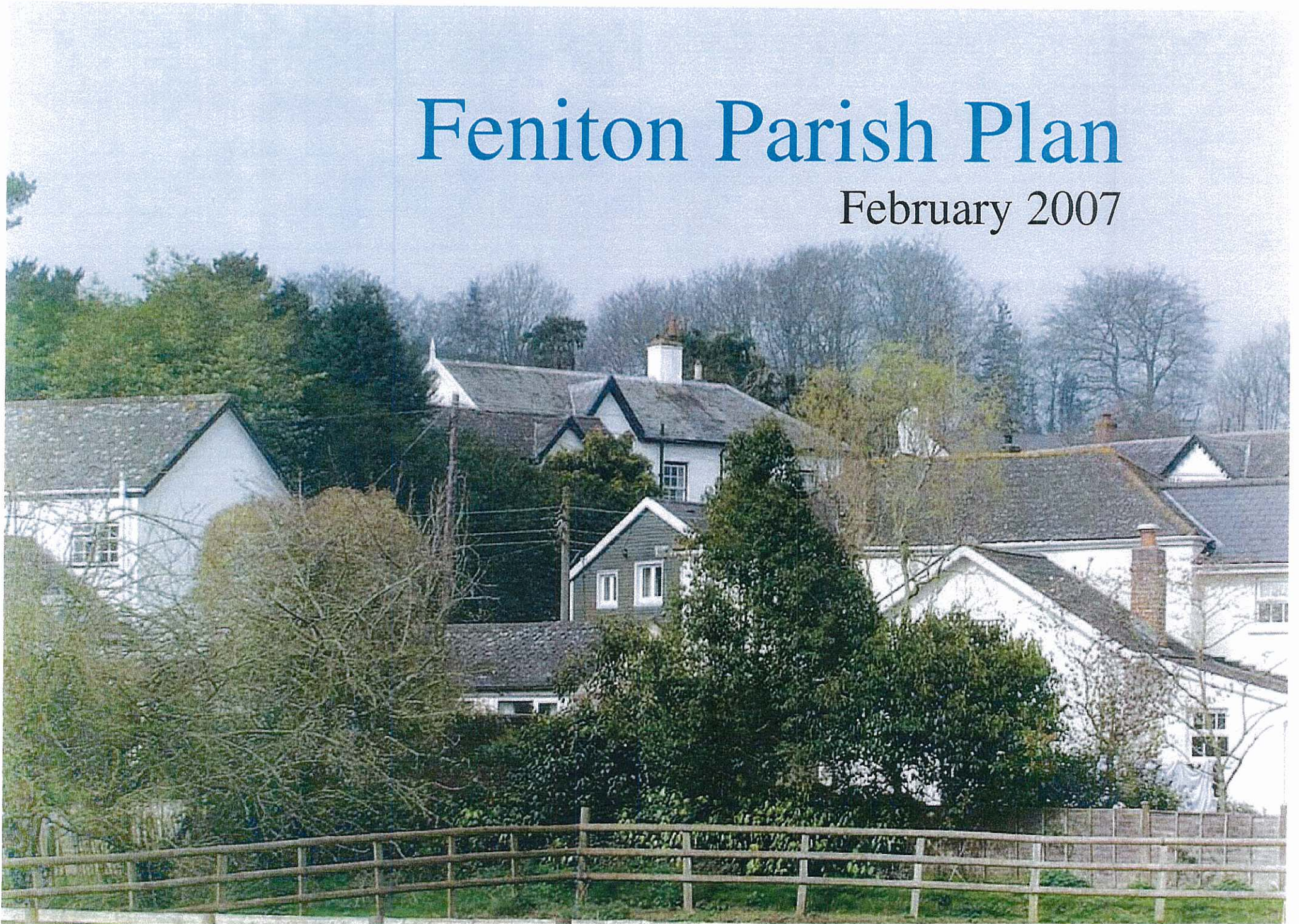


# Feniton Parish Plan

February 2007



## Introduction

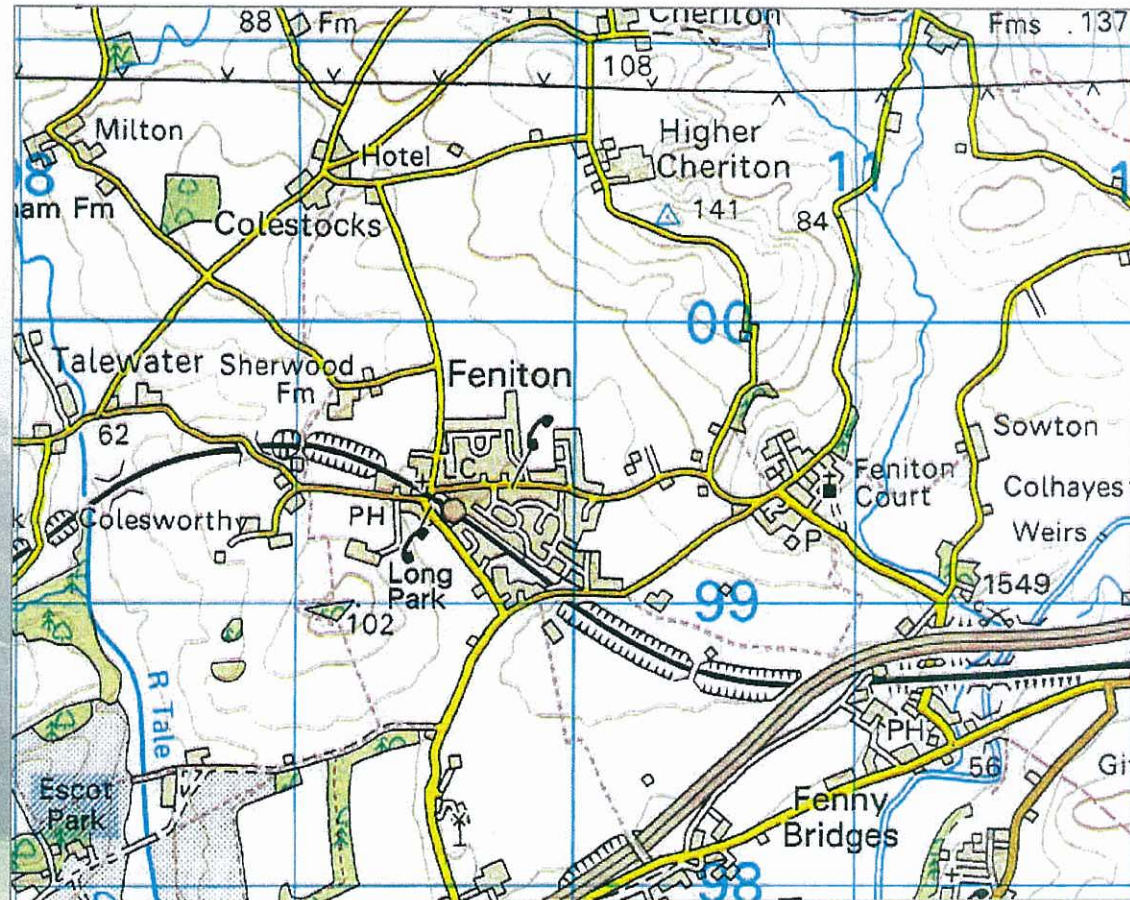
This plan is a profile of our parish and an analysis of our current and future needs and desires. By collecting the views of parishioners in a questionnaire and analysing the results, we've come up with a number of actions which, if implemented, will make Feniton an even better place to live.

The plan has been formally adopted by Feniton parish council and will influence local government (parish council, East Devon District Council and Devon County Council) – for example, through supplementary planning guidance which gives the parish a bigger say in how it wants the village and surrounding areas to develop.

We hope that it will help attract funding for projects, such as the new QE2 play area.

And it will provide information for residents, visitors and prospective residents.

