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Introduction

Membury lies within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in East Devon, 4 miles north west of Axminster and 7 miles south west of Chard. The parish is 4½ miles long (north to south) and is bordered by the River Yarty to the west, extends over the A30 to the Somerset border to the north and is within 1½ miles of the Dorset border to the east.

Membury derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon Maenbeorg (strong fort) and appears as Maaberia in the Domesday Book. Artefacts from the Stone Age have been found and Membury Castle, an Iron Age hill fort, provides evidence of early settlement.

Membury remains a rural parish, containing the hamlets of Crawley, Furley, Rock and Webble Green and many scattered farms. These are connected by a maze of narrow lanes, once ancient trackways.

Following a meeting with officials from the Countryside Agency and East Devon District Council, Parish Councillors agreed that an appraisal should be undertaken so that local people could have a voice in the future of their community.

An Appraisal Committee was formed with members from all parts of the parish representing as wide a range of interests as possible.

A questionnaire was compiled and delivered by committee members to each of the 213 households in the parish. 183 questionnaires were completed and analysed. Of the 30 properties for which questionnaires were not completed, several were empty and for sale and others were second homes whose owners were away or did not wish to participate in the project.

386 people aged 11 or over attempted at least some of the questions in the personal section. The total 11+ population of the parish is estimated to be 460 and there are 437 on the 2006 Electoral Roll.

February 2006

Acknowledgement

The committee would like to record their thanks to the Countryside Agency, the Community Council of Devon, East Devon District Council and Devon County Council with a special thank you to Councillor Paul Diviani for his help and guidance and to Keith Jacobs for getting the project started.

Environment & Roads



What landscape features need to be protected.

There is a wide appreciation of all the features noted. None of the 5 items, Trees, Hedgerows, Natural Stone Walls, The Church and Ancient Copses rated less than 74% (270) out of 366 responses. Interestingly, the Church came out top with 310 (85%). Although 91% did not wish to protect any other specific feature, the remaining 9% suggested a wide variety of deserving causes from Ancient Monuments to Wild Flower Meadows, Membury Castle, the Post Office and the skyline which had “too many masts and pylons”. Clearly respondents are appreciative of and concerned for our local environment.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| AIM | Protection of landscape features mentioned. |
| ACTION | To work with East Devon District Council Tree Officer and Planning Officers. To monitor and encourage parishioners to report any problems. |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Parish Council, East Devon District Council and Parish Tree Warden. |
| TIMESCALE | Ongoing - to be reviewed at Annual Parish Meeting. |

Placement of overhead wires underground - by whereabouts.

This question raised similarly strong concerns - a finding consistent with the desire to protect our environment.

Looking at the returns by area it appears that the greatest support is in 'North End' where 85% of respondents agreed that overhead cables should be resited underground. In Membury, taking the areas inside and outside the Development Zone together, 79% agreed. Furley showed the least concern at 54%. Overall 75% of the total of 328 respondents wanted overhead wires buried.

AIM To achieve future reduction of overhead wires where possible.

ACTION Parish Council to write to Utility Services.

RESPONSIBILITY Parish Council

TIMESCALE Long-term

Ease of finding and following footpaths and bridleways.

The responses suggest a large measure of satisfaction with both the Footpath Warden's work and Devon County Council. The first question 'Are routes clearly signposted' received a grudging 56% agreement yet most of the other listed possibilities for criticism - obscured signposts, overgrown / blocked off / wired off routes, poorly maintained stiles, etc were met with strong support for the existing standards achieved. One feature that did come in for criticism was that routes were difficult to follow.

The question about missing signposts puzzled some respondents since only 53 replied, 24 of whom thought they were missing and 29 who thought they weren't. Perhaps the others decided you could not tell if something wasn't there.

Only 9 additional observations were made. These included 'not enough signposts', 'too easy' and 'wrongly directed'. 21 respondents gave further details of problems they had encountered - Bonds Lane coming in for particular criticism.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| AIM | To maintain the present high standard of the footpath network. |
| ACTION | To continue to press for repair and opening of Bonds Lane (BW33) Letters of thanks to be written to past and present footpath wardens. |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Parish Council, Devon County Council and Parish Footpath Warden. |
| TIMESCALE | Ongoing |

Priorities of actions relating to Roads, Lanes and Paths.

85% of respondents considered prompt repair of potholes to be very important. The only other item coming close to this was maintenance of ditches and culverts - 79% believe these to be very important too.

Proposals that received the highest percentage of 'Not Necessary' responses were 'Have more footpath signs' 31%; and 'Remove some Footpath signs' 38%; the latter recording the highest 'Don't Know' percentage of 53%.

