

Church of  
**Saint Margaret  
of Antioch**  
of Wellow

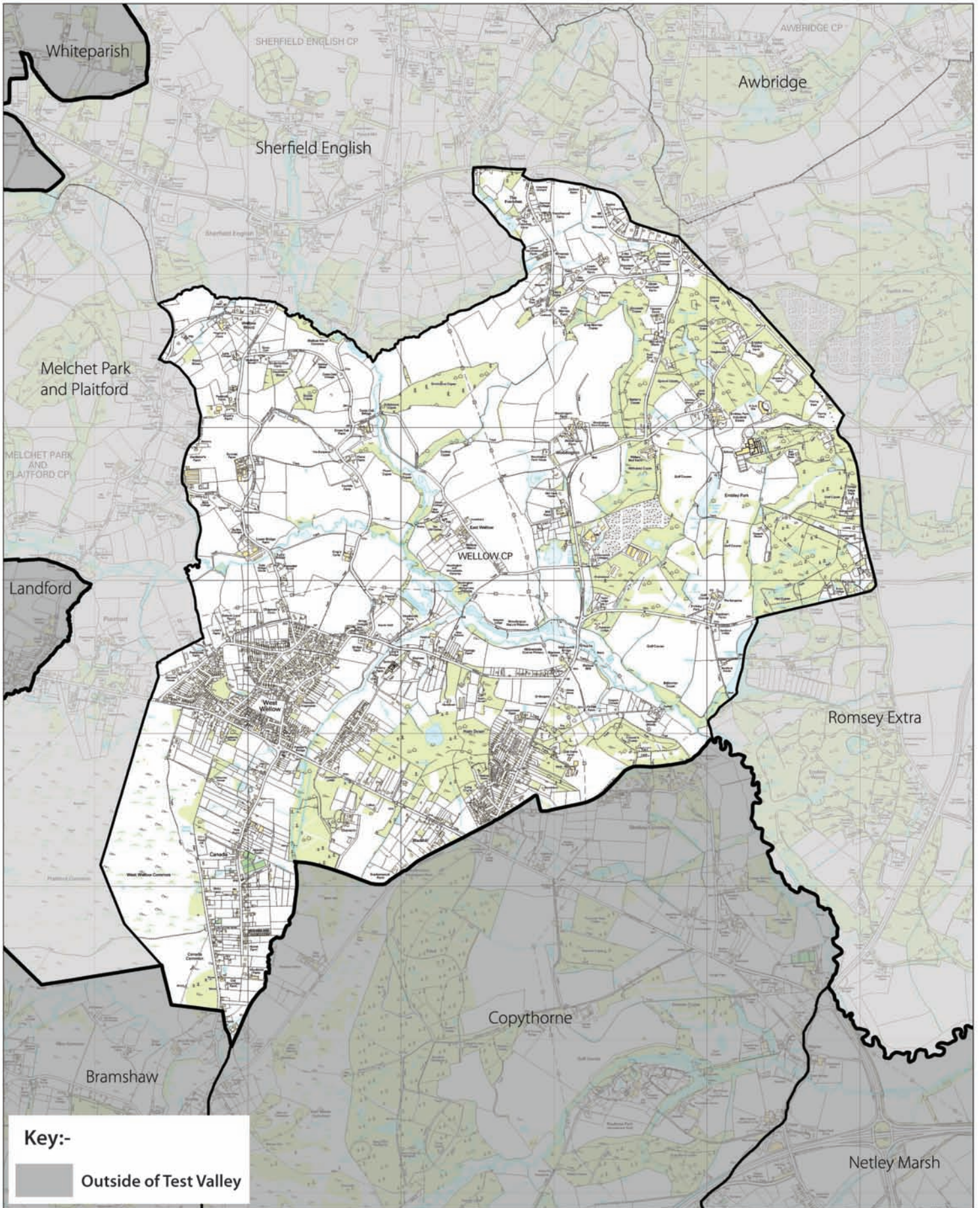
**SUNDAY SERVICES**

10.30	HOLY COMMUNION
11.00	FAMILY SERVICE
11.30	SUNDAY EUCHARIST
12.00	MAZONS
12.30	REFRESHMENT & HEALING

WELLOW, HAMPSHIRE

**PARISH PLAN  
FOR WELLOW  
HAMPSHIRE  
2010**

# Parish of Wellow



Key:-

Outside of Test Valley

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# WELLOW PARISH PLAN

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“Thanks must go to all those involved with this project – trying to preserve village life and surroundings is a constant uphill slog; one we must all involve ourselves in. Again – **thank you.**”



Open Day display – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009

“**Congratulations** on an excellent display – well worth all the hard work in its preparation – much appreciated.”



