

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, likely in the Midlands of England. The image shows rolling hills and valleys. In the center-right, there is a small village or town with several buildings. The terrain is a mix of open fields and wooded areas. The overall tone is somewhat dark and grainy, typical of a high-contrast black and white photograph.

# WIDWORTHY PARISH PLAN

2004

## CONTENTS

Foreward	3
Section 1: Widworthy Parish	7
Section 2: Background	9
Section 3: The Community Appraisal	12
Section 4: The Major Issue: The A35	15
Section 5: Housing and Planning	21
Section 6: Transport	24
Section 7: Health Care Services	25
Section 8: Shopping	25
Section 9: Employment	25
Section 10: Communication	26
Section 11: The Village Hall	27
Section 12: The Church	31
Section 13: The Village Fete	32
Section 14: Footpaths	35
Section 15: The Wilmington Quarry	35
Section 16: Play Facilities in the Village	36
Section 17: Crime in the Community	37
Section 18: The Environment	38
Objectives	39
Endorsements of the Widworthy Parish Plan	43

# THE WIDWORTHY PARISH PLAN

## FOREWORD

Many of you may be wondering why the delay in producing a parish plan, when the main work of the community assessment was finally completed in January 2003; why was the parish plan not written then, as part of the final process towards achieving "quality parish status"?

The answer is three-fold:

1. Widworthy Parish Council did not at that time fulfil all the criteria required towards quality parish status & we required further advice before proceeding.
2. It would have been pointless to produce a plan without reference to our major problem, the A35 and we have been pushing the Highways Agency for some definite proposals for improvements to the road where it passes through the village.
3. The format & cost of production of the plan.

To explain further: before the parish plan can become the final pivot in the application procedure towards "quality parish status", all parish councils must fulfil seven quality criteria tests. These are;

1. The parish clerk must be fully accredited and qualified. He is.
2. The parish must hold 6 meetings a year, including the AGM. We do.
3. Communications in place must include a regular newsletter to local people at least 4 times a year, which must include the names of councillors and clerk, how they can be contacted, and a synopsis of the annual report in one of the issues. The newsletter must be readily available. The Wilmington News contains all this information, and is hand delivered to every household in the parish.
4. Councils must produce an Annual Report. We do.
5. And an annual Financial Statement in accordance with the Accounts and Audit regulations 2003. We do.
6. All councillors must sign the new Code of Conduct. We all have.

Published  
July 2004

7. Parish councils must hold elections every five years. And on this, Widworthy Parish Council failed – until June 2003

In June, 2003, the rules governing this electoral mandate were altered as follows:

**“Stood for election” for the purposes of this Scheme means that councillors must have been nominated and stood (or were prepared to stand) as candidates at the last round of elections. This does not mean that there must be an election. It is recognised that in situations where the number of candidates is the same as (or less than) the number of seats on the parish council, then a ballot is not required. In such cases the candidates are automatically declared “elected” by the Returning Officer”. And this, of course, does apply to Widworthy Parish Council**

Turning to our major issue, the A35 it is, understandably, very difficult for the Highways Agency to commit itself to practical steps to alleviate the adverse impact on village life caused by the A35 going right through the middle of Wilmington when this depends on its ability to lobby for central Government funds. It was not until February, 2004, that the Highways Agency finally responded to our correspondence & informed us that they had bid for funds & should they be successful they would be happy to discuss with the Parish Council the most appropriate use of those funds. In May The Highways Agency informed us that they had secured a small sum for a single safety measure in Wilmington and they would be writing to the parish council to seek our view on their proposal for this single safety measure, hopefully for 2004. We will continue to lobby & keep you informed of progress through the Wilmington News.

Deciding on the format of the plan has not been straight forward. Lengthy enquiries to the District Council finally revealed that the Countryside Agency is the body responsible for directing and advising on the production of parish plans. Their representative recommended

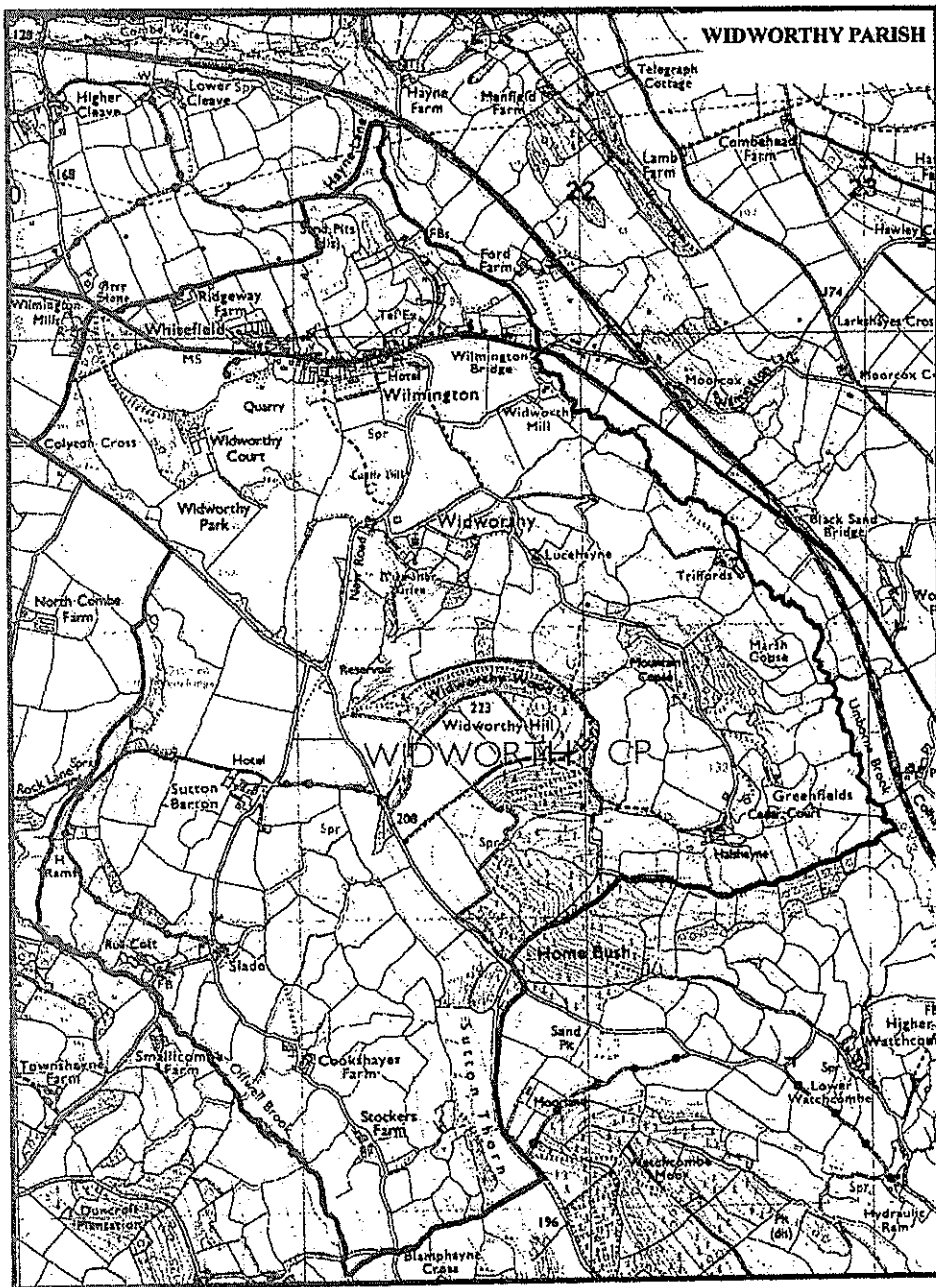
that in view of the time lag (2002-2004) for reasons explained earlier, we should consider repeating the community assessment exercise. This we considered to be totally unnecessary; nothing has essentially changed in the parish since everyone was asked for their views on all matters of concern to us.

She also made it clear that to qualify for funding the plan would have to conform to the Agency’s preferred format i.e. a relatively expensive, glossy, A4 sized plan produced in partnership with our neighbouring Parishes. We did not consider this appropriate for two reasons: our neighbouring Parishes do not share our problems & there was little to be gained from a joint plan and the match funding required from the Parish – around £2000 – could not, in our view, be justified for a Parish of our size. This sort of production would be appropriate if the parish had building land available, was not in an AONB, had reasonable facilities (shops, schools, playgrounds, transport, work opportunities) and all major roads in the parish had pavements! But this is not the case for Widworthy Parish.

