriate to ascertain residents' opinions during the first year of the Parish Plan delivery. It has been suggested to the Parish Council that small cottage-style industries working from home would be acceptable. However, the Steering Group wishes to be sure that residents support this. It is hoped that all residents will use the opportunity to make their wishes known.

## Public Services and Crime Prevention

### Public Services

The village and outskirts have electricity to all properties, but a significant number have their own sewage systems. Almost all have a piped water supply, but there is no mains gas supply. Mobile phone and television reception is adversely affected by the geography of the area.

Little Dewchurch is on the number 37 bus route between Hereford and Ross-on-Wye from Monday to Saturday only. The timetable is at the bus stop near the Village Hall and as from April 2006 free travel has been made available to the over 60s. There is also a Mobile Library service to Little Dewchurch on the second Thursday of each month, stopping at Broadwaylands at 2.45p.m. and at St. David's Rise at 3.15p.m.

### Issues

63% of respondents (107 individuals) said they would be interested in having a gas supply; this has been investigated but no pipeline provider was prepared to quote for what would have been an enormous cost, we were told. 61% (104) wanted better mobile phone coverage, but clearly this would involve a mast and inevitable controversy. 56% wanted Broadband (96), which is now available.

Roadside and street cleaning was a problem for 44% of respondents (75 persons). Six of these referred to the amount of mud on the roads, but a few took the view that this was to be expected in the countryside.

35% (60 individuals) would like better street lighting. Two mentioned a need for lighting from the school to the church, and one for Bolstone road. Six of the 5 to 15 year olds responding said that lack of street lighting was a problem for them. However some respondents said they would not want more lighting because they liked to see the stars.

## Public Services and Crime Prevention (continued)

Concern has been expressed regarding the access of emergency services such as Fire Service and ambulances to St. David's Rise due to the number of parked cars. This issue has been discussed with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority and as a consequence a Fire Officer made an inspection of the area in November 2005. The conclusion was that while the parking situation, particularly at the bottom end of St. David's Rise, was not ideal it was felt to be reasonable.

It is worth noting that within the past six months both fire and ambulance emergency vehicles have had cause to access the bottom end of St. David's Rise and in neither situation were there any problems caused by the parked cars.

## Crime

Although 15% of respondents (25 individuals) expressed concern about crime and anti-social behaviour, this could be due to a period when there were some problems with tenants of flats in St. David's Rise, who have since left. 6% (10) felt unsafe in the village at some time, but again that could be due to the problems mentioned above. Seven boys out of 14 described the village as safe, but only three girls out of 10.

Occasional break-ins to sheds have been reported, but this does not appear to be a major problem. The Neighbourhood Watch continues to function, with occasional information or advice in the parish magazine. The Steering Group does not propose any action in relation to crime. (Also see page 20 - Parking)





# Recreation, Sport and Community

## Current Activities in the Village Hall

Day and time	Activity	Contact
Mondays 7.30 - 8.30pm	Ladies' Keep Fit	Tonya Barnett, (01432) 840712
Tuesdays 7.30pm	Short Mat Bowling	Sheila Lane, (01981) 550648
Wednesdays 8.30- 10pm	OK Chorale Choir	David Parkes, (01432) 840737
Thursdays 7.00 – 10pm	Line Dancing	Margaret Stringer, (01981) 540583
Fridays 7.30pm monthly September to April	Flicks in the Sticks	

There is also an active Over 60s Club. Contact Pat Seaborne (840651) or Gladys Lee (840250)

## Leisure

The results of the survey show that issues regarding the environment are of the greatest interest and concern to Little Dewchurch residents. This is reflected in the top three subjects that respondents expressed an interest in, namely rambling, gardening and natural history. IT/computing and languages were also popular subjects. The majority of respondents showed an interest in attending the various activities suggested in the survey and most felt the Village Hall to be the preferred venue.

