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Layham Parish Plan

Final Report

NOVEMBER 2004

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Supported by

Layham
Parish Council



The
Countryside
Agency

Layham Parish Plan

Final Report

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*for backing the project - in the full knowledge
that it would lead to a lot of work,*

Our families
*for their tolerance -
Parish Plan work has sometimes taken
precedence over domestic matters;*

Duncan McCoid, Ken Oliver
and Bill and Babs Whitsett
*for allowing us to use some of their artwork
to illustrate this report.*

Pam Walker,
who researched the short history of Layham

Messages from our Member of Parliament, our County Councillor, our District Councillor and the Chair of Layham Parish Council

Messages

"I am delighted to learn of the progress which Layham has made following my letter of November 2002. I congratulate all members of the Steering Group on this initiative, the success of which is the result of the hard work and enthusiasm of volunteers in the village"

Tim Yeo
(MP for
South Suffolk)



"I would like to congratulate the Parish Plan Steering Group on the results of their hard work and team effort. It is through this local effort that our village can look forward to a better understanding of its needs and foundations for our future in the 21st century can be laid down."

Jane Gales
(Chairman of
Layham Parish Council)



"We are both very pleased that a group of Layham villagers has been prepared to put in the time and the effort needed to carry out a Parish Plan exercise. We appreciate the enormous amount of work involved and commend the members of the Steering Group for their efforts."

The benefits of having a Parish Plan are enormous. The various sources of funding that are available can only be sought when there are reliable statistics to back up arguments. The Parish Plan report should provide those statistics and will help the Parish Council and other voluntary groups in the village with their work over the next ten years."

Jeremy Pembroke
(Leader of the Conservative Group
on Suffolk County Council)



Sue Wigglesworth
(Chairman of
Babergh District Council)



Bill Whitsett

Introduction

The Parish Plan exercise

Introduction

Funding for parish plan exercises became available from the Countryside Agency in July 2001, following the publication of the Government White Paper of November 2000 entitled *'Our Countryside - The Future'*, in which the idea of parish and town plans was launched.

The project, called 'Vital Villages', was aimed at helping rural communities to 'help themselves' by identifying what they need in order to remain successful or to improve. By consulting the local people, it is ensured that the views of those who live in and care about their parish, are properly reflected in any initiatives that may follow. It is also intended that, with advice and support, communities can implement some improvements locally.

It was March 2003 when, with the blessing and support of the Parish Council, a small group of parishioners held an open meeting in the village hall to sound out interest in carrying out a parish plan exercise in Layham.

The open meeting was a success and ten members of the community volunteered to set up a steering group. Others offered to help the project in different ways as it progressed – for example, by delivering and collecting questionnaires, by entering data and by helping with the analysis of data.



A further open meeting was held for young members of the community. The discussion helped us to create a meaningful questionnaire specifically for them.



Two more meetings were held for parishioners during which outside speakers helped us to think about issues that face rural communities. As a result of all these gatherings, and informal discussions with friends and neighbours, the steering group designed a household questionnaire. It dealt mainly with access to essential services, leisure opportunities and community facilities.

Questionnaires were distributed by a generous team of volunteers to almost all of the 243 households five of which were not inhabited at the time. The volunteers worked hard to collect back 207 sealed envelopes, 203 of which contained completed questionnaires. That is a splendid 85% response. Thank you all.

The steering group has analysed the data set out in the answers given and drawn some conclusions. These conclusions have led to the construction of an action plan involving all relevant organisations – Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council, Layham Parish Council, the Police Authority, Layham Parochial Church Council, the Village Hall Management Committee, the Playing Field Management Committee, Layham Playgroup and Neighbourhood Watch.

Our Parish in the past



The Domesday Survey recorded two manors in Layham in 1086. Later these manors were known as Netherbury and Overbury. The present manor houses, which are both in Lower Layham, date from the Georgian period (Netherbury Hall above) and the 16th or 17th century (Overbury Hall below).



The village church, St Andrew's, is also in Lower Layham and the present building dates from the late 13th or early 14th century. A new Georgian brick tower was built in 1742 and restored in the 1860s, when extensive other restoration work was also undertaken on the church.

A National School was built next to the church in 1840. It was closed in 1922, before re-opening temporarily during World War II to educate local children and the evacuees who came to Layham



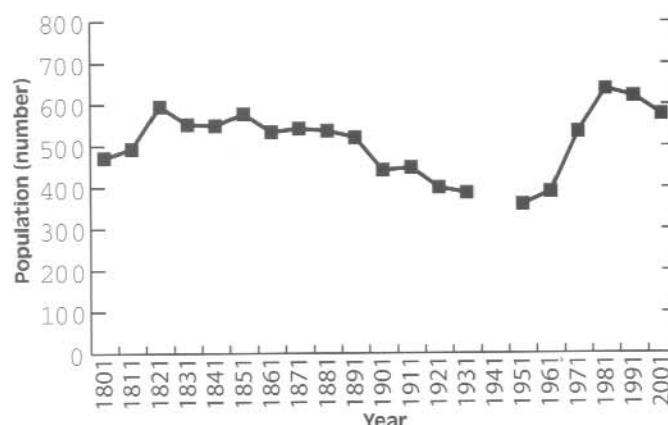
mainly from London. When the evacuees first arrived in 1939, lessons took place in the Village Hall, which was also located near the church, pending the re-opening of the school building in 1940.

Today the village has two public houses – the Marquis of Cornwallis in Upper Layham and the Queen's Head in Lower Layham. A third public house, the Cherry Tree in Lower Layham, closed early in the 20th century. Until the mid 1800s there were butchers in both Upper and Lower Layham and a cobbler in Lower Layham.

Historically, the village has been agricultural. In 1841 about half of the adults in the village were either farmers or agricultural labourers. Much of the other employment in the village was in trades which supported the agricultural industry, such as a blacksmith and a wheelwright. Most of the land was arable. Since 1841 the importance of agriculture for employment in the village has fallen dramatically; today it accounts for very little employment.

In the first half of the 20th century a market gardening business was run in Upper and Lower Layham. After it closed in the early 1960s a new housing development, Brett Green, was built on some of its land in Upper Layham.

The population of Layham (see chart below) was relatively stable, at between 500 and 600 from 1841 until 1891 before falling during the first half of the 20th century. There was a substantial increase, from 390 in 1961 to 535 in 1971, largely reflecting the building of the Brett Green housing development. The population peaked at 638 in 1981.



NORTH

SCALE
1:5000

Village Map

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Village Map

Our Parish today



The Parish of Layham covers 985 hectares (2500 acres) and is immediately adjacent to the town of Hadleigh a mile and a half to the north. The village lies in the shallow valley of the River Brett, with two thirds of the population on about one tenth of the land to the east of the river in Upper Layham, and a third on about nine tenths of the land to the west in Lower Layham. The land, which includes areas of sand, gravel, clay and chalk sub-soils, is mostly sand and gravel dumped during the last ice age. It rises gently to east and west – the highest point being 71m on the north-east boundary near to Potts Farm. The 'feel' of Lower Layham is much more rural than Upper Layham - with its close packed housing and 'main' road (B1070) connecting Hadleigh to the A12. The last census information shows the Parish to be made up of 243 households with a total population of 576. Of the 243 homes, 200 were owner occupied and 43 rented. There are no businesses offering full-time employment in the



Parish although there are two public houses (The Queen's Head in Lower Layham and The Marquis of Cornwallis in Upper Layham) offering part-time jobs and a number of small businesses run by

individuals or families from their own homes. The Essex and Suffolk Foxhounds have their kennels in the parish and several people are employed there. Farmers call in contract labour to do work they cannot manage themselves.



The parish has an Anglican church (St Andrew's in Lower Layham), a village hall also in Lower Layham and a playing field in Upper Layham.



Both the latter are registered charities and are run by volunteer Management Committees. A playgroup uses the village hall four mornings each week and a parent and toddler group uses it one morning.



Parish Map

NORTH

SCALE
1:20000

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The Main Report

Findings from the completed questionnaires

Proposed **ACTIONS** are set out after many of the findings. These actions have been drawn together in a table at the back of this report, together with names of those groups most likely to be involved in tackling them, and a suggested timescale.

Suggested time-scales may be adjusted, as those who become involved with each ACTION assess the detail of the task.

Progress in tackling the matters raised will be reviewed at monthly meetings of the Parish Council and at each Annual Parish Meeting over the next five years.

It may not be possible to achieve every ACTION but it is certainly worth trying!



A. What we most like about Layham

– let's start with some of the comments that sum up why we like being here.

- Peace and quiet, a friendly community and the beautiful environment are what many people value about where they live. They like access to walks, the bird life, beautiful skies and lack of light pollution. They feel secure with trusted neighbours and very little crime. "Living here is like being on holiday all the time" says one respondent.
- We are near enough to Hadleigh to use the services of that town yet we have our distinct identity. We have easy access to larger towns and a rail link.
- "I love living in Layham – I enjoy walking around the village and the route down to Lower Layham, taking in the sights, sound and smells of the river and the hedgerows. I love the friendly community" says another respondent
- Others mention the good community spirit and the feeling that "people actually do care about what goes on in their village". People like knowing their neighbours and the "sense of community in a close knit community where people look out for each other".
- The playing field is appreciated and the fact that the village is "safe for the children to play out and grow up in".
- The strength of the church community offers friendship and companionship.
- The survival of two pubs is appreciated – some people find the use of these a good way to make friends and tap into a social life.
- The thriving playgroup is appreciated by younger families.

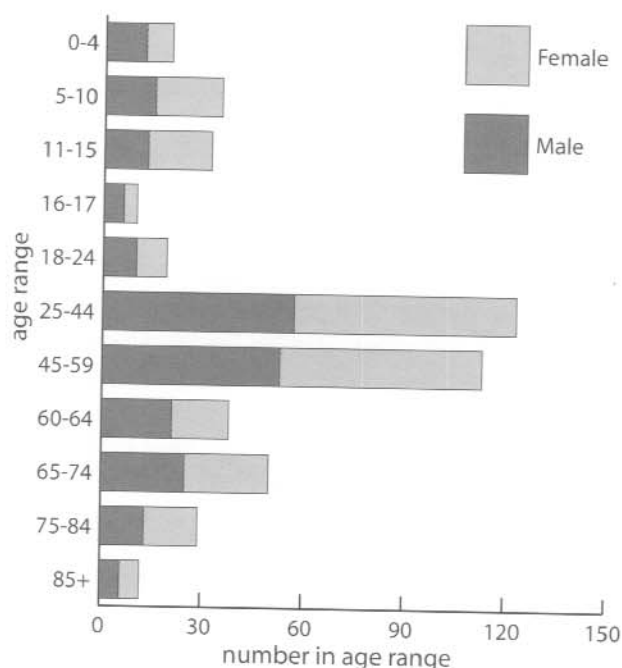
Main Report

B. The Household Survey

This part of the questionnaire provides us with some background information about our households. It was completed by everyone who participated in this survey.



- Of the 203 households that completed the questionnaire 63 are in Brett Green, 68 in other parts of Upper Layham and 72 in Lower Layham.
- These households are made up of 481 adults and children, 250 of whom are females and 231 males with a fairly even balance across the age groups, though slightly weighted towards older people.



- The 203 households own a total of 342 cars, vans and lorries, 22 motor bikes, 5 mobility scooters and 235 bicycles.
- There is no information about their frequency of use although an interesting indicator with bicycles and motor bikes is that, in a later question, only 5 people nominate the bicycle and 3 the motor bike as their main form of transport. It is possible that some cars, motor bikes and bicycles are kept in working order but not used a great deal.

