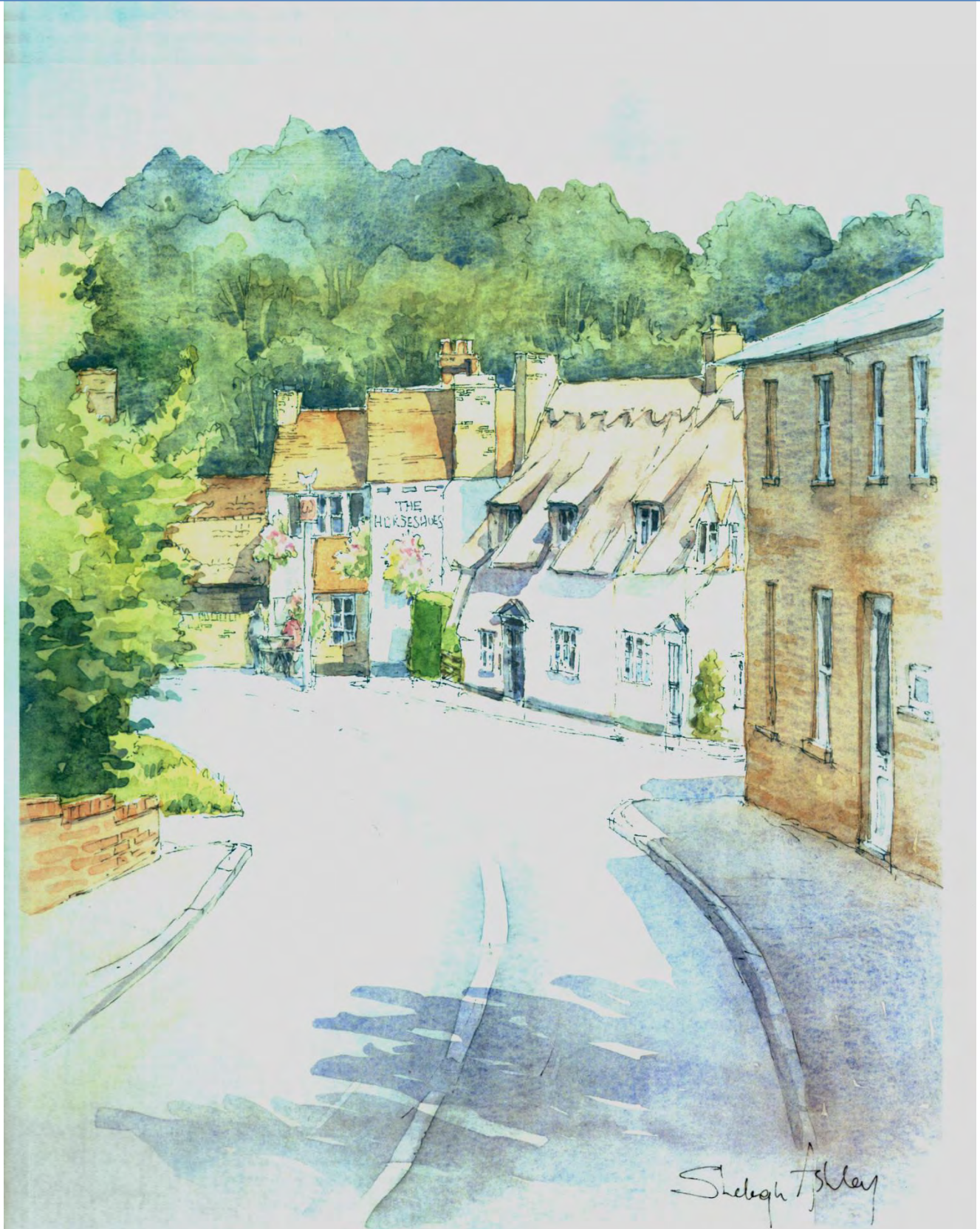


BLUNHAM VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN



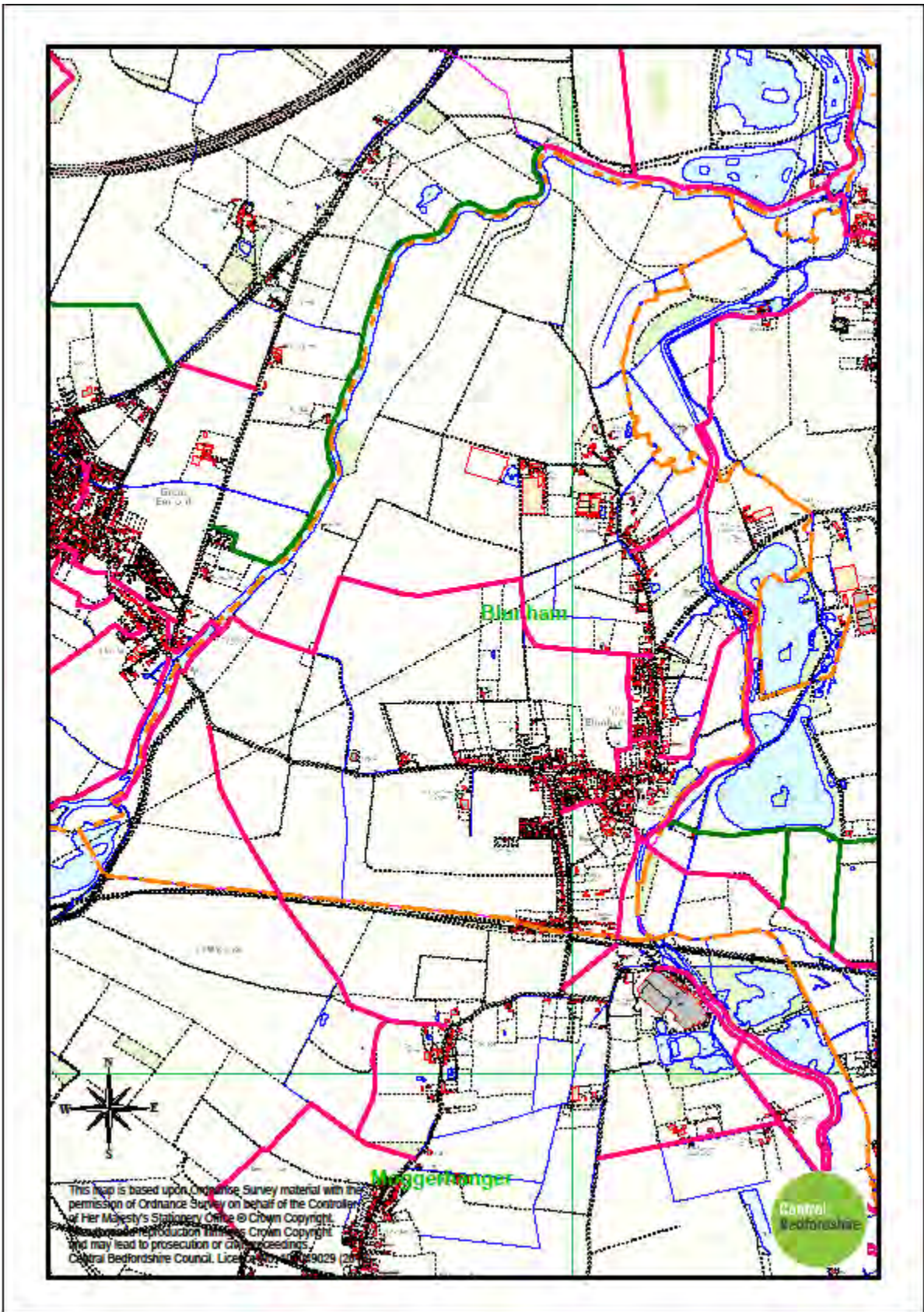


Aerial Photograph of the Parish

This view covers most of the land contained within the parish.

The large industrial building in the near foreground is the Abbey Corrugated site which lies just outside of the parish.

The River Ivel can be seen on the right running from bottom to top of the photo. Part of Great Barford lies in the top left.



Map of the Parish of Blunham

CONTENTS

Parish Council Chairman’s foreword.....	5
Welcome by Chair of Steering Group.....	6
Introduction and history of Blunham.....	7
How did we find out your views.....	12
Foreword on the questionnaire.....	13
Environment.....	14
Traffic and transport.....	17
Housing.....	24
Leisure.....	26
Community facilities and health.....	29
Work, training and education.....	34
Crime and safety.....	36
Summary.....	39
Acknowledgments.....	40

Chairman's Foreword

A great deal of time and effort has been demanded from the local community in order to produce this Action Plan. The result is this document based on your input which sets out a list of recommendations the aim of which is to improve the quality of village life over the next 10 years. I hope you will enjoy reading it and that it will stimulate further interest in our locality and inspire continued action to ensure Blunham remains a pleasant place in which to live.

Most of the calls to action are of a minor nature and can be dealt with immediately. Other suggestions require more thought and commitment and large input from outside agencies. What has been achieved with the Playing Field Pavilion and the plans for the Village Hall are fine examples of what can be done when minds are put to it. As the plan moves forward and targets are reached it will lead to new challenges where opportunities will arise for parishioners to become more aware and involved in its progress.

