

# UPTON PYNE AND COWLEY PARISH COUNCIL



## Introduction

In 2009 the Parish Council of the time created a Parish Plan: in 2022 it was decided to revisit the plan, look at our successes since 2009 and to look forward to the future of the Parish.

The following people were involved in the Parish Plan (individuals no longer in the Council in Italics)

Councillor Bob Short  
Councillor Sophie Ward  
*Councillor David Horton*  
Councillor Maggie Cormack  
Councillor Amanda Ryles  
Councillor Mark Hewlett  
Councillor Tony Jackson  
Councillor Jessica Dalton  
Councillor Mike Leach  
Jacqui Ward UPPC Clerk  
County Councillor Sara Randall-Johnson  
All the Parishioners who kindly contributed to the APM in 2022 or completed the Questionnaire.



## Timeline

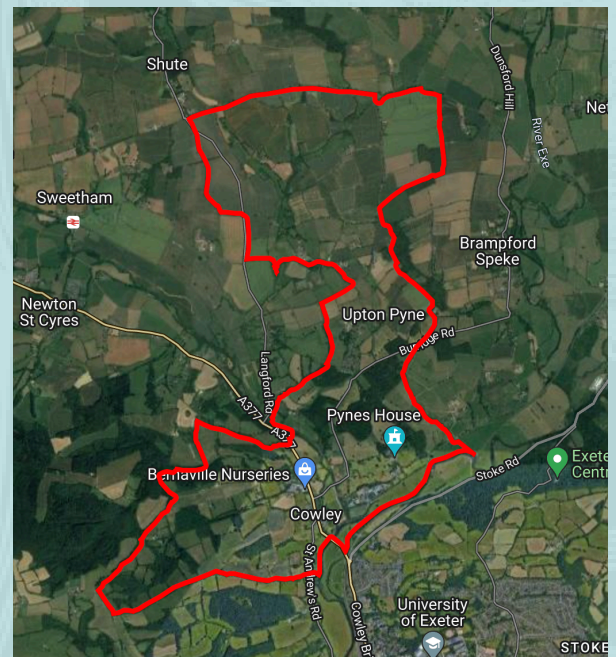
In late Spring 2022, every household in the Parish was sent an invitation to the Annual Parish Meeting in June 2022 at which they were asked to suggest the issues that were most important to them. These suggestions were collated and from that a Questionnaire was devised. In March this was hand delivered by Councillors to each property and then returned. The findings were collated and presented at the APM of June 2023. From that presentation, a draft plan was created and all Councillors asked to contribute to the wording so that it could be ready for the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting.

## Context

The Parish of Upton Pyne and Cowley extends from either side of the A377 at Three Horseshoes and Cowley, straddling Upton Pyne Hill up into the village and beyond to the hamlets of Jackmoor and Nettacott. There are more than 260 properties and more than 500 people.

There is a mixture of privately owned and rented properties, with a small area of social housing at Glebe Close and affordable housing at Lakesdown.

The area includes a Pub, a Garden Centre with Cafe and Restaurant, a children's Nursery, Farms, Shoots, an Architectural Cast Stone Manufacturers, an Equestrian Centre, a Printers, SW Waterworks, a Wedding venue, a Social Club and a Village Hall.



The area is represented by Upton Pyne Parish Council, is part of East Devon District Council, and falls under the governance of Devon County Council.

The Parish is home to the Churches of St Anthony in Cowley (built in 1866) and St Mary's in Upton Pyne (parts of which date back to the 14th Century), has had a Manor House at Pynes since the time of Henry I, and boasts an early 19th Century Bridge over the River Creedy (scheduled as an ancient monument).

## Successes and Notable Achievements

Since 2009, the Parish Council has worked with Parishioners, the County Council, Highways, Private Contractors and Volunteers in an attempt to improve life in the Parish.

### **Notable achievements in the last 15 years have included:**

Being one of the founding members of the Community Land Trust, established with the intention of finding and building affordable housing across the Parishes of Upton Pyne and Cowley and Brampford Speke. The Parish Council provided seed money to start the project and then supported and obtained funding from the Government under a Gordon Brown initiative. By Christmas 2015, 7 homes had been built at Lakesdown in Upton Pyne including a grassed area for Community use. Houses are available for rental at below market rate for people with proven links to the community. Discussions are currently underway for a further CLT development at Stonilands in Brampford Speke with a proposed Community Green Space.



