

Lidlington Parish Action Plan



Introduction

Nestling at the foot of the Greensand Ridge, overlooking the Forest of Marston Vale, lies the small English village of Lidlington. Located in the heart of Mid Bedfordshire, it has existed for over 1000 years and is mentioned in the Domesday book.

The Greensand Ridge long distance footpath passes near to the village. Local speculation is that the Greensand Ridge at Lidlington was the model for the "Delectable Mountains" in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The steep slope at the edge of the village may also be Bunyan's "Hill of Difficulty".

Historically Lidlington used to be part of the Royal park at Ampthill and boasted a large number of public rights of ways radiating in all directions from the village. The brickworks and clay workings in the Parish interfered with many of these.

Lidlington is home to the Thomas Johnson Lower School which provides education for 3 to 9 year olds, 9 to 13 year olds can go to Marston Vale Middle School and Wootton Upper School caters for 13 to 18 year olds.

M1 junction 13 is just 5 minutes from Lidlington. Lidlington has a small station on the Marston Vale (Bletchley to Bedford) line and there is a bus service.

Brogborough lake at the edge of the village is popular for bird watching and wind surfing. The name is somewhat misleading as it resides entirely within Lidlington parish boundary and is only named Brogborough lake because the clay mined from it was used by Brogborough brick works.

The village sites a Church of England church, sadly now closed, built by the Duke of Bedford in the 1880s, a methodist chapel with a combined congregation, two pubs, a hairdressers and two general stores. Lidlington has retained a daily doorstep milk and newspaper delivery service, but has lost its village post office.

Lidlington is adjacent to the site of the Millbrook Proving Ground formerly Vauxhall test track, distinguishable from the air by its large circular track.

Lidlington United play in the Bedfordshire Football League, the village also has a cricket team, and all-weather multi use games area at the pavillion. All come under the umbrella of Lidlington United Sports Club.

Lidlington currently has a population of approximately 1300 and has a vibrant, friendly village culture due to the controlled growth. In the questionnaire distributed to the village residents 70% of respondents indicated that they live in Lidlington because of the pleasant rural location and 48% for the small village community.

What is a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans are a national initiative launched by the Countryside Agency in 2001. They enable people to become fully involved in developing their own community and to give them the opportunity to shape the decisions that affect them.

The process involves:

- Mapping out the key services and facilities already in the community and looking to see if they are meeting everyone's need and if they are being used to their full potential
- Identifying features and local characteristics that people value and looking at how these can be safeguarded for the future
- Identifying any local problems and opportunities and looking at how these can be tackled.

All of this information is then pulled together to form a proposed local Action Plan for the community.

Why have a Parish Plan for Lidlington?

A Parish Plan for Lidlington, based on the views of local residents can help make a difference to the future of the village. It is an opportunity to look forward for the next 5 to 10 years, rather than just responding to tasks as they arise and require immediate action. It highlights the communities priorities and concerns, providing a stronger voice for the community. By demonstrating the communities collective views the Parish Plan will provide assistance to the Parish Council. It will also be used as reference document by Central Bedfordshire Council and other service providers to help guide their decision making in the future.

Consultation

Extensive consultation of the village residents has been an essential part of preparing this plan. Two 'Planning for Real'® events took place; one at the village hall for residents aged 13 years of age and over to air their views and one at the local school to give the children a say. In addition the BRCC 'RAVE bus' was used in a separate event designed to appeal to teenagers.

A summary of the feedback was distributed around the village and the feedback was then used to produce a questionnaire which was distributed to every household in the parish. The

detailed results of this questionnaire were then displayed at a further public event in the village hall where residents were invited to comment on any issues arising from the questionnaire or issues that may have been omitted.

The full consultation data are shown on the parish plan pages of the Lidlington web site www.lidlington.org.

What happens now?