- 35 homes (17%) do not have a lagged hot water tank;
- 37 homes (18%) do not have loft insulation;
- 59 homes (29%) do not have double glazing;
- 135 (67%) do not have cavity wall insulation.
- 92 homes (45%) are reducing their consumption of electricity by using low energy light bulbs.
- One property has solar heating.

Some properties cannot be insulated due to their age and the method of construction. The figures, however, do suggest that there could be some relatively modern properties that do not have insulation and are therefore using far more energy than they need to do.

ACTION 1

Draw together any information available to assist those who may be eligible for grant support to improve energy efficiency in their homes.

ACTION 2

Undertake local publicity to encourage investment in more sophisticated forms of energy saving.

C. The Personal Survey

In this main section of the report, it should be appreciated that not all 385 respondents chose to answer every question. Any percentages given relate to the number of people answering the whole question or part of a question

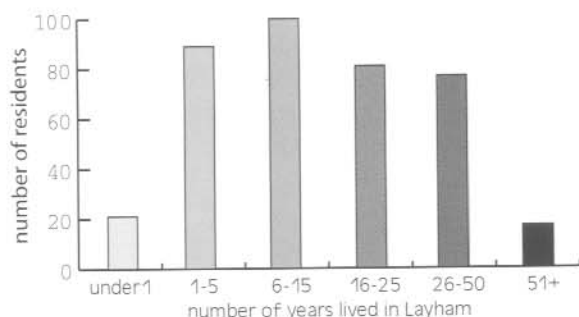


C.1 OUR POPULATION

C.1.1 How long have you lived in Layham?

385 people answered this question

The survey confirms what we see with our own eyes - that there is a frequent sale of properties. 110 properties (29%) have changed hands in the last five years - averaging out at almost two each month. There is, however, a large core of well settled people, as can be seen from the chart, and they bring welcome stability to the community.



C.2 EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

C.2.1 Where is your main place of paid work?

376 people answered this question

- 230 people (61%) are in paid work;
- 43 (11%) are not in paid work;
- 103 (27%) are retired.
- Of those who travel to work, 49 (13%) work in Hadleigh - whilst 137 (36%) travel to 48 different locations including Coventry, Cambridge, Norwich and London (11).

- Unsurprisingly Ipswich and Colchester are the main centres of employment outside of Hadleigh with almost 50 people (13%) travelling to them.
- Although we do not have data, it is safe to assume that many of the 43 not in paid work are partners who choose not to work or who are looking after a family. Thus the level of unemployment is likely to be low.

C.2.2 Would you like to see businesses that might offer employment set up in Layham?

300 people answered this question

103 people (34%) would like to see businesses that might offer employment set up in Layham whilst 197 (66%) would not.

The team that wrote the questions, having seen the written comments about this matter, feel that the question about business in Layham might have been interpreted wrongly by some people. The question does not infer the development of an 'industrial' estate. Planning permission would not be given for major developments that would put strain on the minor roads. The question relates to a District Council initiative to bring back into use some buildings no longer required for farming (for example) by adapting them for small business use.

There are many advantages in people not having to travel far to work and, whilst any jobs arising from such initiatives could not be assured as being for local people, there could be some openings. It is clear from responses to the question that, if such developments were to be suggested in Layham, the planning applications would have to be looked at very carefully. There is a very strong opinion, expressed through written comments, that many residents live here because the parish is rural and would not want their peace and quiet eroded by inappropriate business development on their doorsteps.

C.3 TRANSPORT RELATED MATTERS

C.3.1 Which of the following is your most frequent means of getting about?

378 people answered this question

- 341 (90%) use a car or a van
- 3 (1%) use a motor cycle of some sort
- 2 (1%) use the train
- 9 (2%) use the public bus
- 5 (1%) use bicycles
- 14 (4%) walk
- 4 (1%) use other means

We should not be surprised at this pattern as it relates closely to where people work and there is no suitable alternative to the motor vehicle for most people.

C.3.2 Do you experience transport difficulties getting out of Layham to other places?

366 people answered this question

- In common with most of the country, we are a parish of motor vehicle drivers, with 341 of us (90%) using a car or van to get about.
- Thus 249 (68%) never have any difficulty getting out of Layham.
- 88 (24%) only occasionally having difficulty – presumably teenagers and people left 'stranded' when their partner drives to work.
- Just 29 (8%) experience difficulty often – mostly the small number who walk or use the public bus.
- Only 9 people claim to use public buses regularly – a figure that raises an awkward question. How long can we expect bus services to run with such low use?

The issues that face us concerning carbon emissions and personal fitness suggest that we, like all communities, should be looking for ways to reduce our dependence upon the motor vehicle. It is encouraging therefore to see that, later in the questionnaire, 241 respondents (67%) see the provision of a safer footpath/cycle path into Hadleigh as being very important, important or worth doing. This is paralleled by findings from the youth questionnaire where 45 of the 64 respondents want a safer way of getting into Hadleigh by bike and 36 of 64 by foot. It is also interesting to note that there are 235 bicycles stored in the parish!

ACTION 3

Explore the possibility of developing a safe footpath / cycle path between Layham and Hadleigh.

C.3.3 Which places would you travel to more regularly if there was more frequent public transport to and from Layham?

206 people answered this question.

- Despite seeming satisfaction with motor vehicles as personal transport, 206 respondents show interest in using buses regularly if they ran more frequently.
- 137 (66%) are interested in getting to Ipswich, 105 (51%) to Hadleigh and 92 (45%) to Colchester.

C.3.4 Would you like to see any changes in the existing bus services?

150 people expressed an opinion on this question

Of the six possible improvements listed, only two were referred to by significant numbers of residents:

- Frequency of services is the biggest issue for 114 people (36%)
- Lack of variety of routes is a concern for 84 (26%).

Cost, reliability and bus stop location did not concern many people. Access for those with disabilities was mentioned by 31 and should be drawn to the attention of the bus operators.

ACTION 4

Carry out a detailed survey to find out exactly what additional bus services would be regularly supported, whether or not the support would warrant commercial investment and whether or not access for those with disabilities is satisfactory.

ACTION 5

If the need for additional bus services or improvement in disabled access is confirmed, seek improvements.

C.3.5 Would you be prepared to take part in a scheme to share private vehicles with people who do not drive?

316 people answered this question

- 132 car owners (42%) registered willingness to share transport for shopping and 111 (35%) for social and leisure purposes.
- 53 (17%) showing interest in sharing for school journeys. This is a small proportion of respondents to this general question but it is a very large proportion of families of the 75 school age children.

ACTION 6

Investigate the operation of car sharing schemes. If such a scheme appears feasible, seek out those people interested, meet with them and support them in setting one up.

C.3.6 Where do you usually park any vehicle/vehicles for which you are responsible?

354 people answered this question

- 192 (54%) park off the road by the house or garage
- 137 (39%) manage to tuck their vehicles away in a garage
- 27 (8%) say they park on the road.
- 16 (4%) say they park off the road on public land
- A 'black spot' is Brett Green where 26 people need to park on the road or on public land (presumably grassed areas)

These figures do not tie up very well with the difficulties people say they experience in the next question. It may be that the figures above are a best case scenario or the figures in C.3.7 are a worst case scenario!

C.3.7 Do you experience any parking difficulties where you live?

Of the 280 people who answered the section of this question about limited places to park, 208 (67%) have no problem.

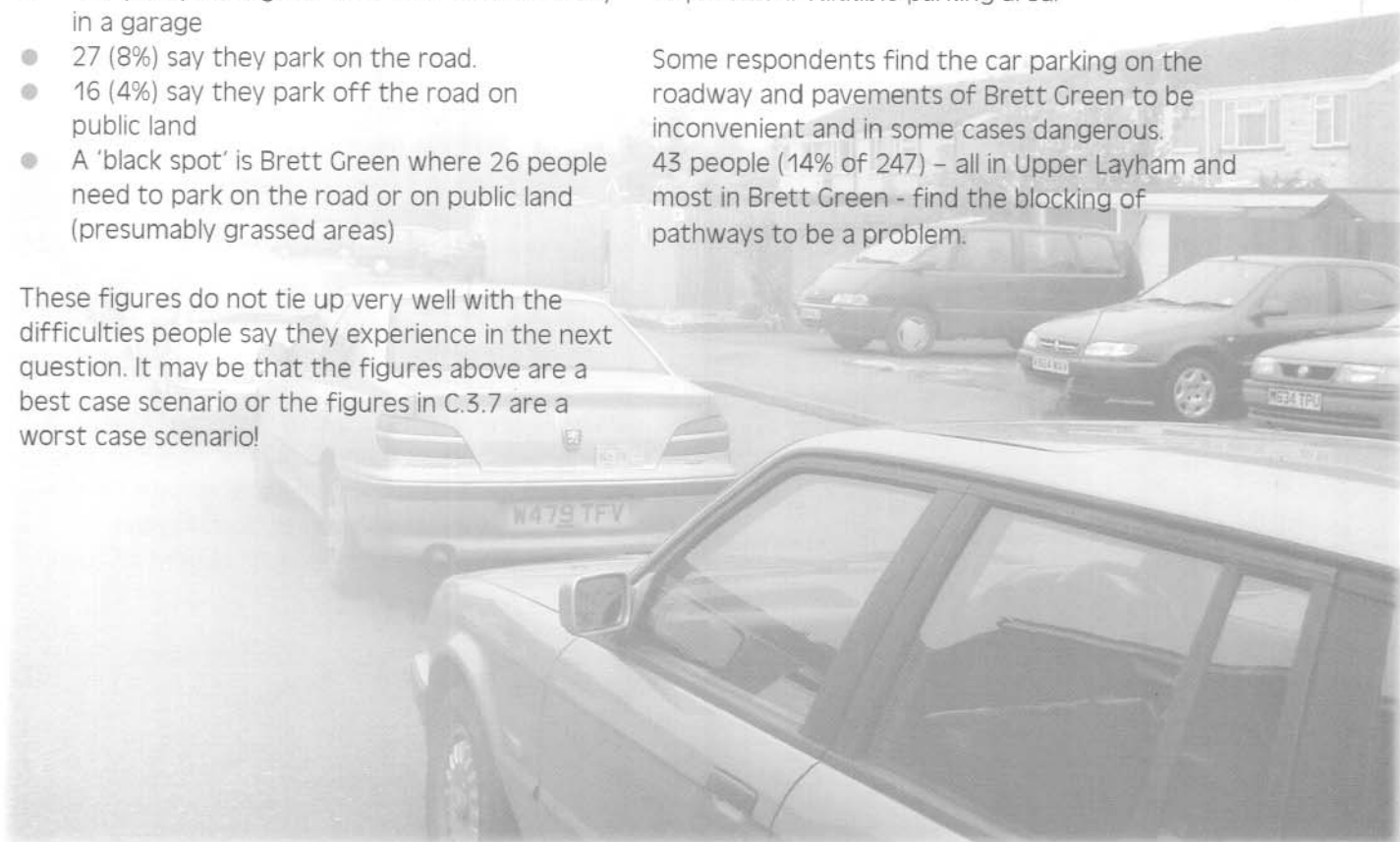
There are 72 (23%) who say they have difficulty – almost all of whom live in Upper Layham where the congestion spots are well known.

Whilst the figures do not match up well with the previous question, there is no doubt that they indicate a real difficulty.

There are problems at Old Orchard, where car owners from Upper Street park their cars off the main road and occasionally cause difficulties for the people living in the bungalows (e.g. access to driveways and parking for visitors).

There are also problems in front of 1-8 Upper Street and in Mill Lane which are being addressed by the construction of a grasscrete track running round to the rear of most of the properties concerned. This will enable householders to park or garage vehicles in their back gardens and thus reduce the competition for places at the front of properties or on the roadway. It is suggested that the rough ground, already accessed by a dropped kerb, in front of 7 and 8 Upper Street could be landscaped, surfaced and the drainage improved, to provide a valuable parking area.

