Farlow and Oreton
Parish Plan
2016

Draft at 31.03.2016
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HOW THE PARISH PLAN STARTED

As a result of the Rural White Paper, published by the Government in 2000, there arose a desire for local communities to create a Parish Plan to link in with County Strategic Plans. This would assist local government in ensuring effective help for local communities and enabling them to best address the issues and concerns of local people. With so many changes affecting our community we want to make sure that we can influence the future plans that affect us.

How we identified wishes and concerns

On 31st January 2008 residents were invited to a presentation at Farlow and Oreton Village Hall made by Gemma Robinson from the Community Council of Shropshire outlining the benefits of having a vision for the Parish. At this meeting residents were invited to complete a ‘wish list’ of ideas for improvements they would like to see in the Parish and also requests were made for volunteers to provide a steering group to create the Parish Plan.

From this presentation a steering group was established that consisted of 12 residents and 2 local Councillors. In July 2008 an application for funding was approved by the Community Council of Shropshire to implement the plan.

Arising from the Parish Plan priorities were identified and an Action Plan produced. A presentation to local residents was made on the 5th December 2008 when it was established that the identified priorities were in line with resident’s expectations.

The aim is for a review to be undertaken every 5 years after publication and in 2015 a new questionnaire was produced and distributed to residents to gauge the level of success of the first issue of the Parish Plan. From the results of the questionnaire a new action plan has been produced for the next 5 years.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Summary of Questionnaire responses

Questionnaires were personally delivered to all members of the Parish. With the first issue, the questionnaires were collected personally. With the current issue, it was decided that the questionnaires would be returned by the parishioners to designated areas around the village and with an opportunity to return them on polling day at the village hall. Unfortunately this collection method resulted in a poor return rate. Perhaps this is due to the satisfaction of parishioners with issues regarding the parish, or maybe is just down to apathy and lack of interest on issues concerning the Parish.

The return rate was 29%
Main issues identified from the questionnaire results

Listed below is a summary of the main issues raised, together with percentage responses from the questionnaires relating to each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you value Farlow Primary School?</td>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use the public house, recently opened in the village?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to see a shop in the village?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you use a shop?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for recycling facilities outside Village Hall</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is local government aware of local issues?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a community cemetery important?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for a newsletter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy to volunteer to run a newsletter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 People volunteered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you read the notice boards?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they an effective way of communicating?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should we have a design statement for the parish?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel informed about parish development?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section of main comments from Questionnaire results:

A positive response in support of the school, although parking outside the school and church is an issue and a need for a playing field in the locality of the school

Suggestions for Village Hall events. These suggestions and other comments have been passed on to the village hall committee.

Support for the recycling facilities outside the village hall, but fly tipping and leaving inappropriate rubbish around bins needs tackling.

Parish website needs to be improved, publicised and made more vibrant. Offers have been made to run Twitter feed and Facebook page
Support for turning the BT phone box into a community asset with many suggestions for its use being put forward. Some concerns it may become an eyesore if not appropriately managed

Big concerns regarding road surfaces, speeding and poor infrastructure maintenance

Despite the dissatisfaction with the condition of our roads only a small number of people use the County Council website to report issues. Those that did use it reported they were satisfied with the response.

Enough support to enable a volunteer footpath group to be formed

Majority of people experience poor broadband speed and mobile phone signal

Suggestions made for use of Community Levy Money (CIL)

During recent times, the Parish has seen the demise of many local amenities e.g. the Post Office, shop and a Public House. The Public House has reopened and we hope to see this amenity fully utilised to ensure its success to enable it to remain open for many years to come.

Many people expressed a desire for a shop to be reopened, but how this may be achieved would need to be discussed.

For a village shop to be a successful and worthwhile business it would require the support and use of parishioners and visitors to the area. The majority of respondents saying they would use it once or twice a week, but whether this is enough to guarantee its long term future as a viable business would be debatable. Perhaps the shop could be incorporated into the pub or be part of a community project?

Apart from their intrinsic value, these amenities provide meeting places and aid the overall communication process across the village.

The Notice boards that were introduced as a result of the last Parish Plan Action Plan, have been a great success with many respondents looking at them and considering them a good way of communicating.

Less of a success has been the Parish website, which many people didn’t know existed. Comments made were that it needed improving and that it would be good to put local information, group information, parish notices, Parish Watch and security information and councillor profiles on there.

A limiting factor for the success of the current website is that we use a webpage that is owned by the county council. The administrator is having difficulty managing the website due to outdated software and compatibility issues. This is something that is out of his hands due to lack of ownership of the website. The best option would be to have our own website that we fully administer ourselves and this will be one of the actions for the Action Plan.

An offer was also made to setup and run a Twitter feed and Facebook page. This would need support from the Parish Council in supplying relevant information that needed to be communicated to the Parishioners.
There was also a desire for a newsletter to be produced, but this would be time consuming for the Parish Council to set up and run so would require further volunteers to do this. Four respondents expressed an interest in volunteering, so maybe this could be a worthwhile community project to start.

Other issues, which are clearly identified, include the desire for a continued local burial facility, recycling facilities and concerns regarding the control of the type of housing which is both appropriate and necessary within our parish.

Only 2% of respondents expressed a desire for social housing within our community.

