

# Parwich Village Action Group

(In conjunction with the Peak Park Authority and Parwich Parish Council)

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## Parwich Management Plan Redrafted (November 2004)

### Introduction

Parwich is a quiet rural community in the Derbyshire Dales within the Peak District National Park. It has a population of approximately 520 people living in around 220 households. There is a thriving school, a shop and a pub, but no post office. There are a large number of active societies and clubs in the village. We have a village hall (the Memorial Hall) and good sporting facilities, including a cricket pitch, football pitch, tennis courts and bowling green. In addition to the Anglican Parish Church there is also a Methodist Chapel. It serves as a centre for the neighbouring villages, Ashbourne (some seven miles away) being the nearest town.

In June 2000 the Peak Park Authority at the invitation of Parwich Parish Council called a public meeting in the Memorial Hall. From this meeting a small working group was set up to devise and circulate a questionnaire looking at how residents wished to see the village change and develop. The questionnaire was circulated to every household in the village. 131 completed forms were returned (67% response rate). From these responses a Village Management Plan was drawn up and adopted by the village at a further open meeting in January 2001. Five areas of action were identified in the plan and groups set up to implement the aims. In late 2003 and 2004 these aims were reviewed.

### Outcomes up to November 2004

**Environment Group** has as organized a number of village workdays and has, over the last three years, obtained over £12,000 in grants for identified improvements. These include: restoring the well in Creamery Lane, work on the brook course through the churchyard, tree work in the church yard and on the football pitch, walling repairs at Nether Green and in the churchyard, and purchase of new benches. Work is currently happening on the restoration of Staines Trough and placing two benches by the children's play area. The Group is also working on an environmental audit of the village.

**Affordable Housing Group** has achieved remarkably prompt results, with agreement to build three 3-bedroom-houses on the schoolhouse site. These, when built, will be available for rent from Nottingham Community Housing Association. Work has commenced on building these houses and the Action Group won the national UK Housing Award 2004 for 'Best Community Led Initiative' for this scheme.

**Community Hall & Sports Facilities Group** gathered a great deal of information (including a survey of what local groups would want from a hall) but failed to achieve a consensus on the idea of a new combined community hall and sports hall on the sports fields, as a majority of the current Memorial Hall user groups were opposed to this change in location. In early 2003 was put on hold pending our review, as they felt we could not continue with the original aims. Following the Memorial Hall Management Committee's community vote supporting the redevelopment of the existing site we now have a representative on their sub-group.

**Children's Play Area Group** together with the Parish Council has raised £11,207 with a £5,000 Awards for All Lottery Grant to improve the play equipment on the Green opposite the Sycamore Inn. This equipment is now in place, and the Group having achieved its aims has disbanded. They did recommend a new group be set up looking at the needs of teenagers.

**Facilities for Older Children & Teenagers Group** was set up in late 2003 while our review process was ongoing because there were volunteers ready to act. They wanted to focus on the idea of a skateboard area, and gathered information on possible equipment suppliers and funding sources. The teenagers went away to draw up a plan the area behind the pavilion on Parson's Croft. But since then the development of Ashbourne skateboard park and a reduction of local interest question the need for this facility in the village at this time.

**Roads, Traffic & Parking Group** had only a small number of volunteers. This made action difficult, and their contact with the authorities responsible for these issues met with the response that all the available funding was required for road repairs. The Group felt that they were too small to be able to create the public pressure required and went into abeyance pending further volunteers.

## **Management Plan Review (October/November 2003)**

In 2003 we set out to review the Management Plan. We obtained feedback from the sub-groups and delivered a questionnaire to each household in the village. Unlike the initial questionnaire we did not make arrangements to collect the completed responses from each house, but asked people to return them to the Shop. Only 32 responses were returned (a disappointingly low response rate of 16%). People already involved in the sub-groups tended not reply, presumably they felt they had had their say already. As there were no adverse comments on the process as a whole this low response rate was interpreted in part as villagers being happy with how things are going. By themselves the questionnaire results were felt to be inadequate to justify change in the management plan, but where they coincided with the input from the sub-groups and other bodies changes to the plan were made (see below).

The re-drafted management plan that follows, retains most of the aims of the original plan, but replaces those relating to the children's play area with a new set of aims relating to the needs of teenagers. The review did also indicate support for the idea of action

relating to the needs of older adults and a village newsletter, but as no one came forward the support such action they have not so far been included in the plan.