For those who may think that this is all a waste of time be assured that studies of the effects of parish plans have shown;

- New people become involved in community activity
- New community groups are started
- There is better networking between existing groups
- An improved community spirit is achieved
- A better understanding of the roles of the Parish Council, local Authority and service providers results.
- The Parish Council knows its decisions are representative of community wishes

I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the Steering Group and local residents who have with such good humour and grace, supported this project in so many ways. You will see the names of the key players in this important exercise at the end of this document. It is through their efforts that this Plan will give our voice to all those issues that might otherwise be determined by those who are not residents and do not fully understand the feelings we have about matters that affect our lives.

The Parish Council fully supports this Improvement Plan and will make every effort to assist in achieving the objectives.

Malcolm Mugridge
Chairman
Blunham Parish Council
October 2010

Welcome by the Chair of Blunham Action Plan Steering Group

You may recall that on 8 September 2008 an open meeting was held in Blunham Village Hall to see if anyone was interested in contributing their ideas to improve our village.

The response was amazing; there was standing room only in the hall that evening with residents putting 'post it' notes everywhere containing their ideas. As a result a committee was formed that very night with the first meeting planned for 28 October in The Salutation at which we appointed the necessary officers, gave ourselves a name and Blunham VIP was born ...Blunham **Village Improvement Plan**.

Over the next 18 months we arranged the Rave Bus, Planning for Real® Event in the Village Hall, the Likes and Dislikes leaflet etc in order to compile our FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE raising issues that are important to everyone in Blunham.

This questionnaire was distributed in March 2010 and we were delighted that 71% of you responded giving us information from which we have produced this, our Final Report.

This will now be submitted to the residents and hopefully some of your ideas will be implemented, the funding provided where necessary and this whole exercise will have been really worthwhile.

As you may know we are a group of volunteers, working in partnership with the Parish Council who have been meeting for the last 2 years to establish the views of our Residents and act on them. Now, as our job is nearly finished, I would like to thank everyone involved, especially the committee who have given a great deal of their time, regularly turning out even on cold winter evenings for the benefit of our village.

Thank you for your support

Gloria Aubury
Chair
Blunham VIP

INTRODUCTION TO BLUNHAM

Blunham is a small rural parish (486 hectares or 1200 acres in old money) in the newly formed (April 2009) Unitary Authority of Central Bedfordshire. It has, for the most part, distinct geographical boundaries, namely to the south the former track bed of the Oxford- Bedford – Cambridge railway line (now National Cycle Network Route 51), to the west and north the River Great Ouse and to the east the River Ivel. There is one very small parcel of common land by The Pound on Tempsford Road.

Almost all the habitable population lies within the village envelope. The remainder being open fields with typical crops of potatoes, beans, oil seed rape and wheat. We also have one of the largest growers of chilli peppers in the country. There are 5 conventional farms plus the market gardener with the majority of land being held by 5 individuals. It is notable that the face of farming has changed from predominantly vegetables/market gardening to combinable crops. The exceptions to the agricultural activity are a coach business off Barford Road and a waste recycling plant also accessed off Barford Road. There are two other large businesses that impinge upon village life but are just outside the parish boundary; Flamingo Holdings, a labour intensive flower packing operation and Abbey Corrugated a more industrialised concern that produces a variety of paper products.

Care of the grade 1 agricultural land should be paramount

In total there are 416 residences with a population of approximately 1000 (2001 census shows 926 residents and 401 dwellings). These are all clustered in the south east corner of the parish. There is one main transportation link, the C5 road that runs east from Barford Bridge through the village to Tempsford and the A1 trunk road. Within the village



Aerial view of the heart of the village

there is an offshoot from the C5 namely Station Road that runs south to join up with the A603 Bedford to Sandy road. Also within the parish boundary is Willington Road that runs from the Barford Bridge south west to the A603 at Willington. For those with their own means of transport the proximity of the A1, A603, A421 and the East Coast Main Railway Line provides easy access to most other parts of the country. For those of a more active nature the cycle route mentioned above gives a safe means of travel to Bedford or Sandy. A small network of footpaths exist in the built up area and also out into the local area.

The Kingfisher Way passes through the parish following roughly the course of the River Ivel.

Examination of the 2001 census for Blunham parish (available on line at the Central Beds website) shows very few notable variations in the statistics for Blunham compared with the averages for the County, Region or England & Wales. Travel to work by foot or bicycle is a half to a third of the county figures and the number of self employed is almost double that of the national figure.

Blunham has two places of worship; The Church of England parish church of St Edmund or St James (one church but leading some to enquire which of the two churches a particular event is being held in) and a Strict Baptist chapel. Unfortunately the post office facility was lost in the recent slimming down exercise by Royal Mail and at present the nearest post offices are at Great Barford or Roxton.

However we are fortunate to have the John Donne VA Lower School (school roll 93 in June 2010) which as in many villages acts as a glue bringing many of the community together. In addition to the school there is a 'Teddybears' playgroup which uses the village hall.

A conservation area is located at the heart of the village and a plan of this is included in the appendices. There are several listed buildings the most notable being The Old Rectory and Blunham Court. Further details of those listed can be found on the Central Bedfordshire website.

The village playing field is greatly valued. The Playing Field Association has been instrumental in rebuilding the old pavilion to a spanking new standard and installing a play area for the younger children which is widely used. The Village Hall Committee after many years of dedicated fund raising is embarking on an improvement project which will enhance the hall's attractiveness as a venue. Mention must be made of the Blunham Cricket Club which, albeit briefly, held the world record for the longest duration cricket match and are mounting another attack this year. There is an active branch of the Women's Institute and several informal groupings such as a book group and local history society. In spite of the economic situation the village shop keeps afloat and the village is lucky for its size to retain a butcher's shop. There is also a take away food shop that caters not only with traditional fish and chips but for the wider palate that is demanded these days. The village also has 2 public houses, The Salutation and The Horseshoes. A far cry from the days when there were 8 pubs and beer houses, more information about which, can be sourced via a link on Colin Hinson's excellent web site.



Our new pavilion

History of the Village

Blunham in the 21st century is a pleasant place to live and it is not surprising that it has been inhabited by mankind for a very long time. Traces of this history are everywhere but are fleeting, disjointed and obscure.

Early history

Stone implements dating from the early Stone Age (500,000 BC to 10,000 BC) have been found in Blunham among the alluvial beds of the rivers and similar remains have been found from the Mesolithic era (10,000 BC to 4000 BC). In these times human communities were hunter gatherers and had no settlements. The period from 4000BC to the coming of the Romans in 49BC is known as the New Stone Age which overlapped with the Bronze and early Iron Age. In this period human communities began to live a settled life and in Blunham there are tantalising and uninvestigated remains of such communities revealed by crop marks, ditches and a barrow.

A number of coins and pottery fragments of Roman origin have been found in Blunham, and there is tentative evidence that a Roman road ran from Sandy, through Moggerhanger, Blunham, Great Barford, and Wilden and onto its ultimate destination in Irtlingborough. Roman influence declined from 400 AD and it is virtually certain that a settlement continued to exist in Blunham in the Anglo Saxon period but very little physical evidence of this exists.

Domesday

Blunham (as it was then known) is mentioned 3 times in the Domesday Book which was commissioned by William the Conqueror shortly after 1066. The Manor of Blunham was owned, in the main, by the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. The value of the manor was recorded to have fluctuated wildly in the period probably due to the depredations of King William's soldiers who passed through the area to quell rebellions and pillage the natives giving many of the populace a long standing aversion to European influences. The manor of Blunham remained in the ownership of the Abbey up until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539.

The Tenants

From 1389 to modern times the main tenant of the manor was the De Grey family which originated in Ruthin in North Wales. The de Grey's prospered and in 1465 they became Earls of Kent and in 1710 the Dukes of Kent. (There is not enough space here to tell the story) The manor passed down through the De Grey family and in the early 19th century was held by Baroness Lucas who later acquired the title Countess de Grey of Wrest Park near Silsoe. The Law of Property Act 1922 abolished in all but name the manorial system and this part of history came to an end.

The Church



This is the most tangible and enduring monument to the community of Blunham which has flourished for at least a 1000 years. The earliest identifiable feature is part of the tower which dates from 1100 AD. The interior is medieval, mostly 13th century Early English and 15th century Perpendicular. The tower was substantially rebuilt in the 16th Century. Much prettification took place in the 19th and early 20th century. There are a number of fine memorials to the patrons of the Church over many years including the Kent family, the Bromsalls and the Thorntons each of which has a story to tell if only there was the space.

John Donne

John Donne, the great metaphysical poet was Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London and became Rector of Blunham in 1621 by the gift of the Earls of Kent. There is much speculation as to the extent to which he had any connection with Blunham. As was normal at the time, Donne paid for a curate to carry out his duties in the parish but there is documentary evidence that Donne was a

conscientious man and spent some weeks in the parish every year. *The Sermons of John Donne* edited by G. R. Potter and E. M. Simpson in ten volumes (1959) states: "It appears Donne regularly visited Blunham...A curate was in charge, but Donne was more conscientious than most pluralists [those holding more than one living] in going each year to see how the parish was faring, and in preaching there for a few weeks. In the late summer of 1628 he wrote to Mrs. Cockain telling her how after he had visited Kent and Peckham [Surrey] he went into Bedfordshire, and there on his third Sunday at Blunham he was seized with a fever which forced him to return to London to consult his physician". What is history

for if you cannot listen to the bells of Blunham Church ringing out on a dark Wednesday evening in November and connect this with the physical presence of Donne in his parish church and recall his melancholy words:

“Therefore send not to know
For whom the bell tolls
It tolls for thee.”