Some respondents find the car parking on the roadway and pavements of Brett Green to be inconvenient and in some cases dangerous. 43 people (14% of 247) – all in Upper Layham and most in Brett Green - find the blocking of pathways to be a problem.



The small number of problems encountered in Lower Layham (8), probably relate to overspill parking on the road from the Queen's Head (a matter which could be resolved when the current building work is completed), parking outside the village hall and clustering of vehicles outside the church. The latter difficulty relates to short periods when parents drop off and collect their children from the playgroup and when the village hall is used for social functions.

35 people (11%) experience vehicles blocking entrances. 6 of these are in Lower Layham and 29 in Upper Layham. 31 people (10%) report vehicles being parked on public grassed areas – a practice which leads to wear and eventually to unsightliness.

All these difficulties are symptoms of the overall problem that we, as a society, now own many more cars than we did when our houses were built. The most important problems to be faced are those that represent a danger – such as parking on blind corners, at road junctions or causing an obstruction. It would be hoped that such matters can be resolved, within our village community, by drawing attention to the dangers and to the fact that the law is being broken. If this fails, then there is only one course of action left and that is to ask the Community Police Officer to speak to vehicle owners who cause obstruction.

ACTION 7

Draw the attention of residents to dangerous and illegal parking practices in the hope that difficulties can be resolved within the community.

ACTION 8

Examine every piece of ground in the 'built-up' parts of the village to see where further parking spaces could be created and whether funding can be raised to meet the cost of any necessary work.

C.3.8 Do the church and village hall need a car park?

366 people answered this question.

118 (32%) have no opinion on the matter. Of the 248 who have an opinion 180 (72%) wish to see a car park and 68 (27%) do not. It is the residents of Upper Layham who are most enthusiastic. 154 wish to see a car park and only 31 do not. Of the Lower Layham residents, 26 wish to see a car park and 37 do not. The village hall is being used much more now that the playgroup has grown in success. There is no doubt that a parking place would be a help for parents delivering and collecting children, for occasions when the hall is used socially and for special events at the church.

ACTION 9

Explore the possibility of land being made available for a car park within easy walking distance of the church and village hall.

C.3.9 Do you consider the junction of the Brett Green entry / exit road with Mill Lane to be safe?

215 people answered this question.

- 110 (51%) feel it is safe – this figure including 24 from residents of Lower Layham.
- 105 (49%) feel it is unsafe – this figure including 7 from residents of Lower Layham.

Whilst the Lower Layham figures are all valid it is unlikely that these people experience the junction several times a day – every day, as do most of the residents of Brett Green, Mill Lane and Watermill Close.

If the figures are adjusted to focus on Upper Layham responses then 86 (47% of 184) feel it is safe and 98 (53% of 184) feel it is unsafe. Of the 45 written comments used to describe the problem, only one came from a resident of Lower Layham.

It is the written comments, rather than the statistics, that expose the nature of the difficulties here. They refer to "vehicles parked dangerously near to the junction" or "on the splay of the junction" causing a hazard; drivers coming out of Brett Green "forgetting to look right"; drivers going up or down Mill Lane at a "ridiculous speed"; drivers leaving the main road having to "pull out to pass parked cars on the left into the path of cars leaving Brett Green"; cars parked in Mill Lane "cause obstruction and would restrict access for emergency vehicles or anything larger than a car to get to the 15+ homes beyond the narrow part of the lane". These problems will be exaggerated when the new development of five houses and the rear access track for the Upper Street and Mill Lane properties are completed, and there is a substantial increase in traffic past the junction.

It is worth referring to a comment from a mother of young children who sees the cars parking opposite the Brett Green junction as "providing a good traffic calming measure". The steps down the bank are steep and it is felt that there could be an accident if parked cars did not slow vehicles at that point. It is possible that the steps are in the wrong place now that conditions have changed.

ACTION 10

Request SCC Highways Dept to look at all the issues relating to the congestion at the Brett Green / Mill Lane junction (The width of Mill Lane, right of way signing, parking around the junction and the position and condition of the steps down the Mill Lane bank).

C.3.10 Do you consider that there is a need for passing places to be constructed on the road from Lower Layham?

251 people answered this question.

- 156 (45%) feel these should be constructed;
- 124 (35%) feel it is not necessary;
- 71 (20%) had no opinion.

Interestingly, when the responses are broken down, the population of Lower Layham is split 57 for / 56 against construction.

ACTION 11

Request SCC Highways Department to assess the need for passing places on the road from Lower Layham to Hadleigh.

C.3.11 Is the weight restriction on lorries using the B1070 through Upper Layham satisfactorily observed?

367 people answered this question

- The use of the B1070 by heavy lorries is a major cause of concern.
- 216 people (59%) say that, in their opinion, lorries ignore the restriction on use of the road.
- When the figures are broken down and the views of people living in Upper Layham are isolated, 113 (84% of 134) confirm this is the case. Only 5 people (4%) have an opposing view and 16 (12%) have no opinion.
- Clearly, there is an overwhelming view amongst those most affected, that the question of lorries ignoring the weight restriction should be addressed.

ACTION 12

Liaise with the SCC Highways Dept and Suffolk Police to develop a joint strategy to combat the problem of lorries ignoring the weight restriction on the B1070.

C.3.12 Does Layham need any of the following speed control measures?

335 people answered this question.

- 223 (67%) want some form of action to combat speeding traffic and 112 (33%) do not see the need.
- 129 (38%) want to see flashing speed warning signs.
- 101 (30%) want traffic calming.
- Around 60 people (18%) want the use of cameras, extension of the speed limit or introduction of speed limit.

This is a question that needs to be examined in different areas of the parish. The 70 written responses consist of 56 from Upper Layham and just 14 from Lower Layham. Speed control is obviously a big issue East of the river and the great majority of observations are about various means of slowing the traffic through Upper Layham on the B1070.

ACTION 13

Liaise with SCC Highways Dept and Suffolk Police to see if anything more can be done to ease the problem of vehicles speeding through the village on the B1070.

C.3.13 How user-friendly are the pavements in and around Layham for walkers, people with disabilities and those using pushchairs?

347 people answered this question

The pavements in and around Upper Layham are seen to be good or reasonable by 225 (65%) of the people who answered this question. The 56 (16%) who describe them as poor, cite a range of examples, the most frequent of which are:

- The narrowing of the pathway on Upper Street which requires wheelchairs and 'prams to use the road where traffic is often frequent and fast;
- The narrowing of the pathway to Hadleigh, which again requires wheelchairs and 'prams to move into a busy road;
- That same pavement is often invaded by vegetation and soil creep, which narrows the surface available and sometimes requires pedestrians and users of prams to move into the road;
- There are difficult and even dangerous cambers on the pavement along the B1070 at some points;
- The blocking of pavements by parked cars in Brett Green.

Whilst only mentioned twice, the steps down from the Mill Lane footpath to the road are considered dangerous – being of poor construction and leading children particularly between parked cars onto a road where moving vehicles can appear suddenly.

The observations above are from a minority, but the Parish Plan Group feels all merit investigation, as the majority of residents do not, for example, walk the pavement to Hadleigh. Those who do deserve to be listened to.

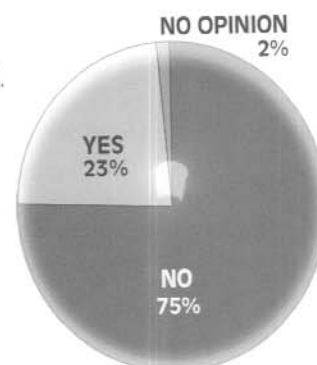
ACTION 14

Request SCC Highways Dept to assess all reported pavement problems with a view to remedial work being undertaken.

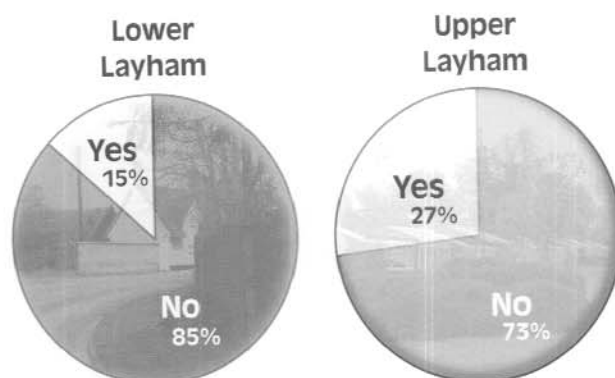
C.3.14 Is street lighting needed in Layham?

359 people answered this question

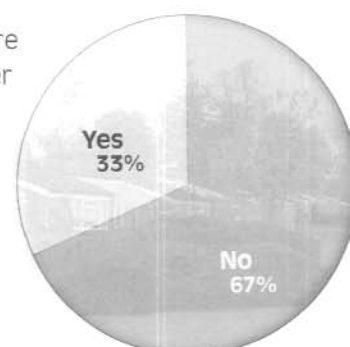
The introduction of street lighting is firmly rejected overall.



Rejection is strongest in Lower Layham.



In Brett Green, where the greatest number of people are interested, the majority against is still substantial



Those who would like street lighting have identified a wide range of locations where they feel it would be beneficial. As the cost would be high, and this would have to be shouldered by all parishioners through their Council Tax, it is not an issue that the Steering Group feels should be taken any further.

C.4 SERVICES – INCLUDING INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

C.4.1 Where do you usually get information about events taking place in Layham?

365 people answered this question

- 283 (77%) name the Hadleigh Community News as their main source of information about what is happening in the village.
- 227 (62%) find word of mouth to be helpful
- 189 (52%) look at the notice boards
- 178 (49%) find information in the Parish Magazine.
- 16 (4%) pick things up in the post office
- 6 (2%) use the UK Villages website

Suggestions are made that another notice board is placed at the busiest junction in the village – near the Mill Lane gate into the playing field; a village website is set up (a firm offer has been received); new residents should have a 'welcome pack' to encourage them to be part of village life from the start; efforts should be made to ensure all residents get a copy of the Hadleigh Community News each month.

ACTION 15

Village news and information to continue to be published monthly in the Hadleigh Community News. Efforts to be made to ensure that this publication reaches every household.

ACTION 16

A quarterly Parish Newsletter to be published for one year, as an experiment, by the Parish Council.

ACTION 17

Thought to be given to the production of a 'welcome pack' for newly arriving residents.

ACTION 18

Examine the practicalities of the offer from a resident to run a website for the village.

ACTION 19

Consider the provision of a third notice board near the Mill Lane gate into the Playing Field.

C.4.2 How well does Layham Parish Council publicise its decisions and activities?

353 people answered this question

- 42 (12%) say this is done very well
- 244 (69%) say reasonably well
- 62 (18%) say badly

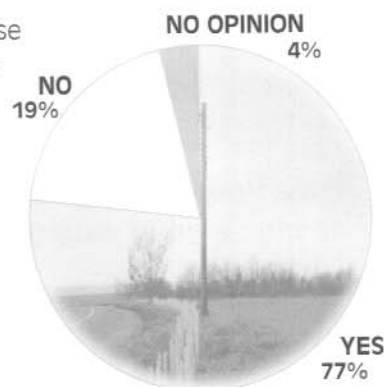
As the group saying 'badly' exceeds the group saying 'very well' it must be concluded that there is room for improvement. The Steering Group believes that a newsletter published by the Parish Council could help to put this right. Actions 16 – 19 under C.4.1 address this issue.

C.4.3 Is there a need for local information and advice network at the time of utility breakdowns (usually electricity supply)?

350 people answered this question

The strongest response is from Upper Layham where 85% say they would like more information.

This figure reflects the difficulty there has been in recent years in making contact with utility providers at time of breakdown.



ACTION 20

Seek an arrangement with the utility providers for a nominated person to be the contact for information about emergencies.