Undertaking the lengthy process of taking the Causeway into Community ownership. The area between the churchyard and the Social club is now owned by the Parish securing it's future as a Community space in perpetuity.

The Parish Council pushed for and obtained funding for an oak Bus Shelter outside Pynes Garden.

The Parish Council pushed for Broadband for Jackmoor and Cowley.



The 6.8km of footpaths in the Parish have been regularly walked. Path 9 has had works enabling access by a mobility tramper, and bridges, hand rails and steps have been improved or replaced on path 1.

A dropped kerb has been put into the footpath at the edge of the A377 enabling wheelchair/pushchair access from Duryard Wood Lane to Bernaville and to the bus stop.

The Parish Council have funded the extension of weekly coffee groups in the village hall to act as a warm space. Additionally, the Parish Council financially supports the upkeep of the church grounds.



# Challenges and Concerns in 2023/2024

## Financial Pressures

The triple supply shocks of Brexit, Covid and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, together with the monetary tightening employed to bring inflation down has put pressure on everybody. Fuel costs are a particular issue in rural communities with several parts of the Parish not on mains gas. Councils have increasing pressures on their budgets with funding for Highway repairs and rural infrastructure being squeezed. Housing affordability, particularly for younger people, is a significant problem.

## Social Pressures

Covid highlighted the Social Isolation faced by many in rural communities but at the same time showed the sense of community as neighbours volunteered willingly to keep an eye on the more vulnerable people in the Parish.

Social Isolation and Mental Health Pressures are regularly cited in National surveys as one of the major issues of today. Mindful of the physical and mental wellbeing of Parishioners it becomes particularly important to have a sense of Community and to take pride in the area.