The redrafted plan was presented to Parwich Parish Council at their open meeting (8th April 2004) and they formally supported it. However since then in September 2004 there was an open vote on what the community wants from village hall facilities. This has resulted in a further updating of this plan with a redrafting of Objective 3 relating to community hall facilities which has been agreed both by the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall Management Committee. This plan in its current form was presented at an open meeting of the Action Group on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

# Objective 1 Protect & Maintain our Environment

## Initial Questionnaire Results

There was generally a positive feeling about the atmosphere of the village as it is, and opposition to any significant changes, such as alteration to the open spaces in the village, or any increased commercialisation. 97% of households wanted protection of the green and open spaces; 89% wanted to avoid commercialisation; 83% wanted no change in tourism; and 68% argued action is required to conserve our environment.

Comments were very varied, but related either to protecting and maintaining what we have, or to specific improvement projects:

*“Preservation of Village heritage. Responsible maintenance of buildings, green areas, walls etc....”*

*“Prevent commercialisation, maintain traditional village life.”*

*“Protection of open spaces with maintenance...”*

*“Seats for the benefit of the elderly...”*

*“Repair and maintenance of brook course.”*

*“A person to tidy road edges like they have in Alstonefield.”*

## Review Results

The Environment Group indicated a willingness to continue with the same aims. This was supported by the review questionnaire where there was 80%, 82% and 81% support respectively for further action on the existing aims. Comments supported continuing along the same lines with a large number of requests for benches, especially at the children’s play area. The original aims will be retained.

## Aims:

- Protect and maintain the green and open spaces in and around the village**
- Protect village heritage and lifestyle**
- Identify and promote specific improvements to enhance the village environment**

## Planned Action

Continue with the existing group to:

- Produce a statement of what is valued (including locations and photographs), to be lodged with planners.
- Continue work on the already identified projects (ie. further benches in the village, restore Staines Trough and improve the diversity of wild plants on the verges and ‘waste’ ground).
- Identify other specific projects to improve the environment and instigate grant applications for them in conjunction with the Parish Council and others.

# Objective 2 Affordable Housing

## Initial Questionnaire Results

The need for affordable housing was one of the most frequently commented issue, with 79% of households stating the need for change in relation to housing, and 83% stressing the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Comments and suggestions mainly related to the increased price of houses and the sale of Local Authority housing preventing young people remaining in the village:

*“Development of affordable rented accommodation...to enable young people to stay in the Village or return to the Village.”*

*“Affordable housing to stay affordable.”*

*“...to keep a mixed community.”*

*“No further allowance of second homes/holiday lets”*

## Review Results

86% of people replying to the review questionnaire wanted further action on the current aim. They were suggesting that more possible housing developments should be investigated. The existing Housing Group felt the current development should be completed before reviewing the need for further housing developments. This group will continue with its original aim.

## Aim:

**-Ensure provision and continued availability of low cost housing in the village.**

## Planned Action

Continue the housing working group to:

-Support the Nottingham Community Housing Association development on the Schoolhouse site.

-Review the need for further affordable housing in the village, when appropriate, and respond to the outcomes of that review.

# **Objective 3 Community Hall Sports Pavilion Facilities**

## **Initial Questionnaire results**

Whilst commending the existing facilities and the efforts of villagers to develop them, a significant number of households identified the need for a new multi-use community hall and improvement of the sports pavilion facilities. 87% stressed the need for a new community hall, and 61% for improved sport and pavilion facilities. One suggestion made by a number of households was a combined solution to both these issues with a new hall being built by the sports field (Parson's Croft).

Comments included:

*"New Village/Community Hall with good parking facilities."*

*"Better indoor facilities in the Memorial Hall (new) especially for Winter time activities, i.e. classes, indoor bowls..."*

*"Showers and toilets in pavilion.."*

*"New Hall on sports field to accommodate EEC Standards, dance/entertainment facilities, with toilet and showers."*

*"Excellent sporting facilities already, but relocating Village Hall and combining it as a sports pavilion would improve the set up at the moment."*

## **Review Results**

The Hall/Pavilion Group felt it could not continue with the existing aims for joint community hall and sports pavilion facilities, as there was not a consensus for moving the hall from the present site. The responses to the review questionnaire did not give clear grounds for changing the initial aims. 64% wanted further action towards the development of a multi-use community hall, 52% wanted improved pavilion facilities, and 78% wanted a combined solution to the community hall and sports pavilion needs. Since the Review the Management Committee for the existing Memorial Hall has set up a group to look at redeveloping the hall on the current site which has produced a new consensus.