Copies of this Action Plan have been sent to every household in the village. Copies have also been sent to the Parish Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and other organisations that we are hoping to work alongside or influence as a result of this plan. The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored annually and updates given to the village through the village newsletter and at the annual parish meeting. The Parish Council will play a key role in monitoring and implementing actions from the plan but it is essential for volunteers from the community to assist with the implementation of any particular actions. If you are interested in finding out more about the Parish Plan process or would like to get involved with any of the actions identified, please contact the Parish Council.

Acknowledgements

This parish plan is a culmination of a lot of hard work by the Lidlington Parish Plan Steering Group over a number of years and I would like to personally thank every member, past and present who participated in the preparation of this plan. I would also like to thank the Parish Council and Bedfordshire Rural Communities charity for their support.

Mark Symonds
Chairman
Lidlington Parish Plan Steering Group



Forward to the Parish Plan

On behalf of Lidlington Parish Council I would like acknowledge that this Parish Plan is a working document, which we hope can help shape the development of Lidlington in the foreseeable future.

This resulting document has been achieved through the voluntary efforts of a number of residents who formed the Parish Plan Steering group. Their drive and commitment to gauging the views of residents and finding out how this village sees itself and what this village wants for the future has involved people of all ages and backgrounds. We would like to thank everyone involved and acknowledge their efforts, energy and enthusiasm and also the depth and detail of the information that has been gathered, sorted and collated into this detailed plan.

Reading through the Parish Plan, it has been very valuable to gain an insight into the concerns and issues that have been identified by residents. The consultation process that took place ensures a democratic basis to the actions and priorities identified and as a Council we embrace and recognise that as a supporting document it is a democratic indication of what you as residents want. We hope that the drive and enthusiasm demonstrated in producing the Parish Plan can be maintained amongst volunteers so that the aims and priorities can be transformed into good practice.

Some priorities may take more time to achieve than others, whilst some may prove to be impracticable and there may be frustrations and disappointments. We may not be able to guarantee to progress every aspect of the Parish Plan but we hope that it can have a great deal of relevance in shaping and improving the future of Lidlington and its residents. Indeed some of the issues and priorities identified have already been taken up by the Parish Council.

Where we feel we can have an impact we will push forward with these issues as far as we are able.

We hope the Parish Plan will influence future policy with planners and developers. That it can identify future aspirations and result in change and an infrastructure that is needed and desired and not imposed upon us from outsiders whilst at the same time maintaining the historic aspects and character of our village.