# The Wellow Parish Plan

## Introduction

Parish Plans are initiatives supported by the Government in which residents can express their views on how they wish to see their communities develop. They are designed to reflect the wishes of all sections of the community and as a result should prove useful to local authorities and other agencies when they are planning their future service provision.

Therefore our Parish Plan is designed to -

- Provide the residents of Wellow with the opportunity to highlight the good things and negative issues which affect life in the Parish
- Influence and inform the actions of the Parish Council, Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), Hampshire County Council (HCC) and other agencies
- Identify community needs and thereby enable the Parish Council and other bodies to plan and prioritise their actions and resources
- Provide a voice for the community
- Develop a sense of community spirit by encouraging people to become involved in local issues
- Obtain funding for projects by demonstrating a proven need within the community

The Parish Plan has been prepared at the same time as the Village Design Statement (VDS). This is different from a Parish Plan in that it seeks to identify those special characteristics that residents value in the buildings and surroundings of the Parish. It focuses on buildings and their design, hedges, footpaths and other spatial aspects and provides guidance on any future development. Whilst a VDS cannot prevent development happening, it should, once adopted by the local authority, be used to influence future developers and the planning authorities to ensure that any new development respects and reflects the local character of the Parish.

Residents are therefore advised to read this document in conjunction with the VDS as, whilst there may be comments and recommendations expressed here in relation to planning and development issues, there will also be specific guidelines contained in that document.

The Parish Plan is intended to provide guidelines for influencing the work of the Parish Council and other agencies over a number of years. The action plan contained at the end of this document contains a number of recommended action points for the Parish Council to take forward, along with other individuals and groups within the Parish, or with other service providers and statutory bodies.

It is important that the Parish Plan is seen as an ongoing and evolving document, and it is recommended that the action points contained within it be subject to review every year so as to take account of changing circumstances as appropriate.

## Background to the Plan

The proposal to produce a Parish Plan was put forward by the Parish Council in July 2007 at a meeting in the village hall and subsequently a steering committee of local residents volunteered to oversee the process. In September 2007 the steering committee agreed to include the preparation of a Village Design Statement in its project.

Since that time a total of three exhibitions and Open Days have been held at which residents have been able to register their thoughts about living in Wellow, both positive and negative, and



make suggestions for improvement. All comments made have been collected and recorded. A survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire, which, with the help of volunteers, was distributed to all households within the Parish during October 2008. A total of 674 questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 53%. The respondents to the questionnaire reflected a good balance of age and gender across the community with the majority having lived in the Parish for more than fifteen years. The vast majority view Wellow as a good place to live and appreciate its rural setting and its proximity to the New Forest National Park (NFNP). The comments expressed generally provide clear majorities and unambiguous views on many of the topics covered and have allowed for many of our recommendations to flow naturally without any need for further consultations.

The content of this Parish Plan broadly follows the findings of our questionnaire and where appropriate, these are tabulated, as are the recommended action points.

## General Information

The Parish is situated some four miles to the west of Romsey. It is bounded roughly by two major highways, the A27 at its northern edge and the A36 to the south, and lies approximately halfway between the major cities of Salisbury and Southampton. It is also traversed by the valley of the River Blackwater which rises to the north west of the parish and flows south east to join the River Test at Testwood.

A more recent change has been the inauguration of the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and the inclusion of part of the Parish within its boundary. The Countryside Agency's approach to defining National Park boundaries included the recommendation that villages should not be cut in two by a National Park boundary. However, the final plan revealed that only part of Wellow was to be included.



*Wellow Common*

When the National Park was inaugurated in 2006 the eventual boundary used followed the line of the A36 road through the Parish and included within the Park all the properties and land to the south of that road. The Parish is therefore now answerable to two different planning authorities (TVBC and NFNPA) and residents' queries as to why the boundary did not follow the natural boundary of the River Blackwater as originally proposed have remained unanswered.

Even though the population has more than doubled in the last 50 years, the Parish is still very rural in character, with wide views of open farmland and areas of woodland. These characteristics, together with the proximity to the National Park, are highly valued by local



*Pinn's Farm Granary*

residents and are cited as major reasons for choosing to live in the area. The Parish also contains more than 45 listed historic buildings, particularly farmhouses and cottages. These provide part of the character of the Parish and it is to be hoped that every encouragement will be given to their owners to preserve them for future generations to enjoy.

