

Whimble Parish Plan



October 2007

Whimble Parish Plan 2007

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Introduction

Why produce a Parish Plan?

Whimble Parish Council determined that it would like to have a parish plan to guide future policy and activities in the parish as well as identify the concerns and needs of the community and actions in which it might become engaged.

What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is three things. It is a profile of the parish, it is a needs analysis of what will make our community an enduringly healthy, sustainable, blossoming place for every single inhabitant and, thirdly, it is an action plan. This document records the results of a survey of all households in the parish of Whimble early in 2007 and contains an action plan for the whole community. It was formally adopted by Whimble Parish Council on 15th October 2007.

How was it produced?

The parish council appointed a co-ordinator who convened a public meeting in March 2006 to gauge the level of support for the preparation of a parish plan. Some 40 villagers attended the meeting at which the purposes of a parish plan and how it might be produced were explained by a representative of the Community Council of Devon. Following discussion, there was overwhelming support for the preparation of a plan for Whimble.



A steering group of volunteers was formed. Its first task was to plan a consultation day which was held in the Victory Hall on Saturday 6th June 2006 with a follow-up session on the following Tuesday evening. Spontaneous comments were sought from those attending on concerns and issues under a variety of headings, and the 267 people who attended posted nearly 2000 comments.

In parallel with this event, a consultation was undertaken by way of a competition for children of primary school age, and special incentives were offered to teenagers to attract them to the Tuesday evening consultation.

Following analysis of the comments by the steering group, a questionnaire was developed and this was circulated to every household in the parish by a total of 32 people, primarily the majority of the regular distributors of Whimple News, supplemented by members of the steering group. The survey forms were collected approximately two weeks later, but completed forms could also be taken to Whimple Post Office.

A total of 410 completed forms were returned giving the views of 811 residents aged 11 and over. There were 674 dwellings on the register of electors at the time and so the return exceeded 60%.

A statistical analysis of the forms was carried out by Devon County Council and members of the steering group analysed the written comments. These were incorporated in a Survey Report distributed to every household with a copy of the June/July 2007 issue of Whimple News. The Report also listed possible actions which might be included in the Action Plan to accompany the Parish Plan.

A further open meeting was held in June 2007, attended by 105 residents at which they were asked to prioritise the possible actions suggested by the steering group and indicate how they might become involved with them, and make other relevant comments. The steering group subsequently drew up an action plan and informally discussed it with relevant interests prior to adoption by the parish council.



Parishioners were given regular progress reports in Whimple News (distributed bi-monthly to every house in the parish) and the Parish Council was kept informed via the councillor member of the steering group.

How is the Plan funded?

The steering group secured through the Community Council of Devon a grant from the Countryside Agency which was supplemented with funding from the Parish Council

