

UPOTTERY PARISH PLAN

2007 – 2012

Introduction and Background

The concept of the parish plan has its origins in the Government's earlier *Vital Villages* programme. The programme was anxious to ensure that the very best of British village life was captured and sustained.

The process of building this plan for Upottery was started in 2002 by Andrew Curtis and Stuart Borer. In their foresight and enthusiasm in doing so, they encountered the perennial problems of bureaucracy and apathy. In the face of these difficulties, the process understandably lay dormant until 2004 when the present Co-ordinating Group was formed, incorporating their early efforts.

The value of a Parish Plan

Upottery Parish Council recognized the value of having a parish plan as a means by which its voice – on behalf of parishioners – would have greater impact on deliberations in the East Devon District and in the Devon County administrations. This was seen as particularly important at a time when central government seemed to be drawing more power to its own corridors, squeezing out the importance of the local view.

The Parish Council was keen that the Co-ordinating Group should not be a sub-committee so much as have an element of independence, drawing its membership as widely as possible and yet reporting regularly for support to the full Parish Council.

A further motivation for creating a plan arose from the parish's success in the *Village of the Year* competition. Upottery was twice (2002 and 2003) placed as runner-up to the winning village and actually won in 2003 the Information Technology award for the county of Devon. It became clear then that the existence of a plan is

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likely to generate in a parish the range of activity which makes it stand out from its peers. In many respects, Upottery already stood out – and had done so for decades - without so much as a thought of a parish plan. It is known widely as a pretty, warm, welcoming and creative parish. Against the background of that significant advantage, the Co-ordinating Group wondered how best to help a plan to succeed.

How do we ensure success ?

Three elements are likely to comprise the only way in which a plan for Upottery will engender any credibility or support:

The first is that *it must be geared to beneficial ACTION*. People will simply not be interested in a document which is consigned to a shelf to gather dust rather than helping to deliver some tangible improvement in parish life.

Second, *it must remain current*. If the plan is sufficiently flexible to take account of changing village events and help the parish to achieve its own objectives, it stands a better chance of being seen as worthwhile.

Third, the existence of a plan – and accompanying project management –will together be a positive help in *securing grant aid for parish initiatives*.

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The Planning Process – a bid for inclusiveness

It was essential that the planning process tried as best as it could to be inclusive, rather than somehow imposing itself upon parishioners.

A number of steps were taken to generate this inclusiveness:

- 1) the Parish Council was involved from the outset, representing in theory all parishioners (although not all residents take an active interest in parish council affairs)
- 2) there was an attempt to draw the membership of the Co-ordinating Group in a way which balanced the need for inclusiveness with manageable size (please see Appendix “A” for membership)
- 3) regular bulletins, giving information or seeking participation, were published in the *Parish Pump*, delivered to every household in the parish
- 4) parish-based focus groups were used to generate help and ideas (and will continue to be used for the “Action” phase)
- 5) a survey of parish views was drawn up, printed and issued to each household and the results published, again to each household
- 6) the results of that survey inform this first edition of the Plan, as do subsequent developments in parish life which have involved broad parish consultation
- 7) a draft of this first edition has been presented to the members of the Parish Council for adoption on behalf of the parish

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THE UPOTTERY PARISH PLAN

Objective

To bring added benefit where possible to any aspect of Upottery parish life, whether for parishioners or those visiting on business or pleasure, either through direct action or through influencing East Devon District Council or the Devon County Council, and either alone or in partnership with other parishes or organisations.

Delivery

The elected members of the Upottery Parish Council remain the formal means by which the above objective is to be attained. Of course, much is already achieved formally and informally by other individuals and groupings within the parish and the preparation of this plan is intended only to encourage and support those well established creative processes. The Parish Plan Co-ordinating Group, in consultation with the Parish Council, will from time to time help to bring together groups of volunteers to assist wherever it can.