“ We recently moved to the area and really welcome the chance to get involved with local issues ”

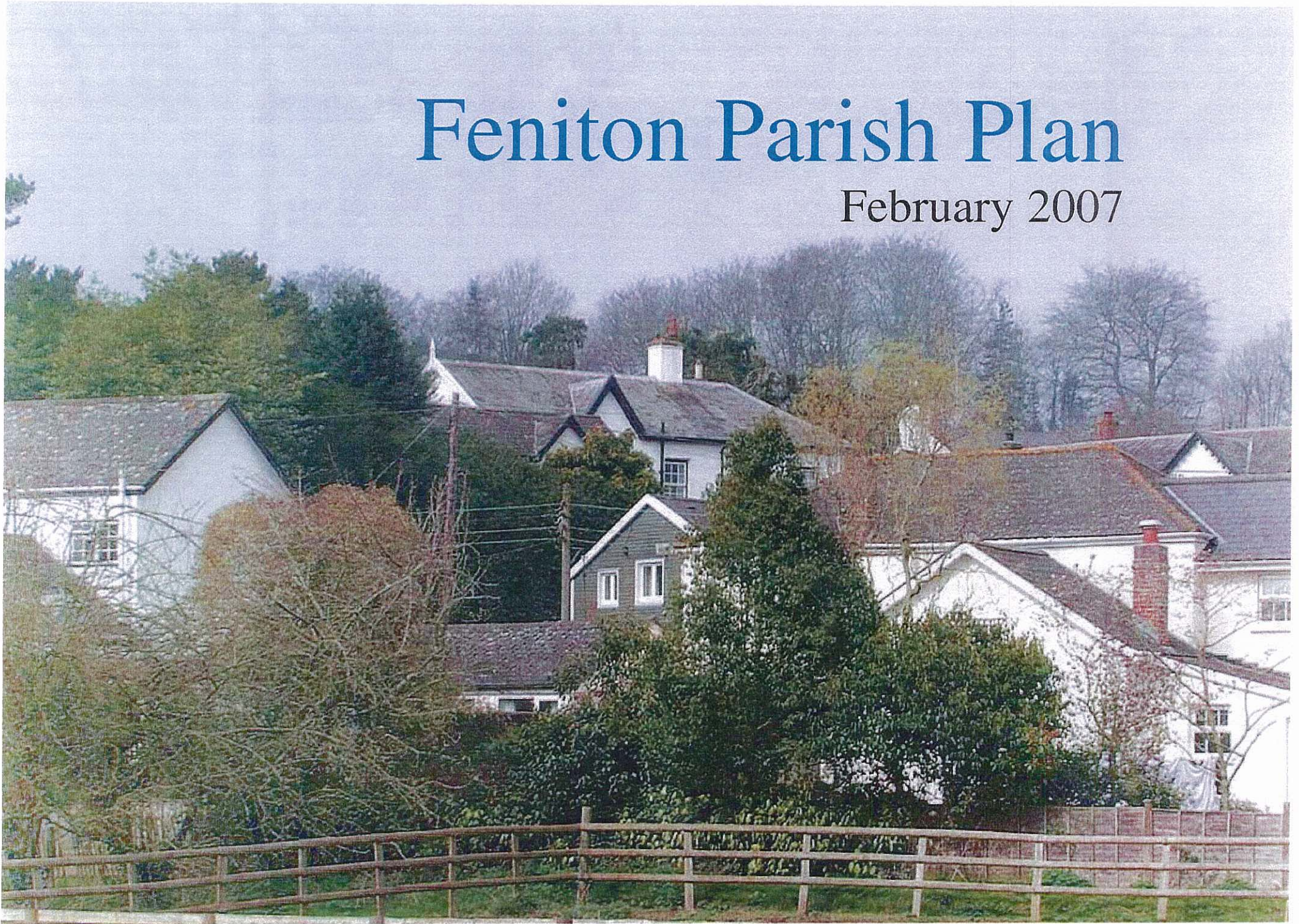


*Which areas are in the parish of Feniton?  
The new village, the old village, Colesworthy,  
Cheriton, Curscombe  
and Fenny Bridges*