The Parish Council has purchased the telephone box by the old Post Office, and the question was asked about what parishioners wanted to be done with it. Many ideas came forward, including communication centre, where parishioners could leave ideas and comments for Parish Council, somewhere to store a defibrillator, a swap shop, mini library, local information centre such as tourist information, rights of way, local events, maps, with other ideas too numerous to mention. Concerns were raised about it being allowed to deteriorate and becoming an eyesore, also some suggested it remain a phone box with a phone, but the issue was that it was not being used and was no longer going to be supported by BT.

The Phone Box has the strong possibility to be an excellent community asset and as such an action of the Parish Plan will be for volunteers to be called for to form a committee to oversee the refurbishment, setting up and continued upkeep of the Phone Box as a community asset.
A SHORT HISTORY OF FARLOW AND ORETON

The Parish of Farlow and Oreton is part of an area standing at the foot of the Clee Hills. The Parish has a mixed environment landscape with traditional hay meadows, arable land and steep hill meadows for stock grazing. There are also the remains of old limestone quarries which were once one of the main activities in Oreton. The stone and lime that was burnt here was transported all over the Midlands; firstly by pack horse and donkeys, later by steam transport and then more recently with modern day methods.

In the 1800’s there was a thriving brickyard in Oreton, using local clay to make bricks, tiles, headstones, pipes and many other items. However, by the end of the 1800’s, modern machinery aided the mass production of bricks and tiles which meant the local brick kilns became redundant. However, one kiln remains in the village and has recently been restored.

There was a limestone quarry along the area to the bottom of Springvale towards Oreton Bank producing stone and quicklime for several hundred years. This eventually ceased production when the lime kilns could not be fired due to the ban on fires being lit at night in World War 2.

A good example of the use of Oreton lime stone for local buildings is the Catholic Church at Ludlow.
The old factory building that once stood at the bottom of Factory Lane has long gone but some evidence of its existence still remains. There are also some remains of the aerial rope that once dominated the skyline from Clee Hill to Detton Siding. This carried stone off Clee Hill to the railway line of Detton. Several books have been written on this topic.

Farlow, once a Hereford village, houses the local Primary School which in the early 1900’s taught pupils from 5-14 years old when they left to start work. Later on the children moved to Lacon Childe School in Cleobury Mortimer to continue their education.

The old church which once stood at the bottom of Farlow Bank fell into disrepair and a new church was built by the school at the top of the bank.

The old blacksmith shop stood at the junction in Farlow opposite the Well Farm. Shoeing carried on here into the 1950’s.

Farlow Mill was a very important business for local farmers in the 1900’s. However, like the brick kilns, modern methods of production led to its demise. Much of the steelwork from this and other mills was melted down for the war effort, 1930-1945. The mill was later restored into a habitable dwelling.

The Parish of Farlow and Oreton is full of so much past history that it renders itself a most interesting place to live.
Modern day Farlow and Oreton consists of a vibrant Primary School, Church, Methodist Chapel, Village Hall and Pub. There are many footpaths, bridleways and mediaeval roadways criss crossing the area. Employment includes farming, tourism, plant nurseries and a building merchants shop. Many residents also commute to local towns and villages and also further afield to the West Midlands conurbation.

Our council is Shropshire Council which is responsible for all the services previously provided by a combination of Bridgnorth District Council and Shropshire County Council prior to the establishment of the Unitary Authority. There has been a small amount of development in recent years both in Farlow and Oreton. Currently there are 170 dwellings and there are around 400 residents of the parish.
A SHORT HISTORY OF FARLOW AND ITS EARLY CHURCH
(written for the Evensong Service of the 150th Anniversary of St. Giles Church on Sunday 22nd June 2008 by Mrs. Marilyn E. Howells.)

When I first came to live in Farlow – forty seven years ago – there were still one or two of the older people here who referred to the village not as Farlow, but as “Feyerlow”. This pronunciation has been handed down to us for over a thousand years – from the time before the Normans came. Some time over this period just one consonant has been dropped – an “n”. The Saxons knew this village as Fernelau – “Ferny Hill”, which it still is today.

It was only towards the end of the 19th century that Farlow became part of Shropshire at all. Before that it was an island parish of Herefordshire, and, together with thirteen Herefordshire parishes, it was part of the King’s Manor in Leominster – a royal hunting ground. We know that King Edward the Confessor reigned from 1042 to 1066 and in the Doomsday Book it is recorded that the ownership of this parish had passed to his widow, Queen Edith.

The older church, which this Victorian building replaced, was actually a 12th century Norman Chapel of Ease. It had a gallery, of the kind described in the novels of Thomas Hardy, where the musicians sat to play their instruments. In 1700, perhaps to celebrate the new century, it had two bells cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester, a famous bell maker.

If you were to drive along the road, past the new church and the school, and down Farlow Bank and, like an unfortunate cyclist some years ago, go too fast and have your brakes fail, then you might go straight over the hedge and land in the field beyond, that is where the old chapel stood. It had no graveyard. People took their loved ones to the great mother church in Stottesdon to be buried – or to Cleeton St. Mary, Silvington or Wheathill according to where they lived in the parish.

My late mother-in-law’s family owned Hillhead Farm, which adjoins the churchyard. If you study the early Farlow census returns you will see that it was once the Maypole Inn. This field, on which the church, and then the school, were built, is The Green Meadow because here, where we are attending this service, was once the Village Green, where Farlow Fair had been held from time immemorial. People came from miles around to attend it, and all
manner of high jinks and shenanigans took place. One old family member told me that the people who chose this site for the new church had chosen the least holy ground in the parish! When I asked what he meant he said you wouldn’t believe what people used to get up to here!