Scope

The initial range of the plan is 5 years and based on the November 2005 parish planning survey. However, the plan is constructed with an eye to flexibility so that it may take account of, and assist where possible, subsequent developments in parish thinking or seize the benefit of opportunities arising from beyond Upottery.

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In helping the three communities of Upottery to achieve improvement, those preparing the plan recognize that Upottery School, St Mary's Church and the Smeatharpe Baptist Chapel will each have its own planning process and administrative arrangements.

Other bodies, like the Manor Room Management Committee, and commercial outlets like the *Sidmouth Arms*, Rawridge Post Office and *Highlands* shop are responsible for their own development and, in such circumstances, the Parish Plan can do no more than offer consultation and recommendation.

Themes:

The November survey broke down an extensive questionnaire into discrete themes (although some themes are likely to have a bearing on others). This plan attempts to distil all of the ideas offered under a sequence of thematic headings. Each section concludes with suggested "ACTION" points. If significant numbers of these actions are followed through and achieved, real benefit to our three communities will follow and all the effort involved in creating the Parish Plan will have been worthwhile.

Voluntary action groups will be needed but will not have to follow the nominated actions in numerical sequence. Some will be achieved more quickly and easily than others. Yet others may prove impossible at this time.

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ROADS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Earlier this year, the first focus group was established to see whether improvements based upon the November 2005 survey might be achieved for our local traffic arrangements.

The principal concerns arising from the survey were:

- 1) The condition of poorly repaired road surfaces
- 2) The management of roadside hedgerows, ditches and drains for greater road safety
- 3) The extent and effectiveness of speed restrictions on narrow lanes and through our village centres
- 4) The management of roadside parking

In those expressing concern, the geographical areas most commonly referred to were the Airfield Road at Smeatharpe and, broadly, the road through Upottery and Rawridge from Harvest Wood to the junction with the A 30. Many mentioned the anomaly of a 50 mph limit on the main A 30 and yet no clear limit on our surrounding narrow country lanes. Others sought the introduction of a 20 mph limit to protect our school area. A school travel plan is currently being developed and part of its brief is general safety, since people associated with the school have raised the question of danger of traffic speed outside the school.

Organizers of the early group were frustrated by their inability to secure anything like constructive help from the Devon County Council Highways Authority, even to the minimum point of getting an answer to a letter or telephone call.

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An early desire to adopt the *Safe Lanes* scheme foundered on the moving on of key advisors from a nearby parish and the relocation of the chairman of our own focus group.

ACTION

1. The Upottery Parish Council publicly to declare its position on the route and safety conditions of the A303, to lobby for its greater safety and to publicize to the parish what action it has taken
2. Re-activate the Road, Traffic and Transport focus group under new chairmanship
3. Work with DCC Highways and East Devon District Council in the medium and longer term to redesign the lay-by immediately to the North East of the junction between the A303 and the A30 and the disused filling-station site at the top of Sandy's Lane to present a "Showcase for Devon" to arriving tourists to the County
4. Work with DCC Highways to re-surface roads where required, to achieve more economical and effective "repair in time" measures with solid repair rather than patching
5. Review with DCC and police existing speed limits in the parish and consider alterations and extensions, including surface warning "rumble" lines or other methods of traffic calming
6. Consider means by which the group can organize the purchase and use of the parish's own movable speed warning device
7. Encourage the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in local use of speed enforcement measures
8. Consider implications of setting up of a police/community partnership in speed reduction (as in Avon and Somerset)
9. Work with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to produce plans for better management of emergency diversions from A303 through village and better management of HGV traffic through village
10. Develop a modest central off-road car-parking area in Upottery (perhaps in conjunction with re-design of the playing field and/or Manor Room)