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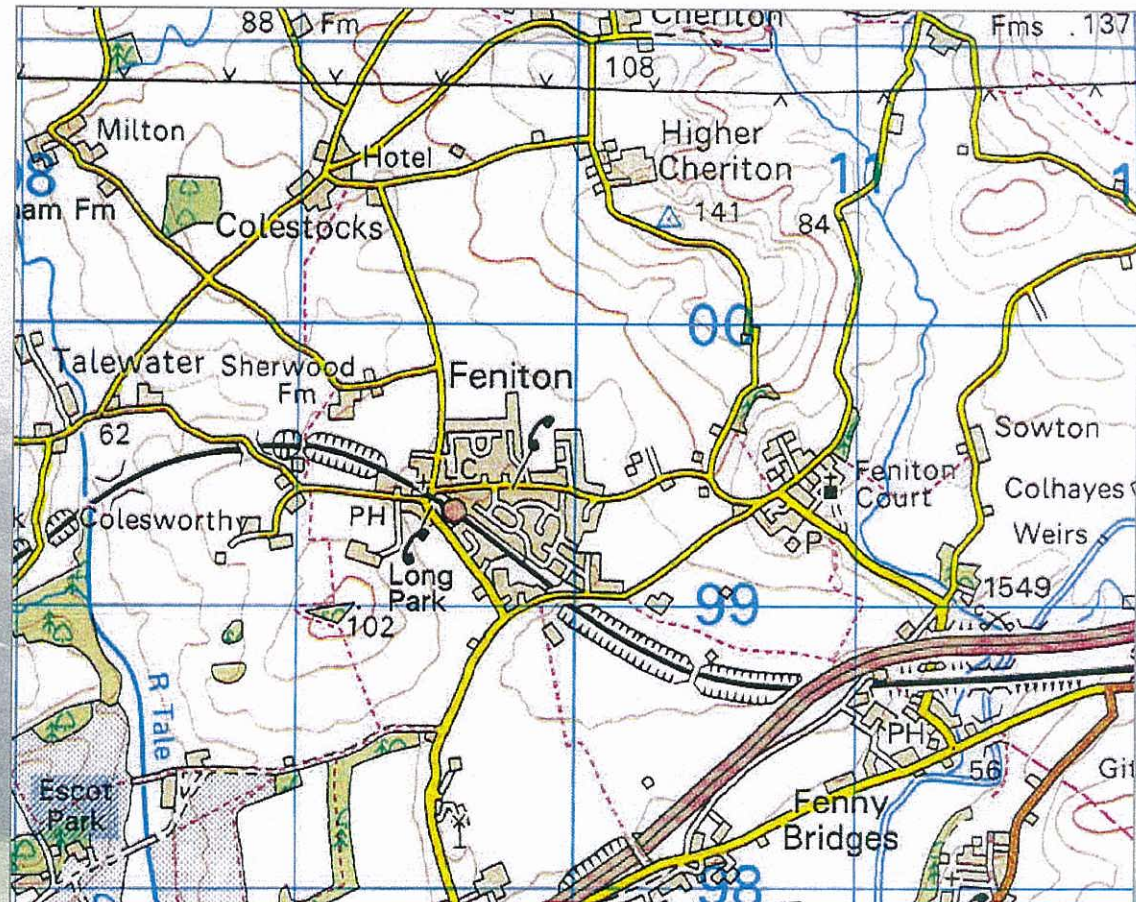
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## What did we learn?

We received 216 forms covering a total of 416 respondents. 81% lived in the new village, 12% in the old village and 7% in the hamlets. 45% of respondents have lived in the parish for more than 15 years, and 23% for 5 years or less.

The age profile of respondents was quite high with 42% aged 60 years or over. This is higher than the electoral roll profile and suggests that older people may have been able to find more time to respond to the questionnaire.

Nearly 31% of respondents were originally attracted to the parish by the availability of housing while 29% came for the country lifestyle and 21% because they worked in the area.

The vast majority of respondents want the village to retain its present character or develop as a balanced community. Over 70% of respondents do not wish to see more houses built.

Within the questionnaire, there were opportunities for respondents to describe what they liked and didn't like about the parish by choosing options or by entering free text in spaces provided. It is a combination of statistics and the many comments received which forms the basis of this report and actions outlined.

☺☺ Just to say, I think  
we're very lucky  
to live here! ☺☺

## What were the best things about the parish?

- The environment
- The community
- Footpaths, bridleways and lanes
- Good transport links
- Playing fields and sports facilities

## What were the worst things about the parish?

- Traffic too fast
- Parking issues
- Litter and dog fouling
- Flooding and sewerage problems



## Local environment

Feniton is probably named from the Vine stream that runs through the village – the name appears as Vineton on 17th century maps.