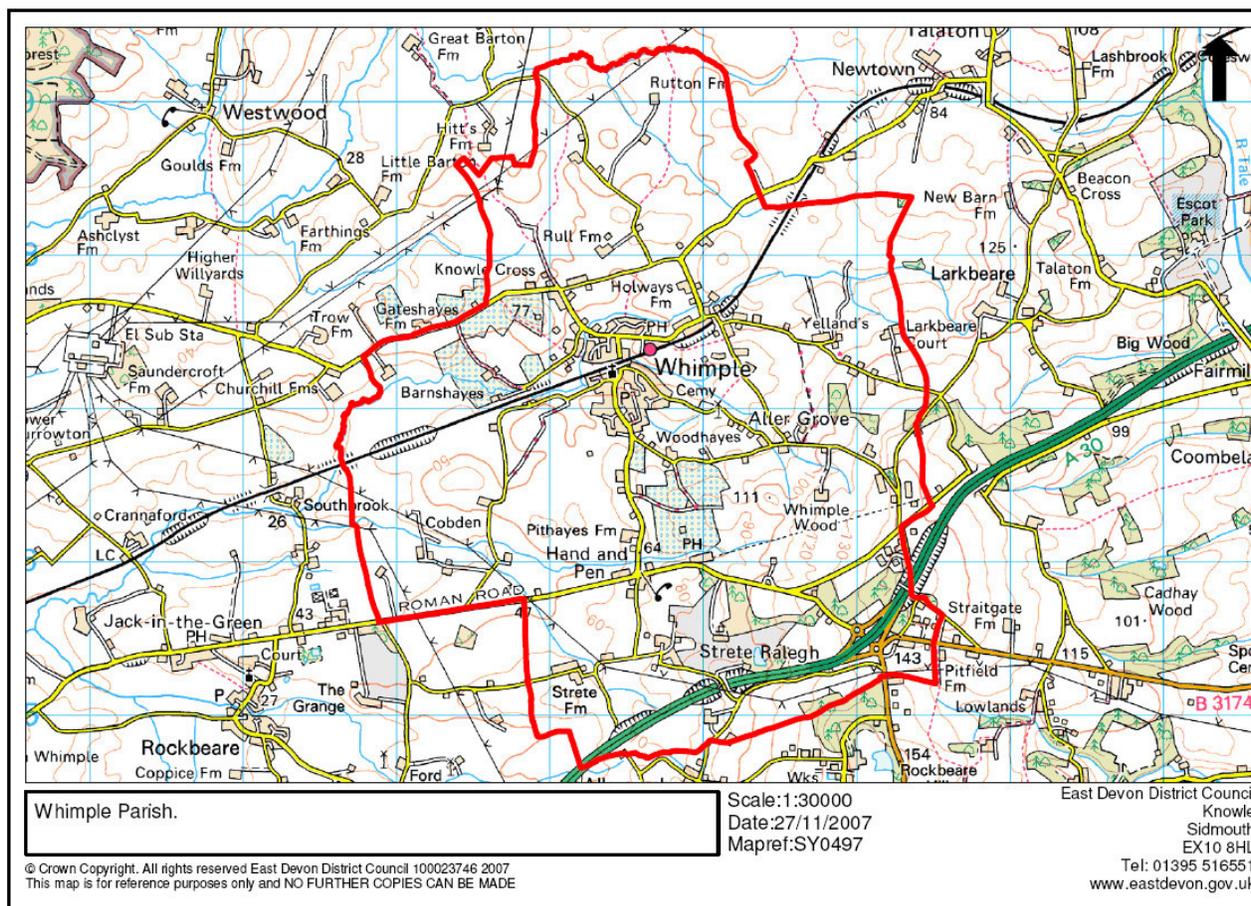
Acknowledgements

The Parish Council wishes to place on record its appreciation of the work carried out by the Steering Group in producing this Plan. It also acknowledges the financial support from the Countryside Agency and assistance from the Community Council of Devon, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council.

Steering Group – Annie Bassett, Richard Betts, Fiona Bowyer, Mike Ellingham, John Griffiths, Jenny Sanders, Liz Silk, Alex Tooze and Adrian Williams

The Parish of Whimble

Whimble is a parish in East Devon, approximately 10 miles east of Exeter. The village is centered on The Square which is one mile from the old A30 at Hand and Pen and 1 3/4 miles from the Daisymount interchange on the new A30. There are outlying dwellings within the parish at Strete Raleigh, Willow View, Hand and Pen, and Cobden, and there is a small industrial estate adjacent to Willow View on the old A30.



There are a number of council houses and bungalows together with properties managed by the Devon & Cornwall Housing Association.

The historical focus of the village was the Whiteways Cyder factory which closed in 1989 and consequently the present working population mainly commutes from the village. There are, however, a number of self-employed businesses based in the parish, including financial advisers, builders and driving instructors. The factory site has been developed, and within the past 10 years in excess of 160 new dwellings have been constructed in the parish, bringing the total to 674 on the current Register of Electors. The population is estimated to be approximately 1,600.

The character of the centre of the village was recognised in its designation as a Conservation Area in 1992. The village is surrounded by agricultural land, with cider apple orchards being a distinctive feature. Within the parish there are a number of public rights of way, exclusively footpaths, and the parish council participates in the Parish Paths Partnership scheme.



Whimpey in relation to the surrounding area and Cranbrook.