Transport

Blunham lies on transport routes which in history were even more important than they are today. Up to the coming of the railways, waterways were the only means for the transportation of bulky items and Blunham stood on both the Great Ouse and the Ivel. In the 18th century the Ivel was canalised and became a formal navigation with locks and tow paths.

Blunham also stands in the A1 corridor linking London with York and Lincoln the great medieval centres of the North. It is important to remember that before the age of tarmac, people using roads on foot or horseback did not follow a single defined route. There were a myriad of routes some favoured in summer and others in winter. Barford Bridge, dating from the 15th century, would have served this north/south traffic and given the multiplicity of routes it is not surprising that the bridge is at Great Barford and not at Tempsford where the A1 now runs. It is therefore possible to envisage weary travellers passing through Blunham on their way north and south. Blunham has a history of many pubs. Perhaps these date back to the time when such travellers stopped by for refreshment.

In the 19th century the London and North Eastern Railway was built. This went to Sandy. Blunham got its railway connection in 1862 when the line linking Bedford to Cambridge was opened. Blunham’s own station had a waiting room, a room for the porters and a station master’s house. This was the last section of a line which had been built in stages and which linked the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The line was notorious for its slowness and delays. It is a misfortune for a railway line to have had such scholarly and articulate customers who recorded its deficiencies for posterity in fine prose.



Blunham Railway Station

School

There are some early references to schooling in Blunham in the 18th century. The will of Gavin Stanger written in 1725 mentions a schoolroom in his house and in 1750 Thomas Bromsall left money in his will to pay for a schoolmaster. In 1816 there are documentary references to a site for a village school. In the early 19th century competition between various Christian denominations led to a more formalised approach to education. In 1811 the Anglican Church set up a National Society which carried out a survey of educational provision in every parish in England with a view to making improvements nationwide. The return for Blunham said



John Donne Lower School

there was a weekly school for 80 boys and a Sunday school for 70 boys and 80 girls. In this context Sunday school would have taught general literacy as well as religious subjects. The vicar at the time commented “the scholars are on the increase and the poor seem anxious to be benefited by education”. The village school has grown from these early beginnings into the flourishing community it is today and no doubt the ethos identified by the vicar still motivates the scholars.

Conclusion

Local history seems to only deal with lords and ladies, churches, institutions and famous men. So much of the social and economic life of a place is unrecorded and lost and ordinary folk never seem to have existed. The lives of ordinary people pass with time, unrecorded. This is not a conspiracy by historians or a value judgment that ordinary life is unimportant. It results, I believe, from a curious quirk of human nature that we tend not to record the ordinary but we do take great note of the grand, powerful, unusual even mindless celebrity although these usually have no direct relevance to our daily lives. Without tangible records, so much of daily life is missing from this short history.

Acknowledgement

Most of the factual material in this article has come from the excellent website maintained by the Bedfordshire Archives:

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Blunham>



HOW DID WE FIND OUT YOUR VIEWS

We started by obtaining the backing of the Parish Council back in the summer of 2008. Subsequently we invited every resident to an open meeting in the Village Hall to gauge the desire for producing a Plan and were very pleased with the almost unanimous positive response and even more so when quite a few parishioners expressed a willingness to become part of the Steering Group. Since our inaugural gathering just before Christmas 2008 we have held regular meetings (mostly in a room kindly provided by the landlady of The Salutation) to discuss and agree the way forward. Although we have had six resignations since our beginning, everyone who has been involved with the group has contributed to its success.

Our main focus was to ensure we obtained the views of as many people in the village as possible and we are so grateful to all of you who took the time to do that. We started by issuing an initial survey form asking what you liked and disliked about the village, we listened to your comments at coffee mornings and other get-togethers and we organised a Planning for Real[®] event held in the Village Hall on a gloriously warm day last September. This event gave you the

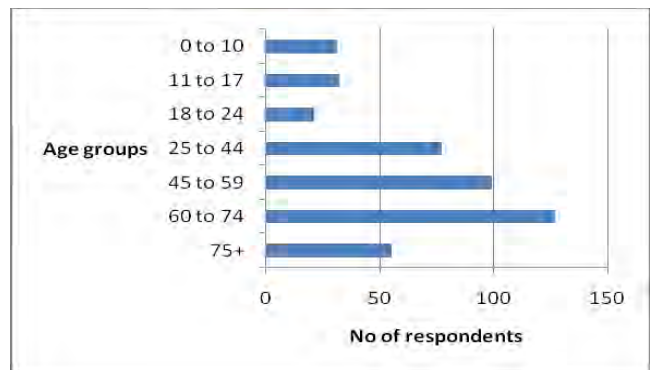
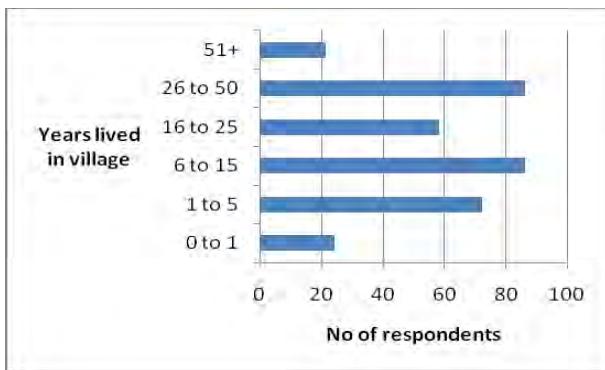


opportunity to look at a map of the village and highlight areas that concerned you. We also booked the Rave Bus for youngsters to give their views in an informal way and although we were disappointed with the turnout for that event, those who did come along gave us some useful comments.

Our year culminated in the preparation and issue of the main questionnaire which we thought long and hard about. We wanted to base our questions on what we had been told so far in our informal consultations. We managed to test the draft questionnaire on some 'guinea pigs' and we are grateful for their input too. We delivered a questionnaire in a plastic bag to every household in the village and our band of volunteers collected 294 completed forms most of which had been left out by residents but a few were left with Mr Patel at the Village Shop. Without our volunteers' persistence and tenacity we would not have achieved the very impressive 71% return rate.

Planning for Real[®] event

Once all the returns were collected the job of analysing them began. The returned questionnaires were analysed by 2 members of the Steering Group who had had no connection with the collecting of the completed forms. In this way we can assure everyone who took the time to give us their views that those views do indeed remain anonymous.



FOREWORD ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to keep the questionnaire to a reasonable length and not deter responses, we adopted a multiple choice format. We issued a total of 416 questionnaires and received 294 completed ones back. From those the total number living in those households was 669. However not all of those 669 completed all parts of the questionnaire even though they were within a household that returned the form. In some cases none of the options of a particular question were answered either because it was perhaps thought to be intrusive or it did not apply to anyone in the household.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Looking at the general information that was forthcoming from the returned questionnaires we saw that:

- The highest number of respondents were in the 60-74 age bracket (127 out of 442) with the next highest in the 45-59 range with 99. We think it must be accepted that the population of Blunham is an ageing one but acknowledging the result might be distorted by the willingness of the older population to complete the form. This indicates that Blunham is not escaping the national demographic trend with the consequent increasing strain on medical and care facilities, falling school rolls and demand for public transport.
- The 18-24 age group were the lowest represented age group. Mindful that this group would probably have less time to participate one could also infer that they were either least able to afford to live in the village or had taken the opportunity to move elsewhere because of job opportunities or cheaper housing.
- The attractiveness of living in Blunham was demonstrated by the responses to the query on the length of time spent in the village. Out of 347 respondents 230 have lived here for between 6 and 50 years.
- Unsurprisingly when relating back to the earlier statements about the age of the population 135 (28%) indicated they were retired. After this the next largest group were the full time employed 106 (22%) and part time employed 59. The numbers of self employed but employing others was 19 with a further 43 in sole self employment which seems quite high in comparison with the numbers of employees. Unemployed stood at a very low 4. Whilst 52 were in full time education (they could also figure in the part time employment) 22 stated they were permanently sick or disabled.
- In addition to the structured responses residents were also given the opportunity to make comments in a free format both for specific questions and in a general comments space at the end. There were 112 comments in the latter section many of which related back to specific topics.

It would be nice to see the outcome of this comprehensive questionnaire

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental issues in the village seem to relate to two or three main areas which are the maintenance of paths and pavements, drainage problems associated with these and finally, though not unrelated to the other two issues, dog fouling. There seems to be strong support for various extensions to the existing cycle path on the southern boundary of the village and also support for schemes which would allow the community buildings in the village i.e. the Village Hall and Sports Pavilion, to utilise power and water to better effect, though more information was felt to be needed on the practicalities of these ideas.