And yet – some of you may know that the lane along which you travelled today, the route all of your children take to school every day, was a very important track in ancient times. It forms part of the Clun-Clee Ridgeway, identified as a Bronze Age track and a very important trading route. The fact that the most important finds along it, particularly locally, are flint arrow heads indicates that it must have been used in even earlier times, by Neolithic peoples.

It is reported in the annals of the Woolhope Club, a Herefordshire group of historians and archaeologists, that, when the foundations of this church were being dug, a Bronze Age burial site was uncovered and the skeleton of a very tall woman was found – so it appears that this promontory on Ferny Hill was sacred ground after all.

I’d like to end by telling you a little story, told to me in the early 1970’s, which illustrates that the transition of worship and bible study from the old church to the new one may not have been as swift or as smooth as one might imagine.

The lady who told me this was in her eighties, which puts the events she described back in to the early 1890’s – some thirty or so years after the new church was consecrated. She said that her grandparents lived at the abush (also an inn at one time, and learned members of the Woolhope Club suggested that its name came not from a shrub or bush but from the word “ambush”, the steep ferny tracks on Farlow Bank being ideal terrain for robbers to lie in wait.....). Every Sunday, as a small girl, she was taken to the Bush, which is the first house you pass as you travel down Farlow Bank, to visit her grandparents. She recounted to me how her grandfather would take her by the hand and walk across with her to the site of the old church where part of the wall was still standing. In it was a deep niche. Her grandfather would reach into the niche and bring out, carefully wrapped in waterproof material, the old Church Bible. He would unwrap it and read to her from it. When they had finished it would be wrapped up once again and returned reverently to its place of safety. He told her that the old people of Farlow insisted on keeping their Church Bible in what remained of their old
church, much of the stonework having been removed to make foundations for the new. We do not know what happened to the Bible, but it must have been there for at least forty years, being read and studied by the people of this parish.

CHAPEL

Melville 1933 – 2009

Early reports suggest that early in the 1800’s a group of Methodists were meeting regularly at Hillhouses for open-air fellowship.

It was not until the 1830’s that the Reverend Charles Janion, who was the Wesleyan Minister at Broad Street along with Mr Charles Hammond (a cordwainer) of Clee Hill, negotiated the purchase of a piece of land known as the Pikes, which was located at a triangle in the roads between Detton Road and Stottesdon Road. The intentions of this purchase was to build a Methodist Chapel.

By 1833 the Chapel and the adjoining Cottage had been built and the name given to this place was Melville.

From that early band of Methodists nine have taken a special place in Melville’s history, becoming the first Trustees of the chapel. The Chapel became registered for marriages in 1932 and the first marriage to take place was between Eva and Oliver Price. In 1933 the cottage was converted into a school room and in 1947 Mr E Poyner donated the ground at the back of the Chapel for use as a graveyard.

For many years Melville had two Sunday Services and a Sunday School met regularly, there has also been a Wesleyan Guild, youth club and choirs in the past. Today there is still a Sunday School meeting monthly and services alternate between morning and evenings.
PARISH AMENITIES

FARLOW AND ORETON VILLAGE HALL

Farlow & Oreton Village Hall was built in the 1920’s and is held in Trust for the benefit of Farlow & Oreton residents. The land and hall therefore belong to the Parishioners of Farlow & Oreton and the rules on how the hall is run are contained in a Conveyance and Declaration of Trust dated 12/11/1951 and as amended 11/06/1997 these documents are lodged with the Charities Commission.

Farlow & Oreton Village Hall consists of a main hall, which has a capacity of 120 seated or 140 standing. There is also a committee room, a fully equipped kitchen, bar area, an area for storage and a new outside play area for children sited on part of the area known as the Bowling Green.
The Past

Between the early 1990’s to 2009 the following has been undertaken:

The wooden flooring in the main hall was replaced around 1990.

The Hall was refurbished around 1998, the tin cladding was replaced with box profile cladding, a disabled toilet was added also disabled access ramps to the hall. The windows and doors were removed and replaced with double glazed units. The Kitchen was also replaced.

The kitchen floor was replaced as part of an insurance claim and units were replaced at the same time in 2008. Unfortunately due to substandard work carried out in 2008, the floor needed to be replaced again in 2015.

The children’s play area was added in 2008/09.

Mission Statement

Farlow & Oreton Village Hall, (Registered Charity 522521), is a charity that maintains and improves this community facility to meet the needs of the population in the villages of Farlow & Oreton.
Aims

Through Farlow & Oreton Village Hall Management Committee and Trustees the Village Hall is maintained and developed to a standard that meets the need of the users. This is undertaken through these general objectives:

- To promote and encourage the increased use of the Village Hall by all sectors of the community particularly those age groups that get little use from this facility at the moment.
- To seek new and innovative events and ways to use this community facility and try to fill the void caused by the loss of the Village Post Office/Shop.
- Working with an annual budget that is mostly obtained through grants, hire of the facility and fund raising events, these funds are used for day to day running costs such as water rates, electricity, also insurance and general hall and grounds maintenance.
- Operate in an environmentally friendly manner.
- Co-operate and work with other village groups and others while working within the equal opportunities policy.
- To maintain a safe environment through planned preventative maintenance.

Management Committee

- The committee consists of Trustees, elected and co-opted members; the election of committee and officers takes place at the AGM, which normally takes place in April.
- Members of the public are welcome to attend and take part in the monthly meetings that normally take place on the first Wednesday of the month at 8pm.
- A list of committee members is posted on the hall notice board.