Individual recommendations on Road, Lane and Path improvements related principally to the many aspects of road and hedge maintenance.

In answer to the question "Would you be willing to help maintain and manage the Public Rights of Way in the Parish"? A public spirited 12% said 'Yes' and 322 of us said 'No'!

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| AIMS | To improve the standard of highway maintenance. Encourage parishioners to report problems to the Parish Council and publicise the availability of the parish lengthsman. |
| ACTION | Continue to pressurise Devon County Council. |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Parish Council and Devon County Council. |
| TIMESCALE | Ongoing |

Housing



Households in need of alternative accommodation

22 people (10% of those responding) expressed a need for alternative accommodation. Half of these required accommodation either now or within the next 3 years. The main requirement was for the purchase of family or starter homes with residential care and sheltered housing making up the balance.

Only 6 people had moved from the parish due to lack of suitable housing.

Type of housing required

The need for housing for local and young people was supported by 50% of the respondents. Housing for low-income families and agricultural workers was supported by approximately 20%. Only 3 residents would consider a 'shared equity' purchase.

How to achieve more housing

Views on expansion of the 'Black Line' development area were divided, with 40% wanting to leave the 'Black Line' as it is and the remainder either wanting expansion of the line or development elsewhere in the parish.

Thinking of moving house?

66 residents are thinking of moving house within the next five years with the majority wishing to stay either within or close to the parish. Only 11 residents wished to move into a town.

Amount of allowable development

70% of respondents opted for some level of housing development over the next 10 years. 30% said that up to 10 dwellings should be built and 16% thought that up to 20 dwellings were acceptable. The remainder opted for varying levels of development with 11% having no opinion. 19% said that no more housing was needed.

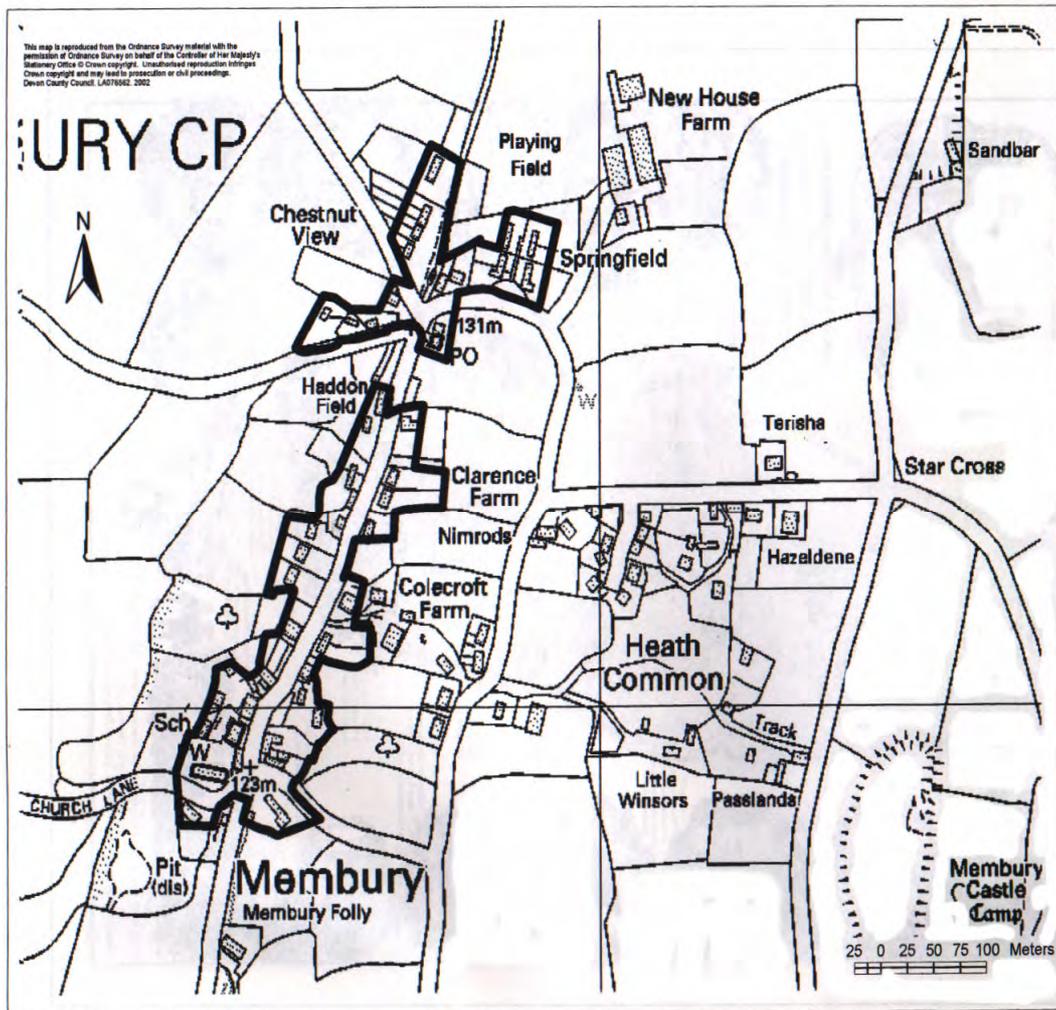
AIM To maintain the rural character of the parish allowing for some limited development of affordable and sheltered housing to meet the local needs.