C.4.4 Do you have difficulties in collecting medical prescriptions?

372 people answered this question

Only 16 (4%) respondents have problems with this. In view of the generous response in the questionnaire about 'good neighbour' schemes, it should be possible to deal with the matter easily.

ACTION 21

Identify a volunteer who would locate the small number of people who have difficulty in collecting medical prescriptions, seek ways of connecting them with volunteers who could assist, and recruit a published contact person to deal with any future cases arising.

C.4.5 Is there a need for a 'good neighbour' type scheme in Layham?

363 people answered this question

156 people (43%) feel there is a need for a 'good neighbour' type scheme.

C.4.6 How often would you be prepared to help a good neighbour scheme in Layham?

336 people answered this question

282 (84%) people indicated they would be prepared help occasionally, once a month or once a week. Clearly that number of people would not be needed, but from such a huge and willing resource, there should be no difficulty in setting up and maintaining a scheme in the village.

ACTION 22

Establish and maintain a 'good neighbour' scheme covering the whole the village.



Ken Oliver

C.4.7 Would you like to join the Neighbourhood Watch scheme?

357 people answered this question

This question threw up some interesting and useful information.

- Brett Green does not have a scheme in place and 58 people (51%) would like it to be introduced. This is worth pursuing.
- Lower Layham which has been fully covered for some time, has 30 people who would like to join and who are presumably unaware of the arrangements.
- Upper Layham has also had a long term scheme in one area and has recently extended membership to include all the remaining homes. There are nevertheless 46 people who are unaware of this and would like to join.

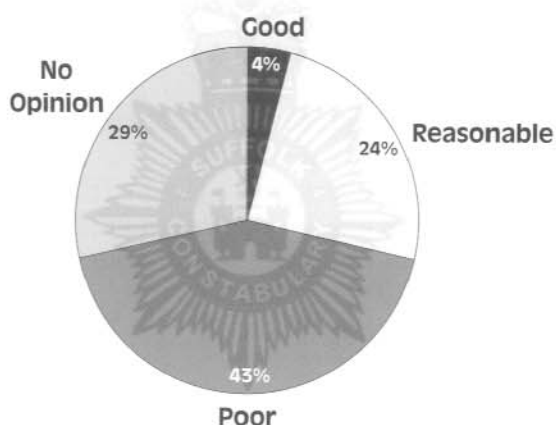
ACTION 23

Consider how Brett Green can be drawn into the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and how the profile of the scheme can be raised across the parish – working towards the highest possible active take-up.



C.4.8 What is your view of police coverage of Layham?

371 people answered this question



The small number of written comments all questioned whether there was any coverage at all! One respondent puts it well, "Give us a local 'bobby' who will stay longer than two weeks and who will be known by and accessible to the people without having to call HQ!" The Suffolk Constabulary and the Community Police Officer in particular will be interested in this perception.

ACTION 24

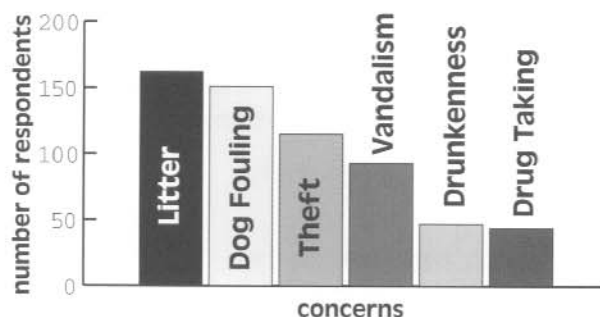
- Report the number of people who perceive police coverage of Layham to be poor to the Suffolk Constabulary and the Community Police Officer for appropriate action.
- Discuss the matter with the Community Police Officer, when he attends Parish Council meetings, with a view to ensuring his work in Layham is recognised.

C.4.9 Which, if any, crimes and anti-social behaviours concern you in Layham?

331 people answered this question.

- First it should be said that 57 people (17%) are not concerned at all.
- Second, we can perhaps consider ourselves fortunate that the greatest concerns are about litter and dog fouling.
- The concern over theft is interesting, as police statistics for Layham show very little theft here over the past two years. This concern is possibly more of a fear, fuelled by media coverage, than of actual crimes in the parish. That is not to deny the unpleasantness of those losses that have occurred – mainly from parked cars and vans.

- A large number of people identify vandalism but there are only two specific instances recorded in the questionnaires and these are about broken wing mirrors on cars and smashed fence panels.
- Drunkenness and drug taking are of least concern.



There is no doubt that drunkenness and drug taking occur in the village but that they are confined to a fairly small area and therefore trouble few people. This sort of behaviour by young people should, however, be of concern to us as a community. Vandalism and theft are occasional and we should all play our parts in reporting such incidents to the police in order to see if there is a pattern.

It is litter and dog (and cat) fouling that really rouses us. 35 of the 52 written comments in this section are about those matters. Litter of different types is reported all over the parish; dumped cars and fly tipping in Lower Layham; broken bottles and drink cans in the lanes of Upper Layham; food wrappers in Brett Green and on the playing field; fast food containers thrown from cars. Dog fouling is reported all over Upper Layham and Brett Green and this is linked to dogs that are allowed off the lead in public places. These are low level offences, but important to try to eradicate, in the light of the value residents put on maintaining a high quality environment

ACTION 25

- Work with our new Community Police Officer in developing strategies to combat anti-social behaviours.

ACTION 26

- Consider campaigns / partnerships, particularly with children and dog owners, which could be undertaken to improve attitudes to litter and dog fouling.

C.4.10 What do you think about the number and location of dog waste and litter bins in Layham?

355 people answered this question

The overall view is that 24 people (7%) think provision is good, 148 (42%) think it is reasonable and 56 (16%) think it is poor. 127 have no opinion.

From the 56 who think provision is poor there are a number of suggestions for improvement, the most frequently mentioned being:

- Larger litter bin on the playing field;
- Dog waste bins on the playing field at the Mill Lane gate, on the walk through the mill and in Water Lane;
- One of each on Brett Green;
- A dog waste bin in the centre of Lower Layham.



ACTION 27

Review the provision of litter and dog waste bins in the village and consider providing more.

C.4.11 What are your views on the quality of the 'public' services in Layham?

371 people answered this question

Residents are generally happy with environmental services delivered to them in Layham.

Water, drainage, gas, electricity, waste collection and telephone land lines, postal deliveries and internet broadband provision all get high approval ratings. Among those services it is electricity supply and waste collection that record the largest disapproval. This is not surprising as there have been several extended periods when electricity has been lost in recent years and the introduction of recyclable waste collection was dogged with difficulties in country districts for a time. The problems with waste collection have been largely resolved now.

There is some dissatisfaction with mobile telephone reception and with standard television reception, and a small degree of dissatisfaction with digital TV reception.

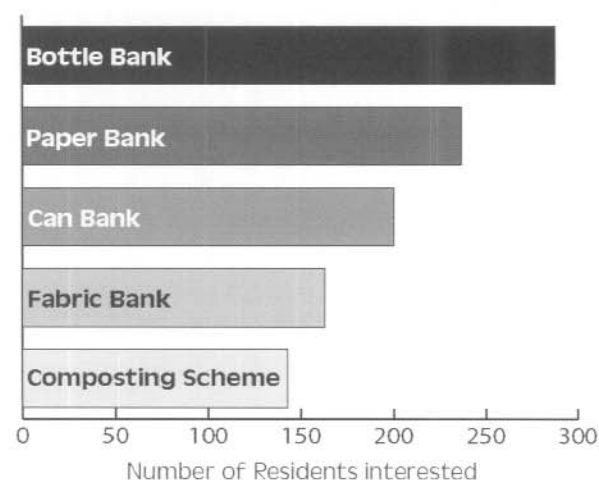
It is roadside care and street cleaning that, whilst recording a majority of 'good' or 'reasonable' responses, also recorded a significant number of 'poor' responses. The evidence of our own eyes shows how little attention is given to plant growth over pathways, weeds in gutters and street brushing in the more populated areas.

ACTION 28

Seek more frequent and better quality path edge maintenance, weed killing and street cleaning with SCC and BDC.

C.4.12 Would you use a local waste recycling site in Layham?

311 people answered this question



The community is voting strongly in favour of helping BDC and SCC to meet their waste recycling targets.

ACTION 29

Request BDC to establish local 'bring sites' for recyclable waste as soon as possible, or establish village 'bring sites' that are serviced by independent contractors.

ACTION 30

Encourage the setting up of home composting units in individual gardens.

C.4.13 How often do you use the library van, post office and local pub?

375 people answered part or all of this question

The library van is used often by just 7 people (2%) and occasionally by 19 (5%) – 318 (85%) never use it, although it should be pointed out that it parks in only one place in Upper Layham (Brett Green) and does not visit Lower Layham. It may be that it is not spending the time allocated to Layham in the best place.



The post office is used often by 20 people (5%) and occasionally by 70 (19%). 258 people (69%) never use it. Six respondents expressed surprise that we have a post office which raises a question about how its presence is brought to the attention of parishioners. This is another institution that is threatened and ultimate survival of the service in Layham will be a hard economic decision made by Post Office Counters Ltd.

Our pubs are used often by 74 people (20%) and occasionally by 200 (53%). 90 (24%) never use them. These are commercial undertakings that have to draw people in by their welcome, standard of service and value. We can only hope they both continue to do that – we are very lucky to have them.

ACTION 31

Review how residents get to know the details of the services offered by the library van and the opening times of our post office. Seek ways of boosting the use of both.

C.4.14 If a community shop was to be opened in Layham how often would you use it?

371 people answered this question

- 114 people (31%) say they would use a shop weekly;
- 177 (48%) say they would use it monthly or occasionally;
- 80 (21%) say they would never use it or didn't know (which has been construed as 'never').

These figures show community interest in a shop but it was beyond the scope of this questionnaire to explore what people might be prepared to use it for and whether the turnover would justify the capital expenditure and overheads incurred in setting up and maintaining a premises.

C.4.15 Would you volunteer to help with the community shop?

336 people answered this question

With 34 people showing an interest in volunteering to help with the running of a shop, the potential overheads drop dramatically. Villages that have opened community shops run them in already existing buildings such as pubs or village halls, or purchase a prefabricated building for the purpose. The social value of an enterprise of this sort could be enormous and possibly more important than commercial success. Break even would be fine!

ACTION 32

Promote a feasibility study for a community shop (which could also answer the expressed needs of the young people of Layham) with an eye to its social value as well as its convenience.

C.4.16 If more allotment gardens were to be provided (with water available on site) would you be interested in renting one at a nominal fee?

355 people answered this question

- 305 (85%) would not be interested
- 50 (15%) would be interested

In view of the recognised benefits of allotment gardening in sustainable communities the interest of 50 people has to be taken very seriously.

ACTION 33

Explore the possibility of obtaining more land for allotments to meet the declared need.



Bill Whitsett

C.5 SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CHURCH MATTERS

C.5.1 If adult leisure classes were provided in Layham, would you consider attending if the subject interested you?

364 people answered this question.

- 202 people (57%) are not interested or have no opinion on the matter.
- 62 (43%) are interested.

This indicates that it may be economically viable to offer some leisure activities in the village. Many suggestions were put forward but only those with a substantial following would be worth pursuing. Those are:

- Fitness related activities (46 expressions of interest)
- Arts related activities (29 expressions of interest)
- Computer related activities (22 expressions of interest)
- History related activities (15 expressions of interest)

Fitness and arts activities require space and thus would probably centre on the village hall (with some possible use of the playing field). It is not beyond the bounds of possibility for the church to be used for leisure activities should the PCC agree and necessary services made available. Computer related activities require access to several PCs, somewhere for them to be stored and somewhere for them to be set up on suitable furniture. The well known storage difficulties in the village hall present a problem in this case. History-related activities could take place in either of the locations mentioned and also in house groups.