## Environmental Pressures

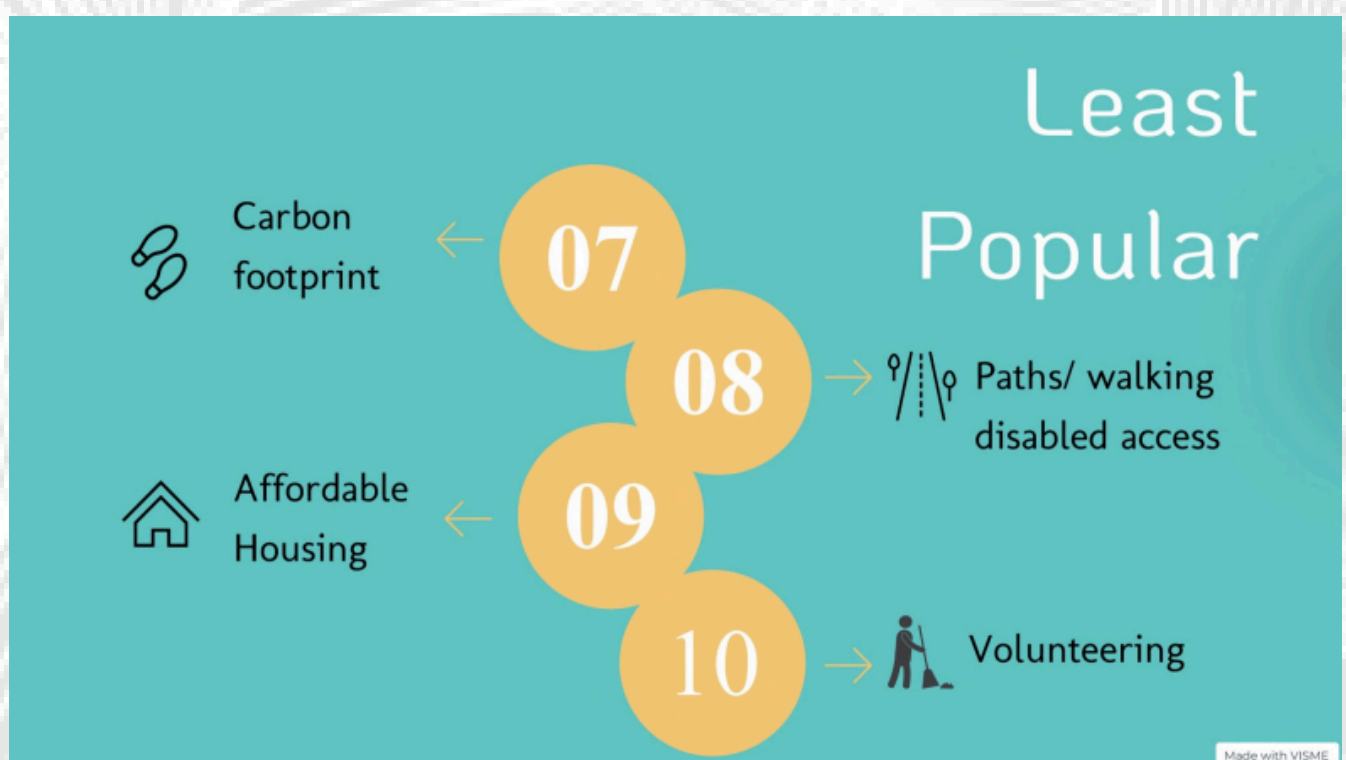
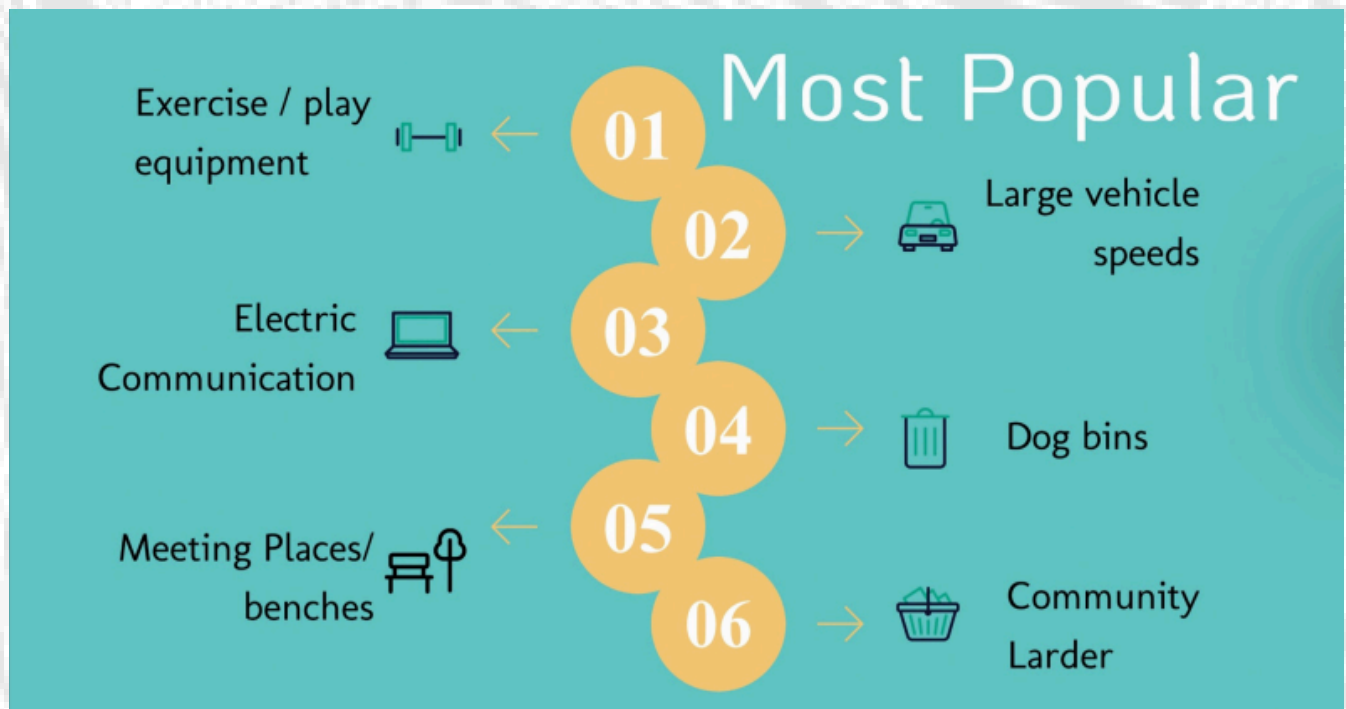
All of the different areas of the Parish have limitations to expansion, Transport causes different issues across the Parish. People from Cowley and Three Horseshoes have the benefit of good transport links including regular buses (but the disadvantage of rush hour traffic jams) whereas only two buses per week run to Exeter from Upton Pyne, Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving at 10 28am and returning from Exeter at 1.30pm.