Adele Moore

Chair, Lidlington Parish Council

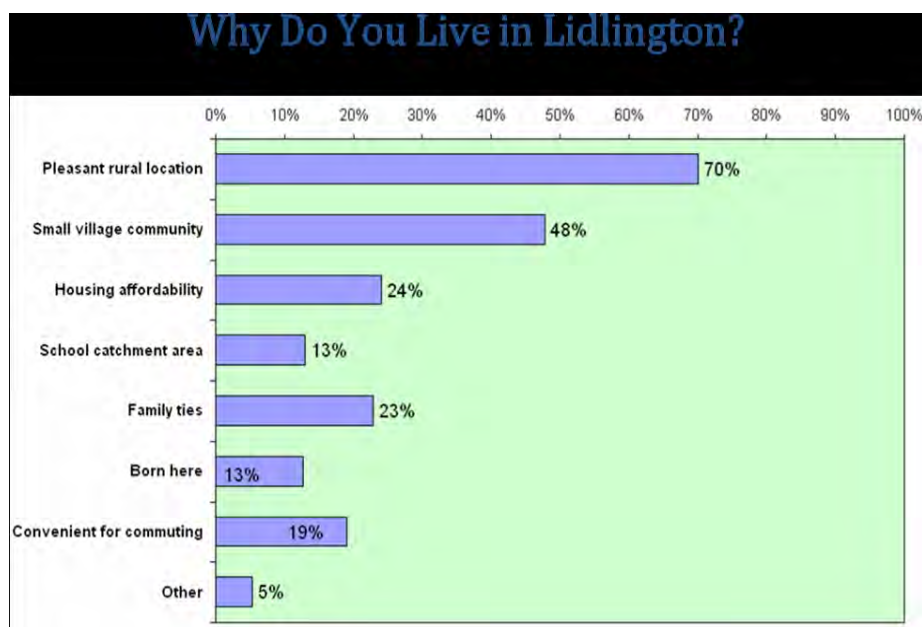
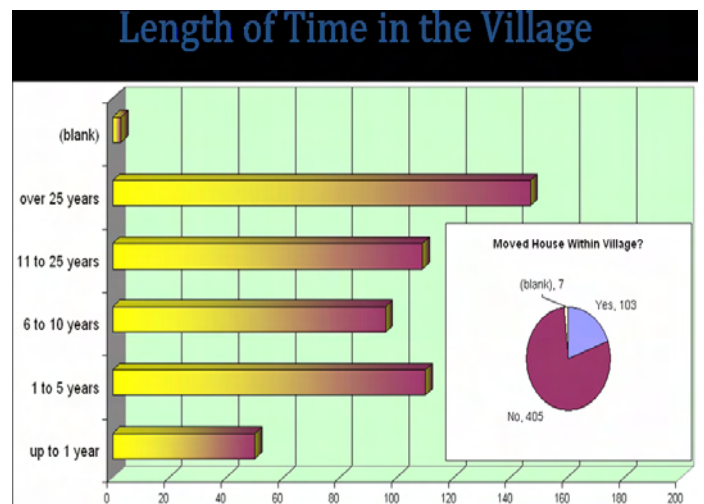
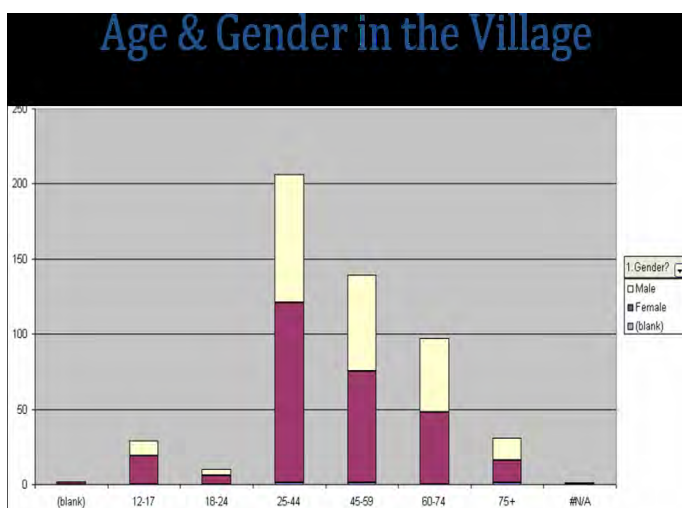
June 2010.

Summary of the Results

The Parish Plan questionnaire was delivered to all households in Lidlington. The questionnaire was compiled using the initial information already collected at previous consultation events held, in order to gain further detail and more in depth information.

The results in this action plan are based on the 515 questionnaires that were returned, this means that approximately 40% of the population of Lidlington completed their questionnaire. All of the action plan items are displayed as percentages of the total responses unless otherwise stated and have a priority that is determined by the percentage of respondents who indicated agreement. The actions have also taken into account the results from previous consultations such as the Planning for Real® events and youth consultation held.

The following graphs provide an overview of the demographic information collected from those responding to the questionnaire



Health

There are number of GP's surgery's located in Lidlington's neighbouring villages and towns (Cranfield, Marston, and Ampthill) but Lidlington itself does not have a dedicated GP's practice. There was a large amount of support in the consultation for a part time GP's surgery, with 82% of respondents feeling that this service was needed in the village.

There was some difficulty identified amongst respondent in accessing some medical services with 12% of people having difficulty accessing a doctors surgery, primarily due to lack of transport.