It was therefore decided that the Widworthy Parish Plan should be printed in the format of The Wilmington News. This offers for a Parish of our size the most appropriate means of translating the results of our community appraisal into a meaningful Parish Plan and the best value for money without the need to apply for a grant, raise the precept, or engage in fund-raising activities. It will be delivered to every household in the parish, and sent to every council, body and organisation that affects our lives.

On behalf of Widworthy Parish Council, I present the Widworthy Parish Plan to guide and direct us into the future, based on our community assessment, returned by 90% of our population.

**Alison Kremer  
Chairman,  
Widworthy Parish Council.**



Widworthy Parish Boundary

## WIDWORTHY PARISH PLAN

### SECTION 1: WIDWORTHY PARISH

**1a.** Widworthy Parish covers an area of 606 hectares, all within the designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in East Devon. The village of Wilmington is the only village in the parish. It is intersected by the A35 but apart from this the area is essentially rural and very beautiful, with steep green hills, hidden valleys, woods and streams, typical of this part of the County. The Umborne brook divides the parish on the east from the parishes of Shute and Dalwood. To the west, Offwell lane by Widworthy Court and the farm lane leading to Ridgeway Farm up as far as the railway bridge (at the end of Hayne Lane) is the boundary between Widworthy, and our closest neighbouring parishes of Offwell and Cotleigh. To the south west is the parish of Northleigh and further south, beyond the beech grove at the top of Widworthy woods, the land falls away to border with Colyton.

**1b.** There are 156 houses in the parish, of which 7 are empty. Full-time residents occupy 140 houses, with 16 additional houses being second or holiday homes. The questionnaire was returned by 137 out of 140 households (i.e. 90.7% responded) though this percentage drops to 87.8% response rate when second or holiday homes are included.

**1c.** There are 347 permanent residents in the parish. There are; 23 children under 5 yrs, 53 children of 6-16 years, 20 young people of 17-25 years, 102 people between 26-50 years, 91 people between 51-65 years, 40 people between 66-80 years and 18 people 80 years or more, or:

- 21.9% of our population are children up to 16 yrs old,
- 5% are young people of 17-25yrs,
- 55.6% are people of working age, between 26-65,
- 16.7% are 65 years or over.

A very different story from 12 years ago, before our baby boom started.



1.d Although 4 houses have changed hands in the last 2 years, the profile of the parish changes very little. The average length of time people have lived in the parish is 14.6 years. Some of our farming families have lived in the same house for generations; no less than 24 residents had grandparents who lived here.

1.e. The majority of our 140 households consider themselves part of the community, related to, and/or owing allegiance to Wilmington or the parish, as neighbours, friends, sharing common goals and concerns, though there are, inevitably, those who have no allegiance to any one place. The relationship of our community to other neighbouring parishes and to the local towns, Honiton and Axminster is good.

**1.f. Facilities in the village include:**

- The Village Hall
- The White Hart Pub
- The Home Farm Hotel
- 3 Bed & Breakfast establishments, one providing Cream Teas
- Telephone kiosk
- Post box
- Bus shelter
- A Mother & Toddlers group
- Under Fives Playgroup
- Library service (fortnightly), yoga classes, gardening and history club
- Special social events organised by Village Hall Committee and, occasionally, the Church committee.

**1.g. Facilities in the parish of Widworthy include:**

- The Church, St Cuthbert's, 14th C, Grade 11\*, is set a quarter-mile outside the village, with car-parking space.
- There is a post box in the wall of Widworthy Barton, 16th C Elizabethan Manor house.



Home Farm Hotel  
and Restaurant

## SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.a. The Local Government Act 2000 requires all principal local authorities (i.e. in our case Devon County and East Devon District Councils) to prepare a Community Strategy to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. And this, in turn, led to the encouragement of plans at parish level. Details of The Quality Parish Council Scheme are set out in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) book, based on The Rural White Paper "Our Countryside: The Future. A fair Deal for Rural England" published in November 2000.

2.b. To facilitate this the Government introduced the concept of a **Quality Parish Council**, to be achievable by any parish council regardless of size, location or current activities. Of the 9 criteria of what constitutes a Quality Parish Council Widworthy Parish Council currently fulfils 8 of them, the 9th being inapplicable to us due to our too small size. This guidance to parish & town councils was seen as an important step in helping local rural communities to take charge of their own destinies. The parish plan is intended to develop previous

work such as village appraisals & village design statements & set a framework for communities to plan their own futures.

**2.c. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** makes explicit the national importance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and requires local authorities to publish a plan to formulate their policy for the management of these areas and for carrying out their functions in relation to them. The South West has no less than 12 areas of AONBs, 2 national parks (Dartmoor & Exmoor), vast areas of designated Heritage Coast, 3 World Heritage sites and 2 Community Forests & the Parish of Widworthy lies within an ANOB.

**2.d.** Effectively this legislation provides AONBs with the same rating in terms of landscape importance, and hence the need to protect landscape quality, as is enjoyed by National Parks.

**2.e. A Parish Plan for Widworthy must, therefore, be prepared within the context of the:**

- Devon County Council's Devon Structure Plan (Deposit Draft) 2001 to 2016
- Devon County Council's Waste Local Plan
- East Devon District Council's East Devon Local Plan (Revised Deposit) 1995 to 2011
- The 2002 East Devon Community Plan
- The Blackdown Hills 2004-2009 Combined Management Plan & Community Strategy for the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Consultation Draft)
- The Honiton & Axminster Town Plans & the Parish Plans produced by neighbouring Parishes

**2.f.** Thus, for example, Devon Council's Aim 1: Conservation of the Devon Environment is "To conserve and enhance the quality of Devon's environment and its local distinctiveness – including the special beauty and characteristics of the countryside, coasts, buildings, cultural and historic heritage – together with the diversity of its wildlife and habitats"

**2.g.** This, in turn, is reflected in EDDC's Policy EN1 "In areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty will be given priority over other considerations. Development will not be permitted within or adjacent to the East Devon AONB or the Blackdown Hills AONB..." It is further reinforced in their Corporate Strategy 2003 "Our overarching purpose is to 'improve people's quality of life within the District without spoiling the outstanding local environment for the generations to come'".

**2.h. The beauty of our countryside is therefore seen as our most precious resource and must be protected.**

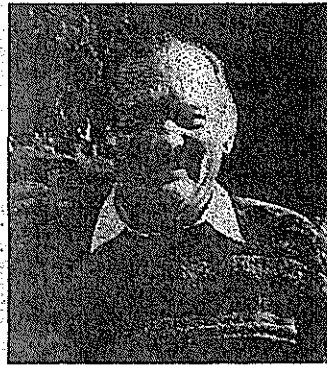


Beautiful Bluebell Woods  
And the Rolling Countryside  
Must be preserved for future generations

## SECTION 3: THE COMMUNITY APPRAISAL

3.a. The first step, initiated by Widworthy Parish Council, was to carry out a Community Appraisal. The first meeting brought together representatives of all sections of our community – village hall, church, parish, old and young residents, those working from home, those not, those involved with B&Bs, residents of Wilmington, of Widworthy Court, residents in more outlying parts of the parish, and farmers - & explored the reasons for participation in a Community Appraisal scheme and the kind of questions that would eventually form the questionnaire to find out about ourselves, our major concerns, needs & priorities.

3.b. A Community Appraisal Steering Group, Chaired by Peter Bunnage & administered by Pongo Blanchford was established &, under the guidance of David Rolls (The Community Council of Devon) & the Countryside Agency, produced a questionnaire.



Peter Bunnage



Pongo Blanchford

3.c. The Community Assessment was divided into 3 parts:

Section 1- who we are;

Section 2- what our community can do for itself – sought to establish the effectiveness of our notice boards, our views on the village hall, the church, footpaths, the fete, crime in the village, our environment etc;

Section 3- How can others help the Community and how can we help others, was essentially concerned with the major issue of the A35, which bisects the village of Wilmington, & other transport and health issues.