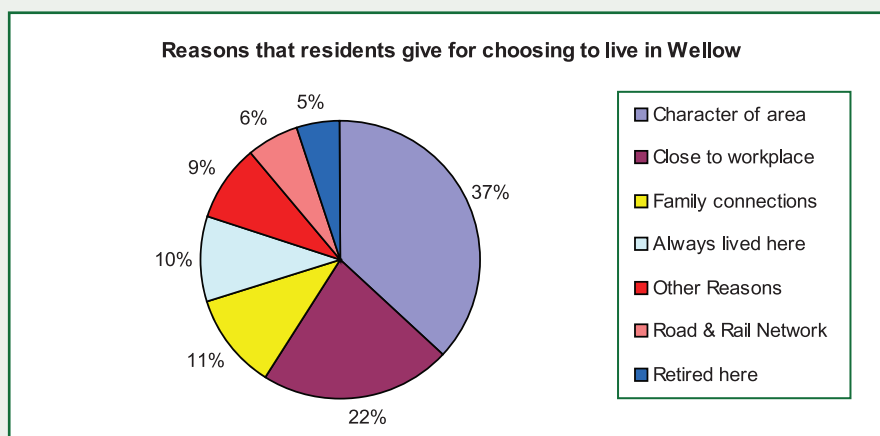
The age and gender of the inhabitants of the 674 households that returned our questionnaire is as follows:

	Male	Female	% in age group
Under 5 yrs	23	17	2.5
5 – 10 yrs	33	36	4.4
11 – 16 yrs	49	58	6.7
17 – 25 yrs	59	59	7.4
26 – 65 yrs	399	460	54.0
over 65 yrs	193	204	25.0
Total	756	834	100.0

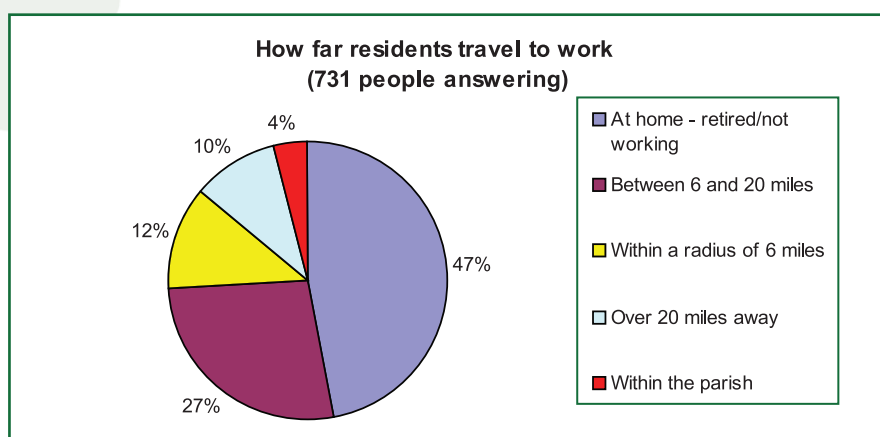
In the 2001 national census 28.2% of the population was aged up to 25 and 17% were aged over 65. It is not clear whether there has been a genuine change in age structure since 2001, or whether the 2008 figures reflect a bias in the return of questionnaires.

61% of respondents have lived in the Parish for more than fifteen years, 24% for between five and fifteen years and 15% for less than five years.

The character of the area was the most important aspect highlighted by residents choosing to live here.



Whilst the scale of farming has diminished locally as it has nationally, the employment pattern of residents has also changed. Many people have been attracted to the Parish by its rural nature and easy access to the road and rail network. This allows many people to work some distance away from their home whilst at the same time enjoying the special nature of the surrounding countryside.



This willingness to commute is also demonstrated by the level of car ownership within the Parish. The vast majority of residents are car owners with some 53% of households owning two cars and nearly 20% three or more cars.

Many have chosen the Parish as a place to retire to but many younger families have been drawn to the area by the good reputation of the local schools.

## Local Amenities

The Parish is well served by some local services and shops in West Wellow, including amongst others:

- Post Office and post collection boxes
- Newsagent
- Pharmacy
- Convenience Store
- Weekly Doctors' Surgery in Village Hall
- Petrol Station
- Schools
- Butcher
- Ice Cream Parlour/Tea Room
- Mobile Police Van at Village Hall
- Pre-School
- Pubs
- Hardware Store
- Blood Donor Service at Village Hall
- Mobile Library Service
- Hairdresser
- Beautician
- Restaurant

Whilst all these services are highly valued by residents, without doubt the most important is our local Post Office, which had the highest score with over 84% of respondents highlighting that service.

***“My favourite place in Wellow is the Post Office because it is very handy for me and my family. Furthermore, I think Wellow is now a much better place all thanks to the great people of Wellow Post Office.”***

Pupil at Wellow Primary School 2008

It is clear that, in common with other rural areas, the provision of a local Post Office service is highly regarded and it is the strong wish of residents that this service be protected and maintained.