ACTION Encourage Parish Council to liaise with East Devon District Council Planning Department and Rural Housing Trust.
To consider the possibility of moving the 'Black Line' to allow such development.

REMARKS Encouragement of starter homes—this could increase the number of pupils in the school.

RESPONSIBILITY Parish Council and East Devon District Council.

TIMESCALE Immediate - to open discussion with the relevant authorities.
Ongoing - to achieve the aim.



**East Devon District Council
Local Plan 1995 to 2011**

Membury Built-up Area Boundaries

“Development in open countryside outside the defined built-up areas should be resisted unless, on the merits of the particular case, there is a proven agricultural, forestry or horticultural need”.

Local Economy



Local Economy

251 people said they used the village shop and appreciated the post office facilities. Reasons for not using the village shop included “only open when I am away at work” and “I shop in the town where I work”. The shop was described as “a wonderful asset for the village”, “the focus of the community” and “the hub of the village”.

Employment Status

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Employed | 98 |
| Self Employed | 78 |
| Unemployed | 1 |
| Full Time Education | 27 |
| Retired | 121 |
| Unwaged Partner | 21 |
| Sick/Disabled | 2 |
| Part Time Employment | 1 |

Place of Work

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Home | 91 |
| Membury Parish | 15 |
| Within 10 Miles | 58 |
| 11 - 30 Miles | 47 |
| 30 Miles + | 20 |

18 people were seeking employment.

68 said they ran their own business, employing 26 people.

Over 60% of households own a computer.

AIM To maintain and encourage development of local economy.

ACTION To liaise with Blackdown Hills A.O.N.B. with a view to stimulating local enterprise.

REMARK It was considered essential to maintain a thriving village shop and Post Office.

RESPONSIBILITY All parishioners.

TIMESCALE Immediate – to contact Blackdown Hills A.O.N.B.
Ongoing - to be reviewed at Annual Parish Meeting

Local Services



Church

While only about a quarter of people felt that the Church was important to them for Sunday worship, over half considered it important for baptisms, weddings and funerals and over three quarters as an historic building.

School

Three quarters of people felt that the school was an important part of village life and would help to attract young families to the village.

Local Government

Over half the respondents thought the Parish Council to be good or reasonable but 40% had no opinion.

48% thought the District Council to be good or reasonable and 35% had no opinion.

33% thought the County Council to be good or reasonable and 36% had no opinion.

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Although nearly three quarters of respondents knew that Membury is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty only 27% were aware that the BHAONB provides services.

Mobile Library

Of the 106 who responded, although only a fraction of this number use the service, nearly all said it was good or reasonable.

Information

Nearly everyone thought that the amount of information about what was going on in the parish was good or reasonable. 88% read the Membury Mercury, 46% the Parish Magazine and over half said they looked at the notice boards.

Standard of services

| | <u>Good</u> | <u>Reasonable</u> | <u>Poor</u> | <u>No Opinion</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Fire Service | 19.9% | 19.7% | 3.3% | 57.1% |
| Police(Emergency) | 9.8% | 21.3% | 15.0% | 53.8% |
| Police(Community) | 8.5% | 21.6% | 24.3% | 45.6% |
| Emergency Ambulance | 28.4% | 20.8% | 4.9% | 45.9% |
| Hospital Transport | 4.9% | 6.3% | 6.3% | 82.5% |
| Mains Water | 25.4% | 23.0% | 6.6% | 45.1% |
| Electricity | 35.8% | 35.2% | 10.1% | 18.9% |
| Refuse Collection | 57.9% | 24.9% | 4.6% | 12.6% |
| Street Cleaning | 6.8% | 33.9% | 34.4% | 24.9% |
| Winter Weather Service | 4.6% | 30.9% | 39.9% | 24.6% |
| Surface Water Drainage | 2.5% | 12.6% | 67.5% | 17.5% |
| Agricultural Drainage | 3.8% | 15.8% | 51.1% | 29.2% |
| Road Maintenance | 3.0% | 14.5% | 68.6% | 13.9% |

Medical Services

Of 299 people who had been to the doctors, 98.7% said they were good or reasonable.