Hire of the Village Hall

- Current regular user groups include Mother & Toddler, Mannerly Mutts dog training, WI, Farlow School PTA, Parish Council and Management Committee events.
- Hire costs and booking terms and conditions are published on the hall notice board.
- Bookings should be made through the booking secretary, details of whom will be displayed on the appropriate notice boards.
VILLAGE GREEN / SPORTS FIELD

Oreton Common was purchased by the Parish Council with the intention of providing a Village Green / Sports field / Community area for the parish.

Unfortunately it was found that various problems prevented the site from being developed as a community area. Although the Council tried to resolve these problems, it became evident that the site would not be suitable for the use for which it had been purchased.

After owning Oreton Common for a number of years and in order to release the funds which it tied up, the Parish Council agreed to put it up for sale and it was subsequently sold at public auction.

It has always been the intention of the Parish Council to try to provide a Sports Field / Community area for the parish if suitable land becomes available, but only 26% of respondents use the playing field / playground situated at the village hall. Also, only 26% of respondents agreed that it needs to be bigger.

Comments were made about the lack of playing field / facility’s at or nearer the school, so clearly this subject needs further investigation and discussion.

Action:
Continue to investigate the development of a sports field / community area for the parish.
LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Farlow School enjoys a wonderful rural position in the heart of the South Shropshire countryside, at the top of Farlow Bank, next to the church. It has about 50 pupils in total, age range 5-11 years, divided into 2 classes; Reception/Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Although small, the school is a rich, vibrant and enthusiastic learning environment. There are 2 full time and 2 part time teachers, together with 8 other support staff including teaching assistants, support workers for pupils with special needs, lunch/playtime supervisors, cleaners and office administration. As such, it is also a significant employer within the parish.

In 2013 Farlow and Kinlet primary schools formed a federation. This means that, without losing their individuality, two schools with much in common are working together under a single governing body, sharing good practice, ideas and development planning, and managing resources to best effect for up to 120 local children.

The buildings have recently been expanded with a new stone extension, up to date modern equipment with excellent internet access and general refurbishment throughout.

Music education is outstanding, provided by a specialist within school and a visiting teacher for advanced musicians. The school owns 2 harps and offers harp lessons to pupils during the lunchtime.

Although the school has no grass playing field it makes use of the rural community by holding forest school activities each week, in addition there are regular after school clubs, e.g. cooking, gardening and cross country.
The school organises regular residential and day trips. It puts on regular plays and concerts in the local village hall. Every term the children take part in church services.
The school PTA Committee hold an annual Show and Fete in the autumn to raise funds for the school.
Overall, the local primary school plays a very active part in the village.

None of respondents felt that the school was unimportant, with 51% valuing it as essential and emphasising its vital role in the community.

Action: Ensure the Parish supports school activities and retains the school for future generations.
ROAD SAFETY, CRIME AND SECURITY

TRANSPORT, ROADS AND DRAINAGE

According to the first questionnaire a majority of respondents drive and have regular access to a vehicle. When asked this time if they have difficulty accessing hospital, doctor and chemist etc. the vast majority indicated they had no problems. A small number of people did indicate having problems accessing these facilities with comments being made about lack of public transport. Suggestion was made for a volunteer’s register of those with their own transport who would consider sharing private vehicles to assist in journeys for shopping, social / leisure, travel to work, etc.

There is, however, some concern for younger people who, without assistance from family or older friends, cannot get out of the village to attend activities in local areas / towns.

Public transport is non-existent with no bus services available. Arrangements can be made for a taxi service to hospital by contacting the GP Surgery.

There is major concern about road maintenance, drainage, speeding, verges and of course the dreaded potholes. Despite respondents concerns about road conditions and maintenance few people have complained about potholes and infrastructure problems on the county councils website. Those who did use it expressed satisfaction in the response they received. If more people complained via the website, perhaps we would be more successful in getting repairs carried out.

New speed limit signs have been erected but the 30 mph limits are not extensive enough and it has proved difficult to get the County Council to extend them. The Parish Council has also funded signs warning drivers that they are approaching the village hall and play area to try and improve road safety for users of these amenities which obviously will include very young children. Despite these efforts, speeding and inappropriate speed for road conditions on national speed limit roads still remains a concern for many people.

The poor condition of the roads, poor quality of work and random nature of when or where work is done still remains a major concern. The Parish Council regularly liaises with the Surveyor responsible for roads / drainage, etc. and it does its very best to ensure that work in our Parish is carried out. The Parish Council employs a Lengthsman whose job it is to carry out verge and hedge cutting, drainage clearance and maintenance and minor repairs to roads using pothole kits provided by the County Council, where appropriate.

Action:
Encourage parishioners to report infrastructure problems on the county council website.
Use improved Parish council website as way of communicating progress on infrastructure issues.
FARLOW AND ORETON PARISH WATCH

Crime in the Parish is extremely low compared with national and urban statistics but even one crime is one too many. The main problem is theft and our widely spread, often isolated population could appear attractive to those from outside with evil intent.

The Parish Watch was set up to enable Parishioners to help protect themselves and their property and to be the eyes and ears of the community. It is an information sharing service with West Mercia Constabulary and several parishes have now joined the scheme increasing the watch area and hopefully making our communities safer.