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11. Replace road-side signs at Upottery War Memorial for road-surface signs
12. Re-activate “Safe Lanes” project
13. Work with local farmers and DDC Highways in hedge-cutting at roadside for improved visibility and to clear mud from road surfaces
14. Work with DDC Highways at improving hours and working effectiveness of lengthmen
15. Assess possibility of concreting of washed-away edges and retaining full width of roads
16. Work with DDC Highways to improve winter salting and gritting arrangements
17. Consider use of central white lines to encourage near-side driving
18. Assess possibility of warnings re. deep ditches
19. Street lights to go off at midnight
20. Introduce splay junctions where possible for greater visibility and manoeuvrability
21. Remove unnecessary signs where appearing in multiples
22. Erect signs where necessary to alert drivers to pedestrians, horses, deer or slippery surface conditions and to include village “Welcomes Careful Drivers” signs
23. Actively support the “safer cycling” scheme in conjunction with local police and Upottery School
24. Consider in partnership means by which the number of on-road parked vehicles in Rawridge might be reduced, which, with current vehicle speeds, constitutes an increasing hazard

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SECURITY

Principal concerns arising from the survey were:

- 1) The safety of items in outbuildings
- 2) Lack of visible deterrent police presence
- 3) Lack of faith in prompt police response to emergency calls
- 4) Anxiety about a developing and unwelcome “them and us” relationship
- 5) Need for ready access to professional police advice
- 6) Prevention of speeding and poor parking (please see *Roads, Traffic and Transport* above)

The parish is so far fortunate to have had the Constabulary allocation of a locally active regular constable as a Beat Manager (formerly PC David Lea and now PC Clive Vickery) as well as the services of a Police Community Support Officer in the person of Phil Anning.

PC Vickery and PCSO Anning are regular attenders in and around the parish generally and specifically at monthly meetings of the Parish Council, where they are always available to take public questions.

Reported crime in the parish is consistently low, often with no crimes at all registered in a month and seldom more than four incidents. Perception remains all important and people often believe themselves to be more at risk than the reported figures would suggest. However, where a family has been the victim of, say, a burglary from an outbuilding, where they feel that their crime has been allocated a low priority by the police service and where, consequently, they (or neighbours) don't bother to report a later incident, the idea of a poor police service moves from perception to reality.

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Both PC Vickery and PCSO Anning are required to share their services over a wide number of parishes.

ACTION

1. Re-activate local Neighbourhood Watch after the recent relocation of key personnel
2. Arrange parish meeting with parish “security” as a theme
3. Re-assess and refresh local Farm Watch arrangements
4. Draw up and adopt a parish-wide plan for improving the security of outbuildings using new partnerships with police and industry
5. Establish regular police surgeries or similar where the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary local Beat Manager and the locally appointed PCSO can meet to discuss security issues
6. Renew property marking events or emphasize through local publicity that the facility remains available by request to PCSO Phil Anning
7. Assess policing arrangements for guarding against earlier (2002) fall-out from the Glastonbury festival to see if expensive resources might now be re-allocated
8. Arrange contact group for police liaison with young people of the parish
9. Review the Community Messaging Service

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EDUCATION

Although the question of statutory and formal education properly remains the responsibility of Upottery School and its governing body, the Parish Council remains readily open to the opportunity of any partnership which might present itself. This might be, for example, in supporting sports coaching through the Playing Fields Association or the hire of school premises for appropriate out-of-hours activity.

As a Parish Council, we should seize every opportunity to celebrate and support our award winning school.

So far as adult and informal education is concerned, the November survey registered a number of interests:

- Well-being classes
- An additional book club
- Language classes
- Sports coaching for all ages
- Practical classes – current affairs, travel
- More “alternative” classes – less predictable than the usual range
- Computer classes

Under the ‘commercial’ banner, separate suggestions were received suggesting the possibility of early help for Small to Medium Enterprises in, for example:

- Book-keeping
- Business advice (e.g. for *Parish Pump*)

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Computers and IT
Editing
Employee relations
Health and Safety
HR management
Marketing
Networking
Painting and decorating
Public relations
Interpersonal skills advice
Self-esteem and assertiveness training
VAT

