



# Colerne Parish Plan

March 2011



# Foreword

The Parish Council commissioned this Community Plan in 2009 in order to get a broad consensus from those living in our community on a wide range of aspects of our lives now and in the future.

We plan to use the information in this document as a guide to inform the decisions we make at Parish Council meetings and to add supporting evidence to applications we may make to other organisations.

We would like to thank the Steering Group for all their hard work in gathering the information and putting this document together. It has been a very informative and worthwhile exercise.

**Jacqui Bradburn**

Parish Council Chair

## Support...

We would like to thank all the following businesses and sponsors for their financial support for the printing and publication of the Colerne Community Plan 2011. It is thanks to their generosity that we are able to deliver a copy of the Plan to all residents of the parish.

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# Colerne Parish Plan



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## 2: Introduction

In early 2009, the Parish Council of Colerne proposed that the village should create a strategic plan to describe how the residents of Colerne wanted to see it conserved and developed over the next five to 10 years.

The idea of parish plans had been introduced by the Government in 2001 in its rural development White Paper. Since then some 1,100 villages have produced parish plans, and their experience showed that to have a better idea of community priorities and aspirations proved useful not only to the parish councils and communities but to county councils and local service agencies.

The Colerne Parish Council did not wish to prepare the parish plan itself. It wanted it done independently, to be confident that the findings would be objective and unbiased. So, following some early public meetings, a small group of volunteers set up as a Steering Group to take the idea forward. The chairman of the Parish Council told us that what he wanted to get out of a Parish Plan was to know what members of the community thought were the important issues for community life, what they really wanted to see in parish development, and, thus, to get some guidance about the things that the Parish Council should be concentrating on.

At the early meetings of the Steering Group, guided by Marion Rayner from Community First (whose advice and support throughout the project has been invaluable), we put together the basics -- a constitution, a budget, and a timescale; and we agreed that the key task would be the assembly and evaluation of information about what Colerne people themselves thought about their village. We took a good look at the parish plans of other villages, to avoid "re-inventing wheels".

We began by assembling a poster display, which we took to a series of summer events in 2009, using them as opportunities for informal opinion-gathering. Then, guided by that, we designed a four-stage enquiry:-

- a survey of key-activity leaders (clubs and societies) to find out what they felt the key issues were in developing their specific interest;
- a survey of local businesses;
- a major Questionnaire to be circulated to every household in the parish;
- a special survey of the opinions of schoolchildren at the Colerne primary school.

We knew this programme would entail some costs, particularly if we were to undertake a Household Questionnaire. Our Parish Council led the way by providing a £500 grant for the year 2009/10; and Community First followed up with a similar grant. To both of them we are extremely grateful.

We also made a successful application for a £1,000 project grant to Corsham Area Board of Wiltshire Council. Thanks to that Area Board grant, we were now able to plan ahead with some confidence. We were then enabled to encourage participation in the Household Questionnaire by offering draw prizes generously provided by three local businesses -- the Lucknam Park Brasserie and Spa; Box Steam Brewery; and the Fox and Hounds.

As a result of this support in cash and in kind we ran a highly successful Household Questionnaire in mid-2010. It attracted a 40% response -- a very satisfactory return for a postal questionnaire. Although processing and analysing the results gave us weeks of headaches (for the Questionnaire was quite a complex one), we were confident that it gave us a solid evidence-base for our conclusions.

And now, drawing upon all your inputs of evidence at the various stages, Colerne has its Parish Plan. The Steering Group hopes that this will not only provide useful guidelines for the Council but can also guide activities by the community itself.

In the two years since we began, the social and political climate has shifted significantly. Today, money for local authority activities is sharply squeezed. For philosophical and financial reasons, we are being asked to find "big society" responses to community issues. And it is said that decision-making powers will be increasingly decentralised, so that the ordinary citizens of local communities can have a greater say in what happens in their locality. We hope that the Colerne Parish Plan will be of real help in this uncertain evolution.



The members of the Steering Group who have worked so hard on this project are:-

- **Ray Barker:** business community projects leader;
- **Ed Bartlett:** village events and school liaison/ survey;
- **Bob Child:** publicity, Questionnaire and Report design and production;
- **Louise Clarke:** Parish Councillor and Council liaison;
- **Nina Copping:** 2009 Steering Group secretary in the formative months of the Plan;
- **Rachel Dutton:** Questionnaire project leader and statistical adviser;
- **Hannah Gayles:** 2010 Pinewood and Southwood representative;
- **Russell Harding:** Cotswold warden and transportation project adviser;
- **Caroline Harrison:** Steering Group treasurer;
- **Robert Jones:** Steering Group chairman
- **Anne Nicholas:** Steering Group secretary and Key Activity Leaders survey;
- **Julia Stacey:** adviser on liaison with external agencies;
- **Jacqui Ward:** Thickwood representative;
- **Steve Watts:** Welfare Officer at 21st Signals Regiment, and Camp liaison;
- **Helen Wright:** 2009 Pinewood and Southwood representative and Council liaison.

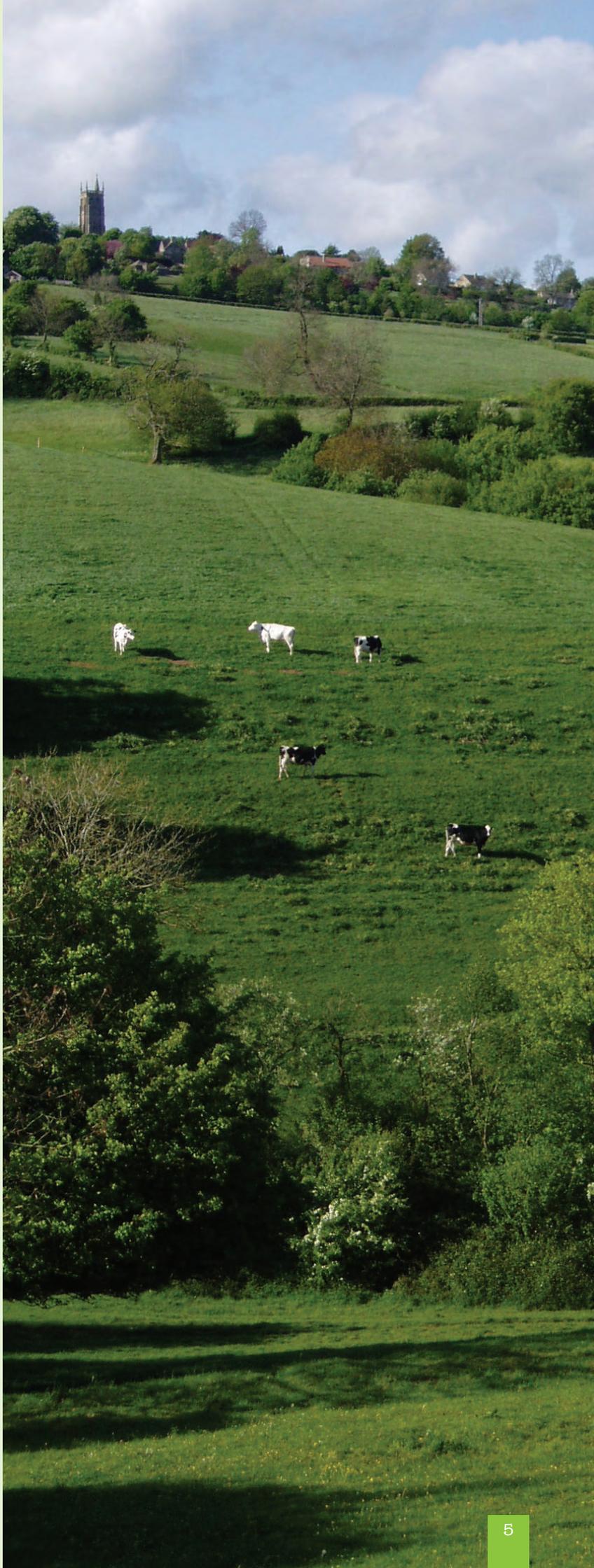
Individual Group members took responsibility for researching and writing up the topics which came to feature as the key issues in the Plan. They deserve special thanks for that effort. I must also acknowledge the specialist support we received from Adrian Constable in the statistical processing of the Household Questionnaire -- a complex task which might have defeated us had we tried to tackle it without professional skills.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the local businesses, shown on page 2, whose financial support has enabled us to publish and distribute this Report to each household in the parish. This publication would not have been possible without them.

In the Report we describe how we assembled the evidence, and then, section by section, we review the "key issues" that have emerged. We have added practical suggestions of ways forward, and these are summarised in "An Action Plan" (page 27). All the detailed supporting evidence is collected in a separate "Dossier of Evidence", available on the website and as a photocopy on request. Contact details are given on page 31.

## **Robert Jones**

Steering Group Chairman, Coleme Community Plan



### 3: A Village Profile

*Some Parish Plans commence with a narrative about village history, geology, natural history, and so forth. Rather than attempting to summarise material which is widely available elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, we have asked a long-time resident of the village, Caroline Harrison, to give a personal profile of the village.*

Colerne lies at the southern end of the Cotswold Hills, 545 ft above sea level. Whichever road, lane or path is used to get here, there is a steep hill at some point; the winds blow in from the Bristol Channel, and sometimes the village disappears into the clouds. We overlook the valleys of the Bybrook and the Avon, about a mile north of the old London to Bristol road, six miles north-east of Bath and the same distance west of Chippenham. We are in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in the Parliamentary constituency of North Wiltshire, and within the Corsham Area of the new Wiltshire Unitary Council.

A village in spirit, character and history, the parish of Colerne is now a large community of nearly 3,000 souls and still a working village -- not just residential, not just retirees, not a 'second-home ghetto', but enlivened by working folk, families and their activities.

Geographically it's a large parish, stretching from the Fosse Way and the Three Shires Stones (Gloucestershire, Somersetshire and Wiltshire) in the west, to the thickly-wooded Doncombe Valley in the north, and to the edge of Ford and Slaughterford (almost in the urban district of Chippenham) to the east. It comprises several centres of population -- the village itself, the Southwood and Pinewood estates to the north, Lucknam and Thickwood to

the east, with scattered farmhouses and dwellings between.

This is Colerne -- the village on the hill.

Its height made it a place of safety, borne out by finds of Stone Age tools and the Bury Wood Camp of the Iron Age. The Romans built the Fosse Way, which borders our parish to the west, and a villa dating from 4th/5th centuries was found in 1854, beneath where the airfield now lies. The oldest part of the present Church was built in 1190 and additions were made in 1240. From 1300 onwards, sheep farming and the wool industry centred round Bath helped the village to prosper and in 1389 the Manor and land attached became the property of New College, Oxford -- they owned the manor until 1877 and land into the 20th century.