Scale:1:83000
 Date:19/11/2007
 Mapref:SY0696

East Devon District Council
 Knowle
 Sidmouth
 EX10 8HL
 Tel: 01395 516551
 www.eastdevon.gov.uk

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Amenities

The community is served by a village shop, a Post Office, two public houses, a filling station and shop, a veterinary clinic, a part-time doctors' surgery (linked to the Coleridge Medical Centre in Ottery St Mary) and a hairdressers. The county council mobile library calls weekly.



Whimble County Primary School is a successful and friendly school with an active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. It has a Multi-Use Games Area on a nearby site which has been designated for a new school (although this is not in the county council building programme), but no playing field. Occasional use is made of the Parish Field. The school buildings are inadequate for the needs of the school and daily use

is made of the adjacent Victory Hall. There are currently 118 pupils on the roll. However, numbers are affected by some parents sending their children to primary schools in a different secondary school catchment area.

The school is within the catchment area of Clyst Vale Community College, although a significant number of pupils attend The King's School, Ottery St Mary, and other schools.

St Mary's church dates from the 15th century but was substantially re-built and extended in 1846. Apart from worship, the church is used by Whimble School and sometimes for concerts and similar events.

Whimble Victory Hall, which dates from the late 1950s, is well used, including on a daily basis during term time by Whimble School. Whilst the Management Committee works hard to maintain the hall, the facilities are dated and inflexible. The hall is used by a Pre-School and Toddler Group, although without dedicated facilities.



Whimble Cricket Club was re-located to a new ground and a new pavilion constructed in 1991. It can be hired by other organisations.

The Scout Hut is owned by The Scout Association and, subject to scouting commitments, may be used by other organisations.

Whimble Parish Council owns the Parish Field and a small children's play area in Town Lane. A children's play area in Slewton Crescent is in the process of being transferred from the developers to East Devon District Council. A free parish council car park is located some 175m from The Square.



There is a single, unlit, tennis court near to The Green.

Whimble Heritage Centre was opened in 2003 and is owned and run by the Whimble History Society.

There is a private day nursery on the outskirts of the village.

Public Transport

Whimble has a station on the main Exeter to Waterloo railway line with services to Exeter, Honiton and London. There is a bus service from the centre of the village to Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth, whilst services from Axminster and Honiton to Exeter run along the old A30 one mile from The Square. The Honiton ring-and-ride bus can call at Whimble once a week.



Community

There is a large number of village organisations, ranging from Beavers and Cub Scouts and a youth club for the younger generation through to an Over Sixties Club. The Village Produce Association stages a flower and craft show each year, and most village organisations participate in the annual village week in July. A village pantomime is staged in the Victory Hall. The church has a growing congregation with three youth groups, a Mothers' Union, bellringers and an occasional choir, and also holds an annual garden fete

Co-ordination and publicity for village activities, together with contact details for all village organisations, is provided through Whimble News which is produced and delivered bi-monthly to every house in the parish by a team of volunteers. There is also a voluntarily run Whimble website (www.whimble.net) and the school and the history society have their own websites.

Sporting interests are catered for in the cricket club which fields league and youth sides, a football team and a tennis club. Short mat bowls and snooker take place in the Victory Hall, and there are league teams for skittles, cribbage and darts

Planning

The East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011 was adopted in July 2006 and contains an inset map showing the Built-up Area Boundary for the parish of Whimble (see page 12). It also contains proposals for a new Community (Cranbrook) to be sited to the west of Whimble. Outline planning permission has been given for, initially, 2,900 homes in Cranbrook, with the edge of the development just over a mile from the Built-up Area Boundary of the village.

Summary of survey results

Households

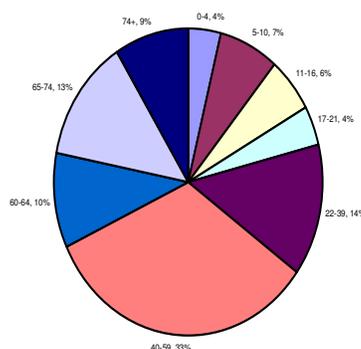
The survey indicated that 49% of respondents live in two-person households. Of the 987 people (including under 11s) covered by the returned questionnaires, the most populous age group was 40 – 59 (33%), followed by the 22-39 group (14%). 18% were under 17 whilst 22% were aged 65 and over.