ACTION

1. Establish a small focus group to co-ordinate a response to the survey's expressed wish for some adult learning opportunity
2. Set up an introductory learning workshop for the parish in which people get together to agree on an adult learning programme for the parish
3. Take advantage of Community Council For Devon's 18 month funding programme (to end its first phase in March 2007) of around £1100 for small capital investment including some revenue expenditure (around £250) with local providers of adult education and for hire of the Manor Room
4. Consider setting up a 10 hour learning course for 12 people (the number recommended by Community Council of Devon funding sources) in a chosen subject – for example, a practical language course for holiday-makers; best use of a digital camera; literary appreciation in conjunction with a book club;

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appreciation of art in conjunction with village tours (see under “Entertainment”); basic approaches to family, house and village history; personal well-being, yoga, Tai Chi; painting, sculpture, poetry and creative writing, theatre and musical composition.

5. Explore alternative grant aid for SME training in commercially related topics such as those listed in the introduction to this section
6. Consider investment of similar grant aid in multi-media projector and screen

ENVIRONMENT

One of the striking features of the survey answers was the obvious delight people felt in the beauty of these natural surroundings. There was an accompanying wish to see that beauty cared for and safeguarded. An equal and complementary force was the distaste expressed for the thoughtless dropping of litter which can spoil the overall impression.

It is good to be able to report that, since the survey, Upottery has been nominated Devon’s *Village of the Year 2006*. The signs announcing the award, now to be displayed at entry points to the village, should provide encouragement to everyone to keep the parish neat and tidy.

Responses to the survey also highlighted the potential conflict between, for example, allowing roadside verges to thrive naturally in support of wild life and yet maintaining them carefully to improve visibility for motorists. A balance needs to be struck between these two competing aims.

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ACTION

1. Establish a small focus group to co-ordinate a response to the survey's expressed wish for conservation of our beautiful environment
2. Set up a parish litter-picking scheme across our three communities perhaps linked with the Parish Strollers and use of local footpaths
3. Enlist school to help with long-term anti-litter drive
4. Ensure, through the Parish Council, that there are adequate lidded litter-bin facilities at strategic points in our three communities
5. Establish, perhaps in conjunction with Upottery School, a Nature Club attracting guest speakers, outings and advice on our environment
6. Add ponds by voluntary effort and with an eye to safety
7. Promote managed conservation through Parish Council agenda
8. Revisit the parish (free) tree-planting scheme where possible
9. Plant trees at school perimeter to bring Piper's Place more into village
10. Recycling arrangements to be improved with more and varied recycling bins and greater emphasis on recycling education
11. Re-arrange re-cycling to generate own income (cf Egerton, Kent)
12. Develop and encourage use of a parish composting scheme
13. Longer term, develop a proper wild-life management plan to encourage environment but prevent untidy verges, encourage re-planting of hedgerows wherever possible and reducing bulk of disposable household waste
14. Re-advertise the Countryside Code to encourage walkers to respect farming needs
15. Attempt to negotiate a reduction in noise from Smeatharpe motor-sport events

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16. Encourage reduction in numbers of industrial bonfires
17. Re-assess possibilities of connecting a water supply to Smeatharpe allotments and planning better communal weed-management
18. Encourage the Parish Council to provide dog-litter bins at appropriate points in our three communities
19. Encourage more flower displays in our three village centres, either at communal points (such as village bridges) or through private gardens (perhaps through more regular repeats of the successful “garden safari” events)
20. Work with owners of riverside frontage to develop an established Otter-side walk
21. Work with owners of woodlands to develop established woodland nature trails
22. Help local volunteer residents to receive grant-aided training as nature-guides

TRANSPORT

ACTION

1. The Upottery Parish Council actively to support and encourage use of the Blackdown Support Group and “Fare Cars” (Trip CTA)
2. Invigorate a fresh drive to encourage car-sharing (for school runs and as an offer of community support to those temporarily unable to drive or for those senior folk who have had to stop driving altogether). The school is in the process of developing a Travel Plan.