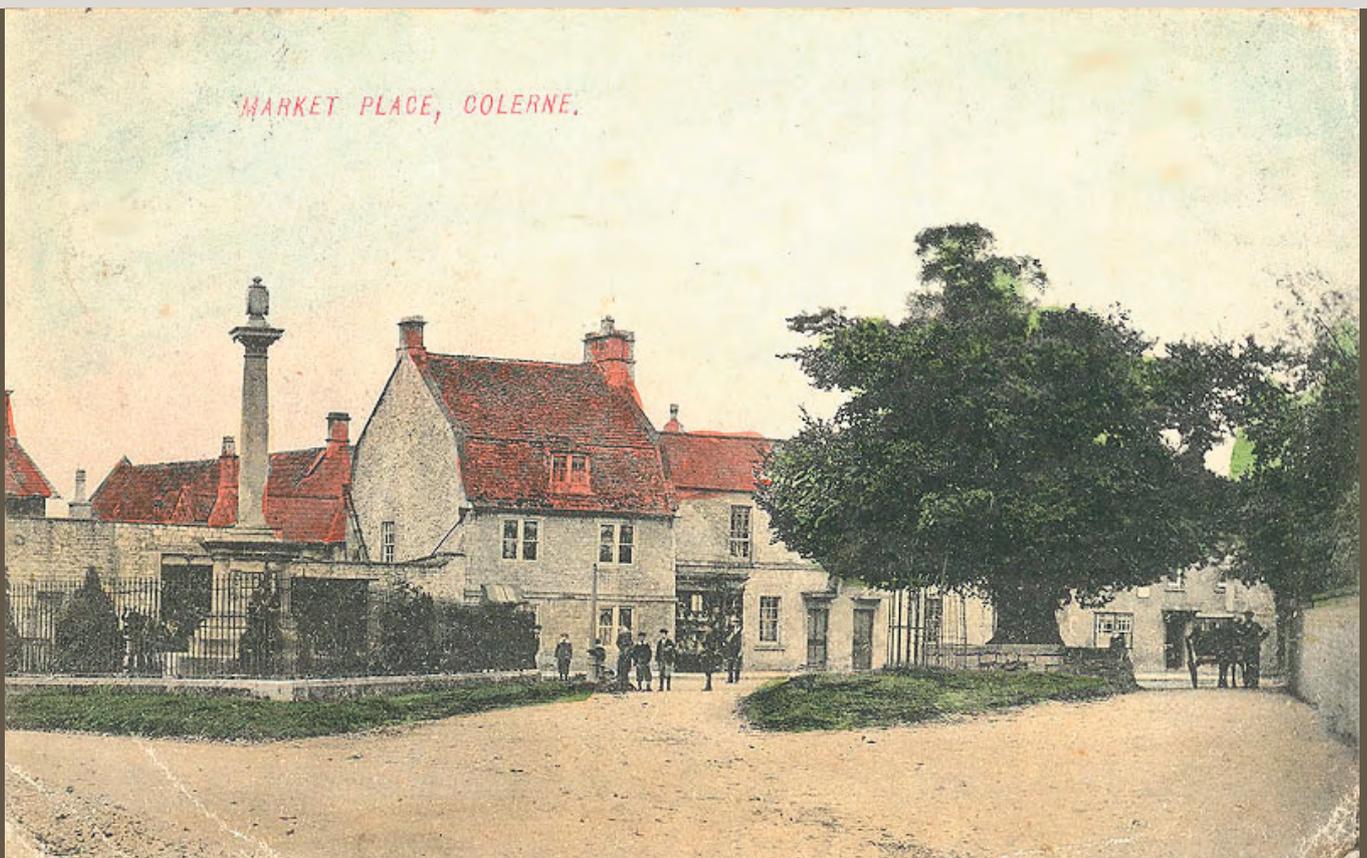
In 1450, the church tower was built. 1689 saw the building of Lucknam House and 1774 saw the great fire which caused 60 families to be made homeless. 1787 saw the first Colerne Enclosure Award.

1801, the year of the first national census, showed a population of 693, rising to 1,209 in 1841 when the Box Tunnel was being built. Sixty-six labourers were lodged in the village, and the first village policeman was recorded. By this time a proper school was needed and the Old School was built in Vicarage Lane.

The population of the village changed very little up to 1891 and in fact by 1931 had dropped to 844 persons. In 1894, Colerne Parish Council met for the first time.

Stone quarrying played an important part in the working life of the village, but the decline of the wool industry caused the village to become a quiet, rather isolated place. Everything changed when the government decided, in 1939, to take advantage of the hill top position to build an airfield for RAF fighters. Throughout

<sup>1</sup> In Colerne's case the starting point would be the excellent sources: 'The Village on the Hill', Volumes 1 (1990) and 2 (1995); and 'Life on the Hill - Colerne Remembered' (1990), all published by the local History Group. There is also a Timeline of Colerne History, prepared by the History Group, which is available in the Dossier of Evidence.



Market Place c.1904

From the Ordnance Survey 1896 revision of the one inch to one mile map. The modern civil parish boundary has been superimposed.



the Second World War; this was a strategic centre for western defences, and many former servicemen well recall the name 'Colerne' -- a name scarcely known to anyone else more than a few miles away!

In 1948, the Martin's Croft council housing estate was begun; and by 1951 the population had increased by 140% over the previous (1931) reading. In 1955, the village hall opened and in 1958 the school was moved in part to its new site on Quarry Lane. RAF Colerne closed in 1976 but happily for the village economy the army moved the Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Corps of Transport to the camp in 1978.

In 1984, when I moved to Colerne, the village had changed completely from its isolated and introspective character of the early twentieth century. Many of those stationed at RAF Colerne had enjoyed their time here so much they returned to live in the village on retirement. Married quarters both at Thickwood and the Camp were up for sale to the general public and the outskirts of the village began to fill with young families with cars and medical and social needs. The school expanded again.

Then -- a potential disaster for the economy of the village -- the Junior Leaders were moved away, civilian workers made redundant, and the base was going to close. But suddenly that changed again -- the military base would be kept open. And in due course the 21st Signals Regiment was transferred to Colerne, where it still operates, providing a crucial link in the global communications network for British forces. And with that -- more children, more families, more activity.

Yes, Colerne has changed very dramatically in the 27 years I have lived here. Very little space is left within the old footprint for new builds. Some of the old RAF hangars at the south of the airfield have been sold on and are being used for commercial projects; and there is always a worry that more of the surrounding farmland that preserves our rural character could go for building if government so decrees and owners so decide.

Many of the former retail shops along the High Street have disappeared - the cobbler; haberdasher; butcher; baker - but the basic needs of the village are still met locally by our Post Office, Costcutters, Dailies, Heads Up hair and beauty parlour, with a touch of luxury supplied by The Flower Shop. And we retain two pubs and two clubs. And, as you will read later, new businesses have sprung up. The bus services to Bath and Chippenham are also a much needed lifeline. We are lucky to have kept so much -- and of course we must all be ready to 'use it or lose it'.

Colerne is a village discovered by many as a wonderful home base for work, a village with an excellent school and onward access to senior schools with good reputations, and a place which is friendly and has something to offer to most ages for relaxation. (The back page of the Parish Magazine regularly lists leisure activities ranging from badminton and bell-ringing to amateur opera and classic cars.) How lucky Colerne is to have this kaleidoscope of people in its community. It is this that has kept the village alive and vibrant. But those are potentially perishable qualities: and we hope this Parish Plan will help to keep them fresh.

# 4: The Consultation Process

## 4:a How We Identified the Key Issues

We undertook three consultations before we designed the major Household Questionnaire. These were: informal “village events” opinion-soundings; a Key Activity Leaders survey; and a Business Community survey. Valuable in themselves, these also gave us information about what we needed to address more closely in the Household Questionnaire. Additionally, the Colerne School

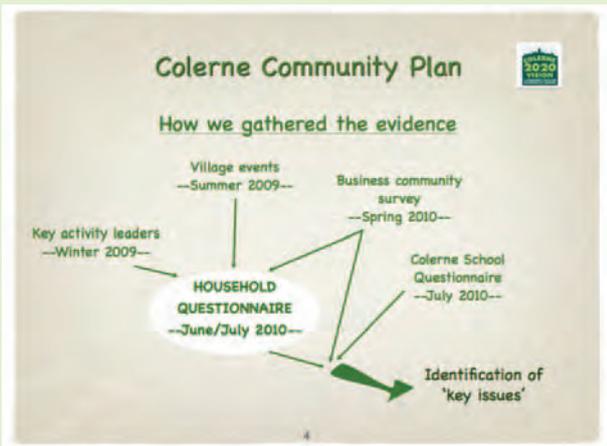
intensive brainstorming session: our task was to decide what you had told us through the survey work were the most important longer term issues shaping the future of the parish. And as a result of this session we distilled out the “ 7 Key Issues”. The table summarises what they were.

You may be thinking: “Those are all very general and don’t really contain any surprises”. So it’s important to note some of the things which do not appear in our table -- problems which are of first importance for other parishes (as we know from their Plans) but which did not emerge at the top of the pile in Colerne. Some of the “dogs that didn’t bark” for us were:

- crime and policing
- unemployment
- reversing village decline
- population/social imbalances
- noise/light/air pollution.

To be clear, these issues are sometimes important here too -- indeed possibly of priority importance to some of us. On crime and policing, for example, the majority of Questionnaire respondents did say that a greater police presence and active neighbourhood watch schemes were important; and we know that, specifically, vandalism remains a concern to many people. And we recommend (see Action Plan, Section 7) that a special task force should undertake a detailed review of the extent and location of these problems, to see if a case can be made for prioritisation to Wiltshire police and other authorities. But based on the results of the survey, these issues did not attract enough across-the-board concern for the Steering Group to conclude that they were priority issues for Colerne at this time.

But before we get into the detail of the priority issues, let’s look at some facts and figures about the people of the parish, which come from the first few questions in the Questionnaire.



Questionnaire was run alongside the Household Questionnaire in July 2010. The Business Community survey raised some distinctive issues of its own and is reported separately on page 25. The chart shows how these various activities linked together:

The Household Questionnaire contained 26 different questions. It gathered a mix of data -- statistical, personal opinion, policy-preferences, and, throughout, frequent opportunity for respondents to write in comments and ideas in “free-text” format. We received a huge volume of such comments, which were all collated and grouped according to topic.

With the aid of the team who distribute the Parish Magazine, we were able to get the Questionnaire to all 1,130 households in the parish early in June 2010, and by the closure date (July 10th) a total of 449 responses had been received. That is a response rate of very nearly 40%. (In fact we are fairly sure that the response rate was over 40%, as subsequent information suggests that the number of households may be nearer to 1,100 than 1,130.) In market research terms this represents a high return on a postal questionnaire.

At its meeting in October 2010 the Steering Group conducted an

Getting Around
The Built Environment
Sustaining & Developing Village Facilities
Community Spirit
Parish Council
Environmental & Ecological Challenges
Business & Communications Development (Websites)

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Map labels: North Colerne, Northwood Farm, Lucknam Park, Hall Farm, Thickwood, Eastrip, Buridge Manor, Widdenham Farm, Saltbox Farm, Drewetts Mill, Lid Brook, Westwood Farm, Fosse Way, To Bath, To Box.

With financial support from:  
- Wiltshire Council/Corsham Area Board  
- Community First  
- Colerne Parish Council

With sponsorship from: Lucknam Park Hotel, Box Steam Brewery and The Fox and Hounds, and production support from Azimghur Barracks.  
Grateful thanks to all of the above.

## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 4:b “About You”

#### Which road or locality in Colerne parish do you live in?

We listed 63 roads/locations in the parish, from which respondents indicated their locality. Only 6 of the 449 respondents did not do so. The overall response was well spread across the three main areas of the parish:

Village “centre”	297
Duncombe Lane/N.Colerne/Pinewood	102
Thickwood/Euridge/Lucknam	44

Replies were well spread across the 63 roads, with only 7 roads having no respondents. (These were short, e.g. Closes, or sparsely populated roads.) So the great majority of the roads within the village had some representation; and five roads had more than 20 respondents [Forrester Green (44); Pinewood Way (30); High Street (26); Martins Croft (25); and Bath Road (22)].

#### Age group

In this question respondents indicated the ages of their household members. The returns showed a total of 1,143 people, who came from 443 households -- an average of 2.58 people per household. The breakdown by age is shown in the table below.