Many residents took the opportunity to list subjects of interest or activities that they would like to be involved in and this has led to the idea of the formation of a Village Club. This idea gained significant interest at two Parish Plan open days. It is envisaged that such a club would be open to all age groups, cover any subject or activity and allow participants to pick and choose any they wish to attend whilst remaining well informed of any new activities.

The main reason given by residents for not attending any leisure pursuits was that they did not want to. However, several people felt that there was a lack of publicity. This seems to be borne out by the fact that there were some suggestions of leisure pursuits that are already taking place on a regular basis in the Village Hall (dancing or keep fit classes for example). This led to questions of how residents are informed of activities. As the survey showed that the Parish Magazine is where the majority of residents gained their information, a Parish Directory was published again in December in the Parish Magazine and will be updated each year.

## Recreation, Sport and Community (continued)

### Summer Fete and Soap Box Derby

The annual Summer Fete and Soap Box Derby is now a well established event enjoyed by parishioners and visitors alike. The Fete is centred on the Village Green, with the Village Hall proving to be an ideal venue, providing shelter from summer sun or showers. Activities on the Village Green are wide ranging to suit all tastes and ages, but perhaps the main attraction is the Soap Box Derby.

There are two separate events: the Speedy Push and the Downhill competitions. The Speedy Push occurs on a fairly level course of some 300m with the finish line adjacent to the Village Green. Later in the day, after much needed rest and recuperation, the competitors move to the other side of the village for the Downhill. The course is both longer and, as the name implies, decidedly steeper! The start is at the top of the hill near St David's Rise with the finish line close to the church car park.



Competitors for both events and the Summer Fete come from far and wide, not just from within the Parish. But the fun has a more serious purpose. All monies raised go to charitable causes, both locally and nationally orientated. So everyone benefits one way or another.

## Recreation, Sport and Community (continued)

### Parish Website and Community Internet Access

Some respondents suggested a website should be set up, and this could provide much information such as Parish Council minutes, bus times, contact phone numbers, etc. It would also provide opportunities for expressing views, offering help, items for sale, and would enable quick responses to consultations of all kinds.

The possibility of designing, setting up and maintaining a Parish website has been investigated. Details can be found in the Action Plan. The possibility of the Plough Inn hosting a community internet access point for the parish has been discussed with Derek Howells. He has expressed interest and is considering making a room available in the near future.



### Flicks in the Sticks

Following the successful start of Flicks in the Sticks in Ballingham, a group of St David's churchgoers formed a group to show films in Little Dewchurch, mainly in order to provide regular entertainment for the local community and improve the range of social events. There is a chance to enjoy a social drink before the film and in the interval. The community benefits from the opportunity to see good up to date films in comfortable surroundings without the need to drive to Hereford or further. They also find it an excellent social event. 50% of the profits go to a range of charities and local organisations such as the school and the Over 60s Club, the village hall gets hire fees, and the other 50% goes to the church.

Generally between 30 and 50 people attend, with some coming from nearby villages. A one-year experiment with Flicks operating as a micro-cluster with Ballingham, Fownhope and Bosbury, with one-off funding from Elmley Arts Small Grants Fund, arranged by Arts Alive (who run Flicks in our region) ended in April 2006. Flicks provided all the kit and the technician to run it, and all spares, technical support, storage and insurance on that kit. Arts Alive are looking for new arrangements for us, which may be crucial to the continuation of Flicks in the village.

## Recreation, Sport and Community (continued)

### Parish Playing Field

The Playing Field Steering Group has done a sterling job of improving the overall condition of the Playing Field (pictured below). It has been levelled off, proper drainage installed, the playing area re-seeded and additional seating installed. However some remedial works have yet to be completed to everyone's satisfaction e.g. there is standing water in localised low lying areas. There are numerous proposals to replace and complement the recently-removed unsafe facilities, including up-to-date children's' play apparatus, a "youth shelter" and a graffiti wall. One of the drawbacks identified in the Questionnaire was the inconvenient and obscure access route. Consultations have already taken place in order to identify and provide an additional, more direct and obvious access pathway. It is hoped that this will encourage a greater use of the playing field area by all age groups.