Farlow Parish Council obtained funding from Bridgnorth District Community Safety Partnership which paid for the watch signs which are now displayed throughout the parish and also for the production of information leaflets that have been delivered to every household. These leaflets contain the telephone numbers of our Parish Coordinators and the Police in case anything suspicious or anti-social behaviour is observed in the area.

There is also an Oreton neighbourhood watch Facebook group that has been set up, independently of the Parish Council.

101 - The police non-emergency number. 101 is the number to call when you want to contact your local police - when it's less urgent than a 999 call.

Only 36% of residents felt they were sufficiently informed about the Parish Watch scheme, so a renewed effort should be made to get information to people regarding the Parish Watch. This will be an action for the Parish Plan Action Plan.

LOCAL SERVICES

MOBILE SHOP

There is a mobile shop that is in the area each Friday that sells general household groceries, if you require more details please contact Mr Lambert 01584 810879.

Action: Carry out promotion of existing mobile shop service in operation using the notice boards and an improved Parish website.

Community First Responders

In the event of an accident or illness and you have requested immediate medical assistance by dialling 999 an ambulance will be sent to you as quickly as possible. As we live in a rural area this may take longer than usual and because of this a Community First Responder scheme has been created. This is a team of volunteer local people with extensive West Midlands Ambulance Service first aid training, who will assist you until the ambulance arrives. We don’t currently have a Community First Responder in the village but the nearest Community First Responder is activated by the ambulance organisation who will contact them when they receive the 999 call.

If you wish to volunteer to become a Community First Responder all the relevant information can be found on the West Midlands Ambulance Service website.
The Parish Council are currently in discussion about the acquisition and siting of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

To assist all the emergency services with finding your location in the event of an emergency it is suggested that you have your grid reference and global positioning system co-ordinates close to hand.

Action:
Encourage people to find their GPS co-ordinates and grid reference. Information on how to do this to be placed on new website.

LUDLOW MOBILE LIBRARY

The Parish is included in route 12 and is visited by the mobile library on alternate Fridays. Visits may be subject to change due to adverse weather conditions and further information can be obtained from Shropshire Council or the library can be emailed at libraries@shropshire.gov.uk.

COMMUNICATION

The Parish Council

The Parish Council consists of 7 elected or co-opted members and usually meets on the last Thursday of the month at Farlow and Oreton Village Hall at 8.00pm.

The agenda for the meeting is displayed on the notice boards placed in various locations around the Parish, one by the old shop at the bottom of New Road, one outside the village hall and also on the notice board inside the Village Hall, one at the bus shelter outside The Gate Hangs Well and one at Well Farm in Farlow. There are also 3 smaller boards located throughout the parish.
Residents can speak to the council for five minutes at the start of the meeting about any concern that they may have, they can remain for the rest of the meeting but cannot comment.

An annual meeting is held by law every year, which gives residents the opportunity to bring up matters of concern, as well as find out about the work of the Parish Council over the past year.

Farlow and Oreton are in the new Cleobury Mortimer Division of Shropshire Council and have two Unitary Councillors to represent them. A Parish Council representative attends the Cleobury and Rural Joint Local Committee (LJC) meetings. This forms one of the 28 LJC’s in the County which are legally constituted, decision making committees of Shropshire Council, formed to fulfil a range of roles including scrutinising and making decisions on local service delivery and encouraging public participation in the decision making of the Council.

A list of Parish and Unitary Councillors and contact numbers can be found on the last page of the Annual Report.

45% of residents felt that our elected Local Government Representatives were sufficiently aware of local issues.

Encourage attendance at Parish Council meetings, Parish Council AGM and Cleobury and Rural LJC meetings where Parish and Unitary elected members are in attendance.

**Local Newspaper**

The Wheatland News is a local monthly magazine which covers news from 17 parishes around Stottesdon and Ditton Priors. To subscribe, there is an annual fee of £6.00 and the magazine is delivered to your home.

To make a contribution to the contents of the magazine contact Mrs Madeline Brown, The Hollies, Upper Nechford, Monkhopton, Bridgnorth WV16 6SF, her telephone number is 01746 718596 and her email address is maddy.brown@lineone.net (subject Wheatland’s Diary). All information must be received by the 14th day of the month.

The Cleobury Clarion is popular with many people, although limited numbers are available. If numbers of these are limited then we should encourage recycling and sharing of copies.

Action: Organise volunteers who have offered to run newsletter or investigate providing information to existing publications.

**Website**

The website for Farlow and Oreton has been discussed previously but can currently be found at [www.2shrop.net/farlowandoreton](http://www.2shrop.net/farlowandoreton). Only information can be found here about contacting the Parish Council, monthly meeting minutes and the Parish Plan.

Actions:
Further Develop the parish website, produce a Facebook page and Twitter feed and keep them regularly updated.
ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

CATHERTON COMMON

Catherton Common stretches approximately 5km from end to end, extending to approximately 527 acres of pasture and heathland, rich in heather, gorse and bracken.

It lies generally to the south of the parish and has recently been acquired by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. More information about the Common and the Wildlife Trust can be found on www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk.

At its highest point, the common is 425m above sea level and being designated in part as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) provides stunning and expansive views of Clee Hill towards Wyre Forest.

The central and northern part of the site is important in terms of ecology and nature conservation and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since 1963 for its extensive areas of wet and dry heathland and wildlife diversity. This area comprises a diverse range of pasture, gorse, heathers and bracken, with wet areas in the north and rocky outcrops to the southern boundary between the Crumps and Wellings Brooks. The part of the common that includes Cramer Gutter is situated in Oreton and is of particular interest as it has a wealth of uncommon plants one of which is the Marsh Gentian, *Gentiana Pneumonanthe*, it grows here in its only Shropshire locality. The stream that flushes here is also of interest and attracts dragonflies including the rare species, *Orthetrum caerulescens*.