Consultation results

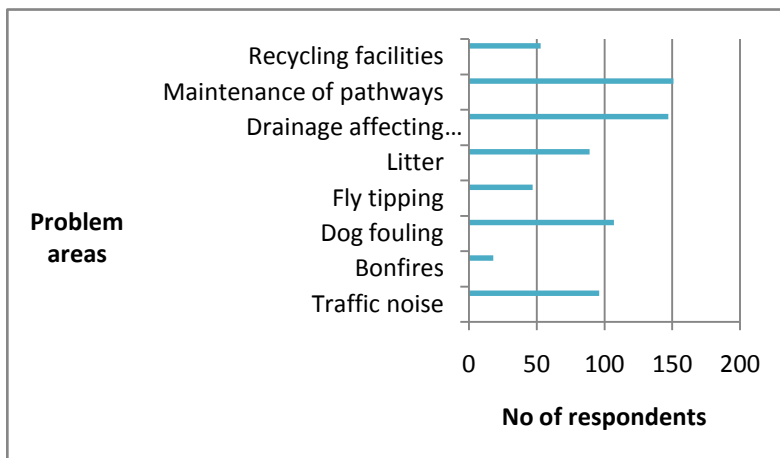
151 respondents felt that **maintenance of pathways and pavements** is an issue and a further 147 consider **drainage** affecting roads and pathways is a problem

Dog fouling is seen as a problem by 107 respondents and 108 respondents want to see more dog waste bins around the village.

Traffic noise was commented on as a problem by 96 respondents and this obviously ties in with the whole traffic and transport issue dealt with more fully elsewhere.

Litter was considered a problem in the village by 89 respondents and the same number (probably the same people) thought that there should be more litter bins around the village. 56 people thought that they would like to see organised litter picks (so hopefully they would agree to be actively involved in such an activity!)

Recycling facilities were commented on by 53 respondents as being a problem, though it appears that a number of residents are not aware that there are glass recycling facilities located in the car park of the Horseshoes Public House. The introduction of bins with integrated recycling facilities (as have been introduced recently in Bedford town centre) was considered favourably by 89 respondents.



Fly tipping (47 responses) and **bonfires** (18 responses) were not really considered to be a problem in the village.

120 respondents felt that a **scheduled bulk rubbish collection** would be a valuable service and a village swap or recycling centre for large unwanted items was mentioned.

There appears to be a need for **more public seating** in the village with 88 positive responses to this question.

It appears that the **communal grass areas** are generally considered not to be a problem with only 57 respondents ticking the improved maintenance of these areas option.

However, there seems to be a feeling that more could be made of some of the ‘wilder’ natural areas of the village e.g. around the Pound at the north end of the High Street (80 respondents) and the possibility of developing an **area planted to encourage wildlife** with associated information boards was thought to be a good idea by 93 respondents. On the same lines, 78 people would like to see a **woodland area with picnic benches** in the village.

Overhanging garden trees impeding easy progress along pavements was seen as an issue by 63 respondents.

The vexed question of **allotments** gained 82 positive responses but there is always the associated problem in any area of finding and funding available land.

I would like to see a seat at the Station Road bus stop opposite the cemetery

The most popular destination (with 193 positive responses) for a new **footpath** and **cycle path** is, without doubt, Great Barford (which would therefore tie in with access to Alban Middle School and the other services such as the Post Office and surgery) but cycle paths to Tempsford (17 votes) St Neots (6) Biggleswade and Roxton (both 3), Moggerhanger and Northill (both 2) and Upper Caldecote (1 vote) all had various levels of support.

Rainwater and waste water recycling facilities and **renewable (solar) energy schemes** for the community buildings in the village had considerable support (126 and 126 respectively) though there was less enthusiasm for wind turbines (only 56 positive responses for the community buildings and 64 for the idea of co-operative purchasing of individual solar units). Concern was raised in the ‘other comments’ boxes about who would be involved in any extra work relating to such schemes.

Use of green waste for a **community composting scheme** was popular (108) though a garden tool bank was considered less useful with only 35 positive responses.



The Play Area

ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN

Challenge	Address areas of concern highlighted by respondents where changes could be made			
Aim 1	To improve facilities around the village			
How it will be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources	
1. Increase number of public benches by identifying needy sites	Medium 3 months	Highways and Parish Council	Grants	
2. Increase number of public notice boards by identifying possible sites	Medium 6 months	Highways and Parish Council	Negligible	
3. Increase number of litter bins around the village by identifying possible sites	Medium 6 months	Parish Council	Grants	
4. Publicise existing recycling facilities and look into possibilities of regular bulk collection service	Medium	Blunham Blurb Central Bedfordshire	Negligible	
5. Look into the demand for allotments again	Medium	Parish Council Local landowners	Unknown	
Challenge	Improve appearance and remove annoying and offensive attributes			
Aim 2	To tidy up the village environment			
1. Reduce the amount of dog dirt by additional provision of dog bins	High	Parish Council Central Bedfordshire	Grants	
2. Reduce the amount of litter by increased litter bin provision and community litter pick	Medium	Interested villagers	Negligible	
3. Make more of some natural areas of the village eg The Pound	Low 3 months	Interested villagers and local wildlife specialists	Negligible	
4. Improve state of pavements and pathways, especially relating to flooding	Medium	Parish Council Central Beds Highways Agency	Grants	
5. Manage problem of trees overhanging paths	Medium	Parish Council	Negligible	

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

Without doubt this section elicited a higher number of responses in the comment boxes than any other subject and almost without exception expressed concerns of one sort or another. This is probably due to the fact that the traffic situation has the most physical impact on residents and is present every day.

Attempts were made to obtain traffic and accident data for the roads in Blunham Parish but unfortunately Central Bedfordshire Council failed to give any response.

However speed and traffic flow data has been obtained from elsewhere for Barford Road and Station Road and consists of a week's monitoring in early 2010 and mid 2009. For Barford Road total flow (both directions) shows weekday 24 hour totals varying from 4073 to 4584 vehicle movements. A more typical village flow would be 2500 to 3000 vehicles. Inbound flows peak in the periods 07-0800 and 1530-1730 whilst outbound flows peak at 07-0800 and 16-1800. Strangely the flows are not balanced as consistently more vehicles travel outbound each day than travel inbound.

In Highway Engineering and Accident Reduction Work the most common statistical indicator of speeds is the 85th percentile. Simply put it means that 15% of drivers are exceeding this speed. Inbound on Barford Road 85th percentile speeds hover around 37mph during daylight hours. Outbound the situation is even worse with the 85th percentile speeds being between 40 and 45 mph. In non-traffic calmed built-up areas one would expect the 85th percentile speeds to be in the region of 35mph.

Looking at the more extreme driver behaviour (which is good for headlines but tends to exaggerate the true situation) on average 24 drivers exceed 50mph outbound in the 12 hour period 07-1900. This falls to 2.4 drivers for the same time inbound. By any measure this section of the road layout in Blunham suffers from higher traffic flows and inappropriate driver behaviour than that expected in a typical Bedfordshire village situation. Barford Road is one of the major pickup/set down points for village children attending Alban Middle School.

For Station Road the monitoring period probably covered the first week of the school holidays and it would be unwise to link the flow data in any meaningful manner with that for Barford Road. Total flow shows weekday 24 hour totals varying from approximately 2700 to 2900 with the same disparity exhibited in directional volumes as shown on Barford Road.

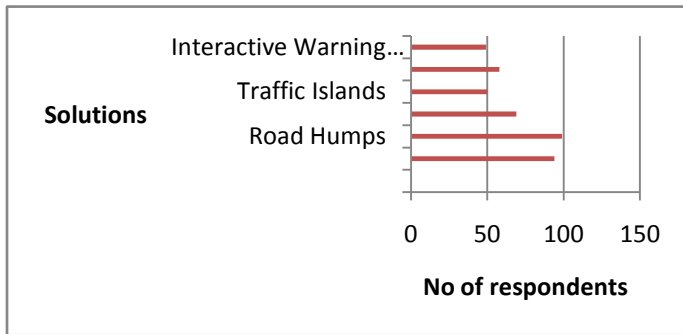
The monitoring point for Station Road is located approximately 55 metres from the T junction with The Hill/Barford Road and it is therefore surprising to see the 85th percentile speeds inbound to the junction over the 12 hour daylight period (07 – 1900) equating to 37.2mph and away from the junction equating to 38.8mph. Maximum speeds recorded inbound by 4 drivers were between 46 and 50mph and 8 drivers were in the same speed bracket as they accelerated away from the junction. This monitoring point is approximately 700 metres within the 30mph speed limit and has housing, junctions and bus stops for almost all of that distance.

Consultation results

229 respondents consider **rat running** is a problem compared with 67 who did not. 85 households did not answer this question.