A mid-sized Devon parish with nearly 2000 residents, Feniton covers an area of some 650 hectares and includes the original 'old' village, housing estates built around the nearby train station and previously called Sidmouth Junction, the hamlets of Curscombe, Higher Cheriton and Colesworthy and traditional Devon farmsteads and agricultural landscape. Access to the village is via single-track roads. The A30 trunk road is a mile to the south and provides easy access to the local towns of Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Exeter and to the M5. The village station is on the Exeter to London Waterloo railway line.

Feniton has a comparatively high population density with 2.9 people per hectare and the age profile of inhabitants is weighted in favour of those of employable age with 83% of adults aged under 64. There are many families with school age children in the parish.

The parish has a 13th century church, a post office, a public house, a general store, two hairdressers and a fast food takeaway. There is a primary school, a private dental practice, mobile NHS services (a chiropody clinic) and a mobile library that visits fortnightly. There are two well equipped children's play areas, a youth centre building, allotments, football and cricket pitches and an active sports and social club. Feniton village has been twinned with Louvigny in France for over 30 years.

A small industrial site located at Talewater on the west of the parish, the site of an old brick works, provides jobs for some 50 people in light engineering, print finishing and forestry. To the east, by the River Otter, is the site of the battle of Fenny Bridges. In 1549 Cornishmen fought here against the government's introduction of the first Reformed Prayer Book. A commemorative stone marks the field.



## Survey findings

The majority of respondents appreciated the appearance of the parish and the countryside features including footpaths and bridleways, traditional Devon banks, hedges and trees. The green areas of the village were particularly valued, including the playing field, which over 70% of respondents felt needed to be protected, and the surrounding countryside.

The local shops were highly rated, particularly the Spar shop and the post office which are important to over 90% of respondents. Respondents felt that there were a number of eyesores in the village – for example, the Nog Inn and the station building, which would benefit from better waiting facilities.

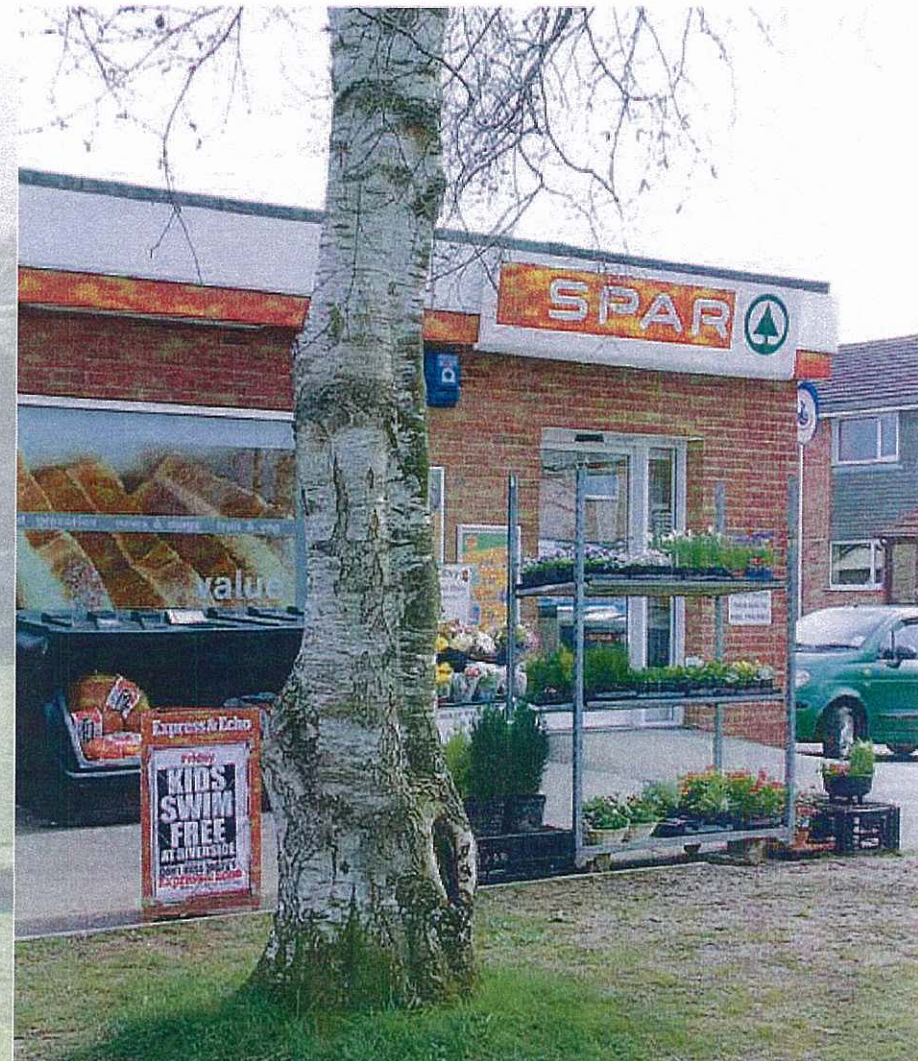
The majority of people (71%) want no further building in the village and those who thought some building was acceptable believe it should be limited to infill only.