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ENTERTAINMENT, FINE ARTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

There is a 'read-across' between this section and *Education* as well as with *Leisure and Sport*.

The parish certainly needs no advice from this planning process on how to encourage, initiate and manage entertainment for parishioners; it is one of the key and successful features of Upottery life. The following section therefore concentrates on interesting aspects which arose from the November survey and attempts to pull together existing ideas and only modest development of them.

The notion of regular community lunches (monthly, quarterly or yearly) was given a significant thumbs-down in a ratio of three to one against and so were whist-drives and tea-dances with an even more emphatic rejection. The compilers of the survey readily acknowledge, with hindsight, that the style of entertainment suggested had a bias towards older inhabitants. By and large, though not exclusively, it was the younger residents who rejected them.

Community events for particular occasions (as with past VE Day or Trafalgar celebrations) will continue to attract plentiful support; it is just that of regularizing them by calendar seems to hold no psychological appeal. The regular and popular Harvest Festival lunch would seem to be a notable exception.

The ratio was reversed in respect of theatrical productions and musical evenings, where something of the order of two thirds of respondents signaled a wish to attend. Totals of 42 and 39 households expressed an interest respectively in acting or playing an instrument, which would suggest (please see below) that organizers might be able to spread even wider their search for talent.

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There is often informal comment after stage-shows at the Manor Room that raise two interesting points. First, that audiences cannot always successfully see or hear productions. Second, that audience numbers come close to an unacceptable level of fire-hazard because of the places sold by organizers in a wish to accommodate support for popular events.

ACTION

1. Establish a small focus group to co-ordinate a response to aspects in the survey which suggested further ideas for entertainment
2. Organizers of theatrical events – for example, musicals or murder-mystery – to consider using the *Parish Pump* as a means of canvassing for new actors, musicians and back-stage support
3. One suggestion raised the possibility of exploring Arts Council backing for professional/semi-professional shows while retaining local amateur drive
4. Develop a twelve-monthly calendar of excursions (so arranged that tours are available to groups as well as individuals, to help cost-effectiveness)

LEISURE AND SPORT

The area of sport and leisure provides an apt example of the way in which a plan with this degree of flexibility can be useful. Unknown to the Planning Co-ordinating Group as it worked on the early development of the Plan, tentative discussions were already taking place elsewhere about different possibilities for the future of the Upottery playing fields. Once contact was established with the planning group - after the November survey questionnaire had been constructed, answers analyzed and the results published - representatives of the Planning Group, now co-opted to the Playing Fields Association, have been able to make some contribution to the parish debate and its practical outcomes.

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The first part of the wider project – the reconstruction of the children’s play area, which was nominated as a clear and unanimous priority at successive public meetings – has already attracted grant-funding of £10,000 and is being formally managed towards a Spring 2007 celebratory opening.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Upottery Playing Fields Association to work through its Committee in liaison with the Planning Group to determine priorities for any change to the playing fields using the January 2006 Colson Stone preliminary sketches
2. Upottery Playing Fields Association consider making a repeat public declaration that building on the playing fields requires majority parish support and forms no part of its intentions
3. Upottery Playing Fields Association makes dealing with the tennis court its next project after completion of the children’s play area, including considering a move to Glebe Park
4. Upottery Playing Fields Association makes dealing with a move of the cricket club to Glebe Park the next project after resolving the future of the tennis court
5. Upottery Playing Fields Association considers, in the event of cricket and tennis moving to Glebe Park, how to configure the playing field area in order best to meet parishioners’ needs
6. Upottery Playing Fields Association considers, in conjunction with Upottery School, whether there are practical ways of meeting the significant interest in the survey from parishioners in hiring the school’s swimming pool facilities
7. Upottery Cricket Club develops, in conjunction with Upottery School and Somerset County Cricket Club, an extended cricket coaching programme for the young people of the parish