As the Questionnaire responses came from 40% of the total population/households in Colerne, and assuming that the respondents' households were typical of the parish at large, a factor of 2.5 will give us an estimate of the total number of people in any particular age-group in Colerne. For example: there would be approximately  $82 \times 2.5 = 205$  children under 5 in Colerne; and 25 people over 90.

Unlike some villages, the age-distribution of Colerne's population seems broadly in line with the English averages. There are slightly fewer young-working age people (19-29), but these are counterbalanced by higher-than-average numbers of mature working age (30-69). Our proportions of children and of the elderly seem broadly in line with all-England figures.

Age-range	No. of people	% total	Approx. estimates for England (2001 Census)
0-4	82	7.2%	6.0%
5-11	99	8.7%	8.9%
12-18	95	8.3%	7.8%
19-29	92	8.0%	15.1%
30-49	336	29.4%	28.9%
50-69	313	27.4%	21.6%
70-89	116	10.1%	11.7%
90+	10	0.9%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,143</b>		

#### Length of residency in Colerne

The high percentage of households, 41%, that have been settled in Colerne for over 20 years may lie behind the strong sense of local identity which is found in the village.

Length of residency	No. of respondents	% total
0-2yrs	67	15.3%
3-5yrs	55	12.6%
6-10yrs	54	12.3%
10-20Yrs	84	19.2%
over 20yrs	178	40.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	

#### Occupation of household residents

The percentage of retired people in the parish is a little, but not significantly, above the national average (19.5% compared with 18.5%). And the percentage in employment/self-employment (49%) is substantial.

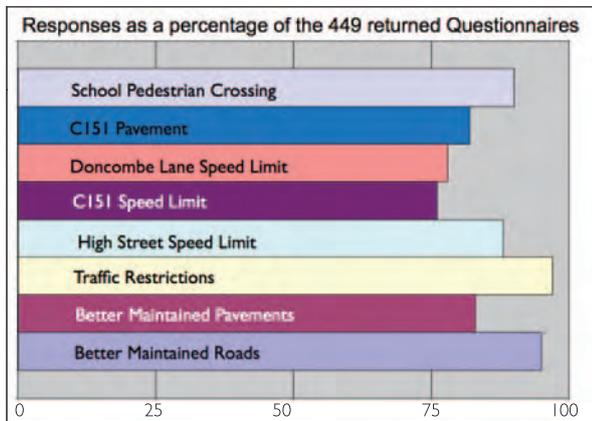
These figures, with their good occupational balance, give some support for the concept of Colerne as “a working community”, not a rural retirement village or “second home ghetto”. The figures for people stated to be in education or pre-school are consistent with the age-group data given earlier. The data suggest a well-balanced activity profile for the Colerne population, with no preponderances (e.g. of retired or job-seeking groups) that might raise special local issues.

Occupation	No. of people	% total
Retired	219	19.5%
Home manager/carers	54	4.8%
Employed	440	39.2%
Self-employed	112	10.0%
Job-seeking	11	1.0%
Student/school	210	16.8%
Pre-school	76	6.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,122</b>	



# 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

## 5:a Road Access and Safety

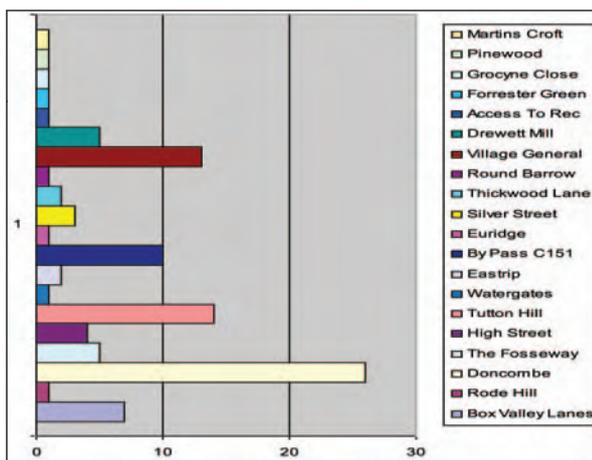


We knew that people were concerned about ease of transport into and out of the village and with aspects of road safety. The Questionnaire therefore asked several questions on these themes.

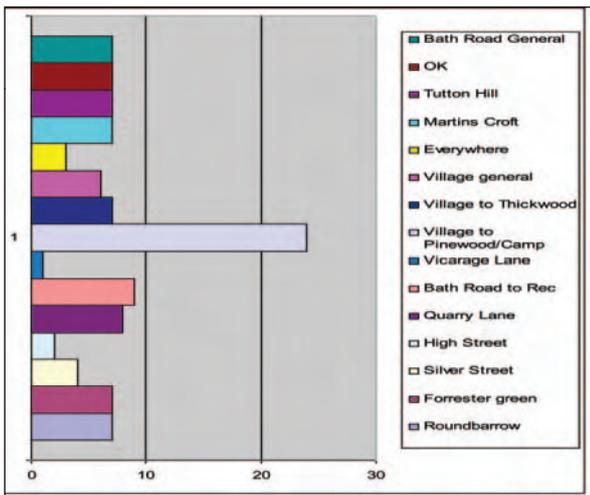
In one, a series of improvements was offered and people were asked how important each would be. The graph shows what percentage of the 449 respondents felt that each of these changes would be either very or quite important. All the topics were regarded as such by at least three quarters of respondents! The top three items were: restrictions on weight and size of traffic using access roads, better road maintenance, and the need for a school pedestrian crossing. The latter point was one of the key outcomes of the School Survey too, with significant numbers of children feeling that traffic speeds in the vicinity of the school were too high and that they sometimes felt unsafe crossing the roadways.



Respondents who felt that better road maintenance was important were asked where they had in mind in particular. These results in the second table are again shown as a percentage of the 449 returned Questionnaires. By far the major single issue was the condition of Doncombe Lane and the hill down from Pinewood to the stream-crossroads. The next most frequently-mentioned site was Tutton Hill (which did receive significant work in autumn 2010, after the Questionnaire was completed). The third most-frequent response was that "the village in general" was where better maintenance was needed, while the village "bypass", the C151, was the next most frequently-mentioned site.



A similar graph shows where respondents felt pavements were in need of better care. Here, well out in front was the pavement between the village and the Camp and Pinewood. This is used intensively at the beginning and end of school day by young families. The the possibility of a new footway along Bath Road from Silver Street to the recreation ground, which the Parish Council is already pursuing, was also strongly supported.



Some of the things you told us...

## GETTING AROUND

### ROADS & PAVEMENTS

- Access from Firs to Roundbarrow would make village more joined up
- I used to walk along C151 from Rec to Bath Rd but speed of traffic scares me
- C-151 - there will be a death soon
- Cycle path from Camp to Village as footpath is too narrow making it unsafe for pedestrians.
- Grit Domcombe road in snow for mothers & prams
- Speed limits should extend beyond Lucknam Pk as many employees walk along this road - particularly dangerous when dark
- Difficulties with pushchair + toddler in village yet I wouldn't want to see all the charm disappear with municipal pavements everywhere - prefer a radical rethink of village centre with pedestrians and cyclists having priority over cars
- Very important something is done at the crossroads.
- Provide better signboards with good map and rights of way etc.

In summary, the community places high emphasis on safer connectivity between the outreaches of the Parish and the centre, for both pedestrians and motorized transport. There are also concerns for those who motor to or for work (e.g. farm traffic, public transport, service supply lorries/vans, and military vehicles). Here is a prioritisation of potential projects, based upon our evidence:-

**C151:**

- Pedestrian crossing near School
  - Pavement/footway, Silver Street to Rec.<sup>2</sup>
- Speed limitations:**
- High Street
  - C151, a consistent and lower limit: possibly from The Vineyard to Thickwood turn.
  - Doncombe Lane

**Control of traffic weight and size**

**Better road maintenance:**

- Doncombe Lane and Hill
- [Tutton Hill - Ensuring that autumn 2010 works remain viable]

**Better pavement maintenance:**

- Village to Camp and Northwood

The findings provide the Parish Council with a good evidence-base for dialogue with external agencies in seeking to prioritise and secure authorization of proposed projects.

## A WAY FORWARD

- Each of the above could be assessed for feasibility by the Parish Council (where not already in hand) and, when appropriate, initiation of an action plan.
- A task-force of interested local parties could support the Council in developing proposals and providing further evidence as required (i.e. maps, photos, measurements, hazard analysis etc.).
- Each project may produce its own side agenda of issues which will need subsidiary evaluation (e.g. positioning of yellow salt bins around the Parish etc.)

<sup>2</sup> C151 footway: Progress to Jan 2011: A survey by Wiltshire Council is currently under way and the Corsham Area Board is financially supporting a feasibility study. The Colerne Parish Council have ring fenced £7,500 for this project and there is currently an estimated total cost in the region of £30,000. Once this and project feasibility are confirmed then sourcing grants can be applied for.

## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 5b: Public Transport

Colerne's rural location, on top of the hill, means that reliable transport is essential to the community. For many people the freedom that a car gives to travel where and when you want cannot be matched by public transport. But looking to the future, the way we travel will no doubt change. Filling a car with fuel is now more expensive than it ever has been. For some, the environmental issues around car travel are important enough reasons to choose the bus or cycle when possible. And many who use the bus services enjoy being driven to their destination without queuing or parking problems. Your feedback tells us that Colerne residents want a good public transport service. For many, reliable Public Transport is essential; for others it gives back-up security to know that there is a regular public service available.



The Faresaver 228 service runs from Bath to Thickwood, Pinewood and Colerne Market Place from Monday to Saturday every 2 hours during the day. However, at the moment, not enough money comes in from fares to cover the costs of this service and Wiltshire Council currently puts money in to keep the service running outside peak hours. No doubt, as a couple of years ago, there would be an outcry from residents if the bus service was at risk of withdrawal. But as a community we cannot take its existence for granted.

The Household Questionnaire told us that you would use the bus more often if the service was:

- more frequent,
- 100% reliable,
- extended into the evenings,
- ran on Sundays, and
- were easier to get on and off with space for pushchairs (low floor vehicles).

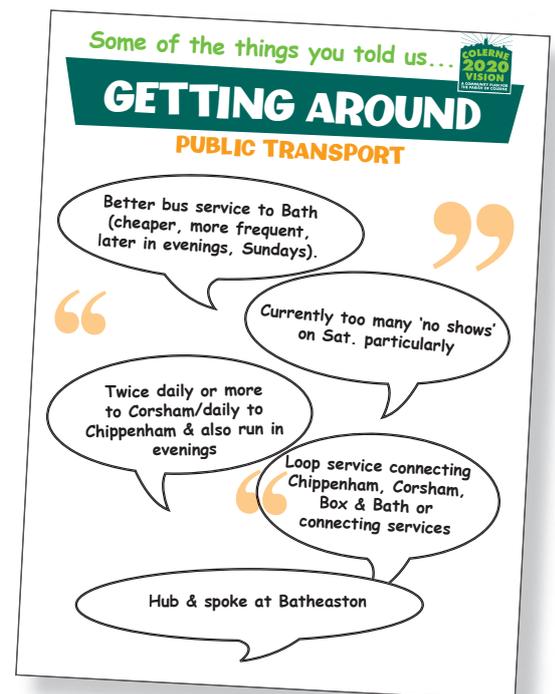
There was also significant interest expressed in new/additional bus services to connect Colerne to Chippenham and Corsham. And 42% of respondents told us they would use a Batheaston shuttle on a weekly basis and 14% on a daily basis. (This idea imagines a vehicle that would run a link service between Colerne and Batheaston. It could improve connections to Colerne, e.g. in the evenings and on Sundays, without greatly affecting the ease of getting into Bath.)