When asked if traffic was travelling at an **inappropriate speed** and if so where, Barford Rd, Station Rd, The Hill and High St were almost all equally a problem. As a solution, traffic calming with 141 responses was favoured over an

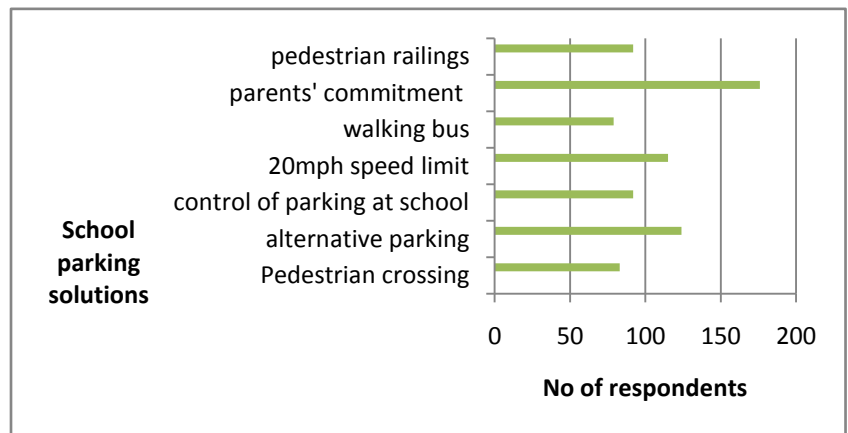
increased police presence with 108 votes.



Related to the previous question was a specific question directed at the **parking outside the Lower School** with a choice of possible solutions. This of course took as given that parking there at dropping off and picking up times was of concern to many residents. The most favoured solution with 176 votes and also the one that went to the heart of the problem was for a commitment by parents to

walk children to school whenever possible. The next two most favoured were the provision of alternative parking areas away from school (124 responses) and a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school (115 responses).

When the question “Is **roadside parking by others** a problem for you” the thought was to find out where adjacent parking made it difficult to exit from drives and side roads. However it became clear from the comments that in most cases the problem was the difficulty encountered in progressing along the road because of parked cars. Station Rd and High St stood out well above the others in this respect.



There were 147 responses in favour of **parking facilities off Station Rd** where the Bedford-Sandy cycle route crossed. 101 did not favour this whilst 53 questionnaires showed no response at all.

When asked about **specific problems on certain footways** the one that attracted most votes (161) was the stretch outside the fish and chip shop which is often covered in slime and mud after heavy rain. The next highest vote (124) attractor was the lack of a footway between Blunham and Great Barford bridge with the narrowness of the footway on The Hill coming third with 115 votes.

Inadequate street lighting was thought to be a problem on The Hill and the High St with 50 responses each but the most telling result was that 130 questionnaires left this section blank.

Improved services is essential for those without transport

Only a small proportion of the population uses the **bus services** with the scheduled service being the most used and then only 7 respondents used a service daily. The factor that would attract greater use was more frequent buses (161) with more convenient running times coming next (128). But still 103 questionnaires showed no interest in using a bus even if the service was improved. Bedford was the most popular destination (125) if a twice daily service was introduced, with Sandy being the next most popular with 87 votes and St Neots close behind with 82 votes. Clearly there is still a high percentage of parishioners wedded to their cars as 106 questionnaires did not enter a choice. The idea of a **car sharing scheme** attracted 35 responses as against 204 not interested whilst 64 did not answer at all. Continuing high fuel prices and the economic crisis may make this idea more popular in the coming years.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

Challenge	Drivers using the village roads as a means of getting from A to B which could be achieved by other more suitable routes. Evidence of weight limit restriction being ignored		
Aim 1	To reduce as far as possible the amount of traffic using roads through the village where there are suitable alternative routes and ensure the weight limit is observed		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Lobby Bedford Borough to bias the signal timings on Barford Bridge against the flow of traffic on Barford Road (C5 Great Barford to Blunham road)	High 3 months	Working group Amey Bedford Borough Gt Barford PC	Negligible
2. Realign the junction of Station Road and Blunham Road, Chalton on the south side of the village so as to reduce the speed of through traffic	High 2 years	Working group Central Beds Moggerhanger PC Amey	High design and implementation costs
3. Create a priority give way (incorporating cycle bypass) on Station Road at the 30/60 speed limit change	High 2 years	Working group Central Beds Moggerhanger PC Amey	High design and implementation costs
4. Realign the junction of Tempsford Road, Grange Road and the High Street so as to reduce the speed of through traffic	High 2 years	Working group Central Beds Amey	High design and implementation costs
5. Persuade local employers to urge their employees to use routes that avoid the built up areas of the village	High 3 months	Working group Local employers	Negligible
Challenge	Drivers travelling at speeds inappropriate to the road layout and vulnerable road users		
Aim 2	Manage the speed of traffic on those roads (as perceived by residents) where there is concern over current speeds		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Using radar/laser speed guns loaned from the Police, carry out measuring procedures on Barford Road, Station Road, The Hill and High Street. Combine with existing speed data held by Central Beds.	High 3 months	Bedfordshire Police Central Beds/Amey Working group	Negligible
2. Using information gathered in (1) above evolve methods of managing driver behaviour to conform with residents' expectations, eg mini roundabout at the junction of Barford Road and Station Road, adjusting the radius of the bend outside the Horseshoes PH	High 2 years	Bedfordshire Police Central Beds/Amey Working group	Design costs

<p>3. Consult residents on results of (2) above</p> <p>4. Submit finalised traffic to Central Beds for inclusion in long term programme</p>	<p>High 2 years</p> <p>High 2 years</p>	<p>Working group</p> <p>Bedfordshire Police Central Beds/Amey Working group</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>High Implementation costs</p>
<p>Challenge</p>	<p>Roadside parking by others</p>		
<p>Aim 3</p>	<p>Introduce a measure of control of roadside parking that meets the needs of residents but does not create situations that are difficult for road users to negotiate</p>		
<p>How will it be tackled</p>	<p>Priority/ Timescale</p>	<p>Lead responsibility/ Partners</p>	<p>Resources</p>
<p>1. Survey the two locations (Station Rd and High St) which clearly caused a problem for most respondents i.e. plotting at different time periods the positions of parked cars</p> <p>2. From the results of the survey draw up a plan of possible parking bays that could be marked out on the carriageway and where additional enforceable parking restrictions may be suitable</p> <p>3. Consult with parishioners on the plan and amend where necessary</p> <p>4. Petition the Highways authority to implement the proposals</p>	<p>Medium 3 months</p> <p>Medium 6 months</p> <p>Medium 1 year</p> <p>Medium 18 months</p>	<p>Working group Central Beds Highways</p> <p>Working group Central Beds Highways</p> <p>Working group Central Beds Highways Parish Council</p> <p>Working group Central Beds Highways Parish Council</p>	<p>Negligible</p> <p>Negligible</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Low to medium installation costs</p>

Challenge	Specifically parking outside the John Donne Lower School on the High Street at the start and finish of the school day.		
Aim 4	Create safe parking opportunities for those parents who have little option but to bring children to school by car and encourage other parents to use alternative means. Deter casual parking that creates unsafe conditions for child pedestrians and other road users.		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Investigate the possibility of a Walking Bus being organised by the school and the parents	High 3 months	Working group John Donne Lower School Central Beds Parents	Grants available from commercial organisations for equipment
2. Discuss the school travel plan. Can it be made more vigorous	High 3 months	Working group Amey or Highways engineering consultant	Negligible
3. Commission 20mph speed limit survey for section of High Street in the vicinity of the school	High 3 months	Working group	High up to £2000
4. Investigate alternative parking locations for parents	High 3 months	Working group	Negligible for survey – low implementation cost
5. Investigate provision of marked parking bays on the carriageway (combined with aim 3)	High 3 months	Working group	Negligible for survey – low implementation cost
6. Investigate provision of pedestrian railings to reinforce the operation of the zigzag markings outside the school	High 3 months	Working group	Negligible for survey – high implementation cost

Challenge	Certain sections of footway have been highlighted as being susceptible to flooding and overgrown vegetation or are too narrow or absent altogether		
Aim 5	To improve, repair, clear and install footways where the questionnaire has shown a need		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Footway between Fish & Chip shop and Brickhill Close – although the deep flooding has been remedied any substantial rainfall leaves a layer of slime on the footway. Elevate the footway and incorporate cambered surface to effect run off	Medium 12 months	CB Highways/Amey Parish Council	Design and implementation costs
2. Several footways and footpaths in the parish suffer from overgrowing vegetation. Investigate with the Right of Way officer if 3P scheme is still in effect and if so work towards clearing footpaths. Publicise to residents their obligation to keep footways clear. Liaise with Central Beds Highways as to their responsibility for clearing roadside hedges	Medium 12 months	Parish Council Rights of way officer Local residents Central Beds Highways	Remedial work costs
3. Constriction of footway on north side of The Hill – relocate lamp column and widen footway into existing grass verge	High 6 months	Parish Council Central Beds Highways Aragon Housing	High Possible \$126 money
4. Absence of footway between Blunham and Great Barford – construct a shared use foot/cycle way on north side of Barford Rd from outskirts of Blunham to Barford Bridge	High 2 years	Parish Council Central Beds Highways Sustrans National lottery	High Design and implementation costs
Challenge	Certain areas are inadequately lit by the existing street lighting scheme		
Aim 6	Improve street lighting in the deficient areas to a level that satisfies residents whilst retaining a rural ambience		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Arrange for a street lighting survey to be carried out by the parish lighting contactor on a year by year basis starting with roads that attracted the highest number of responses about inadequacy and working downwards	Medium 12 months for each road in a rolling programme	Parish Council Street lighting contractor	Design cost
2. Install such additional columns as are necessary to meet the requirements of the street lighting survey	Medium 12 months	Parish Council Street lighting contractor EDF	Capital costs of new columns and lanterns

Challenge	There is a suppressed need for at least a weekly bus service to local destinations		
Aim 7	To compare the aspirations of potential bus users with the services currently provided and encourage Unitary Authority and the Bus Operators to bridge the gap between the two		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Set the outcomes of the questionnaire on destinations and frequency against the new bus service timetable when it comes into force in late 2010 and set out where there is a shortfall. Reinforce questionnaire information by surveying bus queues	Low 3 months	Action group	Low if negligible cost
2. Discuss with Central Beds Passenger Transport and Bus Operators how any shortfall between needs and projected schedules can be met	Low 6 months	Central Beds, Stagecoach Ivel Sprinter, Action group	Negligible cost
3. Work with Central Beds and operators to better publicise the services through displays and publications	Low 6 months	Central Beds, Stagecoach, Ivel Sprinter, Action group Parish Council	Cost of additional display boards
4. Consider how bus stops can be made more attractive to users – location, protection, lighting, seating	Low 6 months	Central Beds Parish Council Action group	Infrastructure costs could be high

HOUSING

The results from this questionnaire are supported by the housing survey of 2007 compiled by BRCC Rural Housing Enabler on behalf of Blunham Parish Council and Mid Beds District Council (now Central Bedfordshire) to assess the need in this parish for affordable housing. This survey identified the number and type of houses which would be required to meet the needs of people with close links to Blunham.