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Walking

1. The Parish Strollers consider the survey suggestion that laminated copies of the directions of a walk are left in suitable receptacles at the beginning and end of the walk for use and return. Parish footpath wardens may be able to explore the possibility of financing this initiative from funds allocated to THE Parish Council from DCC.
2. The Upottery Footpath Wardens develop a regular series of meetings with local farmers (perhaps twice a year) in order better to understand respective viewpoints and improve interaction to the benefit of both parties
3. The Upottery Footpath Wardens assess the possibilities of providing a village route/s for dog-walkers
4. The Upottery Footpath Wardens consider practical ways in which users of footpaths might be encouraged to lift litter as they use our footpaths

Meeting

1. The *After Eight Fellowship* group considers occasional expansion of its activities to include daytime meetings open to both sexes (perhaps along the lines of *Probus* – the professional/business association)
2. Upottery social and sporting groups each put forward a competitive quiz team to participate in a charity-based light-hearted version of *Top of the Form* or *University Challenge* throughout the year, including youth teams, to widen the mix of existing (and already plentiful) quiz evenings
3. Upottery social and sporting groups combine to organize a modest number of car-boot sales or similar each year to raise communal funds

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PARISH COUNCIL

The survey return indicated a generally wide recognition of Parish Council members and of opportunities for public access and debate. It was encouraging to read in responses that, where members of the public had not earlier been aware of public access, they would in future be prepared to attend meetings.

A number of reservations were expressed about Parish Council status and the exercise of its responsibilities. These turned around the following points of perceived need:

- for a generally higher profile amongst members
- for membership more reflective of the parish population
- for enhanced gathering of what parishioners wanted
- for more active pursuit of local interests and activities
- for improved communication of planning and decision-making

As a result of these observations, almost the entire complement of members attended an evening seminar on 30th May 2006 and determined to close any identified gaps in status and activity by the following means:

ACTION

1. To republish and re-distribute the photo display of members which was compiled for the *Village of the Year* exhibition in 2003
2. Members to encourage at every opportunity public attendance at monthly meetings and active public participation

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3. Members to sponsor occasional public meetings on locally important themes – for example, roads and traffic or security - in order to harvest local views and make their own positions clear
4. Members to make an active drive to recruit candidates for Parish Council elections in May 2007, with an emphasis on greater youthfulness and generally wider representation
5. Members actively to pursue the principles and practices suggested nationally to attain *Quality Council* status (although our Parish Council is denied that formal status by, amongst other things, its present quota of co-opted members)

MANOR ROOM

The survey tested people's perceptions of, and knowledge about, the Manor Room in Upottery and the village hall at Smeatharpe. Because of the way that the questions were drafted, it was difficult to distinguish in some answers which of the two buildings was referred to. The suggestions below therefore draw only from those answers where it was clear that the Manor Room were mentioned (there were hardly any obvious direct references to the village hall at Smeatharpe).

There are three important observations to make before this Plan presumes to make suggestions about future action. First, levels of satisfaction were anyway generally high with the Manor Room as they are. Second, the Committee has recently achieved hard-won improvements to disabled access and facilities for users as well as finally tying down the knotty area of rectification of boundaries. Third, responsibility for decision-making about this parish facility lies with the elected members of the Manor Room Management Committee; Upottery Parish Council can do no more than, using the vehicle of this plan, make recommendations.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

That the Manor Room Management Committee:

1. Actively considers the re-developments of village hall facilities in surrounding parishes (for example, Stockland and Kentisbeare) to explore what merits may lie in some degree of development
2. Actively considers the extent to which blocs of grant of £50,000 now readily available might bring benefit to the aesthetic, leisure and commercial opportunities of the building on behalf of the parish
3. The latter to incorporate continued consideration of the proposal from Colson Stone landscape designers in January 2006 to re-orientate the existing hall to look over its own playing fields with increased opportunity for observation of the new children's play area and verandah facilities
4. Organizes a small number of craft fairs in the Rooms each year, advertised beyond the village, to raise awareness of local crafts, to generate sales opportunities for the craftsmen and to contribute to parish funds
5. Explores the possibility of using grant-aid to enlarge the hall and add to some of its features – for example, the height of the stage and the seating capacity of the auditorium, the changing facilities and other aspects which would allow the Committee to increase income at the same time as sustaining safety levels
6. Considers the means by which it may bring renewed emphasis on avoidance of fire-hazard to the notice of event organisers
7. Works with local enthusiasts to develop the present valuable village archive display for more permanent availability in enlarged Manor Room facilities, including access to research opportunities for village, family and house history

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8. Actively considers the suggestions arising from the survey for additional entertainment options within the Manor Room

YOUNG PEOPLE

ACTION

1. That a small focus group, perhaps based on the now successfully established Youth Club, actively considers the suggestions arising from the November survey and liaises with other planning groups to realize as many of the ideas as possible

COMMERCE

SIDMOUTH ARMS

The village pub, owned by Enterprise Inns and managed by its licensee, is, like the Church and the School, one of the dominant focal points of the parish. As with other similarly independent bodies, this plan can do no more than relay parishioners' suggestions from responses to the November 2005 survey.

The parish is fortunate to have an attractive traditional pub at its heart. It is not an easy site for the licensee to manage because its car-park is conventionally a short-cut to and from the Manor Room, the playing fields and the Chard Road. Moreover, the frontage is directly on to a busy thoroughfare for villagers and non-villagers alike. Wind-blown and human-thrown litter is a perennial problem for him and nearby residents.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Parish Council work with the licensee urging Enterprise Inns to achieve manageable and long-lasting solutions to the scope for tidiness of the frontage and car-park
2. That a small focus group works with the licensee to explore the possibilities raised by responses to the November 2006 survey
3. Specifically explores the possibility of a drop-in coffee shop on the premises run on a rota basis by village volunteers
4. Explores the possibility of a controlled Internet site at the same location as any drop-in coffee-shop

POST OFFICE

The services offered by our local post office are valued by a wide range of people, especially those for whom it is *en route* to or from Honiton. The post office business at Rawridge is almost entirely under the commercial direction of the Post Office. This will severely limit the scope of fulfilling any of the suggestions raised in answers to the survey question about desired services. This limitation will be further tightened by the present central agenda to dismantle rural post offices.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. The Parish Council to take every opportunity to throw its weight behind programmes similar to *Local Works* and to lobby (with other parishes) for retention of rural post offices, including our own

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2. A small focus group to explore with the Postmistress the extent to which widened Post Office services might be made available – such as Road Tax facilities, an extension of mailing hours to include an early evening and extended Saturday collection
3. A small focus group to explore with the Postmistress the extent to which widened commercial services might be made available – such as the sale of greetings cards, newspapers or small but regularly needed shop goods
4. The *Parish Pump* to encourage people to buy stamps at Rawridge Post Office instead of at larger offices, especially at key times such as Christmas, and to remind its readers of less well-known facilities such as banking, bill payment, purchase of premium bonds, car insurance, house insurance, equity bonds, foreign currency and access to Post Office credit card facilities.

HIGHLANDS SHOP

The survey tested people's knowledge of our parish shop at Highlands, Smeatharpe, and explored parishioners' wishes for any extension of Highlands' services.