Although at the time of writing there is no immediate threat to the Wiltshire Council subsidy for the 228, this cannot be taken for granted. Therefore Colerne faces two possible scenarios:

1. While public subsidy is secure, we should use the bus service as much as possible! At the same time we need to see how the existing services might improve, through the suggestions listed above. Any of these ideas might improve (not worsen) the economics of the service.

2. If public subsidy is capped, reduced or withdrawn, a pre-existing contingency plan for Colerne would be of help. This might include the setting up of community-led bus service. (There are already examples of this in Wiltshire.)

Such a service could operate in a variety of ways -- as a Batheaston shuttle; a circular route visiting Batheaston, Corsham, Chippenham and Ford; take individual bookings; or a mixture of these options. It would require a significant practical commitment by enough people with time available -- a commodity that Colerne does not have in abundance (see elsewhere in this Report).



## A WAY FORWARD

- Contacts with Wiltshire Council to monitor the subsidy of the 228 service.
- Talk with Faresaver managers to communicate the results of this Community Plan, discuss how the service could be secured/improved/protected (e.g. request provision of low floor vehicles for those with pushchairs and mobility issues, and seek consideration of extended/more effective service).
- Develop a contingency plan for community transport in Colerne should need arise.

# 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

## 5c: Car Parking

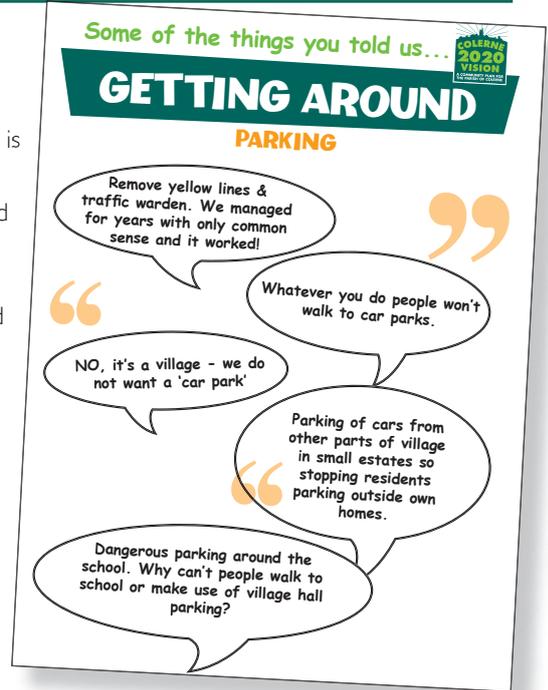
Everyone has a story to tell about car parking in Colerne! But each situation is different and no one-size-fits-all solutions are obvious. Over 25% of survey respondents perceive car parking as a major problem, notably in Colerne village centre. Traffic congestion around Colerne CE Primary School during the school run is also considered a major problem and a safety issue for children.

How could we improve car parking in Colerne as a community? From the household survey, the spread of suggestions fell into three categories:

**1. The 'Radical' solutions:** (a) 'Remove all parking restrictions': simply allow people to park freely, use their common sense and negotiate between themselves. (b) 'Shared Space': remove all traffic priorities, even pavements, so that everyone using the 'space' that we would have previously called a 'road' has to proceed with due care and attention, without causing harm or injury to others. There is a growing interest elsewhere in this kind of Shared Space approach. (c) 'A parking ban': one or two people suggested a complete ban on parking on the High Street.

**2. The 'Designated Parking' solution:** 'We need a car park'. Some argued that Colerne needs a 'proper' Park and Walk solution, with good surfacing, parking bays, signage, and security (and large investment cost).

**3. 'Do Nothing' solution:** 'Just live with it!' There is no solution, we must just muddle along. "Even if you had 'park and walk' nobody would be willing to do the walking".



### A WAY FORWARD

- Although not a new problem, Parish Council to re-review the current situation and re-assess all ideas that could help reduce car parking problems;
- Develop School Run Code for Colerne CE Primary School. With cross reference to the Highway Code, and in partnership with all concerned, develop a Colerne CE Primary School Run Code.
- Parish Council to consider proposal for additional 'overspill' parking area at Rec. e.g. on match and event days



# 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

## 5d: The Parish Council

### Background

As there had been concerns from the Parish Council about the lack of interest from members of the community in, for example, standing for positions as councillors, the Household Questionnaire assessed respondents' familiarity with the work of the Council.

Two thirds of respondents were aware that the public have the right to attend Council monthly and planning meetings: even so, 80% of respondents felt they would like to know more about what the Council does. Reflecting this, 59% of people who had an opinion felt that the Council did not publicise its decisions and activities well enough. (The Council has recently [January 2011] commenced a newsletter on limited circulation: it also has a monthly activities page in the Parish magazine.) Finally the Questionnaire asked if people would welcome regular Parish

Councillor surgeries. 80% of respondents felt they would like this.

Probably the most interesting -- and, for the Parish Council, most useful -- part of this question came with the free-text opportunity to record ideas for other Council services that would be welcomed. About 10% of respondents offered a comment here but, interestingly, most did not specify additional "frontline" services but instead addressed various aspects of communications between the Parish Council and the citizens.

had earlier hosted meetings with the project developer which were poorly attended. Nevertheless the Council needs to be aware of the strength of feeling in the village that it had not been properly consulted at the critical time, and that there was inadequate opportunity for discussion on a significant proposal.

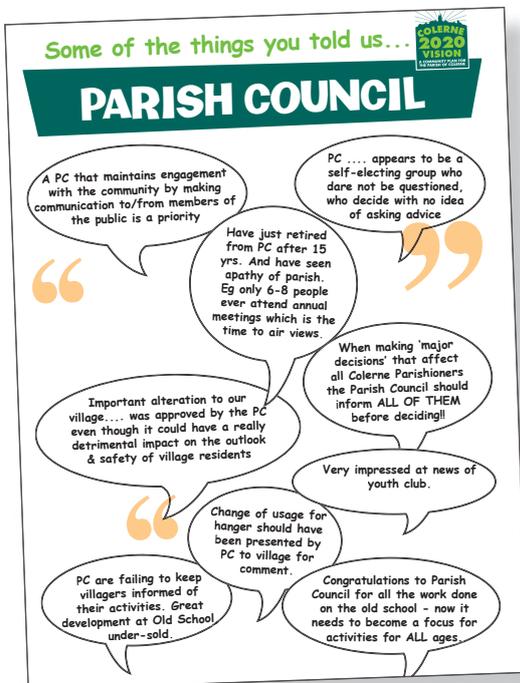
A more favourable angle on "poor communications" came from people who regarded the redevelopment of the Rec and the Old School as excellent, but as inadequately publicised to show what the Council had actually achieved. Again, the Council will respond that there was an opening festival at the Rec, which was well attended. Even so, the conclusion from this consultation is that many villagers would probably not know that the Council had championed these ideas and got them through as a result of considerable hard work.

On other aspects of communication, some respondents commented that it was difficult to get in touch with the Council unless you could call into the parish office during the hours when the clerk was in attendance. (One respondent suggested that an out-of-hours contact line should be publicised.) The Parish Council noticeboards were commented on as not being central or visible enough, and because they were mainly used for routine administrative notices, when they should be used to publicise current important or controversial issues.

This widely-perceived communications failure is damaging to both parties, and particularly when a few commentators extended it to a sideswipe that the Council was a closed shop and/or did not engage with the village. (It might equally be said that the village does not engage with the Council -- when did we all last attend a meeting or the AGM?) However, whichever party is responsible for the failure, a failure it remains and it is probably down to the Parish Council to initiate improvements.

While the majority of comments here dealt with Council/community interaction, there were some specific suggestions for additional "frontline" activities. Examples included: better village signage, parking control, snow clearance, burial ground extension, wider recycling. However, none of these issues picked up a sufficient frequency of comment to conclude that the community saw it as a Parish Council priority.

The main conclusion is that communications between the Parish Council and the community is the matter of greatest concern. If this can be successfully tackled, it should do a lot to deal with the criticisms of Council activity found in the survey, and might even stimulate more parishioners to show interest in undertaking the role of Parish Councillor.



### A Communications Failure?

Many of these comments expressed the view that the Parish Council did not communicate with the village on major issues, and the planning decision-making on Hangar 19 was given as an example. This was a function of the date of the Questionnaire (late summer 2010): it also overlooks the fact that the Council

## A WAY FORWARD

- Parish Council to undertake an in-depth review of how it communicates with parishioners on (a) general matters and (b) specific major issues. This might be approached through:-
  - ⇒ new media of communication (e.g. the newsletter -- but with an all-household circulation);
  - ⇒ new and more attractive design and copywriting (many of the communications at present are formally expressed and dully laid out);
  - ⇒ a more pro-active approach to initiation of parish-wide meetings in the event of large issues arising of wide concern (e.g. Hangar 19);
  - ⇒ the adoption of ad hoc "task forces" to advance work on selected topics, led from the Council but including expertise or experience from the community.

## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 5e: Community Spirit

#### Social Cohesion

In the question which asked if we had overlooked anything, 72 people raised issues surrounding our community lifestyle. Thirty-two percent of them wrote that there needs to be a greater community spirit without specifying how, and 42% said they wanted more community events and activities to encourage this -- particularly events for families. Ten per cent suggested that ways need to be developed to draw in the outer areas of the Parish, such as Thickwood and Pinewood, who often see themselves as separate entities -- part of the parish but not part of the village.

Some respondents said that there was a need for more people to become involved with the running of events. There were also several comments indicating the need for a better welcome for newcomers to the village, such as a welcome pack or visit to encourage this kind of integration.

To help link newcomers into village activities, we have looked at the welcome pack handed out by The Hive (the welfare office at the Camp) to all new members of the service community. This could be expanded to include the village, and vice versa. Such a pack could have a map of the village with places of interest and include information on activities, clubs and societies, giving contact points, meeting times and costs etc. It might be possible for local businesses to sponsor production of the pack.

#### Communications

There is a range of communications media that help us keep in touch, and on the whole most people felt at least reasonably well informed about activities and events. The Parish Magazine was by far the most highly regarded of these, with 83% of respondents finding it definitely accessible and informative. Against this, Parish Council notice boards and village websites were less highly regarded, with a quarter or less of respondents finding them accessible and informative.

There was a strong feeling that a regularly updated Village website was 'a must'. Given that 80% of respondents said they had access to broadband, the importance of effective websites to the development of community spirit could be very high (see page 24).

Special attention may need to be paid to communications for the outer parish areas. They were fully included in the Household Questionnaire; and they can refer to the website developed for the Community Plan and its results. But more may be needed.

#### Youth Activities

Twenty-nine comments referred to the need to provide the

children and young people of the village with something to encourage their involvement in parish activities and reduce troublemaking. The youth club which opened in 2010 is an attempt to deal with this topic.

#### Openness of Clubs/Societies

These were reported by some as seeming inward-looking and even unwelcoming to new people. The formal policy of local clubs and societies is always highly welcoming of new members, but a perception of "us and them" can sometimes be created by quite a small number of members. Clubs and societies need to be aware of this and they may then want to angle their event-publicity specifically to encourage and welcome new members.

#### Camp/Community Relations

It was felt by some respondents that "the Camp" (21st Signals Regiment) no longer involve themselves in village life as much as they once did. The relationship between the Camp and village has recently been greatly improved by the current Welfare Officer; and there is now an effective point of contact for village groups for help and information.

One suggestion for better community/Camp relations was to use the Camp sporting facilities. These include: badminton; basketball; indoor football, volleyball, hockey and tennis; archery. A ballroom dancing group uses the indoor facilities, and there is a 6 lane swimming pool. Outside there are rugby, cricket and football pitches, plus a shooting club.