The whole site is a registered common and subject to public access under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 for recreational activities carried out on foot such as walking, sightseeing, bird-watching, climbing and running.
The Commons Register details 64 commoners benefiting from grazing rights for over 3,000 head of livestock including sheep, horses, pigs and poultry. There are also commoners rights of Herbage, Estovers, Turbary and Pannage and Piscary also exist but to a much lesser extent.

BRIDLEWAYS

Within Shropshire there is a fantastic opportunity for horse riders to enjoy the freedom and safety of off road riding, with a network of over 625 miles or 1000 kilometres of Bridleways. We are fortunate within the Farlow and Oreton area to have excellent access to many bridleways and also have the long distance bridleway, the Jack Mytton way passing through our Parish.

There is a large population of horse riders and a trekking centre at Stottesdon so the bridleways do get used a lot. This, coupled with the large amount of rainfall over recent years, has resulted in some of the bridleways becoming badly eroded and rutted.

Shropshire Council is responsible for ensuring that the rights of way, including bridleways within the county are maintained. The department directly responsible is made up of an enforcement team, a maintenance team and a mapping team. They receive 2500 – 3000 reports per year about issues regarding rights of way within the county. Priority is established by the number of reports a particular right of way has received.

An action that was identified in the first issue of the Action Plan was to encourage the formation of a volunteer group to help maintain the bridleways in our area. This has been achieved with great success with the formation of the Cleeview Bridleways group who carry out a wide range of activities including bridleway clearance, drainage repairs and installation, improvements to the going which includes the laying of stone where necessary, fund raising to pay for hire of machinery and operators to carry out major repairs.
The group closely liaises with the Council to help carry out this work and overcome issues such as access and installation of horse friendly gates. Information about the bridleways group can be found at www.cleeviewbridleway.co.uk
JACK MYTTON WAY

The Jack Mytton Way (JMW) is a long distance bridleway that takes in over 100 miles of bridleways and quiet country lanes within Shropshire. It passes through some of the most beautiful and unspoilt countryside within the county and can be used by those on foot, bicycle and horseback. The trail is well marked, denoted by a yellow disc with a blue horseshoe and horse logo. It is also marked on the Ordnance Survey Explorer series of maps.

The JMW is well documented on Shropshire Council’s website and is broken down into well described sections. Section 8, titled Wheathill to Cleobury, Postman’s knock in the crooked town, passes through our Parish with the Cramer Gutter Nature Reserve being highlighted within the route’s description.

The local environment is important to everyone who lives in the locality. It can also benefit the local economy by encouraging tourism. The JMW is well publicised on Shropshire Council’s website as is other routes and bridleways with pamphlets and literature freely available to encourage people to make use of them.

It is therefore important to ensure that the rights of way are kept open and maintained and not abused by inappropriate use. Shropshire Council encourages members of the public to make reports to them regarding issues with rights of way such as bridleways. This includes problems such as overgrown vegetation, fallen trees, blocked rights of way, broken or difficult to use gates, flooding, etc. The more reports that are made about a particular right of way the higher priority it will get. The department responsible will also have an officer who co-ordinates the use of volunteers.
Farlow and Oreton are fortunate to have several footpaths in the Parish
The Simon Evans Way is a famous footpath that follows in the steps of Simon Evans who documented his daily life whilst he went about his job as the local postman.

Simon Evans 1895-1940
Simon Evans was born in ‘Tynyfedu’ in Wales in 1895 but moved to Merseyside when he was about 12 years old. On the outbreak of war he joined the army and during the war he was gassed and sustained injuries to his lungs.

After the war in 1918 he joined the Post Office and in 1926 arranged an exchange of postal jobs with a young man from Cleobury Mortimer, so getting the country air he needed to repair his damaged lungs. He settled into his new position which sustained him for the next 10 years.

His postal round took an 18 mile route that followed the Rea Valley to Stottesdon where he would rest in a postal hut before his journey home. It is estimated that Simon Evans walked over 75,000 miles during his time as a postman in Cleobury and during that time he
developed a great love of the area. He wrote 5 books (including one novel) about rural Shropshire which shows his passion for the area. Simon Evans died in a Birmingham Hospital from his war injuries in 1940.

The Simon Evans Way

The Simon Evans Way walk is approximately 18 miles long and is roughly in a figure of eight pattern, for experienced walkers it is a one day walk, casual walkers should allow two days to appreciate the lovely Shropshire countryside. Although it is possible to walk sections of the Simon Evans Way in just a few hours.

The walk starts at ‘The Old Post Office’ in Cleobury Mortimer and would have been the morning route for Simon Evans. It passes through the lovely Rea Valley by the River Rea and crosses over at Detton Hall, it continues on to part of the Jack Mytton Way to Prescott, then on to the north to Stottesdon.

The return route for Simon Evans in the afternoon passes several properties in Oreton, Honeysuckle, Little Stocking and carrying on to Oreton Road and down Factory Lane to the Old Factory Cottage. Then crossing the River Rea and on again to Detton Hall and back to Cleobury Mortimer.