### School Playing Field

The school is to have land leased by the Duchy of Cornwall for 10 years in order to have its own playing-field to the rear of the village hall. A re-designed layout has been submitted for Planning Permission. The Parish Council supported the application. Under current terms and conditions it will be for the exclusive use of the village school.

# Roads and Transport

Little Dewchurch is located to the east of the A49 on the Hoarwithy Road, 7 miles between Hereford and Ross-on-Wye respectively. There are three other significant lanes; at the centre crossroads to the east we have the Bolstone Lane; to the west is the lane that leads to St. David's Church and beyond. It is on this lane where the majority of the properties are located. The junction of the third lane is located ¼ mile out of the village towards Ross on Wye, running in an easterly direction to Carey. Most people travel to Hereford to work or shop.

## Road Condition

The questionnaire responses regarding the condition of roads in and around the parish indicated mixed views:

Condition	No. of respondents	%
Poor	85	51
Acceptable	80	47
Good	4	2

Some residents are concerned about the poor condition of roads, pavements, verges and roadside drainage. More frequent maintenance and more regular cleaning of roads, footpaths, gullies and verges are needed.



## Roads and Transport (continued)

### Danger Spots

Whilst it is recognised that many of our rural roads are very narrow, winding and with restricted vision, concerns were expressed about a number of particular danger spots within the parish, not least at the following locations:

- Village Hall junction, turning right and left
- Narrow road between this junction and the old post office
- Narrow road outside the school
- St David's Rise junction
- Court Close blind junction
- Bolstone Road bottleneck opposite the village green
- Carey Lane junction

Meetings have been held with Herefordshire Council (Planning and Transport) with a number of possible solutions presented. However with no history of accidents and constraints on funding, the Council are unable to help at this time. It is however suggested that the Parish Council regularly submit a "State of the Roads" report to Herefordshire impressing the strength of feeling on these issues.

### Parking

20% of respondents raised parking issues. These were mostly from residents of St. David's Rise with a couple from Court Close. St David's Rise was built in the 1950s when 16 garages were erected to one side of the development to cater for 54 families. The road into the estate comes to an abrupt end leaving a simple footpath for access to eight properties, six of whom do not have parking facilities immediately in front of their property. Parking problems have inevitably increased with car ownership, and the fact that a large number of residents have no access to their front gardens.

There has been considerable debate regarding the problem of parking and a range of options has been examined on site with council officers. However, none has proved to be practicable, viable or economically acceptable. Solutions will continue to be sought.

### Speed limits

Many people reported concerns about speeding on village roads. The new electronic warning signs have clearly reduced traffic speeds on the main road through the village, but the exit onto the main road from the church side of the village is still dangerous, and occasionally people drive too fast on the side roads.

## The Village Green

As a consequence of comments made in the Adult Questionnaire, Youth Questionnaire and open meetings, the Steering Committee elected to conduct a further survey concerning the use of the Little Dewchurch Village Green.

The Green is roughly triangular in shape and is the site of the former village pond. It is bordered on one side by the main Hereford to Ross-on-Wye road and by new executive homes or older established homes on the other two sides.

The vast majority of residents (94%) saw the Green as the focal point of the village

A majority (81%) were in favour of children, particularly younger children, playing on the Green, including ball games. They saw this as its primary purpose. A significant number of respondents were not in favour of major alterations to the Green such as a pond, a bespoke shelter or flower beds. However, most were in favour of a Christmas tree and lights, bird boxes, shrubs and a bespoke village name-board.

A sizeable minority of respondents felt that dog mess and litter were a problem on the Green. 31% felt that youths using the Green were an issue of concern.



## Conclusion

We believe that this Plan, if implemented in full, will make a significant improvement to the quality of life in our parish. The process took almost two years, and no doubt to achieve everything will take at least several years.

It is important that the Plan should not be regarded as set in stone, but should be reviewed every year, and amended as necessary, since circumstances and needs may change.