People chose to live in the parish for love of country/village life, and of Whimble in particular.

Of the 406 properties covered by the survey, 356 were owner occupied, and 49 experienced surface water or storm drainage problems. 47 households considered that alternative accommodation was required in the next few years with starter homes to buy being the main priority. Moving within the parish or nearby was considered desirable, but lack of properties at the right price was seen as the main stumbling block.

64% of households expressed a desire to be connected to mains gas

Age Profile of the Whimble Population



Amenities

The survey identified many village amenities as vital or important. Topping the vital list were the Post Office (85% of respondents), village shop (78%), railway station (77%), Doctors' surgery (66%), village school (65%) and the Victory Hall (57%). However, only 20% rated the Victory Hall building as 'adequate' and 54% suggested that refurbishment or rebuilding is required.

A large majority of people with an opinion (more than 75%) felt that the Heritage Centre, Doctors' surgery, vets and the Church were 'good'. The Scout hut and mobile library were rated 'good' by 42% and 36% respectively.

"The heritage Centre is superb and Whimble should be proud of it"

A majority of those consulted said that the Church is important to them as a historic building and for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Over a third said that it is important for Sunday Worship and many considered it to be the focal point for the community. Some felt that the church could be used for a wide variety of events, with concerts being the most popular and also for meetings and social functions, but there was a 2:1 response against using the church for other functions.

Respondents suggested a wide range of amenities they would like to see provided. Most popular (in priority order) were a swimming pool, public toilets, more facilities for toddlers, a tea shop and additional shops.

Community

A number of comments were received referring to the strong community spirit within the parish, particularly from people who have recently moved into the village.

“We have been made to feel very welcome in the village and enjoy being part of community life”



The survey results showed a high response (30%-50%) supporting additional events during Village Week, with the most popular being a hog roast (50%) live music (46%) and a Village Day party (43%). There were a few other suggestions for events and about Village Week in general. These results and suggestions have been passed on to the organisers of the 2007 programme of events.

“Whimple News is an asset to the village”

632 people felt that the parish needs a notice board for advertising community events.

“I am grateful that so many people give their time for the good of the village”

Recreation

Whimple is blessed with a number of well-supported clubs (two of which have 100+ members) and much interest was shown in taking part in future activities. High on the list with 61% was walking and rambling, with cycling on road (36%) and farm visits/trails, history walks, nature study and cycling off road averaging around 30% each. Interest was also shown in painting, photography, horse riding, fishing and shooting.

Those with an opinion gave a ‘good’ rating to the cricket pitch (82% of respondents) and the MUGA (47%). A ‘reasonable’ rating was given to the tennis court (59%), football pitch (49%), Parish Field (48%) and play parks (44%), although the Parish Field and the play parks received a ‘poor’ rating from 29% and 43% of respondents, especially relating to facilities for the 11-18 year group. 49% of respondents said they never use the Parish Field. Suggestions were made for improvements to the Parish Field – improved access, sign posts, drainage, landscaping, parking facilities, toilet area and a new village hall on the site – and for new toilets and lighting at the tennis court.



There was support for the MUGA to be developed as a community facility with the addition of toilets and lighting. It was stated vandalism in the past has been a problem.

“As a village we seem to have the space but don’t seem to know how best to utilise it to provide facilities for the youngsters”

16 households said they would like to see more after school clubs, but most interest was in future activities for under-18s such as swimming (120), music/theatre (69), cycling (68), youth club (63) and tennis (54).

54% of respondents expressed an interest in creating a Village Green as a focal point – the Richard Whiteway Memorial Ground (Old Cricket Pitch), Hayes Bank and the play park off The Square were suggested.

Education

Respondents felt that the Village School and the Pre-school were 'vital' (65% and 51% respectively)

35 households indicated that they would use Toddler Group/Pre-school in the next few years.

Of those households with children under 11 years, 59 (61%) said that they would like to have the option of them attending The King's School.