ACTION 34

Explore ways in which leisure learning activities might be provided in Layham.

C.5.2 Which new clubs/activities would you attend in Layham if they were provided?

198 people answered this question

- 82 (41%) of the people who answered this question expressed an interest in a gardening club. It is a very short time since Layham Gardening Club collapsed through lack of support! It will be no coincidence that 50 people have expressed an interest, in a later question, in owning an allotment. The knock on effect of Layham Open Gardens may have something to do with this figure.
- 64 people (32%) are interested in rambling – borne out by the very large number of people interested in maps of the local footpaths in a later question;
- 54 people (27%) are interested in sporting activity;
- 48 people (24%) are interested in an art club.

There was significant interest also in:

- Senior Citizens Club (29)
- Music (26) Choir (17) Band (5)
- U3A (21)
- Drama (19)
- Creative arts with children (19)
- Whist (14)

In addition a list of 17 other activities (some closely allied to the suggestions above) has been put forward. One person seeks somewhere to play indoor games such as darts and snooker. (Look at the advertisement outside the Village Hall for the Men's Club or walk to The Queen's Head)



C.5.3 Would you be prepared to help organise and run any clubs or activities?

Just 56 people answered this question but they are an important 56.

There are 18 offers of help with a gardening club, 13 prepared to help organise rambling, 14 prepared to help with sporting activities and 7 with an art club.

There are 8 offers to help run a Senior Citizens Club; a total of 11 prepared to help with music, a band and a choir; 5 prepared to help with U3A; 6 with drama; 7 with creative arts with children; 3 with whist.

It seems that nothing stands in the way of some of these activities starting up. It is worth noting that some possibilities already exist – a tennis club in Lower Layham; the Men's Club in the Village Hall and social events associated with the Queen's Head in Lower Layham.

ACTION 35

Meetings to be arranged for those who might be interested in helping to organise new clubs and societies. Attention to be drawn to the possibilities that already exist.

C.5.4 Would you be prepared to help with leisure time activities for young people?

Of the 37 replies to this question (again, a very important 37) 20 would be prepared to help with organized team games on the playing field, 11 with a summer play scheme, 9 with a youth club and 4 with an after school club.

This is an opportunity not to be missed. Such a well of goodwill should not drain away. Support is available for such initiatives from the District Council.

ACTION 36

Meet with volunteers in an attempt to generate some organised leisure time activities for young people.

C.5.5 Do you think the Village Hall is adequate for the needs of Layham?

337 people answered this question

(249 respondents (74%) said 'yes' and 71 (21%) said 'no'. 17 had no opinion.)

Most of those indicating that the village hall is not adequate for the needs of the village wrote comments explaining why. It was a flaw in our questionnaire that we did not invite people to say why they are happy with it.

It is clear that many of those who are not happy with it write from the experience of using it and their comments will be of great value to the Village Hall Management Committee as they continue to improve the facilities offered. They know very well that it could do with total refurbishment but, as all the work is done by volunteers (the same people who put on the events that raise the funds) there is a limit on how much can be done at one time.

A village hall means many different things to different people and many of the facilities suggested (car park, stage, committee rooms, storage, sports facilities and a bar) would require a new build on a bigger site. Such an animal would require years of dedicated fund-raising and grant application. In order to survive, such a building would have to attract lettings from outside the village and be run as a business. Residents who value the peace and quiet of this village may not want regular social activity on their doorsteps.

Whether you are interested in the refurbishment of the existing hall or the provision of another – make enquiries as to how you can get involved and help make things happen.

ACTION 37

Take note of the comments made by respondents when planning priorities for improvements to the village hall.



Bill Whitsett

C.5.6 What are your views of the facilities in the village hall?

Different numbers of people answered the different sections of this question.
The total is shown at the end of each line

	Good		Adequate		Poor		
Heating	74	(31%)	123	(52%)	41	(17%)	238
Lighting	84	(36%)	129	(56%)	19	(8%)	232
Decoration	33	(15%)	149	(65%)	46	(20%)	228
Furniture	30	(13%)	134	(59%)	65	(28%)	229
Kitchen	127	(56%)	83	(37%)	16	(7%)	226
Toilets	44	(20%)	141	(63%)	39	(17%)	224
Storage	14	(9%)	73	(45%)	73	(45%)	160
Disabled access	58	(32%)	94	(52%)	30	(16%)	182
Disabled toilet	18	(15%)	45	(37%)	59	(48%)	122
Hard of hearing	8	(6%)	36	(29%)	80	(65%)	124

It is immediately obvious that those who know and use the village hall appreciate the enormous effort put in to refurbish the kitchen to a high standard.

ACTION 38

Recognise the need for additional storage and new furniture, the adaption of one of the toilets for disabled use and provision for the hard of hearing. Work towards provision of those facilities in the village hall.

C.5.7 Is St Andrew's Church important to you?

288 people answered this question.

- 243 (84%) regard it as important as an historic building
- 126 (44%) regard it as important for funerals
- 120 (42%) regard as important for weddings
- 93 (32%) regard it as important for worship and baptisms
- 12 (4%) see it as important for churchyard wildlife, for performances (utilising the superb acoustics), for community activities, for prayer, thought and contemplation.

C.5.8 Would you like to see St Andrew's Church used as another meeting place for various activities?

320 people answered this question.

- 207 (65%) would like to see it used for concerts; 29 (9%) would not and 82 (26%) have no opinion.
- 92(29%) would like to see it used for meetings; 60 (19%) would not and 107 have no opinion.
- 42 (13%) would like to see it used for a playgroup; 91 (28%) would not and 108 (34%) have no opinion.
- A very small number of other suggestions were theatre, lectures, adult courses and social activities.

There is significant support for the church to continue to be used for cultural activities – in the way that 'Music in Layham' has operated in past years.

ACTION 39

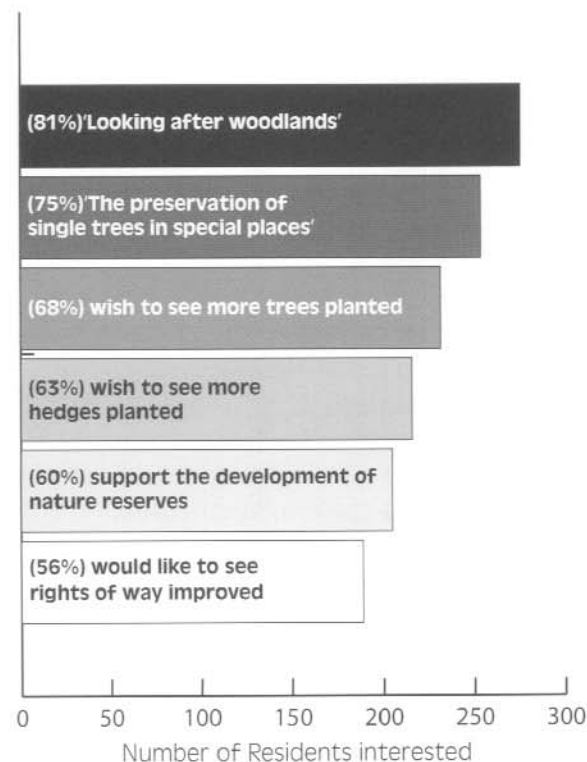
Consideration to be given to the church building being used as a venue for further leisure or educational activities.

C.6 ENVIRONMENT

C.6.1 What do you think could be done to improve the environment in Layham?

338 people answered this question

This is an area of interest for Layham residents. The overwhelming view is that most environmental work is 'very important' or 'worth doing'.



The two questions that have resulted in a less emphatic split of opinion relate to whether hedges should be 'kept short and tidy' or 'left to grow naturally'.

188 people think they should be kept short and tidy and 152 would prefer them to grow naturally. We feel that these were badly written questions because the answers would probably be different if we had specified roadside hedges or field boundary hedges and different again if we had referred to them as 'wildlife habitats and sources of food' or 'stock barriers'. One respondent, quite correctly, wrote "treatment of hedges is dependent upon condition and content". The Babergh District Tree Wardens have recently circularised all landowners with a pamphlet setting out best practice for hedgerow management.

It is interesting that 'Looking after woodlands' heads the list in this parish when we have very little woodland left. We certainly have no accessible woodland at the moment.

Many interesting suggestions were made by respondents, too diverse and numerous to set out here in full, but including:

The provision of more bird boxes, bat boxes and log piles (for invertebrates and reptiles);

Support for developing the 'river end' of the playing field into a nature reserve;

Greater care with hedge flailing;

Let wild flowers develop – don't cut (wider) road verges unless necessary for road safety;

Clear streams and river banks (of invasive species?) – see what can be done to encourage wildlife;

Dig a pond in Lower Layham which could help in controlling the brook from occasional flooding;

Remove all Cypress leylandii trees;

Shrub beds in Upper Layham and Brett Green to be weeded more often and litter collected.

It is likely that most of these are best approached through voluntary environmental work (see C.6.2)

ACTION 40

Meet with local landowners to consider further planting of trees and hedges.



C.6.2 Would you be prepared to help with any environmental work?

136 people answered this question.

- 96 (71%) are interested in protecting wildlife habitats
- 78 (57%) in surveying hedgerows
- 52 (38%) in maintaining footpaths

These are very encouraging numbers. If the footpath maintenance response (for example) is linked with those interested in walking, there is great potential for keeping our footpaths clear and well monitored. If even a quarter of the people interested in protecting wildlife habitats turned out on a set day to clear non-native invasive plants from the River Brett – we could make a big difference to that problem. There are two ready-made projects for those interested, in the Hedgerow Survey and intended development of a conservation area on the playing field.

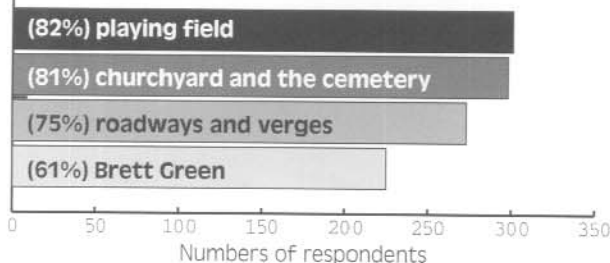
ACTION 41

Call a meeting of those interested in setting up a Wildlife Group in the parish.

C.6.3 What is your opinion on the 'appearance' of our public places?

366 people answered this question.

The graph below shows the numbers of people who feel the areas listed look 'good' or 'reasonable'



The volunteers who manage the playing field, churchyard and cemetery can feel pleased that their efforts are recognised. The local authorities should perhaps take note of the 71 people (19%) who feel that the appearance of roadways and verges is poor. When the responses are broken down into areas the appearance of Brett Green is judged as good or reasonable by 88% (92 of 104) of the residents.



C.6.4 What should be done to improve the general parish environment?

356 people answered this question

All but one of the suggested actions achieved majority support, thus in the following order of priority, residents feel all of the following are worth doing, important or very important. The one that did not receive a majority vote (by a sliver!) was "letting the roadside verges grow for wildlife". Maybe if we had asked about "letting some wider verges that do not interfere with drivers' vision grow for wildlife" we may have had a majority there too!