## List of Background Papers

Countryside Agency:	What makes a Good Parish Plan? (2004)
Herefordshire Council:	Herefordshire Landscapes Final Report (2005)
Herefordshire Council:	Landscape Character Assessment (2004)
Herefordshire Council:	Little Dewchurch Parish Plan results (2005)
Herefordshire Council:	Unitary Development Plan (2005)
Herefordshire Partnership:	Our Place, Our Future (2005)
Little Dewchurch Parish Council:	Analysis of Parish Plan Priorities - Public Meeting (2004)
Office of National Statistics:	Population Census (2001)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Adult and Youth Questionnaires (2005)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Agendas and Minutes (2004-2006)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Notes of Meeting with Herefordshire Housing Officer (2005)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Notes of Meetings with Planning & Highways Officers (2005)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Notes of Public Meeting (2006)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Reports to Parish Council (2004-2006)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Summary of Parish Plan for Consultation (2006)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Summary of Comments of Youth (2005)
Parish Plan Steering Group:	Village Green Questionnaire & Responses (2005)

## Acknowledgements

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- Little Dewchurch Parish Council, for their grant and general support and interest
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- Planning, highways and other officers of Herefordshire Council
- Parish Plan Steering Group members
- Volunteer distributors of survey forms and other documents.



**LITTLE DEWCHURCH  
PARISH PLAN**

**2006**

**ACTION PLAN**

The following Action Plan reflects all the survey responses and research carried out indicating what we think should be done to meet the hopes and wishes of those living, working and visiting the parish. It is designed to be reviewed annually and updated.

Each issue of concern or interest has a number of objectives that the parish will be striving to achieve.

Each objective has a number of accompanying tasks which are set out in the tables. These vary in their complexity; some only require one activity; others require a variety of actions.

With each objective and series of tasks are the following;

- Helpful pointers as to who should carry out the work or who could be contacted for help;
- An indication of the costs involved or what resources may be required;
- Target and success indicators that will allow effective monitoring to take place; and
- Notes that offer additional information

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	CONTACTS	COSTS & RESOURCES	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REMARKS
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE</b>					
Improve the current facilities on the Playing Field	Improve the drainage	Contractor	Contractor should be held responsible	Playing Field usable all year around: i.e. no standing water	Liaise with Playing Field Working Group (Richard King) Standing water at: South goal area; North lower level near road; and most of northern half of pitch
	Improve access to Playing Field	Herefordshire Council	Discussions with HC over funding  Parish Council £5,000 contribution	Confirm Planning issues;  Support guaranteed with St David's Rise quadrangle residents;  Funding confirmed;  Work starts;  Work complete Playing Field in regular use.	Proposal for new access at top of hill, new path running parallel to lane to Playing Field and inside St David's Rise quadrangle boundary  Recognition that parents/youths discontented with current access point  Crucial that regular liaison with residents on St David's Rise quadrangle  Clear out extensive bramble area adjacent to St David's Rise quadrangle and adjacent to road

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	CONTACTS	COSTS & RESOURCES	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REMARKS
Improve the current facilities on the Playing Field (cont)	Provide a Graffiti Wall – gable end of garages facing football field	Parish Council Youth Club/Village project	Paint as foundation base coat - Artists provide own paint? (Yes) Wall able to be `renewed' once `full'; No project leader necessary or wanted; but appoint `warden' to remove any offensive graffiti	Wall cleaned and prepared;  Base coat applied;  Wall declared `open';  Wall `full';	Remove temptation to deface other equipments/facilities  Provide paint to refurbish wall  Light atop Graffiti Wall illuminates wall and Shelter
	Provide a Shelter on Playing Field: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage young people in choice/style of shelter</li> <li>• Contemporary design</li> <li>• Located near Graffiti Wall on second tier of Playing Field.</li> <li>• All weather, minimum maintenance, good protection from elements</li> </ul>	Herefordshire Council  Parish Council £8,000 contribution for development of Playing Field	Seek funding from Parish and Herefordshire Councils; Seek sponsorship	Site identified; Confirm design; Planning Permission granted; Costs confirmed; Funding found; Shelter established.	Tie in with graffiti wall  Share light with Graffiti Wall Seating essential  No power required Litter bins required
	Provide playing apparatus on new site on top tier of Playing Field; all weather, minimum maintenance.	Herefordshire Council, Society of Local Council Clerks	Seek funding from Parish and Herefordshire Councils  Seek sponsorship	Condition of existing apparatus ascertained; Health & Safety requirements confirmed; Additional equipment listed; Exact site(s) identified; Costs confirmed; Funding found; Apparatus established.	Tie in with graffiti wall and shelter  New benches now in situ  Current climbing frame damaged and in poor state of repair. Remove.  Age range of apparatus?