3.d. Indeed, it was this A35 severance problem that gave urgency to the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Global Atkins had been appointed by The Highways Agency to create a Route Management Scheme (RMS) to address some of the issues that this main artery creates for communities on either side of it, and it became vital to provide them with accurate quantifiable information on our predicament with suggestions from our community as to what they would like to see done about it. The public consultation on the A35 as part of the RMS which the steering group attended took place in December 2001.

3.e. This final questionnaire was delivered to every household in the parish of Widworthy in January 2002 by our 14 enumerators, of which 11 were members of the Steering Group, each person responsible for no more than 15 residents throughout our community. By April 2002 the questionnaires were returned. **Just over 90% of our population responded, an excellent result by any standards. A huge effort by everyone and a big thank you to the steering Group committee, the enumerators and all those who completed their forms!**

3.f. By May 2002 we produced our initial numerical analysis, and by November all 3 sections of our questionnaire results were analysed and completed. The data in section 3, the A35 issue, had already been incorporated into the Route Management Study by Global Atkins for the Highways Agency.

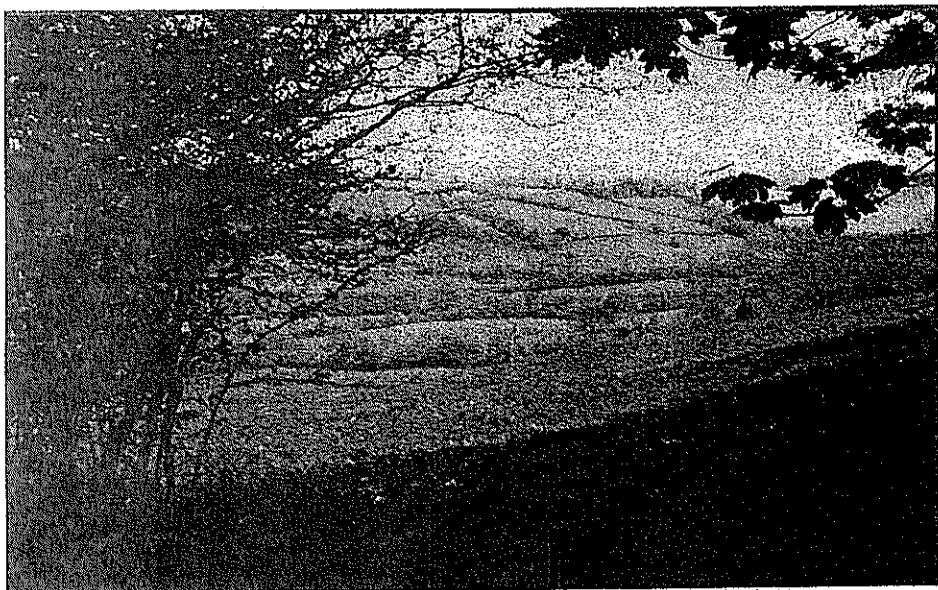
3.g. At the final Steering Group meeting, in January 2003, the analysis of the results were examined by all the committee members, and the whole of this Widworthy Community Appraisal was passed back to the Parish Council with the expectation that it would eventually be printed as The Widworthy Parish Plan.



### 3.h. Summary:

The Community Appraisal Questionnaire was designed by the Steering Group Committee members, representing all sections of our community under the Chairmanship of Pete Bunnage. It was delivered to every household in the parish of Widworthy and completed by just over 90% of our population in April 2002. The data contained in Section 3, The A35 issue, was incorporated into the Route Management Study (RMS) by Global Atkins for The Highways Agency. By November 2002 all three sections of the Community Appraisal were analysed and completed. The final meeting of the Steering Group took place in January, 2003 at which The Widworthy Community Appraisal was passed back to The Widworthy Parish Council.

3.I. The Parish Council sought advice from the Countryside Agency on the most appropriate means of translating the results of the appraisal into a meaningful Parish Plan given the size of the Parish and the limited resources available and concluded that the format offered by the Wilmington News provided the best means of reaching every household & giving value for money.



## SECTION 4: THE MAJOR ISSUE: THE A35

4.a. It would clearly be pointless to produce a plan without reference to our major problem, the A35, together with short and long term proposals to alleviate the adverse impact on village life.

4.b. Indeed, to repeat, it was this A35 severance problem that gave urgency to the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

4.c. The Community Assessment responses to this parish's major issue have already been published in The Wilmington News. Here are the full details;

### RESULTS

#### How can others help the Community and how can we help others?

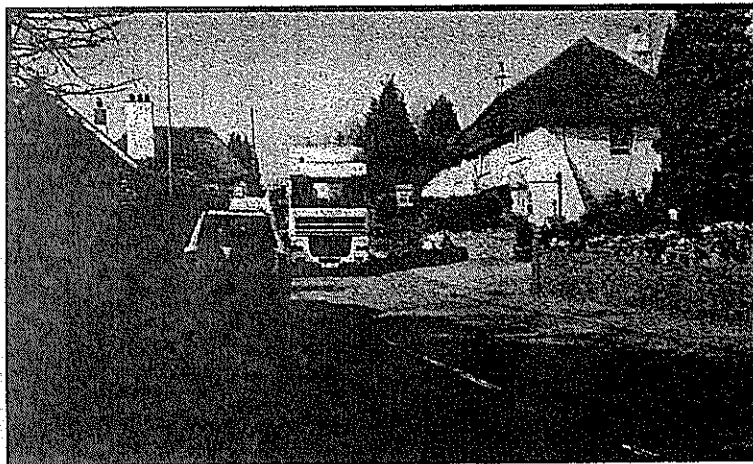
A	Number of houses	163	Resident	140
			Second / holiday home	16
			Empty	7
B	Questionnaire response	87.2%	Resident	90.7%
			Second / holiday home	56.3%
C	Number of residents	345	Number of Cars	210
			Homes without a car	12

4.d. **The A35 and Road Safety.** It is fully recognised that more than anything else the A35 is the major influence on the character of the village and it severely constrains many areas where in an ideal world change and improvement should be considered. The Parish has been and is involved in a great deal of work with the relevant authorities to try to improve traffic calming but the solutions are very expensive and outside the scope of this appraisal. Improvements like crossings have been investigated and are not possible under existing Trunk road criteria.

**4.e. A35 Route Management Strategy.** The draft report of this study has now (Nov 30) been released for public comment. A new factor being considered for introduction into the planning equations for the first time is called broadly "Quality of life in Roadside communities". We are promised serious attention to community issues (safety, severance and accessibility) in 2002 and the Highways Agency will be consulting local opinions in detail. This appraisal therefore sets out to produce some firm positive unemotional evidence to show how the A35 adversely affects the quality of life in the community.



The A35 Wilmington Early 1900's



The A35 Wilmington 2004

**Effect of A35 on Quality of Life of residents**

**4.f.** Please list any incidents, either experienced by you or your family, or that you know to have occurred on the A35 in Widworthy, in the past year: (for example collisions, near misses, knocks into your house, mounting of the pavement, hubcaps in your garden, contact with wing mirrors, road rage etc.)

Response 23%.

38 separate incidences of the above are listed by individuals

**4.g.** Do you regularly experience a significant delay while you wait to join traffic when driving or to cross the road as a pedestrian?

Response 88%

Yes	75%	No	25%
-----	-----	----	-----

**4.h.** With which of the following statements do you and your family most agree:

Response 93%

I regularly walk along the main road and feel confident in doing so.	4%
I feel confident walking along the road by day but not at night	2%
I regularly walk along the main road but feel intimidated by the traffic.	39%
Whenever possible I choose not to walk along the main road due to safety concerns.	39%
I never need to walk along the main road	25%

4.i. Do you regularly have to walk along the road where there is no pavement

Response 77%

Yes	30%	No	70%
-----	-----	----	-----

4.j. Which of the following statements best describes the level of noise from the A35 in your house and garden?

Response 80%

	In your house	In your garden
Constantly intrusive	15%	25%
Occasionally intrusive	21%	22%
A background hum	19%	26%
Intermittently noticeable	18%	23%
I do not hear/notice it	32%	13%

4.k. In summer does traffic noise prevent sleeping with your windows open?

Response 87%

Yes	32%	No	68%
-----	-----	----	-----

4.l. Is the A35 a significant factor in preventing you from visiting friends in the village and/or going to village hall events?