The survey identified that there is little provision for adult learning in the parish. Of those with an opinion 84% felt it was 'poor'. However, 343 people said they would be interested in attending adult evening classes if they were available. There were 534 expressions of interest for possible classes, with the most popular being –



- Art/craft/music (186 responses) including digital photography (36) and painting/drawing (34)
- Languages (74) including French (15) and Spanish (10)
- Health/fitness/beauty (74) including Pilates (10) yoga (9)
- IT/computing (47)
- Home/garden skills (41) including cookery (18)
- Trade/DIY (29)

Transport and Roads

Whilst most people did not often experience difficulties getting transport from Whimple to other places, of the 338 (44%) who did sometimes, 206 had difficulty for social/leisure purposes, 161 for shopping and 118 for medical appointments. The train was used by 80% of respondents, with 36% using it several times or more a month, whereas 92% of respondents used the bus only a few times a year or never. An inconvenient schedule was given as a reason for not using bus or train, whilst cost was a factor with the train and the bus did not go where people wanted to go.



55% of respondents said speeding traffic is a major concern. A number of places in the village were noted as speeding black spots but the greatest concern is with Church Road.

Parking was another major concern by 50% of respondents, especially in The Square creating a negative impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area and giving rise to safety issues such as danger to

pedestrians and access through The Square for emergency vehicles. Other parking black spots of real concern are in the vicinity of the Victory Hall, the school, Doctors' surgery, the station, and the bottom of Grove Road.

The car park in Webbers Close was under-used, with 49% of respondents who park in the centre of Whimble never using it, and 49 being unaware of its existence.

“There is adequate parking if only people would use the car park”

54% of respondents would like improvements made for the safety of pedestrians, with more pavements and better maintenance frequently being mentioned. The total length of Church Road to Hand and Pen is of special concern.



Environment

Responses confirmed people enjoy living in Whimble and are interested in maintaining the local environment to a high standard.

Green Issues and recycling were important for many people. 70% of residents wanted an improved kerbside collection with a wider range of recyclables and more than a third were keen to have local recycling facilities.

Public rights of way were used by 84% of respondents, with 35% requesting more information, 29% saying that better signposting is needed and 25% saying that more footpaths and improved maintenance are needed. The need for better access for wheelchairs on footpaths was highlighted.



The appearance of the Conservation Area was considered by 53% to be 'reasonable', and 28% said it was 'good'. Maintaining and improving 'village character' is an ongoing concern.

Village pride was apparent in relation to litter and dog mess, with 41% saying dog mess was a problem and 34% agreeing that litter was a growing concern. Areas listed included The Square, Station pathway and stream, and vicinity of the School.

Suggestions were made for visual improvements to The Square, school area, station pathway and station area.

There were mixed opinions on street lighting. 35% of respondents wanted to see more lighting, with 8% wanting less. Town Lane was identified as requiring better lighting, while other areas like Bramley Gardens were considered to be over-lit.

“Lights off at midnight – less pollution”

There was a recurring theme resisting urbanization of the village in the form of increased street lighting, road signs and markings.

“Stop turning Whimble into hideous suburbia”

Planning

There was a mixed opinion about the Parish Council. Whilst 59% of respondents think they know what the council does, at least partly, nearly as many have no opinion as to whether the council represents local concerns, and only a third consider that planning applications are sufficiently advertised and considered.