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	CONTACTS	COSTS & RESOURCES	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REMARKS
Establish Village Club	Recruit young people's Village Club Co-ordinator	Herefordshire Council	Seek funding from Parish and Herefordshire Councils	Co-ordinator in place; Response to pilot in June 06; Funding found; Routine established which is supported by young people; Activities that are supported by children & young people	Tie in with adult equivalent of Village Club?  Joan Morris has already offered her services  Qualified NVQ L2 in Youth Work
	Recruit Village Club Assistants	Joan Morris Anna Muizelaar	Voluntary	List of volunteers established  Assurance of sustainable turnout by volunteers, children & young people	Anna Muizelaar has list from Open Meeting; Need police check  Sustainable turnout essential  Wide and timely publication of events
	Identify sustainable activities aiming to change every six weeks	Joan Morris	Funding necessary for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Village Hall</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Materials</li> </ul> Self funding? Contributory only?	Pilot in Jun 06  List of volunteers confirmed; Activities identified; Timetable of activities published; Monitor attendances; Activities evaluated	Dance classes Art classes Speech & drama Puppetry Table tennis Local interests Local walks Assertion training The environment War gaming  Seasonal dependant

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>CONTACTS</b>	<b>COSTS &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>SUCCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
ENVIRONMENT					
Enhancing the value of the Countryside	Building on the mapping opportunities for habitats and landscape work – carried out by Herefordshire Council identify opportunities for maintenance, restoration and creation	Herefordshire Council, local farmers and landowners	Project Team Project Planning Application for funds	Optimum biodiversity is supported by the habitat	Three landscape types present: timber plateau farmland, principal timbered farmlands & principal settled farmlands
Improving access for enjoyment of local countryside	Appoint local Footpath Officer	Confer with Parish Council	No cost	Footpath Officer appointed	Role could be shared between two or more volunteers
	Identify access improvements forwarding to Herefordshire Council for incorporation into Rights of Way Improvement Plan	Questionnaire completion for Herefordshire Council	Individual/Volunteer Group exercise	Initial response supplied to Herefordshire Council	Review available access for less able people and define priorities for provision
	Prioritising and costing improvements – Action Plan prepared into Project Proposal	Task and Finish Group to put proposal together	Possible funding from Herefordshire Council's P3 Scheme	Unobstructed, signposted, surface and structures in good repair	Use techniques and materials which are environmentally sustainable and appropriate to the landscape
	Volunteer maintenance group set up	Local community	Saturday pm/weekday evening activity	Promotion of access opportunities among parishioners, visitors and surrounding parishes	Use of local materials; wood in preference to metal. Apply principle of least restrictive access where structures are being replaced, i.e. a gap in preference to a gate, in preference to a stile