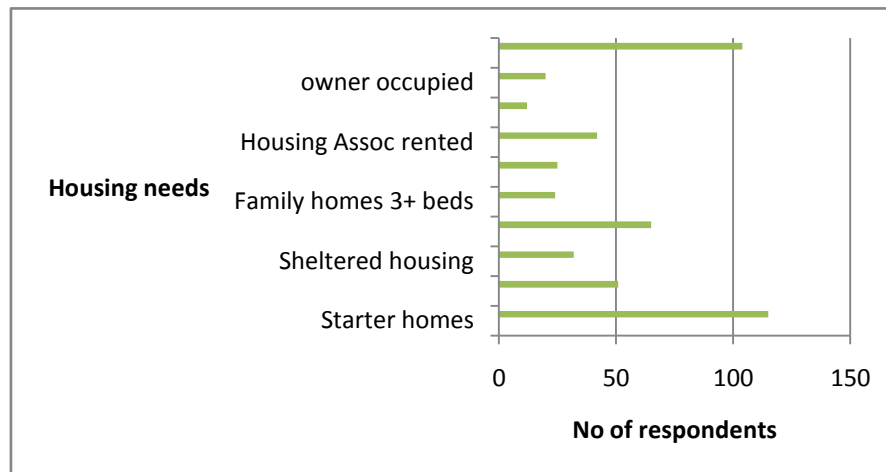
Consultation results

In the questionnaire we found there was a distinct split of views in the responses in this section: – 258 households responded to the housing questionnaire section. Of that figure 104 (40%) households who responded wanted **no new houses** at all.

The village must be allowed to grow – controlled – otherwise it dies

Where housing needs were identified the starter homes category came top of the list with 115 households responding positively. Next came family homes of up to 3 bedrooms with 65 households and third came bungalows with 51.

Those wanting development wanted **single houses/small groups** of starter homes i.e. a strong preference for small scale growth or development. The responses were also split equally as to where new housing should be located i.e. **infilling** within the existing envelope or on the **edge of green field** sites.



Action is already underway with Grand Union Housing providing preliminary drawings of how affordable housing could be built on a potential site. However at the time of writing, this site has yet to gain planning permission and the infrastructure issues mentioned in the Action Plan still have to be given serious consideration.

HOUSING ACTION PLAN

Challenge	Although there is a number of villagers who do not wish to see any further development the questionnaire indicates there is a need for further small scale housing of which starter homes were most favoured		
Aim 1	To provide affordable housing for people with close links to Blunham		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Review of housing needs by Parish Council	High By end 2010	Parish Council, Bedford Rural Communities Charity and Grand Union housing	Suitable land
2. Encourage residents that are in need of affordable housing to put names on register via Central Beds CC ensuring the residents of Blunham are aware that affordable housing will be allocated to those who can identify a close link to Blunham first, after which housing will be made available on the housing register in need	High Ongoing	Parish Council	Blunham Blurb magazine and website links
3. Highlight the concerns of residents that infrastructure issues such as water supply and water pressure, surface water and sewage drainage must be addressed when considering new planning applications	High Ongoing	Parish Council at all planning meetings Central Beds Grand Union housing	Negligible

LEISURE

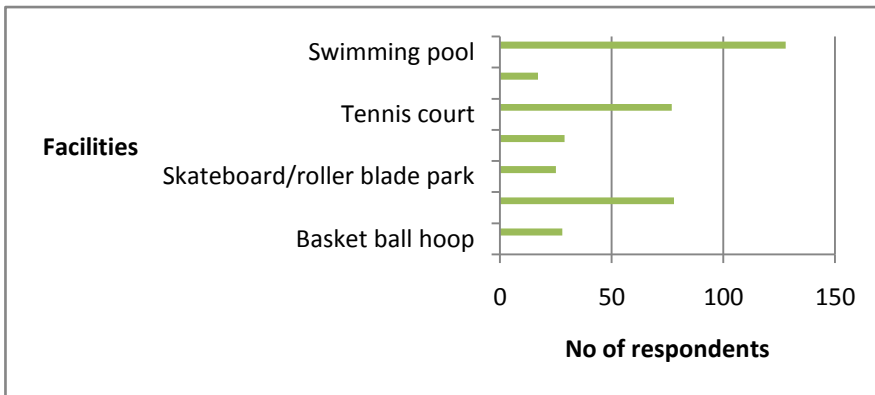
There was a lively interest shown in the provision of leisure facilities and activities with many additional suggestions coming through in the comments boxes. One respondent commented “Facilities that can give kids fun and excitement will be beneficial for all in the long run. Kids need to have access to unsanitised play. The younger generation can really excel if given the chance”

The park is really good and you can go there every day without feeling scared

Activities that were suggested independently of the questionnaire were DIY skills, cycle safety, literature, woodworking, cake decorating, languages, musical appreciation and photography

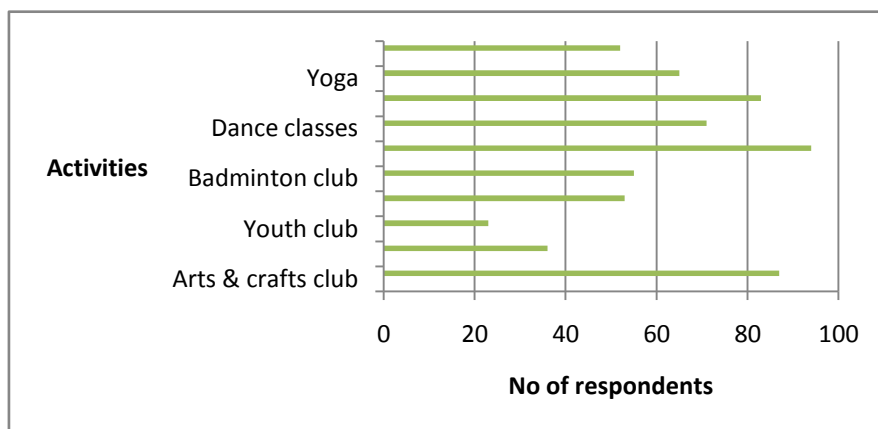
Consultation results

128 respondents showed an interest in using a **swimming pool**. The provision of an **outdoor fitness trail** (78) and **tennis court** (77) were the next priorities.



A **BMX track**, **basket ball hoop** and **skateboard park** had 29, 28 and 25 responses respectively. Only 17 respondents showed an interest in using a **youth shelter** but many thought a **youth activity club** to be a good idea.

People commented that the play area had been successful but that facilities for older (10+) children were needed at the playing field and within the wider village. In particular facilities were needed for bikes and skateboards to deter children from using the roads and the provision of clubs, games tables, a mobile cinema and discos would be welcome. The most popular activity was **keep fit** (94 respondents) followed closely by **arts & crafts**(87), **gardening** (83) and **dance classes** (71)



LEISURE ACTION PLAN

Challenge	An overwhelming majority of respondents were interested in using a swimming pool with outdoor fitness trail and tennis court coming second and third		
Aim 1	Explore the feasibility of finding suitable locations for various outdoor leisure pursuits		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Ascertain if certain clubs/activities already operate in the village and if so advertise these in the Blunham Blurb and other means	Medium 3 months	Working group	Low/ advertising costs
2. Contact other village organisations who are already running appropriate successful clubs/activities to see how they are run	Medium 3 months	Working group	Negligible
3. Contact the school, BPFA and Village Hall as to suitable venues for various activities	Medium 3 months	Working group	Negligible
4. Once established which clubs/activities are feasible advertise in Blunham Blurb and other means to attract interested parties for each individual club/group	Medium 6 months	Working group	Low/ advertising costs
Challenge	What can be done to satisfy the serious numbers of respondents interested in taking up the activities mentioned		
Aim 2	Investigate the possibility of setting up various club/activities in the village		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Consider what leisure facilities should be offered based on responses in questionnaire	Medium 3 months	Working group	Negligible
2. Liaise with Parish Council, Blunham Playing Field Assoc (BPFA) and local landowners to ascertain if suitable sites are available in the village for such activities	Medium 3 months	Working group Parish Council BPFA and local landowners	Negligible
3. If any of the leisure pursuits should go ahead ascertain costs involved	Medium 3 months	Working groups for each activity Parish Council, Central Beds, BPFA and local landowners	Negligible
4. Consider how these costs would be funded	Medium 6 months	Working groups	Submission of grants

Challenge	How can we maximise the day/evening/weekend opportunities for satisfying the greatest number of interested parties		
Aim 3	Create a timetable		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Match the activities for which there is a demand against the facilities available	Medium 3 months	Working group Village Hall committee Blunham Playing Field committee John Donne Lower school	Negligible
Challenge	How can we capitalise on the offers of volunteers to help in organising the activities		
Aim 4	Create a framework so that volunteers can see a positive professional outcome		
1. Set up a sound structure with clear objectives and good communications.	Medium 3 months	Working group	Negligible

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND HEALTH

It was decided to put these two topics together as the thrust of the Health questions was basically towards the provision of facilities for the community.