Action plan - Health

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Improve access to local NHS services by providing transport	Medium 8%	Helping hands and Lidlington web site www.lidlington.org	Helping hands offer a transport service to NHS service providers but require more volunteers. This is now advertised on the Lidlington web site to raise awareness.
Look into the feasibility of providing part time GP services in the village.	Medium 82%	NHS Bedfordshire	NHS Bedfordshire have advised that the local population is too small for such a service. It would require at least 2000 patients to make such as scheme viable.

Traffic and Transport

Lidlington is reasonably well situated for transport links, situated just 5 minutes from the M1 junction 13.

A large percentage of respondents felt that there are 3 perilous junctions in the parish, with 90% of respondents reporting the A507 junction to Ampthill as dangerous.

The Bus service in Lidlington is scarcely used. 75% of respondents do not travel by bus and 15% use the service infrequently. More routes from the village and a more frequent service were the main factors identified that would encourage people to use the service more frequently.

Over 60% of respondents to the questionnaire identified speeding and lack of parking as a problem, with the High Street, Church Street and Station Road being identified the main problem areas. High levels of support were shown for both the addition of off street parking bays and introduction of traffic calming measures.

A large proportion of respondents felt that there are traffic and safety problems caused by the large amounts of traffic that is being attracted to the car boot sale in the village. 73% experience difficulty driving in and out of the village while the car boot sale is being held.

74% of respondents support the proposed canal link through Lidlington.

Action plan – Road transport

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Improve the A507 junction.	High 90%	Central Bedfordshire Council & Highways Agency	Find the source from which data can be found regarding risk levels at this junction.
Reduce the speed of vehicles through Lidlington.	High 62%	Police & Central Bedfordshire Council	Request Highways to supply suitable solutions based on past experience in other villages with similar challenges have implemented.
Reduce parking problems.	Medium 65%	Parish Council & Central Bedfordshire Council	Highlight areas of difficult parking. Look into feasibility of different options and implement preferred solution.
Mitigate car boot traffic problems.	Medium 43%	Police	Are there particular regulations that could be enforced more rigidly by Bedfordshire Police?
Improve weight limit signage.	Low 57%	Parish Council & Central Bedfordshire Council	Look for ways the signage could be improved.
Raise awareness of the Flittabus service in the community	Medium	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity	Timetables to be requested for distribution to village shops & community meeting points and inclusion in welcome packs

Action plan – Rights of way

A number of rights of ways used to cross the area now occupied by the Lake in Lidlington and whilst these cannot be reinstated on their current course alternatives may be established. Many historic rights of way exist in the parish which are not yet shown on the Central Bedfordshire Unitary councils record of paths known as the "Rights of Way Definitive Map".

During the early 1990's as a planning condition the land on the former brickworks was promised for leisure use and it was planted with trees by residents of Lidlington parish. There were a number of public rights of ways planned, however these improvements have never been delivered.

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Create a path around Brogborough lake.	High 76%	Central Bedfordshire Council & Parish Council	Look into restoring the rights of way around the lake.
Create a cycle way to the forest centre	High	Parish Council & Sustran	Consultation is currently being carried out on getting this route created.
Address the concerns over use of the bridleways for cycling	Medium 22%	Parish Council and the Forest of Marston Vale	Undertake a survey to ascertain if work needs to be undertaken to improve the quality of bridleways for cyclists.

Action plan – Railway

Lidlington is located on the Marston Vale Railway line with services running between Bedford and Bletchley. The line was originally opened in 1846 and at one time formed a key part of the Oxford to Cambridge railway. The Marston Vale Line is the only remaining section of this link.

Interestingly 93% of respondents felt that the railway was an asset to Lidlington but 68% of respondents rarely or never use the railway. The majority felt that the fares were good value for money but that they would be encouraged to use the railway more if there were more destinations available and there was a later evening service. Delays on the railway crossing were a cause for concern with village residents and should be reported when they occur.