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Improving access for enjoyment of local countryside (cont)	Preparation of leaflets – routes, history, landscape character, etc	Task and finish Group as above	As part of larger (P3 funded) project	A series of short-medium-more demanding routes selected + promoted	Encourage the development and support for promoted routes, e.g. Bed & Breakfast, campsite, stabling, etc
	Walking for Health Initiative e.g. calorie counted walks	Herefordshire Council's Penny Jones	Herefordshire Sustain, Herefordshire Partnership, Primary Care Trust funding?	Identification and enhancement of viewpoints	Promoted perhaps as part of a larger parish project or stand alone initiative
	Creation of viewpoints and construction of seating/picnicking site	Local farmers and landowners, Greenwood craftsmen and volunteers	Funding perhaps from P3 Project (as above) PC £2,000 contribution	Permissive access achieved for horses with routes identified	Support the sensitive development of these highlighting the special qualities of local wildlife, farming and cultural heritage
	Investigate bridleway opportunities in Public Rights Of Way/permissive routes	Local Farmers, Landowners, Herefordshire Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan department	Awareness raising and signage required	Successful programme of events running throughout the year	No bridleways presently exist in Little Dewchurch.
	Workshops, lectures and events programme	Local Heritage Initiative, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Herefordshire Growing Point, etc.	Village Club activities		Initially these could be awareness raising events from which task groups could be established to consider furthering the work

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>CONTACTS</b>	<b>COSTS &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>SUCCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
Encouraging business opportunities linked to the environment	Promote farm based accommodation and activities on farms which are active in sustainable land management, and develop links between farm tourism, local foods and conservation of the landscape	Natural England (Defra, English Nature, Countryside Agency), Heart of England Tourism, Forestry Commission, English Heritage, Women's Institute, National Farmers Union, Country Land & Business Association, etc.	Partnership or other funding: Defra, Forestry Commission, Advantage West Midlands, Herefordshire Council	Number of Entry Level or Higher Level Agri-Environment Schemes taken up; England Woodland Grant Scheme take up (management, access, health, biodiversity);	Consider setting up or running jointly markets/mini-festivals celebrating the special qualities of the area.
Landscaping the Green Triangle	Refurbishing the area –turfing or reseeded, and adding seats, shrubs and bulbs	Herefordshire Council Highways Department	Obtain Licence (free) to cultivate. Source external funding. PC £1,000 contribution	Area restored – recognised as primary asset	Community involvement
Tackle Litter & Dog Mess	Appoint a volunteer Litter Warden	Local	Advert in Parish News; Notice board; Volunteers?	Warden appointed/task group identified	Perhaps something the Village Club might consider
	Suggest litter “sweeps” on a regular basis	School/community involvement	Minimal cost: Plastic bags, gloves, brushes?	Spring and Autumn litter sweeps completed	
	Signage: educational and awareness raising messages	Leaflets/notices distributed to all	Inserts in Parish News	Publicity programme run throughout the year	
	Install additional litter bins – e.g. PO Box, Bus Stop, Church	Talk to Herefordshire Council			
Better manage storm water and improve poor drainage	Combine with 5 or 6 other parishes to employ a “lengthsman” c.f. Worcestershire County Council	Herefordshire Council	Partnership funding £30,000 PC £5,000 contribution	Parish Council makes decision based on known costs and agreed functions	

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>CONTACTS</b>	<b>COSTS &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>SUCCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
Storm water and poor drainage (cont)	Encourage pro-active reporting process and follow up mechanism	Parish Council	Community involvement		Reporting to named contact in Herefordshire Council's Highways Department
Provide protection and enhancement for roadside verges	"Lengthsman" appointment (see above)				
	Plant wild flower mixes	Local suppliers Potential sponsors	Herefordshire Partnership	Parish Council makes decision based on known costs and agreed functions  Parish survey	
<b>HOUSING &amp; OTHER DEVELOPMENT</b>					
Draw up a clear pro-active planning policy for housing and other development within the parish	Liaise with people of the parish, the Parish Council and the Herefordshire Council Planning Directorate.	Parish Council Herefordshire Council		Policy adoption by Herefordshire Council as supplementary planning guidance	
	Ensure full publicity is given to planning applications.	Parish Council	Parish magazine Parish Website		Should be easily solved. Could perhaps be included in Parish News
	Explore the options for a village shop for local produce and basic items	Herefordshire Partnership; Shropshire Pathfinder	Set up a small task group to examine possibilities – village based or mobile alternative	Viable facility provided	