Response 87%

Yes	20%	No	80%
-----	-----	----	-----

4.m. Is there a particular road noise that affects you? E.g. banging of empty lorries over uneven surface, motorbikes, heavy lorries struggling up the hill etc

Response 53%.

67 incidences of road noise are listed by individuals in Wilmington

4.n. Have you any low cost suggestions for improving the road traffic situation on the existing A35 through Wilmington?

Response 52%.

Over 42 suggestions as to what might be done – from bumps to roundabouts to bye-passes (hardly low cost!) by Wilmington residents

4.o. Suggestions for improving our lot in the RMS by Global Atkins for The Highways Agency included for example, making the road round the narrow bend between Rose Farm and The Old Forge one way; raising the pavement about a foot, so that lorries would not be able to mount it, and many other creative ideas. BUT there are two problems: money and the fact that the A35 is a major trunk road, and therefore hedged about with rules and regulations as to what is permitted. For example, major trunk roads have to be a certain minimum width – and through the narrows of Wilmington it barely qualifies, so it would be quite impossible to create a footpath on either side of the road which we all desire. Ideally traffic should flow without impediment on a trunk road so making it one way through the narrows conflicts with this ideal. As a parish we could not possibly agree to the removal of Rose Farm and The Old Forge to straighten and widen the A35! Nor can we ever qualify for a pedestrian crossing – there are not enough people in the whole parish to justify this! The prospect of a by-

pass, talked about since the 1950s, is as far on the horizon as it ever was. This is recognised in the proposed modifications to the Devon Structure plan which recommends that the A30/A303 Marsh to Honiton Link & the A35 Honiton Eastern Bypass be deleted as they are not programmed to start within the lifetime of the plan i.e. 2016. However the creative solutions put forward in the RMS are still on the table & the latest information is that the Highway Agency has bid for funds & should they be successful they will discuss with the Parish the most appropriate use of those funds.

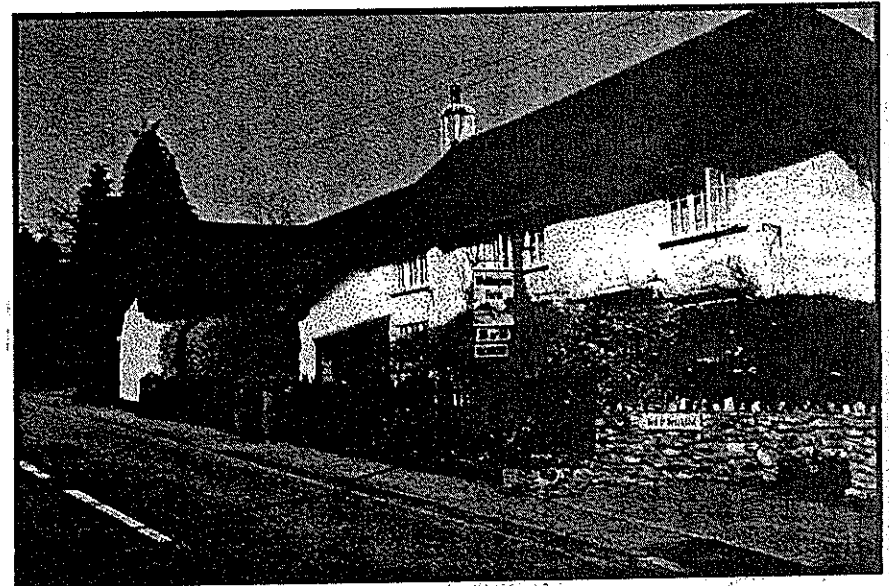
4.p. Just as this Parish Plan was about to be printed, the Parish Council heard from The Highways Agency to say they had not got anything like the amount of money they had bid for, they had managed to secure a very small sum for a single safety measure in Wilmington. The Agency will be writing to the Parish Council asking for their views on their proposal for this single safety measure to raise driver's awareness of the road narrowing at the S bend. This may take the form of further white lines and possibly a road narrowing notice, still to be decided, but which hopefully may be put in place this year (2004) - yet one more helpful measure to alleviate the impact of the A35 on Wilmington.

4.q. Our short, medium and long terms aims therefore are to continue to work with the Highway Agency to alleviate the impact of the A35 on the village, as and when funds become available. We will also continue to foster a good working relationship with Connect to ensure that day to day maintenance and repairs are carried out as speedily as possible.

## SECTION 5: HOUSING AND PLANNING

5.a. Most of our residents live in the village of Wilmington, in privately owned houses with one or two houses still owned by EDDC, and all have gardens. The houses in the centre of the village are 16th & 17th C, thatched, made of flint, & some houses are of 19thC; the majority are 20th C. There is no obvious uniformity of architecture except that no buildings are more than two stories high.

5.b. About one third of our population live in deep country, down single track lanes, mostly on farms or small holdings, or houses with large gardens and/or one field. The majority of these houses are very old, made of flint, Elizabethan or earlier, though there are 6 20th C houses. The vast majority of our second or holiday homes are located at Widworthy Court, an 19th C mansion, set in its own parkland, bordered by woodland, converted to flats and other apartments created from stables, coach house, pavilion etc in the 1980s.



Wellington Farm. Typical of the Stone and Thatched Houses in the village

**5.c.** There is a presumption against new residential development. The village inset map has been deleted from the First Stage Deposit Version of the East Devon Local Plan 2001-2011. "The decision was based upon a sustainability appraisal which examined various criteria, such a whether the villages have particular shops & facilities, the landscape designation, whether the villages have a school & hall & the regulatory transport services. In order for a settlement to be considered sustainable, the everyday needs of its inhabitants must be met by the services within it. This is particularly important in a predominantly rural district such as East Devon where dependency on other, larger settlements necessitates extensive travel, usually by car. ....In deleting the village inset map from the Local Plan, the village will be considered part of the countryside within which, unless an agricultural case can be made, there is a presumption against new residential development".

**5.d.** 67% of our community (i.e. 95 households) are in agreement with this policy: that there should be no further housing development in Wilmington or Widworthy.

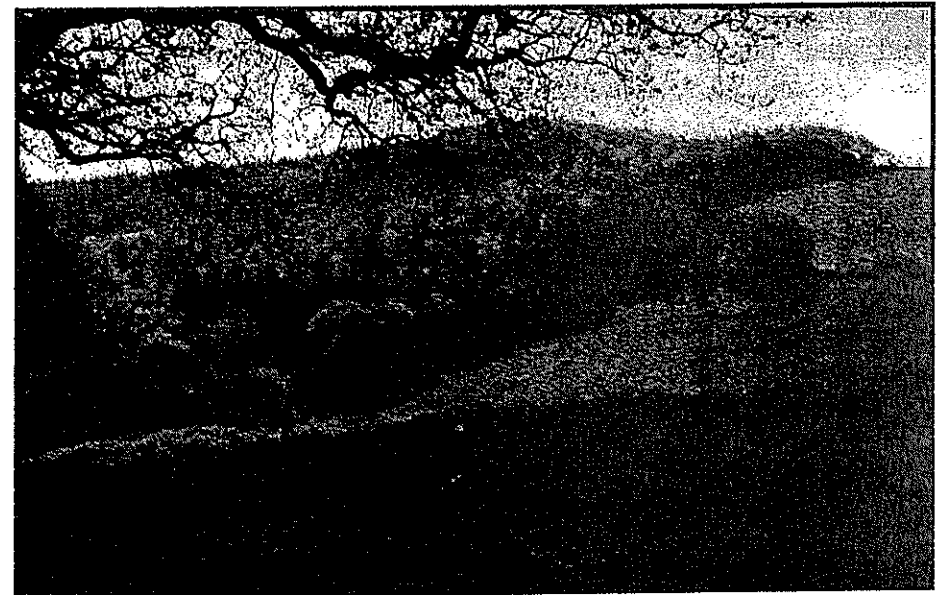
**5.e.** This does not mean that people can not apply to EDDC for planning permission to enlarge, improve, or modernise their houses! Copies of such applications –roughly 6 a year -come to the Parish Council for their observations and comments. Comments are made following an inspection of the plans & the site, seeking assurances re materials to be used and consultation with neighbours. In general our views are respected in the EDDC Planning department, and usually parish and district councils are in agreement.