Two aspects became clear from answers: first, that significant numbers seemed to remain unaware of the shop facilities and second, how highly regarded the shop is by those who did know it and use it.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. A small focus group to explore with Highlands' owners the extent to which an additional range of supplies at Highlands itself might be made available
2. To explore way in which Highlands might draw its presence and excellence more to community attention

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3. Further to explore the commercial and practical possibilities of a Highlands outlet somewhere in Upottery village

COMMUNICATION

ACTION

1. A small focus group to explore with Royal Mail how post-coding might be improved for the parish to avoid confusion for mail and commercial deliveries, especially at borders with other parishes
2. To work with local telecommunication service-providers to see whether radio-telephony signals for the area might be improved short of erecting new masts
3. To consider creating a central point for advertising local events

HOUSING

One aspect of parish life which continually exercises the Parish Council is that of the need for a wide and varied stock of accommodation. A real concern is how to balance our active, ageing population with the need for younger people to be attracted to the parish and to be able to afford local house-prices in an escalating market.

The concern is not simply for the social aim of establishing a more balanced mix of ages. There are also the practical implications of the danger of falling rolls at our school (with the ever-present threat of closure if economically unviable), further adding to the spiral of house-prices by attracting only comparatively well-off

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people of retirement age and the associated “hollowing out” of parish accommodation with second homes which often stand empty.

Another significant aspect is the wish for more obvious consistency in the style and quality of housing for which planning permission is supported by the Parish Council and later granted by the East Devon District Council.

ACTION

1. The Parish Council to publish a clear statement of parish policy for permitted and preferred development of parish accommodation in conjunction with a clear map
2. The Parish Council to develop and adopt a Design Statement as an Appendix to this Plan, perhaps with some element of discrete styles for our three communities
3. The Parish Council uses the vehicle of this Plan and the Design Statement better to influence the decisions of the East Devon District Council in planning matters from consultation to decision
4. The Parish Council in its statement of parish policy for permitted and preferred development of parish accommodation declares a commitment to increasing the stock of housing affordable to younger people and to those in financially straitened circumstances
5. The Parish Council, working with Young Farmers, develops a strategy for helping smaller farms to survive current hardships
6. Develop a voluntary architectural inventory for the three communities of the parish to capture the history of our housing, where residents contribute known histories of their houses (of whatever age). This will serve not only as a valuable (and possibly unique) archive but will inform developments of the Design Statement with a broad and historical overview

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Appendix “A”

The following residents have contributed to the construction of the Parish Plan, either from early days by advising on and participating in focus-groups, through developing the survey or commenting on draft documents:

Lewis Arscott (Parish Council)	*	Judith Pratt	*
Edwin Bartlett (Parish Council)		Stanley Pratt	*
Stuart Borer	*	Rene Pym (Parish Council)	
Ruby Cooke		Alice Seaforth	
John Cornish (Parish Council)		Christopher Seaforth	
Andrew Curtis	*	Brian Spiller (Parish Council)	
Cecil Dare (Parish Council)		Gill Thomas	*
Philip Joyce (Parish Council)		Jim Thomas	*
David Key (Parish Council)		Suyen Tolken-Sinclair	
Sue Key (<i>Parish Pump</i>)		Justine Tolken-Sinclair	
Gerald Layzell		Chris Travis (photographs)	
Anne Legge	*	Patsy Wells (Upottery website)	
Gwen Lewis (Clerk to the Parish Council)	*	Richard Wells (Parish Council)	*
Heather Lockyer		Chris Young	*
Robyn Lockyer			
Cathrine Phillips			

[* Member of the Parish Plan Co-ordinating Group]

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Acknowledgements

Our grateful thanks to all those residents who took the time and trouble to answer the November 2005 survey. This plan is based very substantially on the ideas which came from those replies as well as from informal contributions from parishioners as the planning process moves on. That will continue to be the case. Although drafted for them, the plan is *from* the parish residents and belongs *to* them.

Our warm thanks also to Sarah Duffin of Devon County Council and to Paul Edwards and Annie Petherick of the Community Council of Devon for their invaluable practical advice and for their financial support which has meant that no monetary cost at all has fallen upon the Parish for production of this Plan.

Finally, our warm thanks for the front and rear covers to our local photographer – Chris Travis – now in his 90th year but fully up with digital imaging!

Members of Upottery Parish Council and of the Parish Plan Co-ordinating Group