- 294 (83%) Remove litter
- 279 (79%) Keep roadside verges mown and tidy
- 277 (76%) Make paths accessible for those with disabilities
- 267 (75%) Try to stop vehicles damaging roadside verges
- 241 (67%) Build a safer footpath / cycle path to Hadleigh
- 237 (67%) Signpost paths and bridleways more clearly
- 207 (58%) Plant a community woodland
- 195 (55%) Plant more areas of shrubs on communal spaces
- 198 (55%) Create more dedicated parking areas

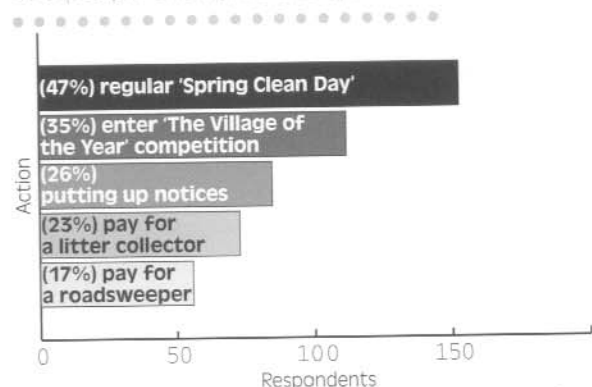
Letting roadside verges grow for wildlife



The people of Layham are clearly keen to live in a quality environment. Several possible actions relating to matters such as litter, footpaths and cycle tracks, tree planting and finding more parking spaces have already arisen under other questions.

C.6.5 How should Layham be kept clean and tidy?

323 people answered this question



Self help is the most popular option here. A day when we do it ourselves has a large degree of support. Entering competitions promotes valuable community participation in making the place look as good as possible for the judges. NB The 'Village of the Year Competition' is much more than the old 'Best Kept Village Competition'. It seeks a whole range of healthy community life and activity.

ACTION 42

Enter the Village of the Year Competition in 2005 and, as part of the preparation for that, organise at least one community clean up day.

C.6.6 Is dog fouling a problem in some parts of the village?

179 people answered this question.

- 132 (74%) see it as a problem on the playing field
- 87 (49%) see it as a problem on public footpaths
- 86 (48%) see it as a problem on the pathways and verges of Upper Layham
- 59 (33%) see it as a problem in Brett Green
- 44 (25%) see it as a problem on the roadways and verges of Lower Layham

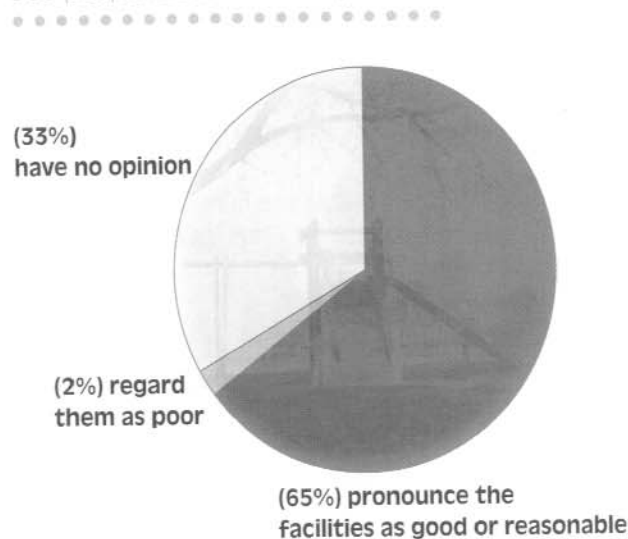
Dog fouling is a problem throughout the parish but, understandably, the greatest problem is near where most people live. The responses to this question link with C.6.8.

ACTION 43

Meet with dog owners to agree a code of practice for using public places, including the Playing Field. This to be put into print, given to every dog owner and included in the 'Parish Welcome Pack'.

C.6.7 What do you feel about the facilities provided on the children's playground?

365 people answered this question



The residents who know the field are appreciative of what is provided. The most important group (the young people) has voted on its priorities which will be passed on to the Playing Field Management Committee for its attention. The Youth Questionnaire outcomes are set out on pages 28 and 29.



C.6.8 What activities should take place on Layham Playing Field?

355 people answered this question.

- Over 300 people in each case (80%+) see the main uses of the field as being for ball games, use of play equipment and hosting village events.
- 212 people (60%) see it as a place for adult team games, with just 36 (10%) against that.
- 210 people (59%) see it as a place for teenagers to meet socially, with 45 (13%) against that
- 173 people (49%) see it as a place for dog exercise with 110 (31%) against that.
- 86 people (24%) see it as an appropriate place for golf practice with 169 (53%) against that.

The approval of the field as a venue for ball games, use of play equipment and hosting village events is unsurprising and uncontroversial.

The field has the capacity for an adult sports team to practice and play there if this should ever become a request from the community.

Where teenagers gather is always a controversial matter. The question that maybe should be asked is, if they are not encouraged to use a space such as the playing field, where should they go?

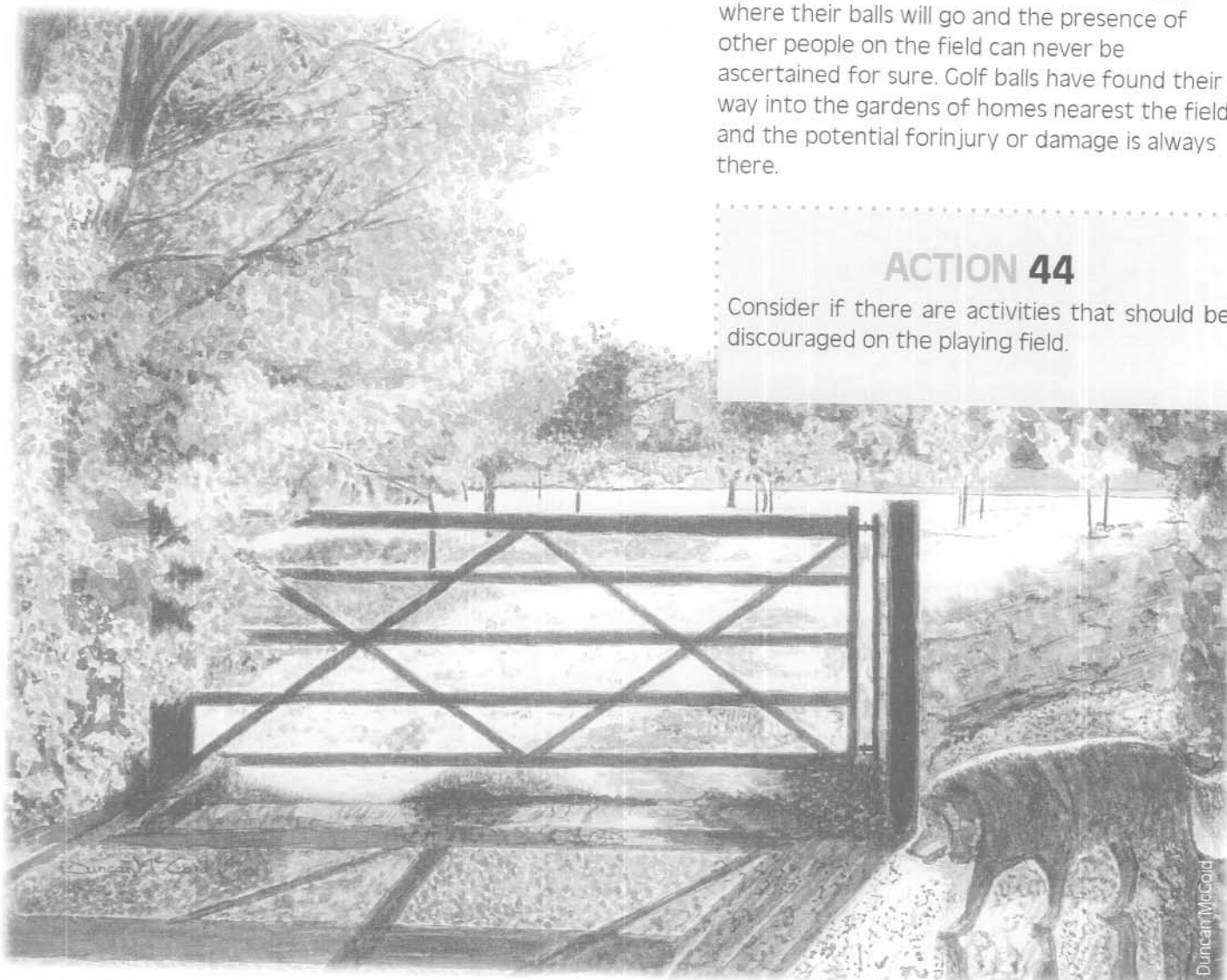
There isn't some halcyon place over the horizon to which all young people can be sent to be out of sight, hearing and mind!

The field is a natural place for dogs to be taken for exercise but there are clear problems with this, relating to whether they should be on a lead or not, and how conscientious owners are in clearing up after their pets. Dog fouling and children playing simply do not mix. This matter to be dealt with under ACTION 43 above.

The hitting of golf balls on the field has caused some concern – this is clearly shared by a large number of people. Golfers can never be sure where their balls will go and the presence of other people on the field can never be ascertained for sure. Golf balls have found their way into the gardens of homes nearest the field and the potential for injury or damage is always there.

ACTION 44

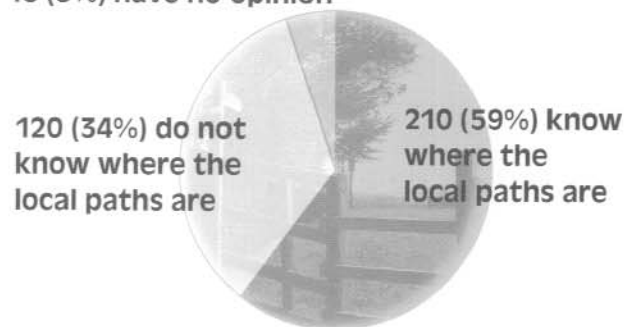
Consider if there are activities that should be discouraged on the playing field.



C.6.9 Your comments on local footpaths and bridleways.

353 people answered this question

18 (5%) have no opinion



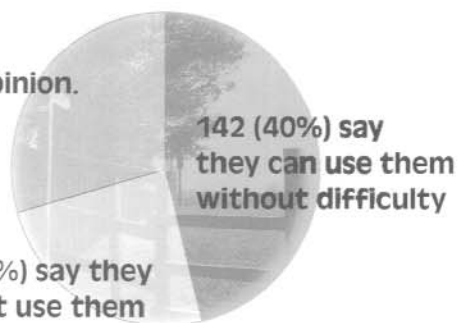
95 (27%) have no opinion

76 (21%) say they are not well signposted



91 (26%) have no opinion.

75 (21%) say they cannot use them without difficulty



Assuming that those who have no opinion do not know where the footpaths are, then 138 people (39%) are not familiar with the pathways of the parish.

The 31 written observations on this matter suggest that responses have been made in many cases in relation to the pathways used by those individuals and therefore the figures cannot be taken as a judgement on the whole pathway network.

Respondents report overgrown and poorly marked paths – way marking being most needed; there are complaints about loose dogs on one of the routes which, whilst they may not be dangerous, certainly appear aggressive. These dogs are effectively barring some residents from using the path and requests were made for the matter to be addressed.

ACTION 45

Look into the matter of loose dogs on one of the footpath routes, overgrown paths and way marking where helpful.

C.6.10 Would you like to see maps or guided walks to publicise footpaths?

253 people answered this question

- 245 (97%) would like maps made available
- 122 (48%) would like guided walks of the area

ACTION 46

Develop a footpath map for the area to be given to every household and thereafter placed in the Parish Welcome Pack.

ACTION 47

Seek volunteers to run a series of guided footpath walks.



D. The Youth Questionnaire

D.1. The respondents

64 young people completed the Youth Questionnaire – 34 were female and 30 male. We encouraged any child under the age of 16 to complete one, thus there were 6 responses (done with the help of parents) from pre-school children. There were 29 responses from each of the primary school and high school age ranges. The majority (44) attend the traditional catchment area playgroups, nurseries and schools. 5 primary and 5 secondary pupils travel to state schools out of catchment and 7 attend independent playgroups and schools.