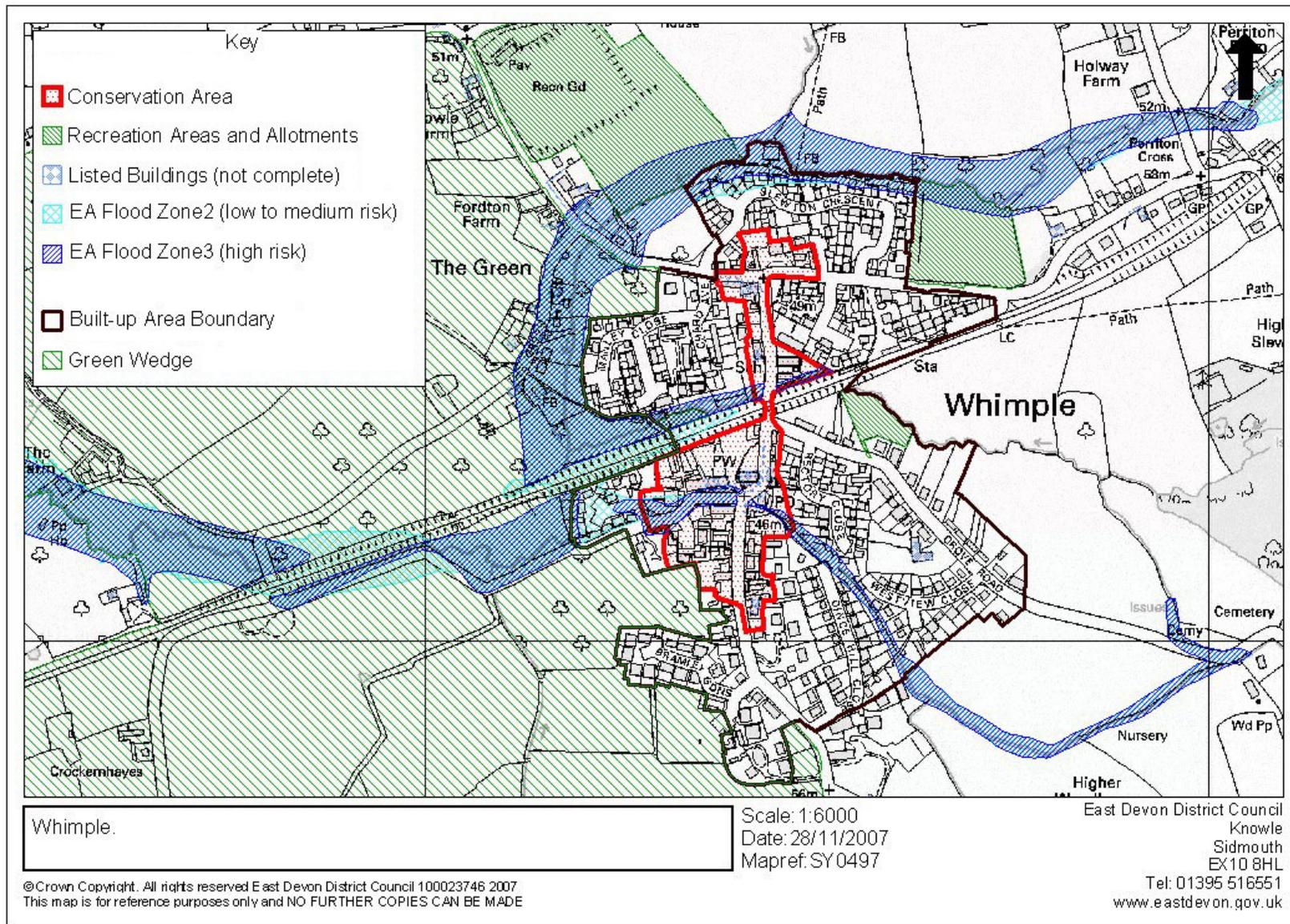
There was widespread support for protection of green areas surrounding the village. 80% of respondents were concerned for protection of every green area. The main issues are retaining the apple orchards and establishing a protected area between Whimble and Cranbrook, along with concerns for Hayes Bank, Slewton Field and the Old Cricket Pitch. Greatest concern was for Whimble to maintain its ‘village’ individuality with more stringent planning controls.

“It would be a great shame to lose any of the apple orchards as this is what Whimble is known for; this marks the character and history of Whimble”

57% of respondents were asking for management of trees and hedges in relation to new development to maintain the visual character of the parish, with 35% suggesting stronger enforcement of planning controls and 24% suggesting more creative design. Other comments included too many brick buildings, important to consider the age of the village, no more house or high density building, no more commercial buildings, avoid infill and extensions of existing buildings, and ensure maintenance is carried out on ditches and streams to prevent flooding.

“A green wedge between Whimble and Cranbrook must be maintained, and infilling ruins a village landscape”

The full results of the statistical survey and of the written comments are available on request from the Clerk to the Parish Council



Whimple inset map from the East Devon Local Plan 1995-2011

The Action Plan

The Action Plan which follows will be monitored by the parish council which will report annually on its progress. It is a guide for future activities and subject to periodic review and amendment where appropriate. However, whilst many of the actions will be parish council led, success in implementing the plan is dependent upon engagement by the community as a whole.