**5.f.** The Parish Council fully supports the EDDC Planning policy and guidelines, not to allow any housing in an AONB. This is because, as outlined earlier, our countryside is why we live here, why we do not go elsewhere, our chief resource, what brings our visitors to our B&Bs, & hotels & pubs and must be protected.

**5.g.** The beauty of our countryside is, in part, created by farmers. They planted and made the hedgerows, made the fields small, planted copses and single trees for shade. The country is a living landscape, to

be lived in, not a fossilised museum piece. As agriculture changes, so do the needs of farmers. The parish council, again in line with EDDC, is sympathetic to change of use of farm buildings once their original purpose is no longer required. These buildings are part of our built environment, usually both old and beautiful, so what matters is that alterations be sympathetic to the style and character of the original building, and that it melds in with the surrounding countryside.

**5.h.** Very many of our older farm buildings, manors, and cottages are listed buildings and so come under EDDC Historic Buildings aegis, any work to them requiring special inspection and permission. The vast majority of owners love their old houses very much and while wishing to improve their living standards have a high regard for the beauty of the house itself and would not wish to damage this.



The beauty of our countryside is, in part, created by farmers.



## SECTION 6: TRANSPORT:

### 6.a. THE CAR

Despite the efforts of Central Government to encourage people to use public transport most people in our community have a car. Indeed of the 140 permanent homes there are 210 cars & only 6 people in the village have no car. 85% of our population always travels by car or take a lift with a friend. It is difficult to see how this pattern can be changed given the need to travel to Honiton & Axminster for basic facilities.

### 6.b. THE BUS

Perhaps the only advantage of being intersected by the A35 is that we have far more frequent bus services than other villages. Every day, Monday to Friday, there are 6 services into Honiton and 6 services back to Wilmington, in addition to 3 or 4 other services to Axminster and other places. Only some 28 people (8%) actually use these services, and some complain that the service is too infrequent or not available when you want to return. These numbers are too small, too individual, to be able to lobby the bus companies to increase or change their service. Whilst others find the services provided to be convenient 27 people find it is too far to walk from their house to the bus stop, with or without shopping. The Devon bus service enquiry line is printed in The Wilmington News, back page.

**6.d. THE RING AND RIDE SCHEME:** again, used by very few, but found very helpful. This service is essentially for the disabled or old; it picks up direct from your door (if it can get down the lane!) on Fridays at 10am going to Honiton and returns at 1pm. Cost is £2.50 single or return, but you have to book by phone at least the day before. Service and Naomi Lot's phone printed in Wilmington News.

**6.d. TRIP (Honiton Voluntary Car Scheme):** is found to be extremely helpful by the elderly when visiting the doctor or dentist. It costs 40p a mile, so about £4.80 to The Honiton Surgery from Wilmington. Details again are printed in The Wilmington News

## SECTION 7: HEALTH CARE SERVICES

These are perceived as good and easily accessible in this parish. Both EDDC and DCC have a good record in trying to help people stay in their own homes if they are elderly or infirm. The help they receive from Health Visitors, physiotherapists etc is considered to be always adequate, and often excellent.

**7.b.** The Royal Devon & Exeter Healthcare Trust has been given a top-rated three stars & is being encouraged by Government to achieve Foundation Status. The RD& E will still be part of the NHS but it will be run locally, with people who live in the area & who use its services having more influence than ever before i.e. local people will be able to become Members of their local NHS Foundation Trust & have a real say in planning services. The Parish Council will monitor this & keep you informed of progress.

## SECTION 8: SHOPPING

**8.a.** The vast majority, 130 out of 140 households, shop in Honiton, the nearest town, for food and other essentials. Honiton is also used by a large number of people for education, entertainment, cultural and leisure activities, though an increasing number of people are prepared and do go a little further afield.

## SECTION 9: EMPLOYMENT

**9.a.** Employment in our working population is very high – full time, part-time and a growing number – 24% - are self-employed, running their own small businesses from home covering every field imaginable from hairdressing to computer programming. This group is expanding rapidly, especially among the more recent arrivals to Widworthy Parish.

**9.b.** Whilst there is some employment in the village, at the pub and The Home Farm Hotel, & 34 people work in Honiton, the nearest town, the vast majority follow no pattern at all, working all over the South West from Bristol to Exeter and all places in between, in London & Cambridge, Surrey, the Midlands...A fluid, moving

working population, whose only fixed point is the home, typical 21st C rural living.

## SECTION 10: COMMUNICATION

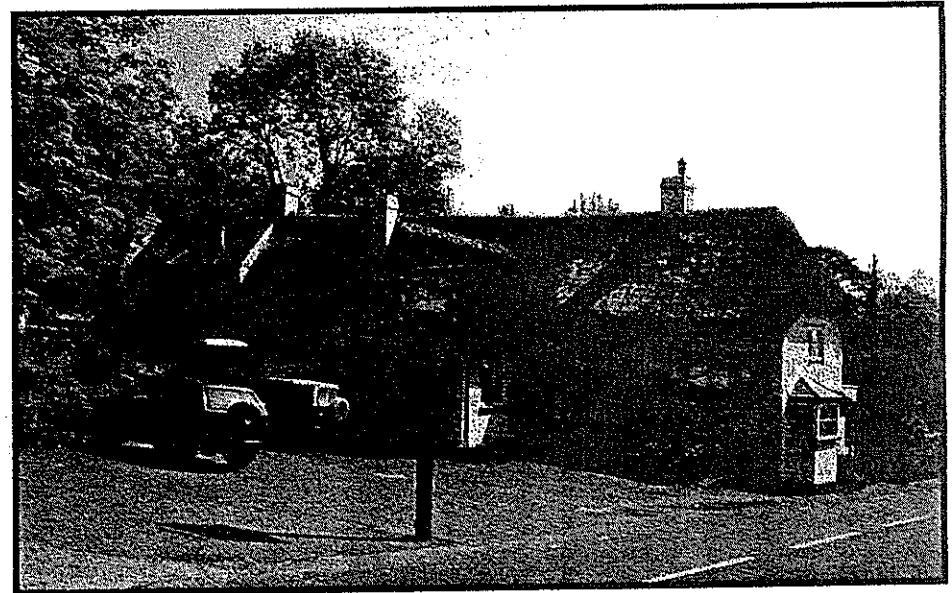
**10.a.** There are 4 notice boards in the community, the Parish Council board on the A35, in the middle of the village, the Village Hall external board and internal board, and in the Church porch. Most people ignore these. The inability to park at any of these, except the church, which is outside the village, and the danger inherent in crossing the A35 are the major factors contributing to the inefficiency of these boards as a useful form of communication.

**10.b.** However the pub, The White Hart has quite a large forecourt and car park behind, and it is proposed to erect a notice board here, where people can park and read it. Negotiations are in hand now to organise this, largely as a result of the community assessment

**10.c.** The Village Hall website is hardly used at all, despite 70 of our 140 households having internet access at home. And very few people pick up information via the pub.

**10.d.** There are 2 publications delivered to every house in the parish. These are **The Wilmington News**, the quarterly parish magazine and **The Link**, a monthly church leaflet. Both are considered useful but **The Wilmington News** is read by 112 households compared to the **Link** (67 households) and is by far the most important way in which people hear about events and happenings in the village, or come to know what organisations operate within the village and what they do. **Word of mouth** from friends and neighbours plays a vital role in communication in the parish (80 households hear about events in this way). The roadside boards, put up on the day of an event, are considered to be a helpful reminder.

**10.e.** 82% considers the communication system within this parish to be good or reasonable. Only the re-siting of a moderately large notice board at or near **The White Hart** where people can park and read in safety will improve our communication system still further.



The White Hart Pub

Very unfortunately the White Hart Pub burnt down in June 2004.  
It will take a year or more to re-build.

## SECTION 11: THE VILLAGE HALL

**11.a.** The Village Hall in the centre of the village is a Victorian (1860s) building, originally the village school until it was closed in the 1950s, the old school playground, tarmacked, being the car park. It is the only place where we can and do socialise, hold events, or meetings. The very necessary refurbishment to bring it to the standards now required in terms of heating, comfort, access for disabled, decoration, and general maintenance has already begun but it will be some time before this essential work can be completed. Outside funding has to be found at every stage & this is an ongoing commitment for The Village Hall Committee. All that they do is supported sincerely by the Parish Council and by and large by most of the community.