## **Further issues**

Since setting the original aims the sports hall facilities in Ashbourne have been dramatically extended and Parwich Bowling Club have built a new clubhouse on the Parson's Croft site.

## **Community Vote September 2004**

The existing village hall does not comply with current legislation so doing nothing is not an option. Following our and the Memorial Hall Management Committee's surveys of what village groups want from a community hall, plans outlining the potential of the

existing sight were commissioned by the Memorial Hall Management Committee and presented to the village. They then outlined the implications of various options and put six options to the vote with all residents of Parwich, Alsop-en-le-Dale, Ballidon and Pikehall aged over eleven years old entitled to vote. 41% of those eligible voted. The results were:

Refurbish & upgrade existing hall	28%
Refurbish & extend existing hall	18%
Rebuild on existing site meeting identified needs	31%
Rebuild on existing site to maximum potential	19%
New build on Parson's Croft meeting identified needs	2%
New build on Parson's Croft to maximum potential	2%

This clearly decides against the option of a combined community hall and sports hall/pavilion facility by the playing fields with a majority of 96% for retaining the village hall on the existing site. Also 50% felt that rebuilding was the best solution to the problems with the existing building.

**Aims:**

- Redevelop the community hall facilities on the Memorial Hall site in line with the identified needs
- Identify separately the needs, if any, for improved sports pavilion facilities at the playing fields

**Planned Action:**

- Work with the Memorial Hall Management Committee (and as appropriate their sub-groups) to confirm the design, seek funding and establish a timetable for redeveloping the community hall facilities on the Memorial Hall site.
- Discuss at our next open meeting what steps if any are required in relation to improving sports pavilion facilities.

# Objective 4 Facilities for Older Children & Teenagers

## Review Results

87% of responses felt action was required in relation to facilities for teenagers. The most frequent suggestion being the need for a skateboard area. Further to the questionnaire results the Children's Play Area Group and the Parish Council both requested action in relation to the needs of teenagers and older children. This resulted in the aims below being included.

Comments included:

*"More for teenagers – maybe a mountain bike course/ skateboard area."*

*"More facilities for older children or teenagers – Skateboard area. Table tennis, small snooker/pool table, table football in Memorial Hall."*

*"There is now the need to develop a skateboard area and activities for teenagers."*

*"We need to think about the older kids."*

*"There is a lack of facilities for teenagers in the village, and I would think this could be improved with consultation with teenagers themselves to see what they actually want."*

## Aims:

- Identify the social/recreational needs of older children and teenagers in the village.
- Involve children/teenagers fully in this process.

## Planned Action

Set up a working group to:

- Identify the current needs and appropriate course of action

# Objective 5 Roads, Traffic and Parking

## Questionnaire Results

There were a range of views and suggestions on these issues, but overall the feeling was that we need to manage the current situation without attracting more traffic. 75% said it is important to improve road maintenance; 73% said it was important to improve car parking and traffic calming; and 63% said change was required in relation to 'the roads and transport'.

Comments were very varied but the following were the most commonly raised points:

*"People speeding through Village...small children are at risk."*

*"Improve car parking and traffic calming"*

*"...discouraging car use in the Village."*

## Review Results

The original group felt it was too small to continue, but the review results supported the existing aims (87% and 79% respectively). There were no further volunteers to support action on this issue, therefore the aims are retained but no action beyond the Steering Group having a watching brief is planned.

## Aims:

- Ensure traffic in the village does not exceed safe speeds
- Investigate solutions to parking difficulties

## Planned Action

Steering Group to monitor any changes in the situation.

## **Possible Additional Areas Requiring Objectives in the Future**

The original questionnaire in 2000 and the review in 2003 raised issues that either were not seen as a priority for immediate action or that no one volunteered to progress. These included:

**the needs of older people**  
**a village newsletter**  
**public transport (especially evenings)**  
**a village post office**  
**crime**

No objectives have currently been set but these will be borne in mind by the Steering Group should circumstances change or when the Action Plan is next reviewed.

Prepared by the Steering Group:

Ann Griffiths (Parwich Parish Council Representative)  
Fiona Hadfield  
Valerie Kirkham  
Peter Trehitt (Chair)  
Ann Wheeldon (Secretary)  
Janice Wigley (Treasurer)