D.2. Travel

The great majority of youngsters (48/64) travel to and from school by car, 14 use the school bus and just one cycles each day. The two walkers attend the village playgroup.

When youngsters visit friends outside the village 43 are taken exclusively by car – a further 14 travel in cars sometimes. 13 youngsters use bicycles or walk on some occasions. There are just three regular walkers and 2 who use the bus.

25 youngsters (predominantly the youngest) feel unsafe as pedestrians alongside the roads, due to the speed of traffic. The majority (37) are not worried by this.

Given the statistics on travel and use of the roads, it is no surprise to find 45 expressions of interest in a safe cycle path between Layham and Hadleigh and 36 expressions of interest in a safe footpath. Young people show very little interest in buses – those that do are teenagers who would like to get to nearby towns.

ACTION

Investigate the possibility of creating a cycle track and/or footpath (away from the roadways) into Hadleigh (Included under ACTION 3).

D.3 The Playing Field

The survey confirms that the playing field is a popular and well-used place. 50 young people use the field at least once each week, 30 between 2 and 4 times and 12 five or more times. One enthusiast calculates she uses it 21 times each week!

The most popular activities, given the facilities available, are use of the play equipment (24) and football (20). 8 young people use the field for some form of exercise and 6 see it as a place to socialise or “hang out”.

Dream lists are extensive! The most popular suggestion for improvement is a large hard surface (30) followed by a BMX/cycle facility (23) and basketball/netball (20). A picnic area received 21 mentions and a shelter in which to socialise in all weathers 18. There were 9 mentions of parts of the field being used for conservation work.

Small numbers of youngsters mentioned other activities such as roller skating (2), more play equipment (6), a rounders pitch (2) and a running track (1).

ACTION 48

Explore the possibility of building a large, flat, hard surface that could be used for cycles, skateboards, roller skates and a variety of ball games such as mini-tennis, basketball and netball.

ACTION 49

Thought to also be given to seating or a simple shelter for young people – perhaps associated with the hard surface area - that could serve as a socialising place.

D.4 Snacks and drinks

The great majority of young people (53) would like somewhere to buy snacks and drinks when they return from school and at weekends. Suggestions as to where an outlet might be were varied with a majority (mostly from Upper Layham) suggesting the playing field (20) and smaller numbers (mostly from Lower Layham) suggesting the village hall (8) or a pub (7). There is one suggestion for a mobile shop. This could be a profitable small business opportunity for a resident to run from a house or garage.

ACTION 50

Consider how snacks and drinks might be made available for sale to young people at set times in the day and week.

D.5 Organised activities

48 of the 58 school young people take part in activities outside of Layham after school and at weekends including organised youth groups, physical activities, music and arts.

34 respondents would be interested in a youth group in Layham. The majority of these are within the 9-14 age group. 11 of those would be interested in youth activity run by the church. 30 would support an activity day run by the church although only 7 are interested in attending family services. Activities identified as the most popular centre on sports (5), snooker (5), football (4) and table tennis (3).

ACTION 51

Seek volunteers from the general community and /or the church community to set up an organised youth group and liaise with Babergh District Council Sports Development Officer over how this might be run.

D.6 Communication

46 youngsters welcome the idea of a notice board upon which advertisements of interest to them could be posted. Upper Layham responses almost unanimously identify the playing field as being the obvious place to site one. Lower Layham responses are less focused and include the church, the pub, the village hall and even Toppesfield Bridge!

34 youngsters, of whom 20 are in the 9-14 age group, would welcome occasional meetings to talk about life in the village.

ACTION 52

Provide a youth notice board for each side of the river (links with ACTION 19).

ACTION 53

Organise a consultation with young people once each year to monitor their changing concerns and needs.

D.7 Likes, dislikes and a wish list

The most valued aspect of life in Layham is seen as being the peace and quiet (19) followed by the playing field (15), good friends and nice people (11) and plenty of space for walking and bike riding (10). 9 youngsters are grateful for the easy access to the countryside.

The greatest inconvenience of living in Layham is the lack of a shop (13), the limited range of things to do (9) and difficulty in getting about (8).

18 youngsters feel that the village would be most improved if there was more to do – including sports, holiday activities and more facilities on the playing field. 11 see being able to spend money on snacks and drinks as important and 6 prioritise social provision such as a meeting place or youth club.



E. How we would like to see Layham develop

The final section of the questionnaires gave respondents the chance to write more freely about how they would like to see the parish develop in future years and to offer thoughts on anything we might have missed.

The word 'develop' caused concern in the minds of some people. Perhaps 'strengthen' would have been a better choice! The Steering Group has no brief to advocate any one action over another. Our task is to reflect on the views expressed by parishioners, pull out the proposals that have greatest support and suggest an action plan for strengthening our community.

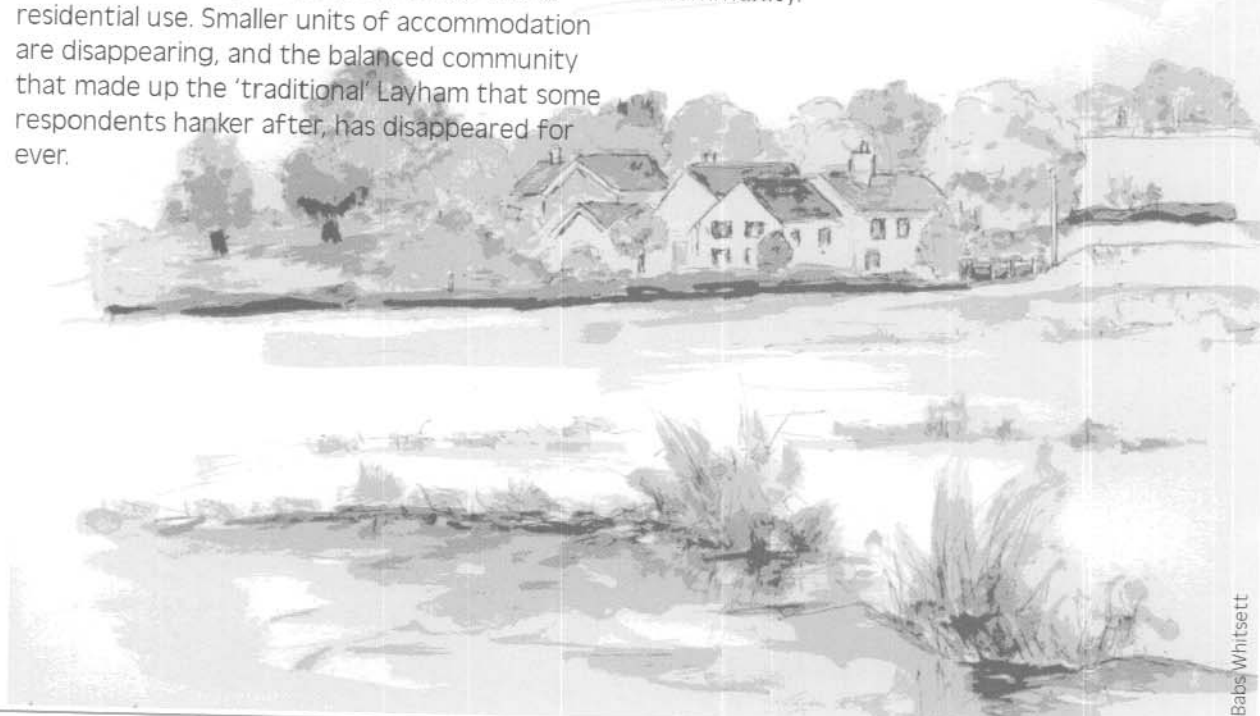
Leaving Layham unchanged is not an option. Some respondents advocate that, but life will march on, social conditions will change, new laws will force differences upon us. A good example is the requirements of the Health and Safety Act on the Management Committees of the Village Hall and the Playing Field. The volunteers who run these two facets of village life accept heavy responsibilities in so doing and have to embrace change or face the possibility of litigation some day in the future.

Just the last decade has seen huge change in the uses of buildings - farm cottages have been extended and turned into family homes and agricultural buildings have been converted to residential use. Smaller units of accommodation are disappearing, and the balanced community that made up the 'traditional' Layham that some respondents hanker after, has disappeared for ever.

Great interest in our environment has been expressed in the answers to questions. The countryside that so many respondents hold dear has been changed out of recognition by, for example, advances in farming practices, the loss of ponds and ditches and the loss of trees through disease. As a result, the wildlife our forbears took for granted is now a novelty. Society as a whole, and certainly the good people of Layham want some of that back again and that means planned change.

It is heartening to the Steering Group to have several comments of appreciation for the exercise itself. Several people clearly found thinking about the issues a worthwhile activity. Thank you! Not everyone is appreciative - "At one time this mountain of paper would have been unnecessary as everyone knew each other and communicated directly". That is true - but now they don't!

Many of the comments on the development of Layham were reiterations of what has been said in answer to other questions. Set out below are examples of interesting ideas that are a bit different to the rest of the document or expand on useful ideas. These are catalogued on the next page as a reference for the future as groups in the parish work together to strengthen the community.



Babs Whitsett

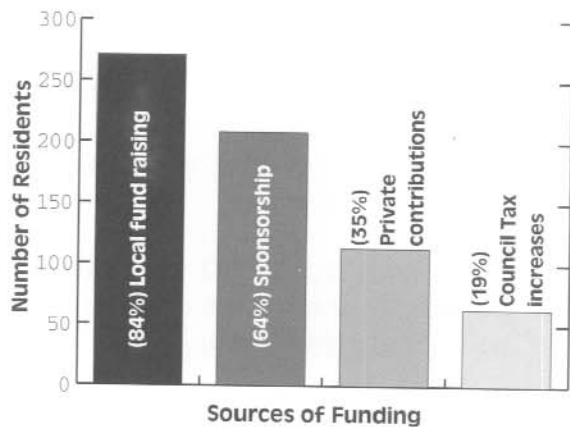
- Do everything possible to enhance and further a sense of place / identity. Short term this would give residents an increased sense of pride and affection for where they live and possibly increase the number of people who become 'involved'. Long term – this should encourage permanence in the community – fewer people moving on and younger people wishing to remain or return.
- Village identity visibly improved; make a village sign; plant a distinctive tree species all along the roads in and out of the village; create a riverside footpath in both directions from the centre of the village; build a small sports pavilion on the playing field, install a cricket strip, mark out the football pitch and encourage teams to compete; display sculpture and other art work in the village.
- The people of Layham should recognise what a massive potential they have in St Andrew's Church which has the finest acoustics for music. Parish churches were designed to be both a sacred core (the Church) and a public extension for the full services of Sundays (the Nave). This area was meant as a Parish centre and used for everything from local fairs to visiting players. It is a Victorian idea that the Nave should only be used for 'church' events. Please use it to the full as was intended by its founders.
- Concerts and picnics on the field.
- Make the ford crossable for horses on the bridle path near Waterhouse Farm and open a foot/bridle/cycle path up to the railway walk (thence into Hadleigh) to encourage more exercise and less use of cars.
- A bench on the verge near the bus stop in Upper Layham – for older people who often have to wait a while.
- All residents to accept responsibility for cleaning the area outside their houses – improved environment and saving on Council Tax.
- Upper and Lower Layham are physically divided by the River Brett – there needs to be improvement in the attitudes of residents both sides of the river to make it one community.
- In contrast to this, some Lower Layham respondents see Upper and Lower Layham as two separate communities and wish them to remain so.
- More community activities with broader appeal – a community spirit showing more responsibility to each other.
- Shop within a pub – providing essentials as well as a meeting place.
- Very limited housing development of low cost homes.
- Creating local economic activity would be of more long term benefit than subsidising under-used public transport.

We close with a splendid quotation taken from one of the questionnaires, "It is not 'things' that enrich the life of a community but the interaction of people". Indeed, but sometimes the 'things' are needed to bring the people together!