School Transport is provided to QECC in Crediton, but there is no transport to Exeter College or to nearby Primary schools in Brampford Speke, Stoke Canon and Newton St Cyres. Walking from Upton Pyne Village down to Cowley cannot be done without having to walk on the road for the majority of the route. The narrow bridges over the Creedy, railway and Exe are a footpath-free pinch-point, making it challenging to walk into Exeter, and there are no current solutions given the historic status of the Creedy bridge.

The Agricultural nature of the area means large vehicles often have to use narrow roads. Additional large vehicles using these roads risk damage to both roads and verges and poses safety challenges. On-Street Parking within Upton Pyne is already at near capacity. Existing pressures on Transport and Infrastructure mean that any future additional housing risks adding to these pressures, requiring a clear Planning Statement.

# Responses from the Questionnaire and Plans Going Forward

The responses to the questionnaire were wide-ranging and often respondents had contrasting opinions. Analysis by Cllrs Ward and Horton showed the following areas where most people expressed a preference for action going forward, and it is this that forms the basis of our plan for the future.



## EXERCISE AND PLAYING EQUIPMENT

A great number of respondents expressed a wish for play or fitness equipment in the Parish. However, concerns were raised over how this would be funded, managed and insured, with other respondents concerned about how noise or antisocial behaviour might affect immediate neighbours. The Parish Council are keen that the green space in front of Lakesdown is used by the whole Parish, not just CLT residents. Members of the Community have put up small goalposts and seating.



## REDUCING VEHICLE SPEEDS

The Parish Council objected to the Digestate plant, lobbying our District and County Councillors. Although we were unable to stop the plant we continue to lobby for the imposition of travel plans, one way schemes etc.

Members of the council have met with the A377 action group to discuss potential improvements, including cycle lanes, to the main road through Cowley.



## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Many people expressed a desire for more electronic communication, but there were also concerns raised about the exclusion of those who are not tech-savvy. Two-way real-time communication directly with Councillors is problematical and beyond Council's remit. There are already good communication methods we perhaps need to shout about more. There are Parish Noticeboards at Bernaville and the Village Hall. Parish Council Meeting Minutes are available online. Speke Up Magazine is an excellent monthly publication which is also available the following month online. A recent village WhatsApp group has enabled real-time communication between villagers. The recent initiative to set up a library and reading area in the church, and the goalposts at Lakesdown both started as a request on the group and gathered support quickly.

## BINS

The council no longer supplies separate dog waste bins instead preferring mixed-use 'to Landfill' bins. Unfortunately despite repeated requests, the fact is there is no more capacity for the Council to empty more bins, even if the Parish Council were to fund them. Questionnaire respondents clearly felt that people walking dogs in the village (residents and visitors) should take any used dog-waste bags or litter back home to dispose of in their own black bins. A creative solution has been found too, with the purchase of three new general waste bins paid for by the Parish Council. They have been situated around the parish and will be emptied into existing householder black bins for collection with general waste. This relies on the goodwill of the chair but is a creative solution to there being no more capacity for collection.

## **PICNIC BENCHES**

As many questionnaire respondents said we had too many benches as said we needed more, so opinion is definitely divided. There are currently ten in the village: three in Glebe Close (two outside the play area, one under the oaks); one by the flagpole; two on the Causeway; one in the Village Hall Car Park; two in the churchyard; one at Starved Oak.

Cowley by contrast only has bus-stop seating.

## **COMMUNITY LARDER**

Respondents expressed a desire for a Community Larder. The Parish Council are very supportive of the idea and were approached by Stuart Pearce. Key to the principle are the twin ideas of reducing waste to landfill and supporting people on limited budgets. The Parish are happy to support this project going forward.

Since attending the meeting Stuart has started a small food larder in the church porch, replenished most Wednesdays.

## **ADDRESSING FUTURE CONCERNS**

The 2024 Parish Plan proposes that going forward we consider both the areas highlighted by Questionnaire respondents, and address the Financial, Social and Environmental Pressures identified. As a Parish Council we have financial responsibilities and cannot take on additional liabilities. However, we wish to support any initiatives that will enable us to address the priorities raised by the questionnaire or improve our community. To that end, we invite groups or individuals who need financial support for a Community project to apply for a grant from the Community Grant Fund.