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Reduce the railway crossing delays	High 58%	Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership, Service providers and the Parish Council	Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council with Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership who will investigate a solution.
Improve the safety of the pedestrian rail crossings	High 30%	Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership, service providers and the Parish Council	Concerns have been raised with Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership who will explore solutions with network rail, possibly adding warning lights to the school crossing.
Work with Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership to extend the operating hours of passenger trains to Bank Holidays and Sundays	Medium 33%	Parish Council & Parish Plan Group	Promote pilot services arranged by Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership
Raise awareness of the Marston Vale Line amongst the community	High	Parish Plan Group Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Lidlington web site	Distribute timetables to all households in the village and include in Welcome Packs
Explore potential for Lidlington Station Adoption Group	Medium	Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership	A public meeting will be arranged to inform residents of the benefits of station adoption and assess the level of interest
Improve signage to the station	Medium	Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership	Install sign at junction of Church Street / High Street / Marston Road

Community Safety

Levels of crime in Lidlington are below average according to Bedfordshire Police's figures. The Most common type of crime to affect respondents to the questionnaire was noise nuisance (26%) and graffiti and vandalism (11%). Perceived levels of crime tended to be slightly higher amongst respondents than levels of crime experienced, the area where this differed was drug dealing which 22% of respondents felt happened often. All residents are strongly urged to report any crime to Bedfordshire Police.

Police crime bulletins concerning Lidlington are now posted on the lidlington.org web site to better inform residents about the true levels of crime.

When asked which form of visible law enforcement people would like to see in the village 53% of respondents were keen to see more regular police patrols., this was followed by 20% of respondents who would like to see more PCSO (police community support officer) presence in the village. This was in comparison to only 2% of respondents who would prefer to see a private security firm employed in the village. Funding for private security is no longer available to the Parish Council.

There was a high level of support for the implementation of a No Cold calling zone, which has been implemented in the village and also for the setting up of a neighbourhood watch scheme.

Action plan - Community Safety

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Encourage further establishment of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	High 59%	Parish Council Neighbourhood Watch coordinator	Proactive communication to villagers on the benefits of NW schemes; provide information on how to establish & run. NW to look into promoting a property marking scheme to increase feeling of security.
Identify areas of the village that are considered unsafe for night-time walking and find out why people feel these areas are unsafe. Take action to ensure those areas are safer.	Medium 53%	Residents Parish Council	Identify areas considered dangerous (as part of communication process outlined in item 4). Take specific actions relevant to the locations, e.g. improve quality of lighting.
Tackle noise nuisance in the village	Medium 27%	Parish Council, Police & Central Bedfordshire Council	Encourage reporting of noise nuisance; clarify contact numbers and process for making reports in a communication to villagers. Co-ordinate activities of police & council to tackle persistent offenders.
Ensure all crime is reported. (More than 50% of crimes go unreported according to parish plan questionnaire)	Medium	Parish Council & Police	Communicate to villagers the importance of reporting crime to ensure the correct level of policing is applied to the village.

Education

Thomas Johnson Lower School currently has 72 students attending the main school and 25 attending the attached nursery school. The school scored highly in its latest Ofsted report, scoring 'very high', 'well above average' or 'above average' in all areas, making it an important asset to Lidlington. The questionnaire results reflect this, showing that 79% of respondents feel that the school is important to the village. The results also show that the communities opinion of the standard of the school is also very good, with 96% of respondent rating the school as 'ok' or better with nearly 70% of these responses rating the school as 'good'.

Head teacher Mr Kevin Nolan has stated 'We were pleased to be able to provide an opportunity for the children to contribute to the parish plan consultation and we look forward to working with local groups in the future. We are also keen to provide more extended services in future and to continue to play our part in the local community.'

Action plan - Education

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
To maintain presence of school in Village and maintain its high profile	High 79%	Head Teacher	By support from parish plan to all initiatives from LEA for school supported by the governing body.
Ensure that the communities views to maintain Thomas Johnson School is fed back to the Head teacher for use in any future discussions with LEA	High	Parish Plan Group, Thomas Johnson School	Parish Plan groups to meet with Head Teacher.