F. How do we pay for all of this?

F.1 If suggestions raised by the questionnaire require money for implementation, where should that money come from?

324 people answered this question



This provides a challenge for the Parish Council, which will have the responsibility to see that those matters raised in this report are addressed. The obvious next question is to find out how many of the 271 people who favour local fund raising would be prepared to join a community group to get on with the job. Sponsorship in the form of Grant Support is always possible where a community is seen to be helping itself.

ACTION 54

Explore the possibility of forming a Community Council to take over the work of the Parish Plan Steering Group. This group would provide support for all possible initiatives that might arise from this exercise and work alongside the Parish Council in developing village life and provision.



NOW WHAT?

Well, the Steering Group has drawn a 'wish list' out of the report in the form of proposed **ACTIONS**. These are highlighted throughout the report and tabulated in the last few pages.

These proposed actions are strictly drawn from responses to the questionnaire and were refined during an Open Meeting consultation at the draft stage of the report.

The ambitious **ACTIONS** will only happen if many of us take a hand in driving them forward.

Groups of people are needed to get projects going and keep them up and running – so, if you said you would be willing to share your car, help with a youth club, work on a nature reserve, lead a social group...now is your chance!

If you are prepared to step forward and help in any of the action areas, check off the appropriate boxes opposite and overleaf, give us your contact details, snip out the half page and return it to:

Michael Woods at 8 Watermill Close, Upper Layham, IP7 5LD.

We are very close to Christmas and, if you are not careful, you will put this down and overlook it.

Please deal with it NOW! Thank you.

This is very important – the Parish Plan exercise can only be successful if we help ourselves. Others will help us if we are seen to be serious.

LAYHAM PARISH PLAN EXERCISE

The Action Plan – offers of help

Possible sharing of private vehicles for:

Shopping ☐

Social & Leisure ☐

Work ☐

School runs ☐

Possible help with a 'Good Neighbour' scheme ☐

Possible help with the running of a community shop ☐

Possible help with the organization and running of the following clubs and activities:

Art Club ☐

Gardening Club ☐

Rambling Club ☐

Sporting activities ☐

Senior Citizens group ☐

Drama/Theatre ☐

Music / Choir / Band ☐

University of the Third Age ☐

Cards and / or board games ☐

Now What?



Possible help with leisure time activities for children:

Summer Play Scheme

☐

Youth Club

☐

Organised team games
on the Playing Field

☐

Creative arts

☐

Possible involvement
with the Village Hall
Management Committee

☐

Possible involvement with the
Playing Field
Management Committee

☐

Possible help with environmental projects:

Maintaining footpaths

☐

Protecting /
developing wildlife habitats

☐

Surveying trees and hedgerows

☐

Helping with a village 'clean-up' day

☐

Hire of an allotment
if made available

☐

Possible involvement with the group
that takes this work on and
'makes things happen' in the parish

☐

**Offers of
help**

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone:.....

E-mail.....



LAYHAM PARISH PLAN ACTION PLAN

Progress in tackling the matters raised by this Action Plan will be reviewed at monthly meetings of the Parish Council and at each Annual Parish Meeting over the next five years.

This plan will become a working document, and time-scales will be adjusted, as those who become involved with each action assess the detail of the task.

Proposed Action	LEAD ORGANISATION and others who may be involved	Suggested time - scale
HOUSEHOLDS		
ACTION 1 Draw together any information available to assist those who may be eligible for grant support to improve energy efficiency in their homes.	PARISH COUNCIL District Council, County Council	Within a year
ACTION 2 Undertake local publicity to encourage investment in more sophisticated forms of energy saving.		Within a year
TRANSPORT RELATED MATTERS		
ACTION 3 Explore the possibility of developing a safe footpath / cycle path between Layham and Hadleigh.	PARISH COUNCIL, District Council County Council, Landowners	Within five years
ACTION 4 Carry out a detailed survey to find out exactly what additional bus services would be regularly supported, whether or not the support would warrant commercial investment, and whether or not access for disabled passengers is satisfactory.	PARISH COUNCIL, Suffolk ACRE	
ACTION 5 If the need for additional bus services and the need for improved disabled access are confirmed, seek improvements.	PARISH COUNCIL, Suffolk ACRE	Within a year
ACTION 6 Investigate the operation of car sharing schemes. If such a scheme appears feasible, seek out those people interested, meet with them and support them in setting one up.	PARISH COUNCIL, Suffolk ACRE	Within a year

Action Plan

ACTION 7

Draw the attention of residents to dangerous and illegal parking practices in the hope that difficulties can be resolved within the community.

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council

Within a year

ACTION 8

Examine every piece of ground in the 'built-up' parts of the village to see where further parking spaces could be created and whether funding can be raised to meet the cost of any necessary work.

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council

Within three years

ACTION 9

Explore the possibility of land being made available for a car park within easy walking distance of the church and village hall.

PARISH COUNCIL,
Parochial Church Council,
Village Hall Management Committee
Landowners

Within two years

ACTION 10

Request SCC Highways Dept to look at all the issues relating to the congestion at the Brett Green / Mill lane junction (The width of Mill Lane, right of way signing, parking around the junction and the position and condition of the steps on Mill Lane bank).

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council

Within a year

ACTION 11

Request SCC Highways Department to assess the need for passing places to be provided on the road from Lower Layham to Hadleigh.

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council

Within a year

ACTION 12

Liaise with the SCC Highways Dept and Suffolk Police to develop a joint strategy to combat the problem of lorries ignoring the weight restriction on the B1070.

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council
Suffolk Police

Within a year

ACTION 13

Liaise with SCC Highways Dept and Suffolk Police to see if anything can be done to ease the problem of vehicles speeding through the village on the B1070.

PARISH COUNCIL, Suffolk ACRE
Suffolk Police

Within a year

ACTION 14

Request SCC Highways Dept. to assess all reported pavement problems with a view to remedial work being undertaken.

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council

Within three years

SERVICES – INCLUDING INFORMATION & EMERGENCY SERVICES

ACTION 15

Village news and information to continue to be published monthly in the Hadleigh Community News. Efforts to be made to ensure that this publication reaches every household

PARISH COUNCIL,
Community News Publishing

Immediate

ACTION 16	A quarterly Parish Newsletter to be published for one year, as an experiment, by the Parish Council.	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Immediate</i>
ACTION 17	Thought to be given to the production of a Parish Welcome Pack for newly arriving residents	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 18	Examine the practicalities of the offer from a resident who has volunteered to run a website for the village	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 19	Consider the provision of a third notice board near the Mill Lane entrance to the Playing Field	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 20	Seek an arrangement with utility providers for a nominated person to be the contact for information about emergencies.	PARISH COUNCIL, electricity, gas and water supply companies, Environment Agency	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 21	Identify a volunteer who would locate the small number of people who have difficulty in collecting medical prescriptions, seek ways of connecting them with volunteers who could assist and recruit a published contact person to deal with any future cases arising.	PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 22	Establish and maintain a 'good neighbour' scheme covering the whole village.	PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 23	Consider how Brett Green can be drawn into the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and how the profile of the scheme can be raised across the parish – working towards the highest possible active take-up.	NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH GROUP	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 24	Report the number of people who perceive police coverage of Layham to be poor to the Suffolk Constabulary and the Community Police Officer for appropriate action. Discuss the matter with the Community Police Officer when he attends Parish Council meetings with a view to ensuring his work in Layham is recognised.	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within a year</i>
ACTION 25	Work with our new community police officer in developing strategies to combat anti-social behaviours.	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within two years and ongoing</i>
ACTION 26	Consider campaigns / partnerships, particularly with children and dog owners, which could be undertaken to improve attitudes to litter and dog fouling.	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within two years and ongoing</i>
ACTION 27	Review the provision of litter and dog waste bins in the village and consider providing more.	PARISH COUNCIL	<i>Within a year</i>



ACTION 28

Seek more frequent and better quality path edge maintenance, weed killing and street cleaning with SCC and BDC.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 29

Request BDC to establish local 'bring sites' for recyclable waste as soon as possible, or establish village 'bring sites' that are serviced by independent contractors.

PARISH COUNCIL, DISTRICT COUNCIL

Within two years and ongoing

ACTION 30

Encourage the setting up of home composting units in individual gardens.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 31

Review how residents get to know the details of the services offered by the library van and the opening times of our post office. Seek ways of boosting the use of both.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 32

Promote a feasibility study for a community shop (which could also answer the expressed needs of the young people of Layham) with an eye to its social value as well as its convenience.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within two years

ACTION 33

Explore the possibility of obtaining more land for allotments to meet the declared need.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within three years

SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CHURCH MATTERS

ACTION 34

Explore ways in which leisure learning activities might be provided in Layham.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP
adult education groups

Within a year

ACTION 35

Meetings to be arranged for those who might be interested in helping to organise new clubs and societies. Attention to be drawn to the possibilities that already exist.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Within a year

ACTION 36

Meet with volunteers in an attempt to generate some organised leisure time activities for young people.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Within a year

ACTION 37

Take note of the comments made by respondents when planning priorities for improvement to the village hall.

VILLAGE HALL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Immediate

ACTION 38

Recognise the need for additional storage and new furniture, the adaption of one of the toilets for disabled use and provision for the hard of hearing in the village hall. Work towards provision of those facilities.

VILLAGE HALL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Within three years

ACTION 39

Consideration to be given to the church building being used as a venue for further leisure or educational activities

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Within a year

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

ACTION 40

Meet with local landowners to consider further planting of trees and hedges.

PARISH COUNCIL, Parish Tree Warden

Ongoing

ACTION 41

Call a meeting for those interested in setting up a Wildlife Group in the parish.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Within a year

ACTION 42

Enter the Village of the Year Competition in 2005 and, as part of the preparation for that, organise at least one community clean up day.

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 43

Meet with dog owners to agree a Code of Practice for using public places, including the playing field. This to be put into print and given to every dog owner.

PARISH COUNCIL
Playing Field Management Committee

Within a year

ACTION 44

Consider if there are activities that should be discouraged on the playing field.

PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Within a year

ACTION 45

Look into the matter of loose dogs on one of the footpath routes, overgrown paths and way marking

PARISH COUNCIL, County Council
Parish Footpath Warden

Within a year.

ACTION 46

Develop a footpath map for the area to be given to every household and thereafter placed in the Parish Welcome Pack.

PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Footpath Warden

Within a year

ACTION 47

Seek volunteers to run a series of guided walks.

PARISH COUNCIL Parish Footpath Warden

Within a year

MATTERS FROM THE YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE

ACTION 48

Explore the possibility of building a large, flat, hard surface on the playing field that could be used for cycles, skateboards, roller skates and a variety of ball games such as mini-tennis, basketball and netball.

PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Parish Council

Within five years

ACTION 49

Thought to be given to seating or a simple shelter – perhaps associated with the hard surface area - that could serve as a socialising place for young people..

PLAYING FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Parish Council

Within five years

ACTION 50

Consider how snacks and drinks might be made available for sale to young people at set times in the day and week

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 51

Seek volunteers from the general community and /or the church community to set up an organised youth group and liaise with Babergh District Council Sports Development Officer over how this might be run.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Within a year

ACTION 52

Provide a youth notice board for each side of the river (links with ACTION 19).

PARISH COUNCIL

Within a year

ACTION 53

Organise a consultation with young people once each year to monitor their changing concerns and needs.

PARISH COUNCIL

Ongoing

HOW WILL ALL THIS BE ACHIEVED?

ACTION 54

Explore the possibility of forming a Community Council to take over the work of the Parish Plan Steering Group. This group would provide support for all possible initiatives that might arise from this exercise and work alongside the Parish Council in developing village life and provision.

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

Immediate