Over 70% of respondents felt that dog fouling is a problem and that dog bins should be provided, while 63% felt there is too much litter in the village. Flies were found to be a problem in parts of the parish at certain times of year.

Most services were considered to be satisfactory, although a number of respondents were dissatisfied with the water supply which they said is often discoloured. Mains drainage and flooding are a significant problem to some residents. When asked about crime and safety, the main concern was speeding traffic. Respondents also said they would appreciate a police presence late at night, particularly at weekends.

Less than 10% of people had problems accessing health services, although some regretted that the Coleridge medical centre at Ottery St Mary no longer holds a surgery in Feniton.

“ This is the friendliest village  
I have lived in! ”



## Actions

- Investigate the possibility of acquiring the playing fields on behalf of the parish
- Encourage EDDC to adopt the parish plan so that residents' views on future developments are taken into consideration
- Look at ways to reduce dog fouling including education and the possibility of providing dog bins in key locations
- Raise the issue of the appearance of and facilities provided by the station building
- Support residents who suffer mains drainage problems in their campaign to get sewers adopted by DCC
- Address flooding issues with DCC
- Address the seasonal problem of flies with EDDC

☞☞ If ditches and drains  
were kept clear,  
it would help with flooding ☞☞





## Sports and leisure

Feniton has an active sports and social club with a membership of approximately 250, about a third of whom participate in the activities on offer. Facilities are good with a clubhouse, a cricket pitch, two football pitches and excellent changing room facilities which have been recently installed.

The club currently runs two Saturday football teams, a Sunday ladies team and a junior mini-league for players aged 10 and under. It also has a strong tradition in youth football.

There are two cricket teams playing league and cup cricket with regular challenges from various touring sides.

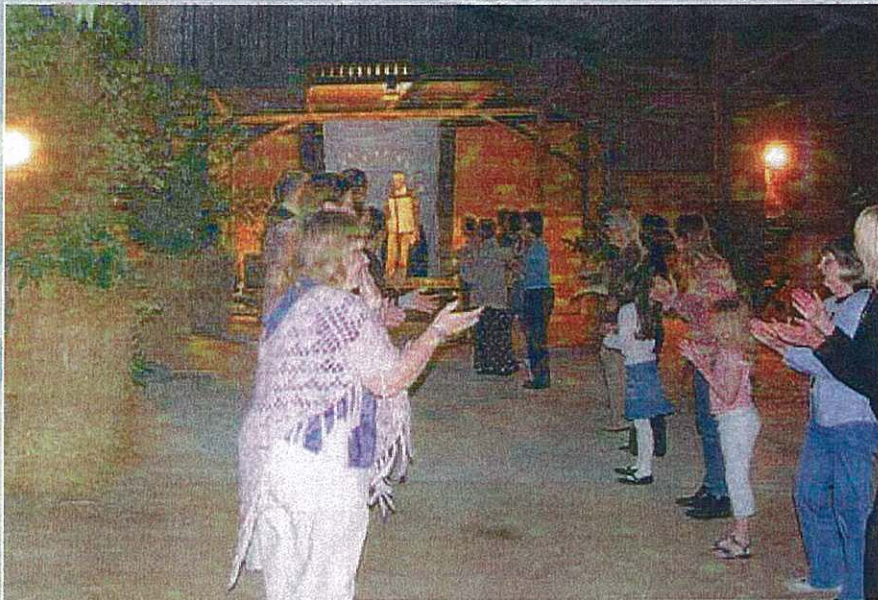
The clubhouse has several skittle teams playing in league matches around East Devon and there are also teams in the local cribbage and euchre leagues.