Housing

The threat of new development is one that affects many rural communities today. In Lidlington the recent proposal to develop an eco town in the Marston Vale area means that the threat of increased development is a real one in the future.

Lidlington currently has a population of approximately 1300 and has a vibrant, friendly village culture due to the controlled growth. In the questionnaire distributed to the village residents 70% of respondents indicated that they live in Lidlington because of the pleasant rural location and 48% for the small village community.

The questionnaire results showed that 50% of respondents would not like to see any type of new development in the village in the future. Of the other 50% of respondents, the main preferred type of housing development was mixed type family homes (23%), starter homes (17%) and Restricted sale to local people (17%).

If development was permitted in the village there was high level of concern amongst respondents about increased road use, the impact on the local environment and the impact on the village and community life.

There was a very high level of support for the parish producing a Village Design Statement to use to influence the design and style of any new development to try and insure that it is in keeping with the style of the rest of the village.

Action plan - Housing

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Produce a village design statement	High 70%	Parish Council and steering group	Volunteers are required for a new steering group that needs to be formed with the expertise to produce a village design statement.

Environment

Lidlington is situated at the foot of the Greensand Ridge and overlooks the Forest of Marston Vale. The Marston vale country park and forest centre are situated just a short walk away, making the surrounding green environment a very important feature and characteristic of the parish and to the community who live here.

The results of the questionnaire show that the maintenance of general village area, such as the graveyard, verges and hedges was felt to be 'OK'. The allotments and corner garden were thought to be maintained to a good standard with over 50% of respondents believing them to be better than 'OK' or 'Good'. Overall more than 90% of respondents felt that the overall appearance of the village was 'OK' or better.

A number of environmental improvements were strongly supported in the consultation, including nature and wildlife areas, additional planting, a nature trail and protection of village landmarks such as the church, Thrupp End farm and the white house.

The questionnaire showed that the footpaths and bridleways in the parish are well used for walking and cycling and that there is a demand for additional footpaths such as one between Lidlington Village and the millennium centre and a footpath to enable walkers and cyclists to go around Brogborough Lake.

Dog fouling and fly tipping were identified as the highest priorities environmental concerns.

Encouragingly approximately 25% of respondent said that they would be willing to volunteer to help implement some of the environmental improvements that have been suggested in this plan.

The Forest of Marston Vale have purchased the land next to Greensand Ridge and are looking for comments and suggestions on how the land may be developed.

There are many historic sites and buildings both in and around Lidlington including:

- The Old Bakery - 26 Lombard Street.
- Old School House - The High Street.
- Some Cottages in Church Street that were originally shops.
- Old Farmhouse - 5 Lombard Street.
- Cottages in the Grove dating back to the 1860's.
- Duke of Bedford Estate Cottages - Lombard Street.
- Police House (including cells) Church Street.
- 'Hillside' Cottage on the Hill.
- Thrupp End farmhouse.
- Red Lion cottage in the High Street.
- Nos 2 to 8 Church St. were all school related from mid 1800s.

Action plan – Environment

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Investigate appropriate sites of dog waste bins	High 54%	Parish Council and Central Bedfordshire Council Dog Warden	More bins have now been placed around the village.
Reduce levels of fly tipping	Medium 34%	Central Bedfordshire Council	Monitoring the problem and improving signage.
Reduce litter levels	Medium 33%	Parish Council Thomas Johnson Lower School Residents	Install prohibiting signs, install additional litter bins at the main problem locations.
Ensure the protection of village landmarks	Medium 66%	English Heritage Parish Council Central Bedfordshire Council	Ensure that the parish council continues to protect landmarks such as the church for future generations.
Create a nature trail	Medium 54%	Parish Council/The Forest of Marston Vale. Central Bedfordshire Council	Work with partners to identify a suitable location and design a scheme.
Refurbish the village pond	Medium 45%	Parish Council and the Forest of Marston Vale	Recreate the pond near the childrens playground complying with modern safety requirements.
Incorporate a nature and wildlife area near the village	Medium 60%	Parish Council and the Forest of Marston Vale	Work with partners to identify a suitable location and design a scheme.
Additional planting and replacement of current planting where necessary	Medium 56%	Parish Council and the Forest of Marston Vale Residents	Identify suitable areas (the entrances to the village have been suggested) and involve the community in a planting scheme.