# Appendix 1: Community Grant Scheme

## **Empowering Our Parish: Introducing a Community Grant Scheme**

Our parish is a community geographically divided into two villages. We have a diversity of ages, occupations wealth within the parish, and this creates unique needs and aspirations. Through consultations with parishioners for the Parish Plan, we have listened attentively to the voices of our residents, and it's clear that while some issues affect us collectively, others are more localised. Take, for instance, the contrasting availability of benches between Upton Pyne and Cowley, or the disparity in accessible play equipment. It's evident that tailored solutions are essential to address these specific challenges effectively.

In our commitment to fostering a thriving and inclusive community, we're excited to announce the launch of a Small Community Grant Scheme. This initiative aims to empower residents by providing them with the means to initiate positive changes within our parish. Whether it's enhancing public spaces, organising community events, or implementing innovative projects, this grant offers up to £500 per application, with the possibility of larger grants on a case-by-case basis.

We believe that by entrusting our residents with the resources and support they need, we can collectively shape a brighter future for all. This grant scheme isn't just about funding projects; it's about fostering a sense of ownership and pride in our community. Together, we can transform ideas into action and make meaningful contributions to the well-being of everyone in our parish.

Projects addressing the priorities identified by the questionnaire will be given precedent.

Join us in embracing this opportunity to create positive change and build a stronger, more vibrant community for generations to come.

# Example Community Grant Schemes and Eligibility:

The Upton Pyne and Cowley Parish Council Small Community Grants program offers one-off grants of up to £500 to support community-led initiatives in the parish. Eligible applicants include properly constituted not-for-profit organisations, voluntary and community sector groups and individuals living or based in the Upton Pyne and Cowley area.

Projects funded by the Small Community Grants should align with the parish priorities outlined in the Parish Plan. This may include (but is not limited to):

**Improving safety - Health and wellbeing of residents - Promoting a greener Parish - Enhancing community life - Providing educational opportunities**

Applications should demonstrate community involvement and a commitment to project delivery and maintenance. While the fund is intended to fully support smaller projects, contributions to larger endeavours may be eligible, with applicants encouraged to indicate community engagement and benefit in their proposals. Match-funding of projects by other sources may strengthen applications but is not required. Examples of eligible projects may include:

- Grants for play equipment on community land
- Funds for a street party for a community focussed event
- Training/equipment for volunteers (e.g traffic monitors)
- Community planting of flowerbeds or bee-friendly verges.

Certain project types are ineligible for funding, including those promoting specific politics, faith, or beliefs, ongoing staff salaries, or projects already completed. Projects where the sole or principal benefit goes to individuals or for-profit organizations will not be considered. Examples of ineligible applications may include:

- Individual sponsorship for a charity race or activity
- Improvements or upgrades to individual's homes
- Business loans or grants
- On-going commitments e.g. equipment maintenance required every year.

Applications are assessed by Councillors on the Community Grants Panel, with decisions typically communicated within 8 weeks of submission. Successful applicants are required to spend the grant within the timescales allowed in the application and must provide feedback, including evidence of expenditure and project outcomes.

Applicants must adhere to the fund's terms and conditions, which include confirming project eligibility, acknowledging Upton Pyne and Cowley Parish Council's support in publicity materials, and conducting project evaluations. Failure to comply with the terms may result in repayment of grant funds at the council's discretion.

In rare circumstances larger grants may be available (up to £1500), if the evidence suggests a greater need, or significant match-funding from alternative sources. For more information on the Small Community Grants program and application updates, interested parties are encouraged to contact [parishclerk@uptonpyne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@uptonpyne-pc.gov.uk)

## Appendix 2: Planning Statement

Upton Pyne and Cowley Parish Council do not support unlimited development in our Parish. The Parish Council cannot support any development that would be detrimental to the Community (for example, significantly adding to the Transport pressures on the A377, parking pressures in Upton Pyne, or Flooding issues in Jackmoor) .

All planning applications will be considered on an individual basis as now, but going forward the Parish Council consider it important that we retain the rural feel to the community.

The Parish Council therefore gives weight to:

Applications enhancing the rural environment;

Applications offering sustainable worked-through transport solutions;

Applications following the model for Affordable Housing adopted by the CLT.

However, in all cases this will be weighed against the pressures development might place upon the Parish's Infrastructure and there should be no presumption of support