**11.b.** Renovation work will eventually include some form of double glazing to reduce traffic noise, and the traffic calming measures taken

some 8 years ago have reduced the speed of vehicles through the centre of the village making it slightly safer to walk to the hall & support events.

**11.c.** Nonetheless it is generally felt that the community does need a village hall, but reaction is mixed with;

43 people saying they support the idea of a community hall but would be unlikely to use it;

42 people saying it should be improved;

48 people saying if the hall was made warmer and more welcoming they would be encouraged to come to events;

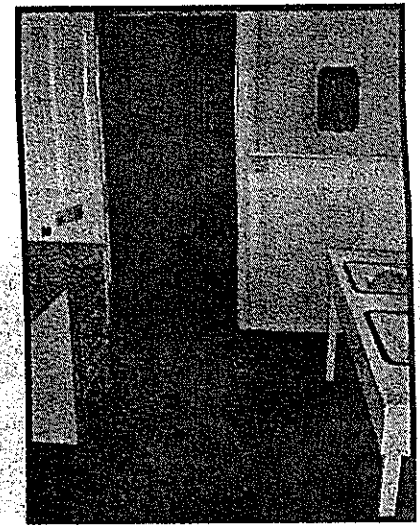
30 saying the hall is adequate for our needs;

and a few even saying effectively we shouldn't have one at all.

**11.d.** No less than 64 households would be prepared to make a voluntary contribution to the hall for improvements, 40 households are prepared to give time to help with fund-raising activities and no less than 22 are willing to help physically with building and decoration work.

**11.e.** 33% of our population are already voluntarily involved with organisations and village events that keep Wilmington's community infrastructure together or are happy to get involved, all of which inevitably involve the use of the village hall. And 64% say it's easy to find out about events, so at least no real problem with our communication system.

**11.f.** There is strong numerical evidence that there is a need for the hall, that as a community, and through the Village Hall Committee, with as much help as is needed from the Parish Council the refurbishing should continue and so should the struggle to obtain funding for repairs beyond the confines of this community.



Renovation work by volunteers before and after.

**11.g. The Village Hall offers the following facilities**

- The mothers & toddlers group (weekly)
- The Under-fives Playgroup open to all our neighbouring parish children as well as our own (daily)
- The Mobile Library (fortnightly)
- Yoga classes (weekly)
- Gardening Club (monthly)
- History Club (when required)
- Parish Council meeting (6 times per year)
- Parochial Church Council meetings (4-5 times per year)
- The Harvest Thanksgiving Cream Tea (once a year run by the PCC, the Village Hall Committee and the Gardening Club)
- Children's Christmas Party
- Quiz nights, discos, bingo, village BBQ as fun events dotted through the year.

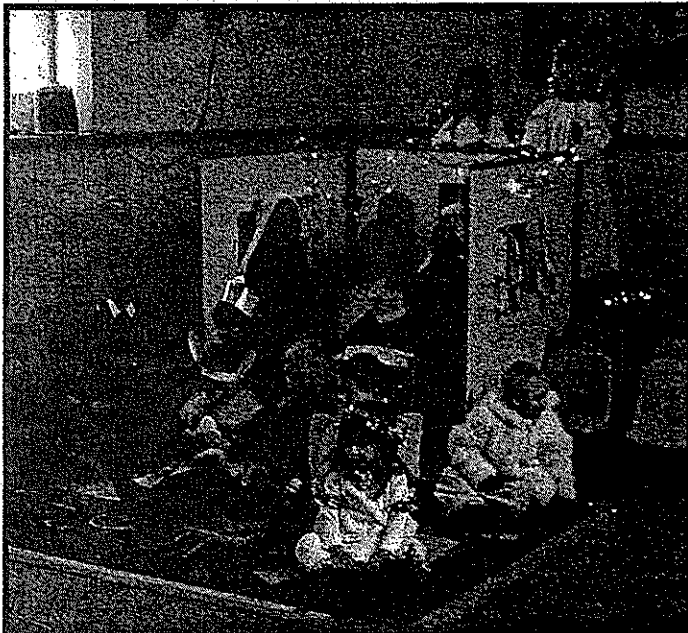
**11.h.** Many and various were the activities proposed to encourage an even greater use of this resource – unfortunately too diverse to warrant serious attention. That is, if only one person wants an art class or an over-50s social evening or something for teenagers, it is unlikely to be

worth pursuing as a worthwhile event attracting at least 30-40 people to make it economically viable. However coach outings and a monthly exchange of local produce gained enough support to warrant serious consideration as possible future Village Hall events.



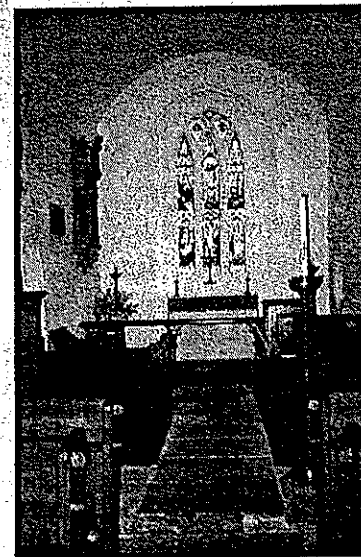
Children's  
Christmas  
Party

Offwell  
Under-fives  
Nativity



## SECTION 12: THE CHURCH

12.a. The 14th C Grade 11\* Church, St Cuthbert's, is another centre for our community, and occasionally plays host to worshippers from the neighbouring parishes within the new group or Benefice of Offwell, Cotleigh, Northleigh, Farway & Widworthy.



St. Cuthbert's



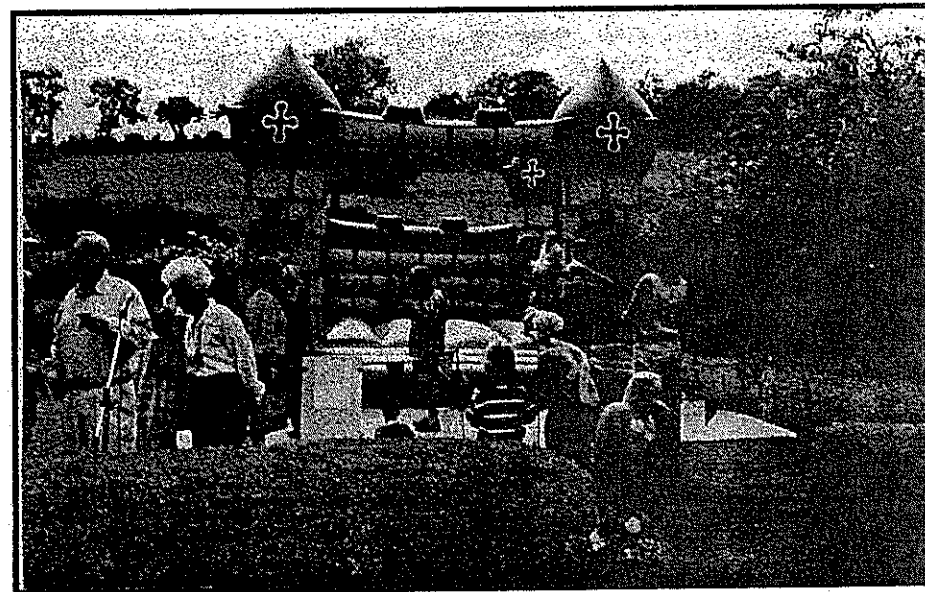
12.b. Although the vast majority of our population (66.8%) would loosely classify themselves as Church of England, just fewer than 10% actually attend the 3 services a month at St Cuthbert's. Yet there is strong residual feelings of goodwill and perhaps a feeling that no parish is quite complete without a church, and possibly also a recognition that the very lovely little church full of quite outstanding effigies and wall sculptures, is part of our national heritage and must be preserved. For whatever reason, 83% would be sad or very sad if the church were to be closed, and only 7% wouldn't care or would think it a good idea.

12.c. The most popular services, at which the church is usually full, are the Christingle and Harvest Thanksgiving services, essentially for children, and The Remembrance Day service.