There was a high input to question 44 concerning the retention of existing facilities with only 6 households not answering at all. The point was made that if these facilities were to be kept then they needed to be supported. Several respondents mentioned the need for a cashpoint facility. The upgrading of broadband connection speeds was something else that the Steering Group had not thought of but was mentioned as being of value to the community. Several parishioners made the point that although they may not have need of community facilities at the moment as they grow older they foresaw the time when that would change.

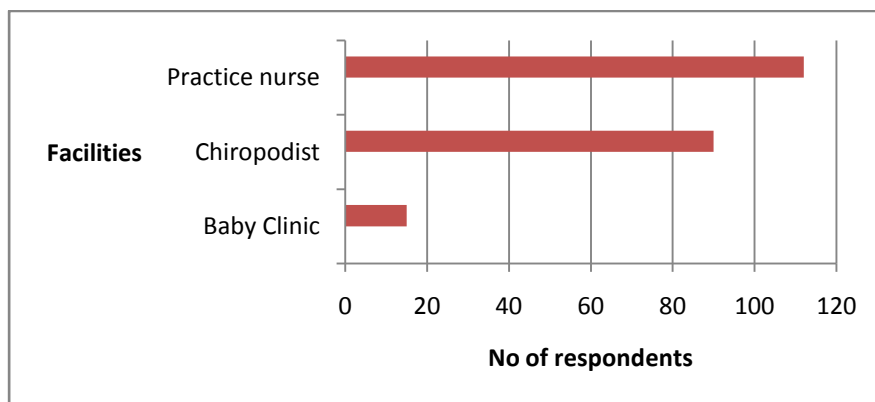
Also brought up as facilities that could be of additional benefit were:-

- Seats at the bus shelters
- A bench in The Avenue
- Mobile Wellman/Wellwoman clinic visits
- Hairdressing facilities

Register of locally registered tradesmen who are recommended

Consultation results

65 households said they had **problems with transport** to and from health providers. Reflecting the ageing population 112 respondents would use a resident practice nurse, 90 would use a visiting chiropodist but only 15 would use a baby clinic.



Unsurprisingly the **school, mobile library** and **shops** had a high response rate in favour of retaining these facilities. There were 225 respondents who said they would use a **mobile post office** and 140 who would use a **mobile bank**.

211 respondents knew the **location of the notice boards** but 109 did not. The majority of respondents felt they were in a convenient location but it was mentioned that a board in Station Road would be useful.

A clear majority of residents read the **Blunham Blurb** and find it contains useful information. 40 respondents made comments about it including more frequent issues, reader's letters page and making it more like Great Barford's *The Bridge* with adverts.

Disappointingly few respondents (55) had visited the **Parish Council website** but of those who had only 4 found it not to be useful.

288 households answered the question about **access to the internet**. Within those households 331 respondents had access either outside/within their homes leaving 58 respondents with no access at all.

The majority of respondents did not know who their **Unitary or Parish Councillors** were and similarly did not know how to contact them.

Of the 294 households who completed a questionnaire over a third took the time to add further comments at the end for which the Steering Group is very grateful.



Our village pubs

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND HEALTH ACTION PLAN

Challenge	A lack of appropriately timed transport to health facilities and dispensaries and lack of local clinics which would obviate the need to travel		
Aim 1	Provision of transport facilities to enable parishioners to attend healthcare surgeries etc and provision of mobile clinics		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Lobby Central Bedfordshire to provide a bus service that enables villagers to attend surgeries etc at appropriate times	High 3 months	Parish Council Central Beds	Negligible
2. Speak to local surgeries/health providers about visiting practice nurses and chiropodist	Medium 6 months	Working group Local health providers	Negligible
3. Investigate the possibilities of setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme that could provide transport as required	Medium 6 months	Parish Council Working group	Negligible
Challenge	Retain existing retail and educational facilities in the village		
Aim 2	Encourage residents to use those facilities so that they are not lost in the future		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Promote advertising of the facilities	Medium 12 months	Working group	Low
2. Ascertain the needs of consumers and relay this to the businesses	Medium 12 months	Working group	Low
Challenge	Lack of post office and banking facilities		
Aim 3	Provide these facilities in the village or easy access to them nearby		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Discuss with retailers the economics of providing a cash facility	Medium 12 months	Parish Council	Negligible
2. Investigate whether mobile services are provided within Central Beds and whether they can be extended to this village	Medium 6 months	Working group Parish Council	Low

Challenge	No notice board in the Station Road side of the village		
Aim 4	Provide a notice board		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Obtain Parish Council approval to the provision of a notice board	High 3 months	Parish Council	Cost of board
2. If acceptable determine a suitable site	High 3 months	Parish Council	Negligible
3. If financing is a difficulty investigate possibilities of sponsorship	Medium 3 months	Working group	Negligible
Challenge	Lack of involvement by villagers in the activities of the Parish Council		
Aim 5	Persuade villagers to take a more active interest in the workings of the Parish Council		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Raise the profile of the Parish Council by getting more involved with local groups	High 3 months	Parish Council	Negligible
2. Include résumé of notable features of the Council minutes in the Blunham Blurb	High 3 months	Parish Council	Negligible
3. Investigate the feasibility of a Parish Council surgery similar to that provided by elected representatives	High 3 months	Parish Council	Hire costs of room
4. Investigate the feasibility of providing a Parish Council stall at village functions where residents can raise any concerns	Medium 12 months	Parish Council	Low
Challenge	Low broadband speeds		
Aim 6	Raise broadband speeds available to internet users in the Parish		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Ascertain the speeds within the village	Medium 6 months	Working group	Research costs
2. Approach broadband providers with a petition to increase the available speeds	Medium 12 months	Working group	Negligible

Challenge	Low use of Parish Council website		
Aim 7	Make the website more attractive to users		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Use the comments from the questionnaires to provide what people want	Medium 3 months	Working group Parish Council	Negligible
2. Ensure the content is kept up to date	Medium 3 months	Parish Council	Negligible
3. Invite residents to contribute to its content	Medium 3 months	Parish Council	Negligible
Challenge	To improve the contents and appeal of the Blunham Blurb		
Aim 8	Ensure the Blunham Blurb continues to meet the needs of the community		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Take advice on possible improvements to the layout	Medium 6 months	Parish Council	Negligible
2. Seek Parish Council approval to increase the number of issues	Medium 6 months	Working group Parish Council	Printing costs
3. If issues are increased advertise for a volunteer to take on the role as editor	Medium 6 months	Parish Council Local residents	Negligible
4. Explore the possibility of advertising to defray costs	Medium 6 months	Working group Parish Council	Negligible
5. Increase contributions from residents and organisations plus the possibility of a letters page	Medium 3 months	Parish Council Local residents	Negligible

WORK TRAINING AND EDUCATION

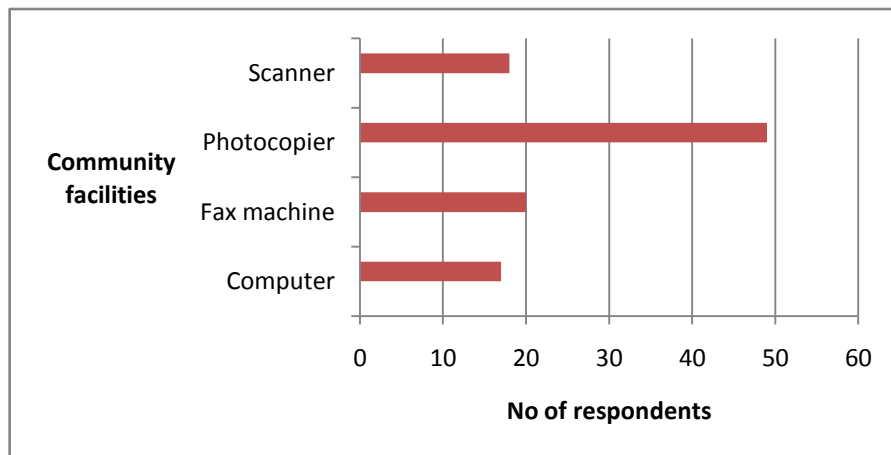
Although there was a good deal of interest in the prospect of computer skills courses, when it came to other adult education courses respondents almost all specified leisure or hobby activities. It is notable that only 4 respondents class themselves as unemployed and this is perhaps why there was no call for vocational courses leading to re-skilling.