Of 55 people who had seen a community nurse or health visitor, 100% said they were good or reasonable.

Of 178 people who had seen a surgery nurse, 99.5% said they were good or reasonable.

Of 164 people who had used hospital services, 96.4% said they were good or reasonable.

17 people said they had difficulty getting to medical services.

AIMS Maintenance of existing services particularly the school and medical facilities. To improve the response time of the emergency services. To improve public awareness of the services provided by different Councils.

ACTION To ascertain whether emergency vehicles have GPS guidance and whether they require any assistance from the parish. Letter of appreciation to be written to the surgery and police. Invite the Fire Prevention Officer to give a presentation. Better communication with parishioners—Membury Mercury.

RESPONSIBILITY Parish Council, Emergency Services, Local Education Authority and Blackdown Hills A.O.N.B.

TIMESCALE Immediate - contact emergency services.
Ongoing - monitor response times.

Sport & Social Activities



Sport and Social Activities can generally be related to the age distribution in a particular area. In the parish of Membury, only 14% (58) of those responding are under 16. 19% (78) of the respondents are under 21 and 33% (138) of the respondents are under 40. The nature of employment also has some bearing and in this context it is noted that 25% of the businesses in Membury are related to Agriculture and 5% to Tourism, occupations where the opportunities for Sport and Recreation, at least on a regular basis, are limited.

The questionnaire sought information on the awareness of people living in the parish of Membury of the existing sport and leisure activities. It is reassuring to see that an average of 75% of the population were aware of existing activities. This ranged from 83.5 % being aware of the Merrymakers and the Swimming Pool down to 61.3% who were aware of the Whist Club.

In regard to the establishment of additional clubs and activities in Membury, the responses covered a vast range from Archery and Aerobics to Tea Dances and Yoga, but mostly proposed by just one person. The only future possible activities supported by more than one person were Bridge (4), Youth Club (4), and Tennis (3).

There was little support for additional facilities for young people. There are reported to be 41 persons in Membury between the ages of 11 and 16, of whom 31 completed the questionnaire and yet only 4 people in Membury supported the introduction of a Youth Club. Revival of the pub was supported by two people as was the building of a tennis court. Other suggested activities were After-school Young Christians, a Cinema Club, a Skateboard Park and Village Days Out.

The overwhelming majority of social and sporting activities in Membury take place in the village hall. Bookings for the hall run at a very high level but, with some manipulation, existing activities appear to be satisfactorily accommodated. There is little demand for outdoor activities and this may be related to the factors mentioned in the first paragraph of this section of the Report.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| AIM | To provide a wide range of activities and promote use of the village hall. |
| ACTION | To support the Swimming Pool Committee in their efforts to re-open the pool. Encourage all organisations to advertise their events on the Membury website. |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Village organisations and website editors. |
| TIMESCALE | Immediate - ensure earliest possible re-opening of the swimming pool. |

Transport



Vehicle ownership and location

The 183 households covered by the survey own a total of 324 cars and vans. 142 of these are garaged, 172 are parked off road, 4 are parked on the road and 6 are parked in the car park.

There are 16 registered disabled persons in the parish, half of whom are aged 75 or over.

Public transport

Only 6 people said that they used the weekly bus or Axe Ring & Ride service. Three quarters of those responding had no opinion regarding the bus service with most of the remainder rating the service as 'poor'. 84% of people did not know the bus timetable or destinations.

Only about 16% of car owners are prepared to car share.

Transport problems

23% of residents have some difficulty with travelling during the evening, at weekends and after school. Most cited the lack of public transport and the fact that events were too far away to walk or cycle.

Over 70% of residents consider that street lighting is not required. 13% did not know if it was or not.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| AIM | Encourage parishioners to use the services available. |
| ACTION | To give greater publicity to the Ring & Ride and Fare Car Scheme. |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Parish Council, Membury Mercury for information on transport services provided. Post Office as holder of Parish Information file. |
| TIMESCALE | Immediate and ongoing - publication of articles in Membury Mercury. |

Tailpiece

September 1927

The village street of Membury was tarred for the first time. This event caused much excitement. The oldest inhabitant, the village carpenter, exclaimed in disgust "This place is getting more like London every day".....to which the Postman replied "Yes, this tar makes a horrible mess, but I suppose it is necessary. Hardly a day passes but some motor or something comes to the village".