Many residents feel that although the footpaths are well marked from the road, they are not marked afterwards and this makes keeping to the designated footpath very difficult. Also some residents feel that the footpaths, although well maintained, have some signposts missing and many signs become overgrown during summer months and this also can cause problems whilst out walking.

There have been reported obstructions on our footpaths and bridleways in Farlow and Oreton and this is also a concern as this could be dangerous to animals and prevent walkers and riders using them.

There are numerous stiles on our footpath routes and if you have a large dog this is a problem as you cannot get the dog over the stile.
Overall the footpaths are well signed – Shropshire CC replaced many stiles and signposts in recent years, but the feeling is that they could be better maintained.

59% of respondents use rights of way, with over 52% of those agreeing that they are adequately maintained and sign posted. 52% also said that some are obstructed and 37% stated that more information should be available. These figures could be improved upon with the establishment of a volunteer footpaths group and actually since this new Parish Plan has been produced a footpaths group has been established.

Action:
Promotion of the new footpath group to monitor footpaths, report problems and carry out volunteer work in partnership with the Shropshire Council.
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

Following the formation of the Unitary Authority, Shropshire Council, on 1st April 2009 the parish now lies within the southern administrative zone of the new authority. This change was followed by a complete re-examination of planning and development policy with the introduction of the Local Development Framework.

The Local Development Framework, or LDF, is effectively a collection of various planning policy documents which consider a wide range of important planning issues such as housing, employment, retail, the environment, and transport. The LDF will play a crucial role in prioritising and shaping development in Shropshire over the next 20 years.

The LDF is made up of several planning documents, known as Local Development Documents (LDDs). The policies and guidance contained in these LDDs will play an important role in the assessment of individual planning applications within Shropshire.

Two of the key documents which make up the Shropshire LDF are:

**Core Strategy DPD** - Adopted 24 February 2011

**Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD (SAMDev)** – Adopted 17th December 2015

To fully explain the intricacies of the above mentioned documents and planning policy is beyond the scope of the Parish Plan so it is recommended that for further information go to the county council website, www.Shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy.

There is recognition of a need to cater for affordable homes for local people otherwise development is restricted to replacement and conversion of existing buildings. With this in mind the Parish Council is fully supportive of legitimate applications for Single plot exception site developments.

The single plot exception site policy helps increase the affordable rural housing stock, is an innovative ‘selfhelp’ scheme enabling qualifying people to build their own affordable home on single plot exception sites.

Exception sites are granted planning permission as an exception to normal planning policies in order to meet a local need for affordable housing. In its broadest sense, this includes the provision of affordable housing for people who have a strong local connection to a specific area (e.g. a Parish or group of Parishes) who are unable to afford or secure open market housing in that area.

The scheme encourages those with resources (both land and finance) to invest them in the stock of rural affordable housing to the benefit of the local community in the long term. Further information can be found at www.shropshire.gov.uk/affordable-housing.

Approximately a third of respondents to the survey considered that any future housing development in the parish should consist of low cost starter homes for sale, single plot exception sites, houses for rent and barn conversions. Half agreed that they would support conversion of redundant agricultural buildings.

There was a slightly lower level of support for mid-range family houses, low cost starter homes for rent and small business units with virtually negligible interest in the provision of new executive type dwellings and social housing.

Much of the older housing stock in the parish exhibits considerable character, something which many feel has not been maintained in the appearance of some of the more recently constructed or extended properties.
Over 43% of those who responded to the survey felt that the Parish should have the benefit of a Design Statement which would set out clear guidelines and enable the Planning Authority to exert a tasteful and balanced level of control in the choice of materials on any new or extended buildings. Cost restrictions associated with any new affordable housing will of course preclude the use of expensive external materials yet this should not be seen as providing any reason for their appearance to be other than entirely in keeping with their surroundings.

ACTION:

1. Monitor the formulation of the Local Development Framework for any policy changes which might apply to Farlow and Oreton.

2. Efforts to be made to retain the character of the Parish by avoiding unsightly alterations particularly to older buildings and the use of inappropriate materials.

3. Recognise the need to be supportive of commercial/employment opportunities within the Parish and encourage such activities in appropriate locations.

4. Conserve the unique landscape and environmental features of the Parish.

5. To continue to support the Farlow Parish Councils Housing development policy as set out in their SAMDev response 2011 (signed by all of the then incumbent Councillors). The Relevant paragraphs are as follows.

The Council has ambition to accept single plot site development to create and enhance sustainability of the community. Development would be considered within the clusters (Oreton, Farlow and Hill Houses) adjacent to existing properties.

The type of housing the Council endorses is single plot exception sites throughout the parish close to existing properties (applicants must conform to all of the Rules of the Scheme including satisfying the local connection criteria)

Within the Clusters, Open Market houses on single plot sites will be considered with the emphasis on smaller properties to encourage market low cost housing. Bungalows and accommodation for people in retirement will also be considered. Larger multi-unit developments are not acceptable or seen as suitable for the Parish. New Properties would not be permitted to be extended to a size much bigger than the original building.