Colerne Football Club is following a procedure from the Quartermaster to ask for use of the indoor football pitch for one night a week. Another respondent asked whether large village events like the May Fair and Village Bonfire could be held at the Camp where space and parking are not an issue.

Some of the things you told us...

### COMMUNITY SPIRIT

#### BARRIERS TO SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



## A WAY FORWARD

- Preparation and sponsorship of an introductory 'Welcome Pack' for newcomers to the community, and "buddy" visits to newcomers;
- Improvement /more intensive use of Parish Council noticeboards and village websites (special attention to outer areas);
- Sports clubs to consider use of Camp facilities;
- Club/Society officers to be alerted to need for new-member welcome;
- The Friends of St John (Colerne Church) may want to consider whether advantage could be gained by locating major annual events at the Camp.

# 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

## 5f: Village Facilities and Services

The parish has a number of commercial and community service facilities, and to provide community views on these the Questionnaire surveyed seven community services:-

- The Parish Church and the churchyard (the parish burial ground).
- The Evangelical Church built as the Congregational Chapel in 1824.
- The Mobile Library managed by Wiltshire Council, which visits to a published schedule.
- Two Medical Practices (grouped as one in the Questionnaire), one by the Market Place, part of the Three Shires Practice; the other on Cleeves Avenue, an extension of the Box Clinic.
- The recently refurbished Recreation Area and pavilion (not refurbished), managed by the Parish Council.
- The Village Hall, opened in 1955, recently modernised and managed by a voluntary committee.
- The recently modernised Old School Rooms, in Vicarage Lane and managed by the Parish Council;

and ten business organisations:-

- the five High Street shops,
  - the two pubs and two clubs on the High Street, and
  - the Brasserie & Spa facility of the Lucknam Park Hotel
- The shops and pubs had already been invited to participate in the Business Community survey (see Section 6); this time it would be the community expressing their opinions on the businesses in five areas: *the personal level of use; importance to the village; user-satisfaction; what specifically was liked; and what improvements would be welcomed.*

The overall response rate here was just under 98% of all participants in the household survey; clearly this section was of considerable interest to the community at large.

### Usage of the Facilities/Services

The responses 'I use often' and 'I use a bit' were combined in our analysis. The Post Office and Costcutter were used "often" or "a bit" by 439 respondents -- the highest total usage figures (98/99%) The two most-used community facilities were the Church/Churchyard and Village Hall, both at levels of nearly 70%. (Usage of the GP surgeries may require clarification -- why is it not 100%? Not all Colerne residents are registered with these practices: some use a practice with which they may have other family or residential connections.)

### Importance of the Facilities/Services

Respondents stated "importance" to the village on a 1-5 scale

(with 5 being highest and the scores of 4 and 5 being added to give the overall rating). Here, once again, the Post Office was regarded as particularly important, followed closely by the doctors' surgeries and the Village Hall. There are some differences from the 'usage' scores. An example is the Mobile Library, which has a level of use of about a quarter of respondents but which 85% of respondents rated as important to the parish -- perhaps because they wish it to be available for their use in the future.

	% respondents reporting as "user"	% respondents scoring 4 or 5 for "importance"	% users scoring 4 or 5 for "satisfaction"		% respondents reporting as "user"	% respondents scoring 4 or 5 for "importance"	% users scoring 4 or 5 for "satisfaction"
Post Office	98	99	92	Rec. & Pavilion	49	90	83
Costcutters	98	96	90	Heads Up	35	67	84
GP surgeries	91	99	93	Lucknam Park Spa/Brasserie	37	37	71
Dobbies	81	84	73	Old School Rooms	30	79	91
Five & Hounds	74	76	64	Six Bells	28	35	46
Church & churchyard	69	93	89	Liberal club	28	39	69
Village Hall	67	96	88	Mobile library	27	85	95
Flower Shop	61	35	71	Constitutional Club	22	32	67
				Evangelical Church	7	26	83

### Satisfaction with the Facilities/Services

Respondents were similarly asked to indicate satisfaction with each business. The chart shows responses from users only. No generalised conclusion can be drawn from the widely ranging results, but it indicates how important it is for each organization ask its own questions in relation to customer satisfaction, remembering that there is a *big difference between the lack of a negative and a definite positive.* (Absence of dissatisfaction may not indicate total satisfaction.)

### Features Liked/Improvements Required

The several hundred free-text comments received here were usually specific to the business/facility concerned. We decided that the best way to get value from these comments would be to observe confidentiality and to offer each business a personal feedback session, to provide the complete data about their activity including their free-text comments.



## Feedback to the Businesses/Facilities

Individual 'one-on-one' sessions were held in August/September 2010 with each interested business. The feedback was entirely factual and did not include any opinion of the presenter or the Steering Group. It was intended that the confidential analysis would be of practical value to the management teams and thence to the community.

These feedback discussions were received very positively. From some recipients there was appreciation of the professionalism of the Questionnaire. Others noted how unexpected it was to receive, free, a market research study focussed on their business and conducted across an entire community. One business manager was at the point of questioning whether or not he would want to invest further in Colerne, just when this report of what the community liked about his business (as well as what could be improved) was presented to him!

Though many suggestions for improvement were written "negatively", all of the businesses took them as helpful. Most were pleased to note the levels of usage they were attracting and the levels of importance that the community assigned to their businesses.

Some benefits have already directly arisen:-

- Dailies (newsagent and retail outlet) has introduced a fresh vegetable and meat-products range as suggested by feedback;
- Costcutter has been encouraged to continue with a planning application, previously rejected, which will result in enhanced shop facilities;
- The Parish Church council (PCC) have undertaken a survey at a recent social event, and look to plan a further 'customer satisfaction' survey relating to the Churchyard;
- The Village Hall committee has commenced a film nights/ cinema trial, which may become a regular monthly event;
- A recommitment by Lucknam Park Hotel to encourage more local business and community integration for its brasserie and spa;
- Recognition by managements of the importance of publicity, and of the fact that business sustainability is dependant upon the usage-decisions made by many individuals.

## Conclusion

The parish of Colerne is fortunate to retain a village centre with a significant number of facilities and business services. The Household Questionnaire has sharpened the focus on these activities for both the business management teams and for all of us as users/customers.

In Section 6 there is reference to a possible Colerne Business Community network. There may be scope for all facilities/services covered in this Questionnaire to participate in such a network to develop campaigning and other joint interests, and so that each business and community facility can enhance its "customer satisfaction" ratings and work to the maximum community interest.



## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 5g: New Village Facilities

Respondents were asked what new community facilities they would most like to see. However, the largest single category of comments (11% of the total) was to the effect that the current village facilities **must** remain -- particularly the doctors' surgeries, the Post Office, the shops, pubs and clubs. There was a wide recognition that we must **"use it or lose it"**. This is a common small-community problem. Everybody recognises that there is a shared responsibility to use facilities if they are to survive; but many people still fail to do so, preferring other "more competitive" facilities.

This may be one of the most difficult issues raised by our survey-work -- the need to encourage active community spirit through small, everyday actions. This also applies to volunteers coming forward to run the clubs/societies. As we have just noted, the chief practical idea here may be: Publicity. The Plan can help in stimulating this, but it is essentially a matter for the facilities themselves.

We offered a range of **possible new facilities** to assess the interest they might attract. The percentage of respondents who said that they would 'definitely like to have' the suggested services were:

- café 46%,
- more community events 30%,
- film club/cinema 28%,
- more sporting facilities 25%,
- training courses (e.g. computers) 23%,
- more childcare 12%.

Over half of the 44 free-text comments here referred to additional retail outlets of one type or another; while one-third reinforced the interest in a café/teashop.

#### Café/Tea Shop

There is a clear business opportunity here, but it is not a new idea. Recently, the Village Hall Committee advertised for someone to start a café in the Hall, but with no response. (Perhaps this was not the correct venue, the ambience being more towards functions than informal meeting). Maybe the pubs would provide a better location, being nearer to the centre of the Village. Both have investigated whether this option, but have reportedly decided against. According to our results, a big opportunity remains open.

#### Local Produce/Farmers' Market

A desire for new food outlets, especially for local/farm produce, was frequently mentioned in Questionnaire responses.

We have recent experience of an initiative in this area, but one which did not achieve its objectives -- some might say due to community apathy. In mid-2010 Euridge Manor Farm asked if we would like to set up a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme. They proposed the supply of produce, if the village would undertake the necessary admin and distribution. After some public meetings, facilitated by eColerne, at which the potential range of produce was described, it appeared that there was insufficient active support to set up the project group necessary to get this off the ground.

In the end, with the support of eColerne, a "Veggie

Box" scheme was introduced, run by Doug at Euridge [[douglaswhitelaw@virgin.net](mailto:douglaswhitelaw@virgin.net)], providing a regular supply of Euridge vegetables to subscribers. And the management of Dailies, the local news outlet, commenced a trial in vegetable and frozen meat retailing. While not amounting to the "farmers' market" demanded by many respondents, these initiatives could be seen as at least the first stakes in the ground.

Without the necessary capitalisation, no permanent fresh produce shop is likely to get off the ground. But other communities have successfully introduced this type of retailing as an occasional event -- the "classical" farmers' market. (Our nearest one is in Corsham.) According to Questionnaire responses, the preferred location for such a farmers' market would be the Market Place. The location would necessarily be influenced by footfall, ease of access, and by car parking. As the pressure of car parking in the village centre and traffic flow through the High Street is already at critical levels, a farmers' market would have to be planned to minimise additional impact.

An option may be to develop project-links with local villages -- Box, Biddeston, or Marshfield? There are sources available to support such initiatives, e.g. [www.wiltshirefarmersmarkets.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirefarmersmarkets.org.uk) who "organise about 130 markets a year in various locations". All we can conclude here is that, were a regular farmers' market to be initiated, it is likely to meet with a warm response from the community.

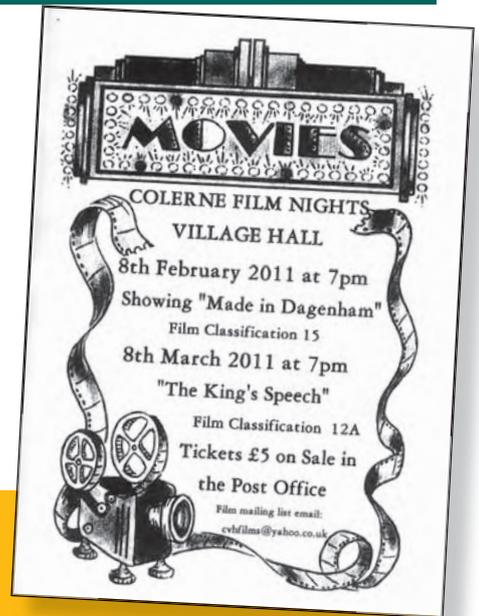


### Cinema Club

As a direct result of the interest expressed through the Questionnaire, the Village Hall Committee is now organizing film nights in the Village Hall (once a month, starting February 2011) in association with Moviola. A regular film club may be generated from this if enough people are interested.

### Cricket Club

Some interest was expressed in re-commencing a Colerne cricket club, absent for some years. If enough people are interested a club could be re-formed. There is a cricket pitch at the Camp. It requires refurbishment, which is due soon. The Football Team is also discussing shared use of Camp facilities; and the Parish Council, which is investigating sports facilities in the community, may want to add these feasibilities, especially for cricket, into its enquiry.



## A WAY FORWARD

- Concerned businesses to give consideration to maximising publicity for the “use it or lose it” principle”;
- Consideration by business parties/ potential investors of survey findings regarding :
  - (a) cafe/tea-shop;
  - (b) retail outlet for local produce;
- Consideration by Parish Council [Task Force] of feasibility of revised Farmers’ Market;
- Village hall committee to consider future of cinema club following “film nights” experiment, first half 2011
- Current Parish Council investigation to take on board potential interest in cricket club (and joint use of Camp facilities).



## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 5h: The Built Environment

Our informal opinion gathering in the summer of 2009 identified some significant concerns about the built environment, including architectural style and design, housing density and village “sprawl”, and the potential development of the ‘industrial’ land at the south of the airfield. The need for affordable housing was mentioned. This issue was therefore featured in the Household Questionnaire.

We began by asking what people thought about the number of houses in the parish, to which a large majority (80%) said “it’s about right”.

There’s not enough	48	12%
It’s about right	332	80%
There’s too many	37	9%

Whether the view that the village should not grow larger can prevail depends upon: (i) the market-availability of undeveloped land, (ii) the way planning principles are applied to development applications, and (iii) the effect of policy requirements for housing. These factors these need to be closely monitored and understood: simply reporting that we have a large majority opinion against new development will achieve little.

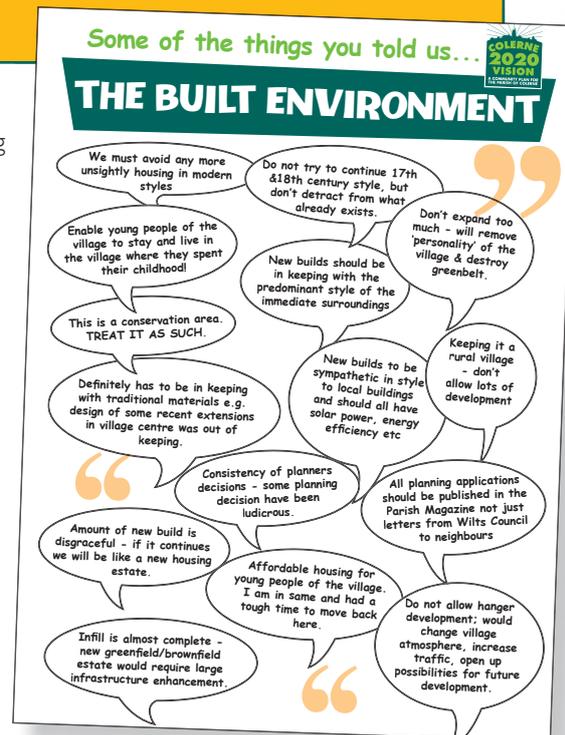
A free-text question then asked: *“In terms of future building developments, what are the key things that should be taken into account (e.g. style and type of buildings)?”*. This attracted a lot of interest -- about 70% of respondents gave a view. Half said that new development must be stylistically in keeping with the original build of the village; although there was a smaller number who said that style must be allowed to evolve. Some respondents felt that further development should be restricted to single-houses only, or that no large-scale new developments should be allowed. A further 23% said that there should be no further development at all. A number of respondents specified qualities that should be mandatory for new-build, such as environmental standards, own parking space, or being affordable housing.

A frequent concern was how the village should respond to proposals for major developments such as the recent application for change of use of Hangar 19. There was obvious disquiet at the way in which this had been handled, with respondents feeling they had been kept in the dark and that the wider implications of such a development had not been considered. At the outset, the developer sponsored public consultation meetings which, at the time, not many of the village were interested enough to attend, or else were inadequately informed about. Whichever it was, were this development to fail as work-live units and then become subject to an application to convert to residential use, and/or to prove a sighting shot for further development of other zones on the industrial site, then, from the results of this survey, the Parish Council might expect more organised community interest than occurred this time.

Several respondents referred to the importance of our surrounding green spaces (agricultural and amenity) as safeguards of Colerne’s rural character. The idea was mooted that a specific plan or set of principles be developed to help protect and manage these spaces and prevent incremental degradation by development.

A number of complex issues is raised by this collection of comments. They can be summarised in *“Five Questions”*:-

- 1 What should the stylistic principles be for new-build developments in Colerne?
- 2 Should there be a parish statement of principles for the further development of the industrial site at the south of the airfield -- whether for housing, industry or wind-farming?
- 3 Should such a statement of principles also address the “green” spaces around us that give the parish its rural character and be aimed at preserving that?
- 4 How should planning applications of any significant scale be publicised so that the community feels properly consulted?
- 5 What initiatives can be taken to secure more leverage over the narrow principles by which planning officers must make their decisions?<sup>3</sup>



## A WAY FORWARD

- Parish Council not only to progress the Village Design Statement already initiated by them but also to ensure that its remit runs wide enough to cover the questions focussed by this survey.
- For a document of this importance, consultation with and input from the community is essential.
- To undertake this an ad-hoc Task Force led from the Council but including non-Councillor volunteers may be appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> One reading of the Hanger 19 approval in September 2010 is that the planning decision had to be based on criteria that were too narrow for a development with the potential community-impact of this type. Merely to conclude “Well, that’s all that planning law allows” may not be a sustainable position. The effects of these decision-making processes had also been raised by the business community (see Section 6).

# 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

## 5i: Environmental and Ecological Challenges

Question 10 of the Household Questionnaire looked at eight “environmental” topics, ranging from reduction in light-pollution to more seating and post boxes, farmers markets, and recycling. These had been selected for detailed attention by the outcomes of our earlier informal enquiries. Respondents were asked to rank the changes suggested on a four-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

	Farmers Market (398)	Tetra Pak Recycling (380)	More Curbside Recycling (404)	Dog Mess Bins (370)	Reduction in Lighting (365)	More Seating (329)	Local Trade Exchange (293)	Post Box (350)
Agree	92%	86%	86%	73%	68%	57%	34%	32%
Disagree	8%	11%	14%	27%	32%	43%	66%	68%

The overall number of responses is given in brackets.

### Farmers’ Market

The strongest agreement-point here was in favour of an outlet (“farmers’ market”) for local low-food-mile produce. This topic also attracted strong support in the question exploring “new facilities” and is reported in detail there (page 18).

### Recycling

Recycling has an impact on all of us and 89% of our respondents wanted a local collection point for TetraPaks. The expansion of curbside collections to include cardboard and plastic also had a resounding approval of 86% of our replies. 24% of free-text comments mentioned a need for better facilities at the communal recycling centre. So we need to consider what else we can reasonably do, in particular having in mind the needs of those who are unable to get to the Household Recycling Centres.

Possibilities to consider:-

- A local ‘Link’- type organisation to help take rubbish to recycle centres.
- More availability of information on charities that will come and collect unwanted furniture - sofas, beds etc - for free
- Designated place for large-item skip or maybe a roving vehicle to take bulky waste?
- Swop shops -- tidy up days
- Electrical waste & electronic equipment drop off points (including batteries/light bulbs)
- New recycling locations, for example nearer to the Market Place or Village Hall.
- Additional information on Parish Council website ([www.Colerne-PC.gov.uk](http://www.Colerne-PC.gov.uk)) to signpost people to existing recycling resources.

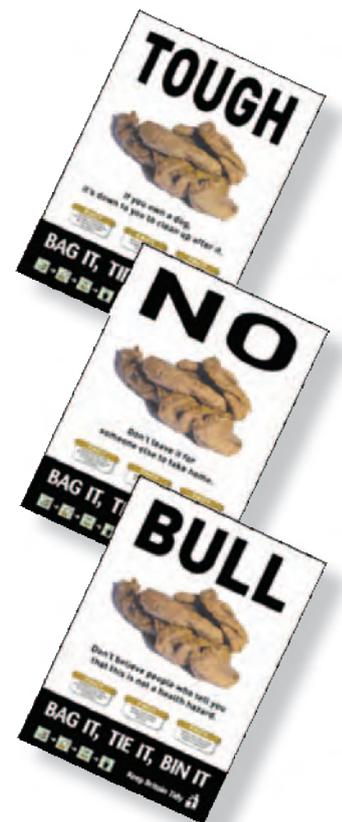
### Additional Dog Pooh Bins

The 2020Vision was meant to be about longer term strategic issues that will determine our quality-of-life in the village over the coming years. Despite scepticism by some members of the Steering Group as to whether fouling of the streets by dogs was a truly strategic issue, it was a subject that refused to go away and we are regrettably unable to complete this Report without a full discussion of the matter.

Sites where additional bins needed	
Everywhere	24
High Street	21
Old Road / Lucknam Park	15
Bath Road / The Firs	11
Thickwood to Colerne	9
Doncombe Lane/Camp area	8
Silver Street (bottom)	8
Market Place	6
Total	146

Given the interest in this issue, it is perhaps surprising that as many as 27% of our respondents disagreed that we need more dog pooh bins around the village. But this, of course, means that 73% thought we did. Particular locations for the problem were identified as High Street, Old Road/ Lucknam Park and Doncombe Lane, but the largest single response was that it was a general issue all around the village.

From our research, there is little doubt that greater consideration by dog-owners and more thoughtfully-sited dog bins would be a big help. Furthermore, other research has shown that people will clear up after their dogs if publicity shakes or shocks them into it. Here is the Keep Britain Tidy dog fouling poster campaign which reduced dog fouling by 40% .



Possibilities to consider:-

- Education -- poster campaign;
- Discussions with Lucknam Park/Euridge Farm regarding locating bins (both dog and general waste) along the Old Road. (Early feedback on sponsorship is encouraging, although the private landowners could take no responsibility for maintenance);
- The 'Poover' -- a moped which is used by some authorities. Although this may prove too expensive for our parish on its own, perhaps one shared between several villages could be an option;
- Park Spark which is a dog waste system which turns poo into energy -- methane digester [www.parksparkproject.com](http://www.parksparkproject.com);
- Enforce fines for regular and persistent offenders;
- Local activism--siting our own bins and organising collections (level of support for which would test the strength of feeling on this issue);
- Provision-points of free of charge bio degradable poo bags (or flushable ones).

To summarise, we can only say that this issue does seem to be one of widespread concern. Although it is far from new to the Parish Council, it might want to take a new look to ensure that all possible policies are being pursued.

### Reduction in Street Lighting after 1 a.m.

A reduction in street-lighting was seen as a positive move forward for the village with 68% responders agreeing to the proposition; but interestingly there was no overall agreement as to where reduction should take place. One-size-fits-all should not be our approach to the lighting cost and pollution issue. We have

several areas of concern regarding crime in the village, and some research has shown that well illuminated areas are less attractive to vandalism and crime.

In November 2010 a community consultation assessed attitudes towards a "switch off" of selected overnight street lights. There are safety regulations from Wiltshire Council which keep certain lights on. The consultation identified others regarded as important by the community. That left about 80 in all which were marked for experimental switch off between midnight and 8 a.m. The plan was approved by the Parish Council in January 2011 and went to Wiltshire Council for next consideration (February 2011).