### SECTION 13: THE VILLAGE FETE

13.a. This is our major fund-raising activity, involving everyone in the parish. It takes place once a year, date variable, in the grounds of Widworthy Barton, next to the church. It is run jointly with the PCC and the Village Hall Committee, headed up by one of the present owners of the Barton. For the last few years the proceeds have been shared equally between the church and the village hall.

13.b. 84% were in favour of keeping a flexible approach to the division of money raised by this event, being sometimes entirely for the village hall, sometimes entirely for the church, and sometimes split equally between church and hall, according to the perceived need of each at the time. Having established this significant mandate, we will continue with this approach for the future.

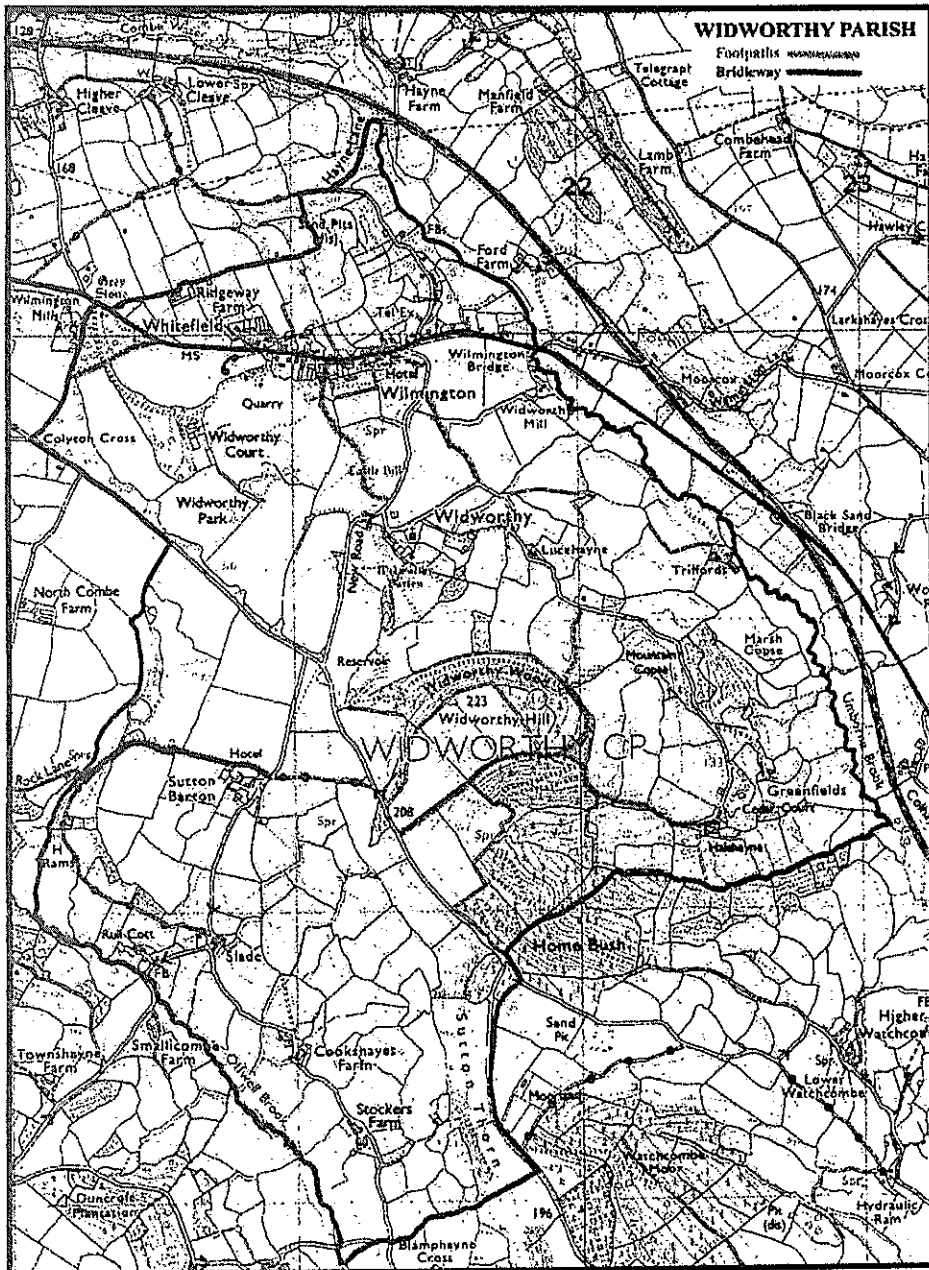


Children's favourite The Bouncy Castle



Refreshment break, and a rest for those weary legs





Parish Footpath Map

## SECTION 14: FOOTPATHS

14.a. There are 5 public footpaths and one bridleway in the parish. They are not used greatly by our population, used frequently by 6% and occasionally by 16%. But they are greatly enjoyed by those who do use them. None of them have car parks at the beginning or end of them.

14.b. There is a need for another footpath, inside the field leading from Wilmington up the A35 to join with the existing footpath that cuts the corner when going to Offwell by the Widworthy Court entrance.. In the old days it was reasonable to walk along the A35, but nowadays it is not the pleasant experience it once was with the traffic zooming past very fast and no pavement.

14.c. To introduce such a footpath cannot be guaranteed and it will take time, and probably have to be part of the A35 improvement plan, but it will be a medium to long-term aim to create such a footpath for this parish.

## SECTION 15: THE WILMINGTON QUARRY

15.a. This quarry is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, SSSI. It is really quite remarkable in terms of its geological structures and strata and of course its fossils. It is under consideration by EDDC, English Nature, English Heritage and other groups involved with preserving such sites, to landscape it to make it safe, create a large car park for buses, provide toilets, give it a caretaker, and to make it a place where geological and fossil boffins, parties of school children and interested members of the public could spend time studying the features within it. It would be locked when there is no supervision.

15.b. 67% of our community would be in favour of this happening but with a lot of reservations: there are concerns over the extra noise and traffic; mess & vandalism, the possibility of restricted access to local people, its viability, fear of it becoming too commercialised, fear of

destroying significant wild-life habitat, that it would not contribute to village life; that it should only be open 2 or 3 days a week, and a host more.

15.c. Although the majority felt there was no requirement for picnic tables, 10% said they would be useful if placed in the "renovated" quarry.

15.d. **With over half our population being in favour of developing the quarry it must be pursued as a long-term aim although funding is not currently available. The situation will be monitored, kept in mind, and the relevant bodies reminded of this suggestion from time to time so that if sufficient money can ever be found it can be made to happen.**

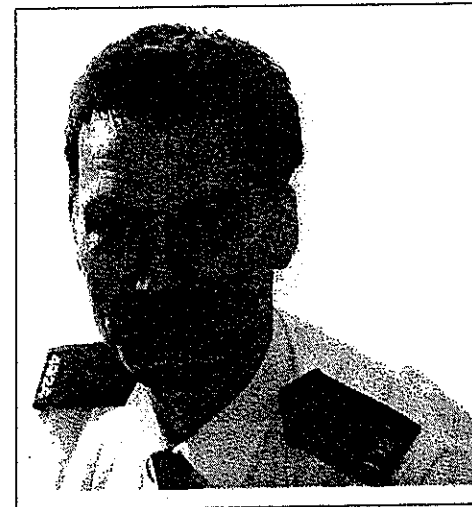
## **SECTION 16: PLAY FACILITIES IN THE VILLAGE**

Every house has a reasonably sized garden, - by town standards a large garden & there are the fields and woods beyond with the sea with our East Devon pebble beaches on the Heritage coastline under an hour away by car. The nearest children's open-to-all playground is by the playing fields at Offwell. There are also sporting facilities and swimming pools at Honiton and Axminster, 5 and 7 miles away. The Offwell Under Five's Playgroup meets daily in school term time & makes use of the Village Hall car park in reasonable weather, with the gate to this area being shut, and the children supervised. This is also where the toddlers can play once a week. So perhaps for all these reasons only 35% responded to the question "Do we need community play facilities?" and only 35 people said it was needed, with 24 people saying they would not permit their children to walk along the A35 to get to such a facility by themselves and neither would they take them there regularly. **Extra play facilities are not required by the majority nor could they be made viable.**

## **SECTION 17: CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY**

17.a. 12% of our households suffered crime in the past 3 years, and reported it. Since conducting the community assessment policing has changed greatly. The incidence of crime is coming down and we now have our own special community policeman or "Beat Manager", PC Andy Carmichael, who, operating out of Axminster, covers this parish and beyond. It is intended to recruit up to 150 new officers at community level throughout Devon & Cornwall in 2004/5 & Axminster will be gaining two additional officers. It is intended that the Beat Managers should work at grassroots level on issues of concern to the local community &, with a tenure of 2/5 years, bring some stability to policing in the parishes.