Affordable social housing outside Parish Council tenancy control is not felt appropriate.
## Farlow and Oreton Parish Plan – Original Action Plan Highlighting Successes

**Short Term – in next 12 months**  
**Medium Term - 12 months to three years**  
**Long Term – Three to Five years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of Communication</td>
<td>Erection of noticeboards</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lottery funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Organisation of community events</td>
<td>Village Hall Committee</td>
<td>Newly recruited volunteers</td>
<td>Yes, start up cost but would look to be self sustaining</td>
<td>Events have been organised to date and to be continued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Develop regular community newsletter</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Church, Chapel and School</td>
<td>Initial start up cost around £500</td>
<td>Not done. Current questionnaire suggest a desire for this but a lack of volunteers coming forward will prevent future progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Create website</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Parish Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Possibly, although could be free of charge through <a href="http://www.shrop.net">www.shrop.net</a></td>
<td>Complete, needs improving. Volunteers required.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lack of household plastics recycling</td>
<td>Approach Shropshire Council regarding new policy and</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Shropshire Council</td>
<td>None directly – through Shropshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
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<td><strong>COMMUNITY AMENITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Increase local cemetery space</td>
<td>Approach local Church, look for suitable land and progress as necessary</td>
<td>PCC / Parish Council</td>
<td>PCC / Parish Council</td>
<td>Yes, although not defined as yet</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lack of community facilities, specifically Public House and Shop</td>
<td>Promote Mobile Shop</td>
<td>Parish Plan Group – through newsletter, website and parish plan</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Not directly</td>
<td>Public house open, needs local support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Consider local “pub nights” in the village hall.</td>
<td>Village Hall Committee</td>
<td>Parish Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Yes initially, but should be self financing</td>
<td>Complete, but to be continued.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT, ROADS AND DRAINAGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Inadequate maintenance of local roads</td>
<td>Arrange regular liaison with Shropshire Council contact and keep local members informed to lobby on our behalf. Ensure regular list of issues is logged and reported</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Shropshire Council Highways Shropshire Council local Members</td>
<td>Not directly</td>
<td>Ongoing, Lengthsmans scheme established. New actions established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Concerns over parish security</td>
<td>Launch of Parish Watch Scheme  Promotion of West Mercia police Rural Watch scheme</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>West Mercia Police  Shropshire Council</td>
<td>Yes, for some initial marketing and promotion</td>
<td>Complete, but an ongoing action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Poor state of repair of parish bridleways</td>
<td>Carry out review of all paths / bridleways and establish problems  Setting up of local Parish Paths Partnership with volunteers to support long term management and maintenance</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Shropshire Council  Countryside Services</td>
<td>Yes, for dealing with identified maintenance issues – to be met by Shropshire Council</td>
<td>Complete. Work continuously being carried out by volunteer group, Cleeview bridleways Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Local businesses</td>
<td>Established lines of communication</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Medium Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# FARLOW AND ORETON PARISH PLAN 2016

Timescales – short term up to 12 months, medium term – 12 months to 3 years, long term 3 to 5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Improvements to communication</td>
<td>Organisation of community events</td>
<td>Village Hall Committee</td>
<td>Newly recruited volunteers</td>
<td>Yes, start up cost but would look to be self sustaining</td>
<td>Events have been organised to date and to be continued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Develop regular community newsletter</td>
<td>Parish Council initially to recruit volunteers, Then solely volunteer run, with input from Parish Council</td>
<td>Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Church, Chapel and School, Volunteer parishioners.</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redevelop Parish website. Facebook page and Twitter</td>
<td>Parish council initially, then volunteer run.</td>
<td>Volunteer parishioners, Parish Council Village Hall Committee, Church, Chapel and School, website designer</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Medium term, but needs continued attention to keep updated.</td>
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<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>COMMUNITY AMENITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Increase local cemetery space</td>
<td>Approach local Church, look for</td>
<td>PCC / Parish Council</td>
<td>Yes, although</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>suitable land and progress as</td>
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<td>not defined as</td>
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<td></td>
<td>necessary</td>
<td>PCC / Parish Council</td>
<td>yet</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Refurbishment and development of BT phone box into a community asset.</td>
<td>Establish a volunteer group to</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Short term</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>refurbish, set up and maintain</td>
<td>Volunteer parishioners.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>the phone box as community asset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Lack of shop</td>
<td>Promote Mobile Shop, investigate</td>
<td>To be established</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>other opportunities to establish</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Improvements to playing field/village green</td>
<td>Establish need for larger playing</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Village hall, School.</td>
<td>Long term</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>field or facilities appropriate</td>
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<td>for the school to use.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT, ROADS AND DRAINAGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Inadequate maintenance of local roads</td>
<td>Arrange regular liaison with</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Shropshire Council</td>
<td>No time scale,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shropshire Council contact and</td>
<td></td>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>keep local members informed to</td>
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<td>Shropshire Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lobby on our behalf.</td>
<td></td>
<td>local Members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Encourage parishioners to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>report issues on County</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Council website</td>
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<td>Ensure regular list of issues is</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>logged and reported</td>
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</table>
## CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

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<thead>
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<th>Timescale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Concerns over parish security</td>
<td>Continued promotion of Parish Watch Scheme. Improve communication of Scheme and security issues. Promotion of West Mercia police Rural Watch scheme</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>West Mercia Police Shropshire Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short term</td>
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</table>

## ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Poor state of repair of parish footpaths</td>
<td>Setting up of local Parish Paths Partnership with volunteers to support long term management and maintenance Carry out review of all paths</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Shropshire Council Countryside Services Volunteer Parishioners</td>
<td>Yes, for dealing with identified maintenance issues – to be met by Shropshire Council</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate building within parish</td>
<td>Continue to investigate the need, influence and scope of a design statement.</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Design statement Steering Group Shropshire Council Planning policy</td>
<td>Yes - £1000 to £2000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>Established lines of communication</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>13.</td>
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