Abbreviations used in the plan –

CCD	Community Council of Devon	PCSOs	Police Community Support Officers
DCC	Devon County Council	WACY	Whimple Action Committee for Youth
DPFA	Devon Playing Fields Association	WPC	Whimple Parish Council
EDDC	East Devon District Council		

Timescales –

Short term	12 –18 months
Medium term	18 months – 3 years
Long term	3 – 5 years

What has happened so far?

Prior to adoption of this Plan work began on implementing a number of the Actions which follow this section. These include –

Pavement on road alongside the MUGA – The parish council has committed funds for this work to be carried out as soon as possible.

Facilities for young people – The WACY group has secured funding via the DCC Locality Budget for a shelter in the Town Lane play area and this has been erected. The Group is also actively working on the provision of facilities at the Parish Field.

Public Rights of Way – a new parish map of public rights of way has been displayed on the notice board in The Square.

Victory Hall – the Management Committee is seeking funding for improvements to the toilets and for better access to the kitchen and committee room.

PLANNING

ISSUE	AIMS	ACTION	PARTNERS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE
Development within the parish	To protect green areas surrounding the village.	Ensure that current Local Plan policies are transferred to the East Devon Local Development Framework	WPC, EDDC	High	On-going
Development of Cranbrook	To maintain Whimble as a separate community	Ensure that the East Devon Local Development Framework provides an adequate Green Wedge between Cranbrook and Whimble	WPC, EDDC	High	On-going
Building design	To ensure that new development is in keeping with the character of the village	1. Scrutinise planning applications to ensure that design and materials are in keeping with their surroundings	WPC, EDDC	High	On-going
		2. Consider the need for preparation of a village design statement	WPC	Low	Long term
Housing concerns	To ensure that there is a diversity of housing type within the parish	Monitor the need for any low cost housing and maintain a balance of housing type when considering planning applications	WPC, EDDC, CCD	High	On-going
Lack of mains gas supply	To have a mains gas supply to Whimble	Lobby for a mains gas supply	WPC, Wales and West Utilities	Low	Long term

TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Feared closure of Whimble station when Cranbrook station is built	To retain Whimble station and a satisfactory schedule of trains	1. Lobby planners and train operators	WPC, DCC, Rail Passengers Council, Network Rail, SW Trains	High	On-going
		2. Publicise train services to encourage use	Whimble News, Whimble.net website	High	On-going
Poor bus links	To have a bus service to Exeter from the centre of Whimble	Liaise with bus operators	WPC, DCC, Devon Rural Transport Partnership, bus operators	Medium	Short term
Parking in The Square	To minimise congestion and improve safety in The Square	Encourage greater use of the public car park	WPC, local businesses, Whimble Church, Scout Group, Whimble News, Whimble.net website	High	Short term
Parking problems throughout the parish	To reduce congestion and maintain road safety	Investigate options for easing parking congestion at key locations	WPC, DCC, Whimble News, PCSOs	Medium	Medium term
Speeding traffic	To improve road safety	Promote measures to reduce speeding traffic, including enforcement of existing speed limits	WPC, DCC, Police	High	On-going
Lack of pavements	To improve safety for pedestrians	Provide a pavement on road alongside the Multi Use Games Area	WPC, DCC	High	Immediate
Access to facilities at Cranbrook	To provide a low-carbon means of access to facilities at Cranbrook	Lobby for a safe cycling route to facilities at Cranbrook	WPC, EDDC, DCC, Sustrans	Low	Short term