Village facilities

A number of leisure and recreation facilities have been suggested by residents throughout this process that were highly supported in the questionnaire. 76% of respondents would like to see a cycle path created around Lidlington Lake, 47% of respondents would like to see an outdoor fitness trail and 45% would like an adventure playground for 6 to 12 year olds.

There was also a high demand amongst respondents for extra evening classes being held in the village, the most popular of which was keep fit followed by arts and crafts.

36% of respondents use the children's playground opposite the church and the majority felt that the equipment was 'OK' or better, one area identified that was in need of improvement was seating at the play areas.

Following some youth consultation a number of suggestions were put forward for new youth facilities in the village. All suggestions were well supported by respondents, including the village having its own premises for a youth club, a drop in place for 13yrs and over, a basket ball hoop, a graffiti wall, a skateboard park and a youth shelter. A basket ball hoop is now available at the sports pavillion.

Action plan - Village facilities

Action	Priority	Who	How it will be tackled
Site a post box nearer the shops	Medium 64%	Post Office	A new post box is now sited in Lombard Street.
Get additional seating around the village	Medium 53%	Parish Council	Undertake a survey to establish suitable sites.
Identify sites and consult with residents on the type of fitness trail that would be most suitable to meet the needs of the Parish.	Medium 47%	Parish Council Central Bedfordshire Council	Officers at Central Bedfordshire Council have indicated that they would be happy to help with this
Create an adventure playground	Medium 45%	Parish Council	Improve and upgrade the existing playground facilities to create the adventure playground.
Evening classes required	Low 39%	Web site	This will be advertised on the Lidlington web site.
Improve youth facilities	Low 25%	Parish Council	Look into the possibility of creating some of the requested facilities.

Local contacts and services

Amphill village web site: www.amphill.info

Army Cadets: 01234 353291

Brownies: Fridays 6pm - 7:30pm in the Pavilion

Central Bedfordshire Council: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 8000

Church hall: 01525 405730

Church Newsletter: Jean Peall 01525 405730

Coffee morning: All welcome at Methodist Hall, Tuesdays 10am - 12pm

Cricket Team: Rolf Taggart 01525 840508

Flitwick: www.flitwick.gov.uk

Guides: Fridays 7:45pm - 9:15pm in the Pavilion

Helping Hands Care Scheme: 07817 258279

Highways Agency: 0845 955 6575

Karate: Fridays 7pm - 8pm in the Village Hall

Lidlington Advertiser: Beki Turner 01525 402361

Lidlington Ladies Club: Linda 01525 402647

Lidlington United Sports Club: Brian Shepherd 01525 4031616

Lidlington Church web site: www.lidlingtonchurch.org.uk

Lidlington community web site: www.lidlington.org

Lunch Club: Jackie 01525 280478

Marston Vale Middle School: 01234 768224

Mobile Library Services: **01525 715268** Stops at Station Road then Church Street,
alternative Thursdays from 2:55pm to 3:40pm

Parish Council: Parish Clerk 01234 841835

Police Station Amphill and PCSO: 01234 841212

Scouts, Cubs and Beavers: at Marston or Cranfield. Becky Stothart 07963 187111

SHELL Club (9-12 yrs): Jackie 01525 280478

Thomas Johnson Lower School: Kevin Nolan 01525 402377

Toddler Groups: Cathy 01234 767456

Village Hall: Inta Batsman 01525 840131

Woburn village web site: www.woburnvillage.co.uk

Wooton Upper School: 01234 767123