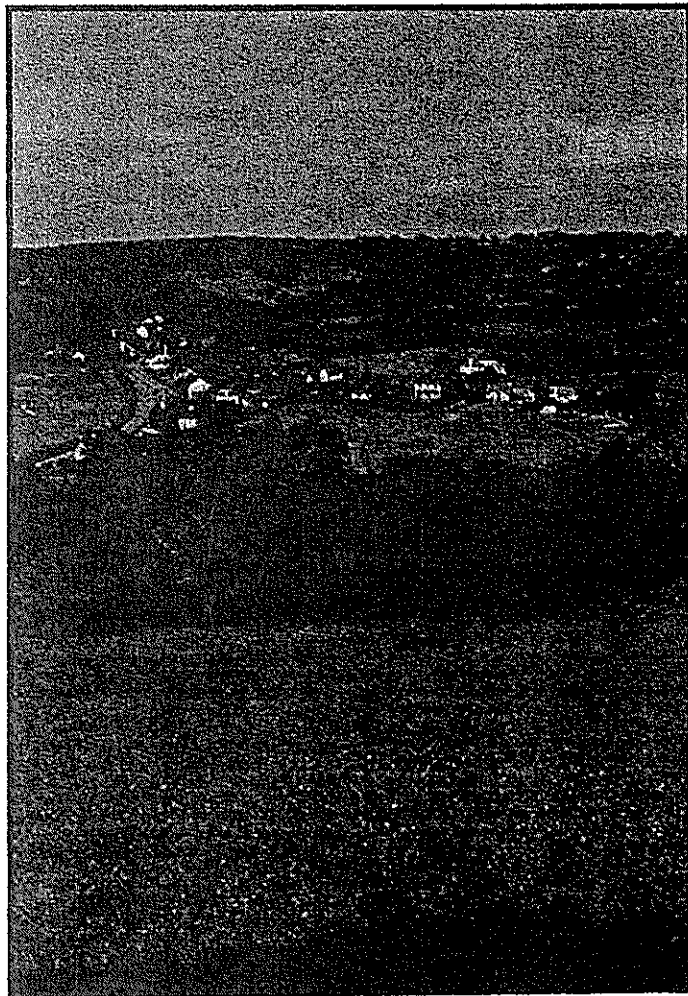
17.b. **What is significant is the belief in the benefits of having a neighbourhood Watch Scheme in place, as we had until some 5 years ago. 55% of our households would like this scheme relaunched, and 16 households said they would help to run it. Unfortunately it is impossible to know who or where these willing people are. But it must be our community's aim to re-introduce the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**



PC Andy Carmichael  
Community Police Officer  
(Neighbourhood Beat Manager)

## SECTION 18: THE ENVIRONMENT

Living in an AONB and recognising that our environment is our most priceless resource, it would be very odd if we were not interested in it as a community! 90% of our community are, in fact, interested in the environment, both locally and nationally, with 25% actively involved in its preservation and enhancement, and a further 3% wishing to become more involved.



OBJECTIVES  
arising from  
THE WIDWORTHY PARISH PLAN  
Short, medium and long-term

- **The A35:** Building on much previous work, begun long before the community appraisal or this parish plan was instigated, which led to the introduction of traffic calming measures on the A35 through the village, our prime objective is to continue to work with the Highway Agency to alleviate the impact of the A35 on village life, as and when funds become available.
- We will also continue to foster a good working relationship with Connect to ensure that day to day maintenance and repairs to the A35 are carried out as speedily as possible.
- Working in collaboration with the police, we will continue to encourage the use of occasional speed checks & warnings to help remind motorists that they are entering the village, and perhaps even to catch the few early & late motorists in particular who continue to tear through the village at 60 or more mph.
- We shall continue to make site visits to those applying for planning permission who wish to improve, enlarge or modernise their houses, seeking assurances re materials to be used and that any neighbours are aware of, and not inconvenienced by, such planning proposals.
- Our medium term aim – within the next 2 years or earlier- is to site a moderately large new notice board at or near The White Hart Pub where people can park and read in safety.
- The Parish Council will continue to give the Village Hall Committee as much help as is needed or possible so that the refurbishment should continue, and to help this committee in any way it can to obtain funding for repairs beyond the confines of this community,

- It will be our medium to long term aim to introduce another footpath, now much needed to avoid the danger of walking ON the A35, *inside the field* leading from Wilmington up the A35 to join with the existing footpath that cuts the corner when going to Offwell.
- With over half our population being in favour of developing the quarry, it must be pursued as a long term aim although funding is not currently available. The situation will be monitored, and the relevant bodies reminded of this suggestion from time to time so that if sufficient funds can ever be found it can be made to happen.
- It will be our medium-term aim - within 2-3 years - to re-introduce the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme with the help of our Beat Manager PC Andy Carmichael.
- The protection and enhancement of our environment will continue to be of paramount importance to us, now and in the future.

Endorsement of the  
Widworthy Parish Plan  
from our  
County & District Councillors





Councillor  
Dr. H.W. Waterworth  
EDDC Coly Valley Ward



Councillor  
Mrs. Helen Parr  
EDDC Coly Valley Ward



Councillor  
Mrs. Margaret Rogers  
DCC Seaton Rural

## Letter from Dr. H. W. Waterworth, Councillor for East Devon District Council Coly Valley Ward



The Lady Alison Kremer,  
Chairman, Widworthy Parish Council,  
Widworthy Barton,  
Horton,  
Devon EX14 9JS

21/04/04

Dear Alison,

### PARISH PLAN

As indicated, Widworthy Parish is a small community comprising just 140 houses and represented by a Council of 5 members. 2/3rds of the population live in the built-up part (i.e. Wilmington) with the remainder in open country.

Unfortunately, Wilmington is bisected by a busy main road (A35). However, in spite of this disadvantage Widworthy Parish is a vibrant community committed to improving the quality of life for those living in the area and is led by an enthusiastic and competent Council. The Council clearly has the support of parishioners as witnessed by the 90.7% response to their questionnaires, which is exceptional.

Bearing in mind the size of the Parish and hence its very limited resources a simple, inexpensive format for their submission is all that parishes of this size can be expected to produce. What, of course, is important is how the document demonstrates the quality of the Council. I have enjoyed working with this organisation for the last 13 years, as their District Councillor, and wish them well in seeking quality status.

Yours sincerely,

Clr. Dr. H.W. Waterworth,  
EDDC Coly Valley Ward

Email from Margaret Rogers. County Councillor for  
Seaton Rural

Alison Kramer

From: Councillor Margaret Rogers  
Sent: 14 April 2004 10:58  
To: Alison Kramer  
Subject: Widworthy Parish Plan

I was very impressed by the plan's clarity and I entirely support the views set out especially those relating to the dreadful dangers and annoyance caused by the A35 going through the centre of the village. In fact I was nearly killed some years ago by a HGV when I was trying to cross the road to a Parish Council meeting.

The other principal matter that I was asked to address was the plea for a footway inside the field to Widworthy Court. I walked this stretch of road at Easter in 1981 with parents concerned for the safety of their children who attend Offwell Primary School and was horrified at the traffic, its speed and the number of HGVs hurtling along out of the main holiday season. In the twenty three years since then it has greatly increased in volume and size while, despite restrictions speeds are still frightening.

Margaret Rogers  
County Councillor for Seaton Rural

Email from Councillor Mrs. Helen Parr.

Alison Kramer

From: Helen Parr  
Sent: 31 March 2004 21:36  
To: Alison Kramer  
Subject: RE: Widworthy Parish Plan

Dear Lady Kramer- thankyou for your email.  
Very impressed by the Foreword and Parish Plan - extremely interesting, and useful. Obviously a great deal of time and effort involved in its production. re photograph- will send  
Re Annual Parish Meeting - please let me know time and date- if possible I will be there.  
Best wishes- Helen