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Planning Policy (cont)	Seek broad consensus amongst residents on the acceptability or otherwise of encouraging small cottage-style industries, working from home within the Parish	Parish Council	Undertake a parish survey	Parish Survey	Suggest annual reviews
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES &amp; CRIME PREVENTION</b>					
Investigate the availability and potential of alternative energy sources	Investigate the availability and potential uptake of Mains gas	Contact made with a number of suppliers	Cost too prohibitive		Not possible – consider alternative energy sources at later date
Improve the reception coverage of mobile phones.	Consider the feasibility and location of positioning a mast within the parish.	Parish Council, Major network suppliers		Improved mobile telephone reception	Controversial - some have indicated that they do not want a mast
Improve the street lighting in the village	Consider replacing present lighting with less light polluting alternatives	Herefordshire Council Lighting Division	Source alternative funding. PC £3,000 contribution		Sensitive additions to improve access roads close to village centre
Review of access for emergency vehicles to houses in St David's Rise	Visit to the site and advise whether in a congested condition it would hamper their services	Fire and Ambulance Services	Nil	Confirmed that there was no problem at present	Suggest an annual review
Minimise crime and anti-social behaviour	Monitor continuously	Parish Council		Low incidence	Not a significant problem at present

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	CONTACTS	COSTS & RESOURCES	SUCCESS INDICATORS	REMARKS
<b>RECREATION, SPORT &amp; COMMUNITY</b>					
Improve communications for leisure activities – events, groups and clubs	Make list of clubs and groups to go onto notice board and maybe in pub or perhaps on the parish website	Contact Joyce Parker for list of regular clubs etc. in Village Hall		Greater community involvement in activities	
	Promote and encourage coordinated countryside/nature activities	Local Heritage Initiative  Campaign for Protection of Rural England  Holme Lacy College Horticultural Therapy  Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership	£3,000 to £25,000    Funding no longer directly available, but will help with applications		Information Pack received  Information Pack received  They provide workshops in demo garden or out in the community for elderly and disabled.  Very happy to give talks, has information on special sites etc. and would investigate Little Dewchurch to establish what wildlife there is, areas to be protected etc.
Investigate other suggestions and possibilities	Explore the possibility of forming of a Village Club encompassing varying areas of interest rather than have several smaller groups. Members can then be well informed of activities and 'pick and choose' what to attend.	Invite those who have indicated interest – but everyone is welcome		Village Club formed and active programme underway	

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Investigate the potential for a village website and internet facility	Parish survey to determine usage	Website providers	Sponsorship? Herefordshire Partnership Parish Council: £2,000 contribution	Suitable and viable facility provided	Increases the options for improving parish communications
Ensure the continuity of "Flicks in the Sticks"	Secure the necessary additional funding working with other parishes		Small Grants Funds, Herefordshire Partnership	Successful programme of films continuing	
<b>ROADS &amp; TRANSPORT</b>					
Enhance the condition of the roads	Express concern to Highways Department on the poor state, low level of priority and inadequate funding	Herefordshire Council	Considerable	Improved road surfaces and storm water drainage	Road surfaces checked annually by Council and repaired according to the priority listing
	To submit periodical state of the roads report, and individual requests to repair specific roads/lanes.	Parish Council		Improved road surfaces and storm water drainage	
Reduce traffic speed through village centre and improve visibility at junctions	To move the 40mph speed signs closer to the cross roads.	Herefordshire Council: Highways		Safer environment for vehicle users and pedestrians	Considered to be more effective
	To review speed of vehicles on the Bolstone and Church and Lanes, considering additions to speed limits	Herefordshire Council		Herefordshire Council	
	Investigate options for improving junction visibility	Parish Council		Dependent on solutions	