The Wednesday Club is a social group for the over sixties which meets at the clubhouse every other Wednesday. Activities include bingo, beetle drives, film shows, guest speakers, all accompanied by tea and coffee making facilities.

A number of events are organised through the year including discos, dances, barbeques and bingo.

The local branch of the Women's Institute meets in the village hall on the first Wednesday of every month. Meetings take the form of an informative talk or craft demonstration, refreshments, sometimes a light-hearted game or quiz, together with any necessary business discussion. Members join with other local WIs for outings and take part in county and Honiton group events.

There is a bowling club in the old village with excellent facilities, a thriving membership and a very busy season.



## Survey findings

Nearly all of the respondents who expressed an opinion thought that football, cricket and bowls facilities in Feniton were good or reasonable.

Of the indoor sports, most of those who expressed an opinion thought that pool, skittles and darts facilities were good or reasonable.

When asked what other sports facilities people would like to see in the parish, many requested tennis courts and some liked the idea of indoor facilities for gym, dancing and badminton.

A number also thought it would be good to have a swimming pool in Feniton.

In terms of other leisure activities, some people thought that Feniton could benefit from better facilities for eating out.

Many people were interested in evening classes and computing skills was the most popular subject. A few people were interested in language classes and studying craft activities.

## Actions

- Review sports facilities and investigate the provision of additional ones, particularly tennis courts
- Find ways of informing parishioners more effectively about facilities provided locally which are too expensive to provide in a small village
- Investigate the provision of evening classes in computer skills



## Education and youth facilities

Feniton Church of England Primary School has approximately 220 children enrolled and receives consistently good Ofsted reports. The school catchment area covers Feniton, Talaton, Buckerell and Gittisham. There is an after-school care club called Cool Kidz.

Secondary school education is to be found locally at The King's School, Ottery St Mary, and Honiton Community College. Students wishing to study for post-16 qualifications can do so at these schools or at Exeter College.

Music with Mummy is a fun stimulating approach to music for children aged 6 months to 3 years based in Feniton.

The Feniton Toddler Group meets on Monday mornings from 10.00 to 11.30 and on Wednesday afternoons from 13.15 to 15.15. It offers play experiences for children from birth to school age and opportunities for carers to socialise.

Scallywags is Feniton's pre-school providing early education and play experiences for children from the term in which they reach 3 to school age.

Beavers (ages 6 to 7, 17.30 – 18.30) and Cubs (ages 7 to 10, 18.30 – 20.00) meet in the youth centre on Thursdays and are affiliated to East Devon District Scouts.

Brownies meet in the youth centre on Friday evenings (17.00 – 18.30).

Youth club usually meets on Wednesdays (18.30 – 20.00) and Fridays (19.30 – 21.00) at the youth centre. Children over the age of 6 are welcome (any under 6 must be accompanied by an adult).

In addition there are sports clubs in Feniton that welcome the participation of children and young people.



## Survey findings

A number of respondents said they were attracted to the parish by the good schools in the area.

The youth centre did not generate enthusiasm amongst respondents and there is clearly room for improvement.

Play areas were appreciated with 84% of those who expressed an opinion finding the facilities satisfactory or good.

Youth football and cricket were considered good, but there was a strongly held view that skateboarding facilities should be provided. Like the adults, a number of children were interested in tennis being available in the village.

## Actions

- Raise awareness in all age groups of clubs and activities available
- Encourage the development of the youth club
- Investigate the provision of skateboarding facilities

“ I don't know what's available at present, teenage activities would be good ”



## Traffic and transport

### Survey findings

Over 50% of respondents owned two or more cars and many people considered on road parking a problem in Feniton. A number felt that more parking was needed, particularly in Station Road and Feniton Gardens.

Many people were concerned about speeding traffic and 68% highlighted a number of danger points on the roads of the parish. These tended to be on the main access roads, all of which have narrow or potentially dangerous sections.

Surprisingly few respondents relied on public transport with 92% saying they used it less than once a week or not at all.

However there was a demand for a higher frequency of buses and for more routes to be available. Popular destinations were Exeter, Honiton, Taunton and Ottery St Mary.

Similarly, there was a demand for a higher frequency of trains although it was pointed out that traffic disruption will increase unless the station platform is lengthened and the level crossing barrier remains down for a shorter time when trains are approaching.