Blunham is a lovely village with lots going on

Consultation results

Of the people who answered in favour of **computer skills courses** a slight majority would prefer a beginners' course of tuition. 60 respondents voted for beginners' courses, 57 for intermediate and 44 for advanced.

When asked when they would like these courses to take place, 56 preferred morning classes, 45 afternoon, 51 evening and 26 at weekends.



As for **centrally located computer and associated equipment**, 49 respondents would be interested in using a community photocopier, 20 a fax machine, 18 a scanner and 17 a computer.

WORK TRAINING AND EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

Challenge	There was a considerable number of respondents interested in participating in computer skills courses		
Aim 1	To investigate setting up adult education classes in computer skills		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Discuss with training providers, schools etc the possibility of providing such training in the village	Medium 6 months	Working group Training providers	Negligible
2. Assess feasibility and cost of delivering such training	Medium 6 months	Working group	Negligible
3. Market the scheme through the Blunham Blurb and other means and see what take-up there was likely to be	Medium 6 months	Working group	Negligible
Challenge	67 households needed to be able to use community computer and associated facilities		
Aim 2	To investigate setting up a community facilities point within the village		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Consider what facilities should be offered based on responses in questionnaire	Medium 3 months	Working group Parish Council	None
2. Consider how costs should be funded	Medium 3 months	Working group Parish Council	None
3. Consider how the equipment should be sourced	Medium 6 months	Working group	None
4. Survey village to identify suitable premises	Medium 6 months	Working group Landlord/owner	None

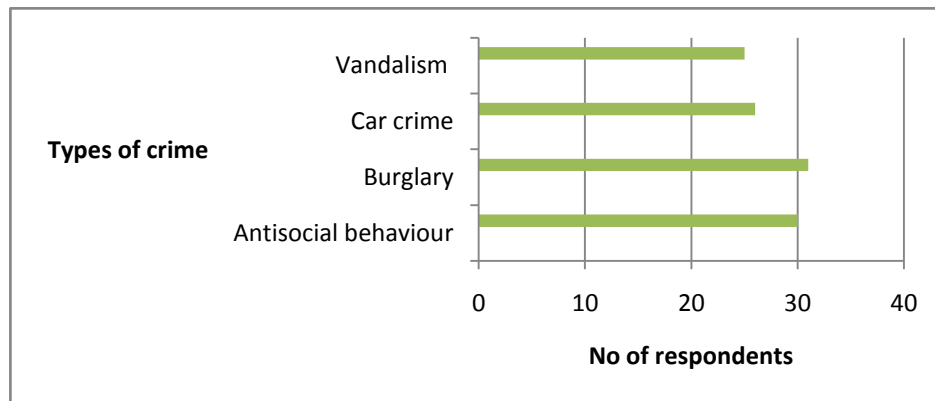
CRIME AND SAFETY

After Traffic & Transport, this topic drew the most comments from respondents. In the main a majority of people felt that Blunham was a safe place to live although there were some who felt unsafe in certain locations. There was a fair amount of cross-over from the concerns arising from traffic issues into this topic.

Despite a request being made, Bedfordshire Police were not able to supply crime figures for the Parish of Blunham only.

Consultation results

89 households said they had been **affected by crime** in the village in the last 2 years.



As mentioned before an overwhelming majority **feel safe** in Blunham and of those who did not, the main reason given was lack of street lighting. A few respondents mentioned speeding traffic and the footpath between Station Road and Park Lane.

186 respondents are aware of the **Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)** Scheme but only 82 are aware of the **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)** visits.

Very few people had heard of the **Bobby Scheme** which was launched by the Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust in 1997, and is supported by local Bedfordshire businesses. The scheme aims to help the elderly or vulnerable victims of crime by giving completely free advice, support and practical help in improving their home security.

189 respondents would like to see a more **visible police presence** and less than half that number would like **more consultation with the Police**.

Only 32 respondents felt **CCTV** was appropriate to tackle crime in the village, the favoured sites being the playing field, shops and pubs and Village Hall. 3 respondents mentioned the garages in The Avenue.

Interestingly 85 households did not feel that any measures were necessary to increase personal and property safety.

People are nice
and friendly

CRIME & SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Challenge	Anti-social behaviour with the most prevalent location being the playing field		
Aim 1	Reduce anti-social behaviour especially on the playing field		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Determine the extent of the problem by talking to the Blunham Playing Fields Assoc (BPFA) and Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)	High 3 months	Working group SNT and BPFA	Negligible
2. Invite local residents to a meeting at the Pavilion to ascertain their perception of the problem and seek possible solutions	High 3 months	Working group BPFA Local residents	Cost of hire
3. Ascertain the extent of the problem in Pound Close by gathering residents' views	High 3 months	Working group Local residents	Negligible
4. Report findings back to the committee for further consideration	High 6 months	Working group	Negligible
Challenge	Although a large number of households are aware of the Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme active members are still quite low		
Aim 2	Encourage more villagers to become part of the NHW group		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Organise a local event on the back of another village event to highlight the benefits of NHW	Medium 3 months	Area coordinator	None
2. Arrange for the Area Coordinator to put the NHW newsletter on the PC website together with details of Ringmaster messages as they arrive	Medium 3 months	Area coordinator	None
3. Ensure NHW is a regular item on PC agenda and is mentioned in the Blurb	Medium 3 months	Area coordinator Parish Council	None
4. Arrange for the Area Coordinator to seek approval from the village shop to display copies of the latest newsletter for residents	Medium 3 months	Area coordinator Village shop	Low Printing costs

Challenge	Provide a more regular Police presence		
Aim 3	Liaise with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team(SNT) for a more visible police presence within the village		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Set up a meeting with the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to discuss the current situation and seek to negotiate a more visible presence to address concerns of residents	High 3 months	Working group SNT Parish Council	Negligible
Challenge	CCTV seen as being a possible way of increasing personal & property safety		
Aim 4	Explore the demand for CCTV in the village		
How will it be tackled	Priority/ Timescale	Lead responsibility/ Partners	Resources
1. Identify suitable sites for a camera based on the results of the questionnaire	Low 12 months	Working group	Negligible
2. Liaise with Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to seek their input. Consider the legalities of such a scheme	Low 12 months	Working group SNT Parish Council	Negligible
3. Report findings back to the committee for further consideration	Low 12 months	Working group	Negligible

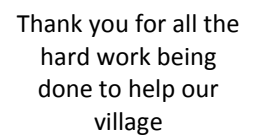
SUMMARY

What Next?

The publication of this Village Improvement Plan (VIP) marks the end of the first phase of the process; we now have a clearly documented understanding drawn from the information gathered of the needs and wishes of the whole parish together with recommendations as to how to bring about the changes needed. It also marks the disbandment of the Steering Group as such which will have fulfilled its role.

The next phase of the process falls broadly into two main categories. Some of the recommendations will involve the Parish Council working with Central Bedfordshire, other service providers and funding bodies. However other projects need volunteer working groups with some needing to interact with external organisations whilst others need only the volunteers' energy and enthusiasm.

To ensure the VIP is effective, a system will need to be set up to monitor the progress made on the Action Plans. It will need to be reviewed annually to assess progress and provide an opportunity for amendments to be made in response to new legislation/circumstances and the changing needs of the community. Implementation of the recommendations will measure success and we suggest that 'The Blurb' is used to keep parishioners informed and involved in the progress of initiatives.



Thank you for all the hard work being done to help our village

For the VIP to be given credence and support by external bodies it is essential that the parishioners are seen to be actively engaged in implementation measures and not sitting back waiting for others to do the work. The village has a fine record in self-help and we are confident that this can be demonstrated again. There are many opportunities to volunteer in an area that interests you and in a way that suits you. Some people can give more time than others but all help is valuable and will be the basis for success.

If you would like to have a chat about volunteering please contact:

Sue Mugridge – Steering Group Secretary – 01767 640326 – suemugridge@live.co.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and especially **Jemma McLean** for all her help and guidance

Blunham Parish Council, Rural Action East and Central Bedfordshire for their funding of the plan.

Shelagh Ashley for her watercolour painting on the front cover

George Elwes for his piece on the history of the village

Janet Dean, Colin Hinson and Philip Rose for the use of their photographs

Residents who helped with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires

Gloria Aubury's company, **Cyprus Property Services** for funding the prize

Mr Patel at the Village Shop for displaying posters and receiving completed questionnaires

All former members of the Steering Group – **Dave Tookey** (our first chairman who guided us on our way), **Chris Rook, Byron Sinclair, Joan Emms, Victoria Crooks** and **Gladys Fox** who generously gave their time

Victoria from The Salutation for allowing us to use her back room for committee meetings

The Committee also wishes to thank all the residents of Blunham who took time to give their views, some of which are shown within the text.

Steering Group Committee:

Gloria Aubury (Chair), Ken Armstrong (Vice chair), Gill Bland, Tina Hurman, Brenda Leaf (Treasurer), Fred Merrill, Malcolm Mugridge and Sue Mugridge (Secretary)