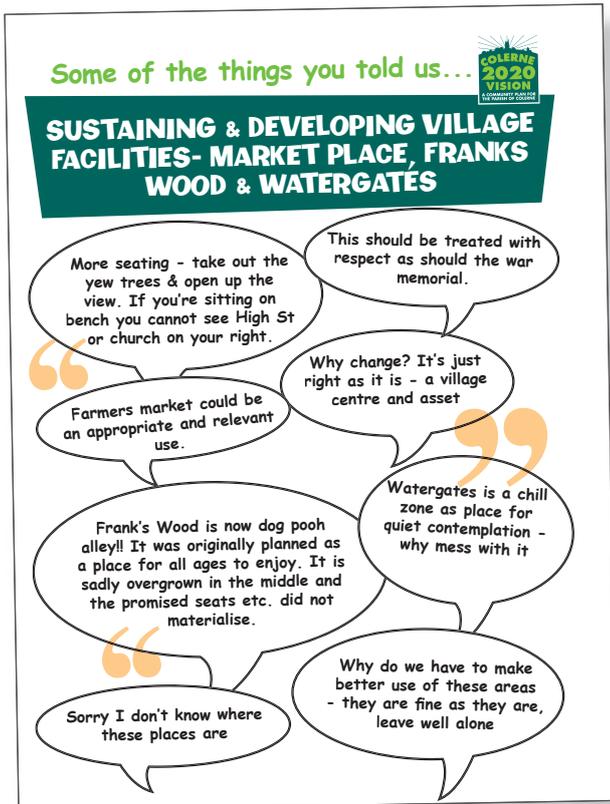
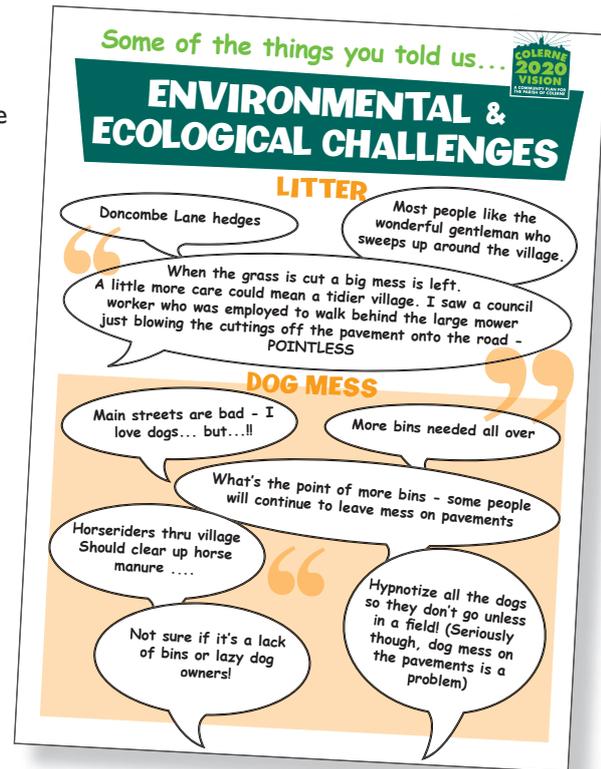
### Additional Public Seating

The idea of more public seating in the village yielded an even result, with 57% agreeing that we could do with more and 43% thinking that we were okay as we are. There were 55 specific suggestions and the top three were: 'any open spaces', Franks Wood, and The Rec.

The Rec was also suggested as an ideal place for picnic tables and this may well be an idea for further consideration.

### Encourage Local Trade

There was small support for a local trade exchange (32%). We think that the idea was not familiar to most people (and the Questionnaire did not offer any detailed explanation). However, it is possible that the 'Big Society' environment may suggest a further look at this again in the future.



## Additional Post Box

Thirty-two percent of the whole village agreed that there was a need for additional postbox collection points, while 68% disagreed. But after closer investigation of the replies from specific locations, we conclude that it is the Firs area of the village which has the greatest local need for an additional service, with 52% of respondents here supporting the idea. To move this forward a request from interested residents must be made to Royal Mail who investigate the need and give a decision in about 3 months.

## Any Other Environmental Improvements?

There were 61 free-text suggestions for other environmental improvements, which fell into two main categories.

First, litter and waste control around the village, e.g. repeat requests for additional locations for recycling points and dog poo bins, while 39% concerned litter and the need to keep the village looking clean and tidy, and/or maintaining its rural character. (Litter and the general tidiness of the village was the second most frequent concern of the Colerne schoolchildren, according to their survey.)

Possibilities to consider:-

- A review of the rota for our community handyman/warden, including both Thickwood and the Camp;
- Resident tidy-up week-end or days (as has worked well in other small-community locations);
- A campaign for a tidier village (along the lines of the Keep Britain Tidy poster campaigns);
- A village composting scheme;
- A plan for protection and management of Colerne’s green spaces and general rural amenity-value, to prevent incremental degradation by developments (see The Built Environment, page 20).

The second category was for ecological improvements such as carbon-reducing energy (solar and wind power), but opinions expressed did not polarise in quantity around any specific idea.

## Market Place as a Meeting Place

Respondents were asked how we could make better use of the triangle area at Market Place as a community asset. Twenty-eight percent wanted Market Place used as an occasional market. Only 7% wanted radical change, such as use as a car-park or traffic re-routing to make a one-way system island. The general read-out is that people want the area to be conducive to relaxing and enjoying a peaceful village centre which is still a strong community core. Thus, 56% of respondents wanted either no change at all or specific environmental improvements to enhance its character as a meeting place. Better planting, more trees, and better siting of seating and railings were mentioned, and could perhaps be reviewed by the Parish Council. To add a local-voluntary element, there may be scope for a parish competition for re-design; and for a Cotswold Warden team, or other team of volunteers, to help with implementation.

## Ideas on Other Common Areas (Franks Wood, Eastrip Lane, Watergates Well)

Respondents were asked to think about these “community” areas. No common views emerged. In fact a significant minority (16%) did not know where these areas were, or had no opinion. Thirty-six percent specified that there should be no changes to them at all. Otherwise comments ranged around things like tidying up, tree-pruning and better seating, with no single suggestion having outstanding statistical weight.

### A WAY FORWARD

- To identify potential new initiatives, Parish Council to consider survey findings on:
  - (a) recycling and other environmental initiatives;
  - (b) dog waste control;
- Parish Council to consider suggestions for additional public seating/picnic tables;
- Task Force (eColerne-led?) to further assess options for local trade/exchange (transitional town concept);
- Parish Council to review Plan suggestions for upgrading Market Place as a meeting place.



## 5: The Key Issues for Colerne

### 5j Community Websites

Some organisations and groups in the parish have websites, most of which are informative and kept up to date. Examples include:-

- Colerne School ([www.colerneschool.org.uk](http://www.colerneschool.org.uk)),
- St John the Baptist Church ([www.colerneparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.colerneparishchurch.org.uk)),
- Colerne RFC ([www.colerne-rfc.co.uk](http://www.colerne-rfc.co.uk)),
- the Parish Council ([www.colerne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk)).

For the last few years, there has also been a **Colerne community online bulletin board** ([www.colerne.net](http://www.colerne.net)), which comprises discussion boards and a calendar. People can post information and messages on different themed boards (e.g. 'announcements' or 'Azimghur Barracks'). The site has covered a range of topics but it seems to be used sporadically rather than regularly.

A site for the Colerne Parish Plan ([www.colerne2020vision.com](http://www.colerne2020vision.com)) was set up by the Steering Group in the autumn of 2009 to provide information about progress with the Plan. It also contains details about the village and links to other local websites.

From the Household Questionnaire we noted that 80% of respondents had access to broadband. Even if this reduces when extrapolated from respondents to the whole community, it still indicates a fairly high degree of 'e-linkage'. Secondly, even with all of the above websites in existence, there was strong feeling among respondents that a regularly updated village website was a must: 73% would like to see a Colerne website with events and information. A new or refreshed 'portal' website for the parish/community might meet this need. Care would have to be taken to ensure that it did not have a detrimental effect on the Parish Magazine which remains essential to many, especially those without internet access.

### A WAY FORWARD

- Rather than being discontinued now that the Plan is complete, the 'colerne2020vision' website is being developed so as to allow editing on a 'wiki' basis by members of the community. In due course, the site could:-
  - ⇒ serve as a 'portal' to other local websites (including the discussion forum, colerne.net);
  - ⇒ be usable by clubs and societies to share information and event-dates;
  - ⇒ carry a village events calendar that could work alongside the 'village diary' currently held at the post office (than which it may prove more effective in time);
  - ⇒ include information on the village, such as history, facilities, walks, demographics etc.
  - ⇒ display current news and weather information;
- It may be possible for the two general community sites (colerne2020vision and colerne.net) to be co-developed and publicised, with the latter providing special emphasis on discussion forums.

## 6 The Colerne Business Survey

It is obvious that there are businesses in the parish, but their extent is not so evident. A working party examined a range of primary sources, from which it produced a list of over *70 businesses functioning within the parish of Colerne*. The local economy is obviously greatly influenced by this significant group, and the owners of these businesses could have important views about how community developments affect their business. We therefore initiated a survey of the business community to identify specific issues that could affect the growth of business in the parish and also the wider community issues that have a bearing on the business scene. (Details of the survey are given in the *Dossier of Evidence*.)

The questionnaire was addressed to the owners of businesses that traded in Colerne, but not to business owners whose business was outside the parish. (These people, as individuals, would be covered by the Household Questionnaire, but their businesses, being elsewhere, would be unlikely to be affected by conditions in the parish of Colerne.) In December 2009 the questionnaire was delivered to 69 different business owners/representatives. Thirty business owners/representatives (43%) responded.

### Questionnaire Feedback and Business Network Meeting

Although most of the businesses advertise their contact points in a variety of ways, some wished not to have contact-details published so we are unable to publish a comprehensive list of known businesses in Colerne. However, several of the businesses expressed an interest in a meeting to hear about and discuss the Questionnaire results. Two meetings were held, attended by 17 business owners and managers.

As background the meetings discussed the changing character of business over the decades in the village. We noted that the number and range of specialist retail outlets have diminished over the years, e.g. loss of the butcher, cobbler, haberdasher etc. Set against the survey's identification of 70 businesses within the parish, it is clear that business activity has not necessarily declined, but its character and profile have changed. Technology accounts for this. Just as it was the motorcar, providing access to cheaper food at supermarket outlets, which led to the decline of specialist village stores, so it was the advent of broadband and desktop computing which was enabling a range of new businesses to spring up and operate from a relatively rural location like ours.

### Key Outcomes

The survey and discussions identified the following main issues which affect the conduct of business in Colerne and which might be capable of improvement:-

#### Traffic Management and Road Access

Current traffic management arrangements were seen as ad hoc, and control of traffic speeds around and in the village was irrational. Secondly, the maintenance of adequate road surfaces on all access routes is critical to the business (and social) community. Currently, road maintenance was rated as poor. This especially included winter gritting. This issue was one that featured in the (subsequent) household survey.

#### Village Business Signage

Because of the village "bypass", traffic is, fortunately, not compelled to drive right through the centre. But there is little to indicate that the village offers a range of business services and facilities to the passing traveller (e.g. shops, pubs, toilets etc). The installation of village signage on the bypass was considered desirable.

#### Post Office Services

The protection and promotion of the Post Office as a viable functioning unit was given a high priority by many of the small businesses (as it is to the social community).

#### Application of Planning Regulations

As the village is crucially dependent on certain specific services (e.g. shop, post office) we should ensure that the application of planning regulations does not restrict or even prevent socially-needed developments of these facilities. One local business manager had recently received support from the Parish Council for a business-enhancement project, but it was frustrated by opposition from the Listed Buildings Authority.

#### Broadband

The importance of good broadband service to the Business Community was stressed. Some geographic locations in the parish suffer from well below optimum capability. (This too was reflected in the results of the Household Questionnaire.)

## Local Business Audit

The audit of local business had revealed an impressive and unexpected quantity and spread of business activity. At both feedback meetings there was support for the idea that an ongoing “Colerne Business Network” should be established as a forum where local business people could meet to discuss matters of mutual interest.

# A WAY FORWARD

### Business Priorities

- Publicity to be given on an ongoing basis to the ‘use it or lose it’ principle by which the community must sustain the ‘High Street’ outlets vital to local business.
- Consider brown tourist signage to encourage “passing trade” for businesses and facilities.
- Consider how the Broadband service can be enhanced parish-wide.
- Consider creation of a business networking group to share information and collaborations between Colerne-based businesses; and to publicise the benefit to the community of its business sector.
- Networking group to consider a business directory of local businesses.