### Actions

- Review with DCC parking arrangements in the new village
- Review with DCC danger points on main access roads and consider traffic calming measures
- Make representations as to frequency of trains, station facilities and timing of level crossing barrier



## Religion

St Andrew's Feniton is a Church of England parish church and the only active public place of worship in the village. The building dates back to the 13th century.

It seeks to be open and accessible to all members of the community and to this end a variety of Sunday services are held in the parish church and in the village Church of England school.

Physical access to both buildings is good, although facilities at the parish church are limited by the historic nature of the building.

Traditional activities are actively encouraged and open to all and include bell ringing, choir, flower arranging and many more of the elements associated with village life.

## Survey findings

Two thirds of respondents felt that the church was important as a historic building and nearly 50% saw it as important for baptisms, weddings and funerals. A total of 27% said it was important for Sunday worship.

We asked whether people would like to see the religious buildings of the parish (Feniton church and Sidmouth Junction chapel) used for other functions but approximately equal numbers of respondents were for and against this, and over half had no opinion. Those who were in favour liked the idea of concerts and other social events.

“ The church is there when you need a friend and can't find one ”



## Communication

### Survey findings

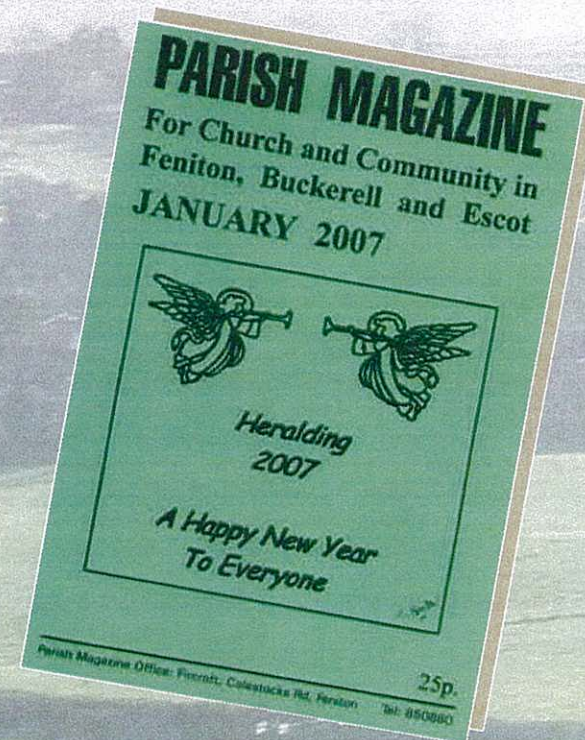
We asked which methods of communication of news, events and services were preferred by parishioners and nearly 80% said that they found the parish magazine the most useful source of information. Some respondents suggested that it should be delivered free of charge to all houses in Feniton.

Opinion was then fairly evenly divided between the parish noticeboards, the parish website and a parish council newsletter as favoured methods of communication.

### Actions

- Ensure that the parish magazine has the widest possible circulation
- Promote the new website as a means of obtaining up to date information

“ The parish magazine is good for keeping us informed, and the adverts for local trades people are really useful ”



# Fundraising

## Survey findings

Some of the actions identified in the parish plan will require money to implement. We asked where this money should come from.

The majority of respondents preferred fundraising as the main source of funds for projects and many also favoured sponsorship and lottery funding. Some people (30%) found small council tax increases acceptable, but larger council tax increases were unpopular – only 3% in favour.





The Feniton Parish Plan was commissioned by Feniton parish council and co-ordinated by a steering group comprising the following volunteers:

John Horrocks	(chair)
Phil Higginson	(secretary)
David Lanning	(church)
Steve Phillips	(sports)
Shân English	(children)
Martyn Smith	(twinning)
Pete Privett	(parish council)

The committee would like to thank Diane Cowgill for her help, and Brenda Powell, Christine Gibbins, and Val and Cliff Stringer for allowing us to use some of their photos.

Implementation of the plan will be managed by the parish council either directly or through 'task and finish' project groups.

This plan is also available on the parish council website at [www.fenitonparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.fenitonparishcouncil.gov.uk).

*John Horrocks, chairman,  
Parish Plan steering group,  
January 2007*