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Improving public transport	Set up meeting with Herefordshire Council Transport Manager, Jim Davies	Parish Council		Improvement in our limited service	Constraints limiting improvement of the bus services in the immediate future
Explore options and feasibility for improving the parking on St.David's Rise	Discuss with residents, identifying needs and priorities	Parish Council, Herefordshire Council: Planning & Highways			No immediate solutions: suggest an annual review
<b>VILLAGE GREEN</b>					
Enhance the Village Green as the focal point of the Village	Encourage sub-13 year olds to play on Village Green: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance environment on the Green (see below)</li> <li>▪ Improve safety aspects including speeding vehicles etc</li> </ul>	Parish Council	Nil. Publish widely including age restriction (and why)	Full use of Village Green  Reduced traffic speed	Ball games? Balls onto roads?  Liaise with other areas of the Parish Plan  Parish Council to manage any complaints
	Landscape the Village Green e.g. shrubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek expert advice on options</li> <li>▪ Seek funding to implement</li> <li>▪ Establish who responsible for maintenance</li> <li>▪ Establish volunteer group to assist with maintenance</li> <li>▪ Establish and publish types of usage</li> </ul>	Parish Council Countryside Agency English Nature Herefordshire Parks British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Apply to Parish Council and other funders  Fund raising with Fete/Soap Box Derby?  Seek sponsorship  Seek competitive tenders	Design process started  Design agreed  Design funded  Work started  Work completed	Needs to be low maintenance  Flora to be child resistant  Shrubs placed to restrict ball access to roads – but low so as not to obscure vision -Year round variety  Ban dogs? Include wastepaper bins

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Enhance the Village Green as the focal point of the Village (cont)	Provide power point; for Christmas Tree, Public Address system etc	Parish Council £2000 contribution	Apply to Parish and Herefordshire Councils  Seek competitive tenders	Liaison with landscapers  Establish any Planning criteria  Work started  Work completed	240v or 110v? - In secure, robust box  Ideal location – tie in with landscapers  Planning issues? Health & Safety?
	Erect Christmas Tree with decorations		Seek competitive tenders	Christmas tree erected annually	Engage Parish & School to decorate  Requirement to remove & store decorations.
	Provide Village sign board from sustainable local materials	Parish Council Church  Herefordshire Council	Apply to Parish Council  Sponsorship? Or seek competitive tenders  Funding options explored whilst design finalised. Parish Council?	School engaged in project  Design agreed by Parish Council  Sign erected	Engage Village School in design
	Provide bird boxes	Apply to RSPB?  Apply for National Nature Reserve Capital Grants	Apply to Parish Council	Liaise with landscapers  Erect boxes  Monitor usage	Erected on trees, posts?  Vandal & vermin proof  Engage with School – projects

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TASKS</b>	<b>CONTACTS</b>	<b>COSTS &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>SUCCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
<b>THE ACTION PLAN DELIVERY</b>					
To ensure that the Parish Plan is delivered effectively and efficiently	Prepare an annual work plan for the Parish Council based on a rolling Action Plan approach	Parish Plan Steering Group	Grant funded to date	First iteration of Parish Plan produced June 06; next one produced Summer 2007	Produced from draft and consultation responses. Priorities and phased work identified
	Secure commitment from the funding partners to fully resource the work plan	Identified task groups or personnel responsible	Variable	Funding secured as and when required	
	Encourage all partners, individuals and task groups to report annually on their contribution	Parish Clerk/Parish Council nominee issue reminders	Time and postage/Email costs	100% response	100% response
	Maintain good links between all parties, ideally through one bi-lateral meeting per year	Local Community and funding partners as appropriate	Hire of facilities, refreshments, etc	One meeting held with good proportion of the community attending	Consider need for different formats to meet the needs of young people, or disenfranchised groups
	Collect and collate the data relating to the parish which will assist in the delivery and review of the Parish Plan	Parish Clerk/parish Council nominee(s)	Time		
	Publish an annual progress report and update of the action plan	Parish Council nominated task group	Publication costs	Annual progress report published and action plan updated	Consider use of Email and website for dissemination to minimise costs
	Initiate consultation processes for a full review of the Parish Plan	Parish Council	External funding availability to be explored	Parish Plan reviewed at prescribed interval	Consider most appropriate interval; 3, 5 or 10 years

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