### Community issues of business relevance

- Traffic management and road access;
- Retention of Post Offices/services;
- The effects of planning regulations on business development.



# 7 An Action Plan

## Priority Actions

In the following tables PC = Colerne Parish Council; WC = Wiltshire Council; SG = members of the Colerne Community Plan Steering Group; Task Force = ad hoc project group led by PC.

Where no evidence is quoted, the proposal comes from SG deliberations, or individual Questionnaire respondent.

*In specific cases, outcomes may be advanced by working with the Corsham Community Area Network. This links the parishes of Colerne, Box, Corsham and Lacock, and, in matters of common interest, can help get greater leverage at Area Board and Unitary Council level.*

### ROAD ACCESS & SAFETY

Action	Lead	Support	Target Date	Progress	Evidence/Strength of feeling
Restrict weight and size of traffic using narrow lanes	PC				Very important for 84% + quite important for 13%
Better maintained roads throughout village	PC				Very important for 67% + quite important for 27%
Better maintenance of Doncombe Road / Hill	PC				Nearly one quarter highlighted this
Sustained maintenance of Tutton Hill				Drainage work and resurfaced autumn 2010	Nearly one sixth highlighted this
Reduce speed limit on High Street to 20mph	PC				Very important for 67% + quite important for 20%
Pedestrian crossing across C151 to school	PC				Very important for 61% + quite important for 28%
New pavement along C151 from the Rec to Silver Street	PC			PC is pursuing the possibility	Very important for 51% + quite important for 32%
Reduce speed limit on C151 from water tower to Thickwood	PC				Very important for 49% + quite important for 27%
Reduce Doncombe Lane speed limit from Camp to C151	PC				Very important for 48% + quite important for 32%
Better maintained pavements throughout village	PC				Very important for 41% + quite important for 46%
Improvements to pavement from village to camp	PC				Nearly one quarter highlighted this

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CAR PARKING

Contacts with Wiltshire Council to monitor subsidy status of 228 service.	PC		ongoing	Jan '11: subsidy forecast to remain	
Talk with Faresaver managers to discuss Plan results, how service could be improved	PC		Apr '11		Up to 88% would use buses more often with service improvements
Develop a contingency plan for community transport	PC	Task Force	Jul '11		
Review of Car Parking: re-assess car parking issues and solutions	PC	Task Force		Review commissioned by PC Feb '11	50% gave suggestions
Develop 'School Run' Code:	Colerne Primary School	FRESCO, Wiltshire Police, PC, BRAKE	Spring '11	In development	School Survey
Additional 'overspill' parking area at Rec	PC				

### NEW FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Improve speed of broadband connections across the Parish	Business Network	PC Task Force			80% of respondents said they had broadband. 85% of these would like better broadband speed (38% essential)
'Brown signage' to advertise village facilities on C151	Business Network	PC		Under assessment	Business network priority



## COMMUNICATIONS

Action	Lead	Support	Target Date	Progress	Evidence/Strength of feeling
Programme for better PC/Community communication and consultation:-	PC		a.s.a.p.		84% would like to know more about what the PC does; 59% felt the PC does not publicise its decisions and activities well.
⇒ New media / improve Notice Boards	PC	Task Force			
⇒ New communications design and copywriting	PC	Task Force			
⇒ Initiation of PC-led public meetings in event of major issues	PC				
⇒ PC-led Task Force method to research/develop major issues	PC				
⇒ Trial regular PC Surgeries	PC	Residents			80% think this is a good idea (31%, definitely)
Colerne Business Network	SG	Business Community		Follow-up meeting late Spring '11	Advocated by SG Business Network meetings
Parish Websites: development of Plan website as a Colerne portal	SG	colerne.net		Initial design and discussions commenced	73% respondents want a new/better Colerne information website
Sustain and develop Parish Magazine	Friends of St.John			Ongoing	83% strong approval

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Develop a Village Design Statement to address 'The Five Questions' raised by the Household Questionnaire results	PC	Task Force		Commenced	Many comments re lack of consistent development standards and inadequate local consultations
Assessment of developments against parish development principles	PC			Outcome from above	80% think number of houses in the Parish is about right

## ENVIRONMENT

Recycling: facilities for cartons (and 'Other Ideas')	PC	eColerne?			89% approval
More curbside recycling	WC				86% approval
Dog waste control: new bins (and 'Other Ideas')	PC				73% approval
Trial reduction in street lighting	PC/WC			Assessment in progress	68% approval
Provide more public seating / picnic tables	PC	Private sponsorship?			57% approval
Market Place upgrade as meeting place	PC	Task Force			Majority want area conducive to relaxing/enjoying village centre. 56% wanted either no change or improved planting/trees, seating and railings.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Action	Key players	Progress
Use them or lose them!	All residents!! / concerned businesses / Business Network	
Follow up suggestions from Questionnaire responses for business/facilities improvements	Business/facility owners, managers and service providers	Dailies fresh vegetable and meat products range Costcutter resuming plans for enhanced shop facilities; Parish Church Council survey; and plan a further survey relating to the Churchyard; Recommitment by Lucknam Park Hotel to generate more local business for its brasserie and spa;
Cafe/coffee shop and Local produce retail outlet	Potential investors to review survey findings	
Film Club		Village Hall committee has commenced a 'film night' trial
Set up a farmers market	PC [TF] / interest group / local suppliers to review survey findings	
Options for greater police presence	PC	
Reinvigorate neighbourhood watch schemes	Residents/Police	



COMMUNICATIONS		
Action	Key players	Progress
Policies/ideas to protect/sustain Post Office service -- key facility for business & community	PC / All residents / Business community	
New Post Box - The Firs	Local residents	
Better use of the village diary	Events secretaries	
SUSTAIN AND DEVELOP COMMUNITY SPIRIT		
Enhanced support for the range of village clubs, events and activities	All residents	
Ensure openness of clubs and societies	Club and society leaders to be alert for problem; and to angle event publicity to welcome new members.	
Enhance Camp/Village interaction (a) Camp as venue for community events? (b) Use of camp facilities (sports/pool/social)	Events organisers Councillor reviewing community sports facilities	Colerne Football Club interest. Cricket Club possibilities?
SAFETY & SECURITY		
Special review of incidence of vandalism, burglary, anti-social behaviour etc	PC led Task Force, to assess scale of problems/ possible solutions	Of some or strong concern to 45%+ of respondents. Research needed to assess relative incidence in Colerne.

<b>OTHER IDEAS FROM THE CONSULTATION</b>	
SUSTAIN AND DEVELOP COMMUNITY SPIRIT	
Action	Progress
More people, particularly new residents, to become involved with the running of events	
Newcomers welcome pack similar to the one provided by the welfare office at the Camp	In progress
Develop ways to draw in the outer areas of the Parish, such as Thickwood and Pinewood	
FACILITIES AND SERVICES	
Picnic tables at the Rec	
Explore local trade exchange idea (34% indicated approval).	
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
Qualities that should be mandatory for new-builds (environmental standards, own parking, or affordability)	Village Design Statement
ENVIRONMENT – RECYCLING	
A local 'Link'- type organisation to take rubbish to recycle centres. Information on charities that collect unwanted furniture Designated place for large-item skip or a roving vehicle that will take bulky waste Swap shops – tidy up days Electrical waste & electronic equipment drop off points (including batteries/light bulbs) New recycling locations, for example nearer to the Market Place or Village Hall. Additional information on PC website to signpost existing recycling resources.	
ENVIRONMENT – DOG MESS	
Education – poster campaign; Discussions with Lucknam Park/Euridge Farm to locate bins along the Old Road; The 'Poover' – a moped-disposer, perhaps shared between several villages; Park Spark, a dog waste system which turns poo into energy – methane digester; Enforced fines for persistent offenders; Local activism – siting our own bins and organising collections; Provision-points of free bio-degradable or flushable poo bags	

## 8 Some Final Thoughts

First of all, if you were able to participate in any of the survey work that lay behind the Plan, we wish to express our appreciation and thanks.

While the Plan necessarily dwells on “issues” and on improvements, let’s not forget that our community has many more strengths than weaknesses. Your responses throughout have shown that, overall, we have a village that we are proud of and that we wish to preserve. We have a demographic balance and a range of community and commercial services which compare most favourably with other rural communities, many of whom are are grappling with serious imbalances or have lost such facilities altogether.

But the preservation of these qualities of local life demands input from us all; and, often, we are already very busy with jobs, maybe a daily commute to work elsewhere, with family life and with personal commitments. The number of people with time and residual energy to move community ideas further forward can be limited.

In these “Big Society” days, when Whitehall is requiring more local activism, this problem intensifies. For a long time, when faced with this that or the other community problem, it has been possible to expect that “They” -- someone else -- will do something about it; and often “They” have responded. That is less likely today when, increasingly, “They” is “Us”.

To help move things forward, we may need to be ready to provide that element of personal participation. Whether it’s helping to launch new initiatives, joining project teams to move an idea forward, helping run clubs and societies, charity volunteering, involvement in Council affairs ..... whatever it is, “They” may not be able to do it, “We” may have to. And if we don’t, that could do more damage to Colerne over the next five or 10 years than any building development, car parking problem or shop closure will.

Several of the ideas reported in the Plan would entail costs if implemented. In many cases those costs would have to be met from a Parish Council or Wiltshire Council budget. Our Parish Council commissioned this Plan to identify and prioritise projects considered important by the community, and we hope the finished Plan will assist the Council in balancing new and existing ideas within the available budgets.

Some of the things you told us... 

### CLOSING COMMENTS

(or: You can't please all the people all the time!)

**! WE DON'T NEED ALL THIS VISION RUBBISH DECIDED DOWN THE PUB BY NON-COLERNE PEOPLE !**

Thank you for the opportunity to give our views

We do not need a community vision - what changes do we actually need?

We need a positive attitude to the future - of which this survey is a great example

“ We are all very fortunate to live in a charming & pleasant village/parish - we should be grateful

“ The community are lucky to have such an active village.

Yes we have lost most of the shops but that has happened all over the country.

Keep it calm and safe. It's a lovely place to live

I have lived in Colerne for over 40 yrs... the village has evolved over this time.

The village has done well and generally the community are lucky to have such an active village.

We love living here and would be happy if things stayed just as they are over the next 10 years.



These are practical problems for the future. Right now we can take heart. First, from the commitment you have shown by your participation in this project. We've had no shortage of inputs, ideas and interest in the main theme -- the protection and careful development of the parish of Colerne. And, second, from the encouraging fact that several of the ideas that this Plan has generated are already up and running -- the film nights, the Council newsletter, wider use of facilities at the Camp, the School Run Safety Code, initiatives to distribute local produce ..... and others.

This is already a manifestation of the spirit of participation from those who have so far been able to get involved. Now we need to build on this. When we hear the call (as we surely will) "**Your Community Needs You!**", let those of us who are able create the time and apply the enthusiasm to respond. Be assured that the preservation of the great things in our community can be wonderfully rewarding!

## Contact Details:

For further information about this Colerne Community Plan, its findings or recommendations, or to provide your comments, or to request a copy of the Dossier of Evidence, please contact:

- [admin@colerne2020vision.com](mailto:admin@colerne2020vision.com)
- Robert Jones, Steering Group Chairman: phone 01225 743444: [rhjones@btinternet.com](mailto:rhjones@btinternet.com)
- Glenys Gill, Clerk to Colerne Parish Council on 01225 742207: [www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/contact-us](http://www.colerne-pc.gov.uk/contact-us)
- or visit the Community Plan website:

[www.colerne2020vision.com](http://www.colerne2020vision.com)





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