RECREATION

ISSUE	AIMS	ACTION	PARTNERS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE
The Parish Field	To improve facilities at, and access to, the Parish Field	1. Prepare a 'vision' for enhancing the Parish Field and incrementally install new features	WPC, WACY, DPFA, Whimble School, Youth Club, Parishioners.	High	On-going
		2. Provide a footbridge from Slewtton Crescent to the Parish Field	WPC, Bovis Homes, DPFA	High	Short term
Expansion of sporting opportunities	To enable wider use of the Multi Use Games Area	Liaise with Whimble School to review the possibility of non-school use of the MUGA	WPC, Whimble School, EDDC	High	Short term
Lack of activities for 11 – 18 year olds	To provide facilities and activities for over 11s	Introduction of over 11 recreational facilities and activities	WPC, Devon Youth Service, WACY, Youth Club, Whimble Church, Tennis Club	High	On-going
Promotion of local events	To provide a central information point and minimize fly-posting	Provide a community events notice board (or suitable alternative)	WPC, DCC	High	Short term
Creation of a public open space	To provide an open space for informal recreation and village events	Investigate creation of a 'village green'	WPC, Landowners	Medium	Medium term
Preserving local distinctiveness	To provide a public amenity and raise awareness of the local heritage	Investigate the creation of a 'community orchard'	WPC, Landowners, Whimble Village Produce Association, Common Ground	Medium	Long term

AMENITIES

The Victory Hall	To improve and extend facilities at the Victory Hall to accommodate a wider range of activities	Prepare and action a development plan and seek funding	Hall Management Committee, CCD, WPC, EDDC, Hall users, Parishioners	High	On-going
The Scout hut	To ensure that the Scout hut remains serviceable for Scouting activities and other compatible uses	Assess the need for, and cost of, essential repairs and long term improvements, and seek funding	The Scout Association, 1 st Whimble Scout Group, CCD	High	Short/medium term
Mobile Library Service	To increase use of the Mobile Library	Publicise times of visits, press for additional visits and improved range of books	WPC, DCC, Whimble News, Whimble.net website	Medium	Short term
Lack of play equipment for toddlers	To ensure that amenities are provided for every age group	Provide additional toddler equipment in Slewtton Crescent play area	WPC, EDDC, Early Years Partnership	High	Short term

EDUCATION

ISSUE	AIMS	ACTION	PARTNERS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE
Working parents	To provide after school activities for children of primary school age	Assess demand for, and possibilities of, after school activities	Whimble School	High	Short term
Adult education	To provide adult education classes in the village	1. Identify co-ordinators, trainers and potential participants	Parishioners, DCC, Rural Outreach Learning Initiative	High	Short term
		2. Arrange taster sessions and courses	Parishioners, DCC, Victory Hall	High	Short term
Lack of awareness of some activities in the Whimble	To ensure that the community has easy access to relevant information	Provide regular information in Whimble News, in the Victory Hall and on the Whimble.net website	Whimble News, Victory Hall Management Committee, Whimble.net website, activity/event organisers	High	On-going

ENVIRONMENT

Low recycling rates	To increase the amount of recycled household waste	Lobby EDDC for improvements to the kerbside collection	WPC, EDDC	High	Short term
Distance from recycling centres	To improve villagers' access to recycling facilities	Provide a local recycling facility	WPC, EDDC, DCC, Otter Rotters, Parishioners	High	Medium term
Litter	To reduce the amount of litter in the parish	1. Install more litter bins and dog bins	WPC, EDDC	High	Short term
		2. Set up litter picking team(s)	WPC, Parishioners	High	Medium term
Ownership of care for the local environment	To increase 'pride of place' and care for the local environment	Enter 'Best kept Village' competition	WPC, village organisations, residents and businesses	Low	Annually
Public rights of way	To ensure that local residents are aware of local access provision	Review information provided on local rights of way	WPC, Parish Paths Partnership	High	Short term
Conservation Area	To raise awareness of the Whimble Conservation Area	Make available relevant information on the Whimble Conservation Area	WPC, Whimble History Society	Medium	Short term
Appearance of the village	To make visual improvements to communal/public areas	Review possible locations and nature of improvements which might be made	WPC, EDDC, Whimble Village Produce Association	Medium	Medium term
Street Lighting	To establish the appropriate level of street lighting, balancing safety with a reduction in carbon footprint	Review the location and operating hours of street lighting	WPC, DCC	High	Medium term

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementation	To ensure the Action Plan is implemented	Set up an implementation group with co-options as appropriate	WPC	High	Immediate
Monitoring	To ensure the Action Plan is reviewed annually	Review the Action Plan and report progress to the Annual Parish Meeting	WPC	High	Annually

Timescales

Short term	12 – 18 months
Medium term	18 months – 3 years
Long term	3 – 5 years