Residents were also asked to identify a service for the Parish that was not currently available. Whilst there are farm shops in neighbouring parishes it is interesting to note that this type of facility was the one receiving the most support with over 27% of those answering this question in agreement. Therefore it is assumed that should an application for such a facility be forthcoming then it would be received positively.

However one important issue raised by local shopkeepers is the lack of signposting, which results in many people travelling through the area being unaware of the shops' existence. The provision of better signage would certainly improve the situation and help guarantee the future of these businesses.

Another concern relates to the adequacy of parking around local shops, particularly in Lower Common Road. Should a solution to this issue be possible at a future date this would be welcomed.

### **ACTION**

- All public bodies, representatives and residents, to do their utmost to ensure the continued presence of the Post Office within the Parish
- The Highways Agency, to provide clear signage on the A36 indicating the location of the local shops in Lower Common Road
- Hampshire County Highways to examine the issue of parking within the vicinity of the local shops in Lower Common Road



## Health

Most Wellow residents are registered at one of the doctors' surgeries in Romsey, Whiteparish and Totton, and would normally travel there to attend a surgery; however, two practices hold brief weekly surgeries in a dedicated room at the village hall. The provision of this service is rated important by 40% of respondents to our survey.

## Emergency services

Happily, the number of times that the emergency services are required is not great. In the questionnaire parishioners were asked the number of times they had called the emergency services during the previous twelve months plus whether they were satisfied with the speed of response and the quality of the service.

- The Fire Service was called out 5 times and there were no complaints about the service.
- The Ambulance Service was called upon 75 times with 8 complaints relating to the speed of response and 4 with the quality of service.
- The Police were also called out 75 times but in this instance there were 33 (44%) complaints relating to speed of response and 24 complaints (32%) relating to service quality.

Whilst no action has been taken to discover the precise nature of any complaints, the individual emergency services themselves may wish to follow up these findings to make any improvements as required. During recent months the Police Service have maintained a positive liaison with the Parish Council and have been in regular attendance within the parish.

## Neighbourhood Watch

There are 160,000 active Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Britain covering more than six million households - some 25% of all homes.



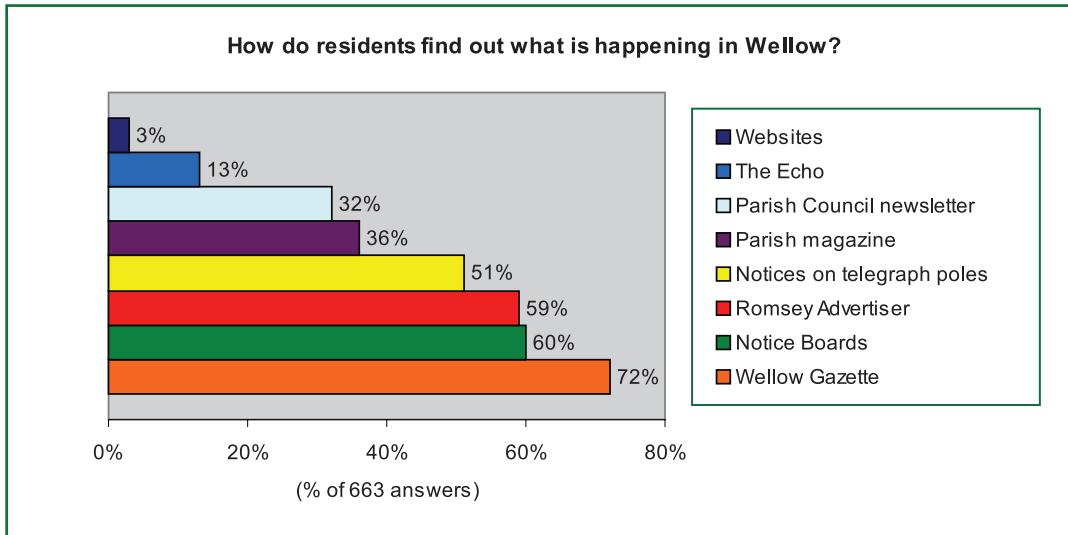
Wellow has one of the best functioning Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the wider locality. The village is divided into 17 linked areas, cared for by a link co-ordinator. The number of homes in each area ranges from a small group such as Reeves Close to long roads such as Canada Road and Romsey Road, dependent on the fitness and spare time available of the co-ordinator. The job can be whatever the neighbourhood group wants it to be. Some groups just want information delivered, others have developed a sociable pattern of coffee mornings each month and bigger regular events three or four times a year. New residents are always welcomed and encouraged to join in. Folk tend to watch each other's properties at holiday times and report to the police if there are any problems.

Co-ordinators meet three times a year, sometimes with police representatives in order to receive updates on new policies, changes to policing areas or responsibilities. Sometimes the meeting just involves the Wellow Link group reporting any issues that have occurred.

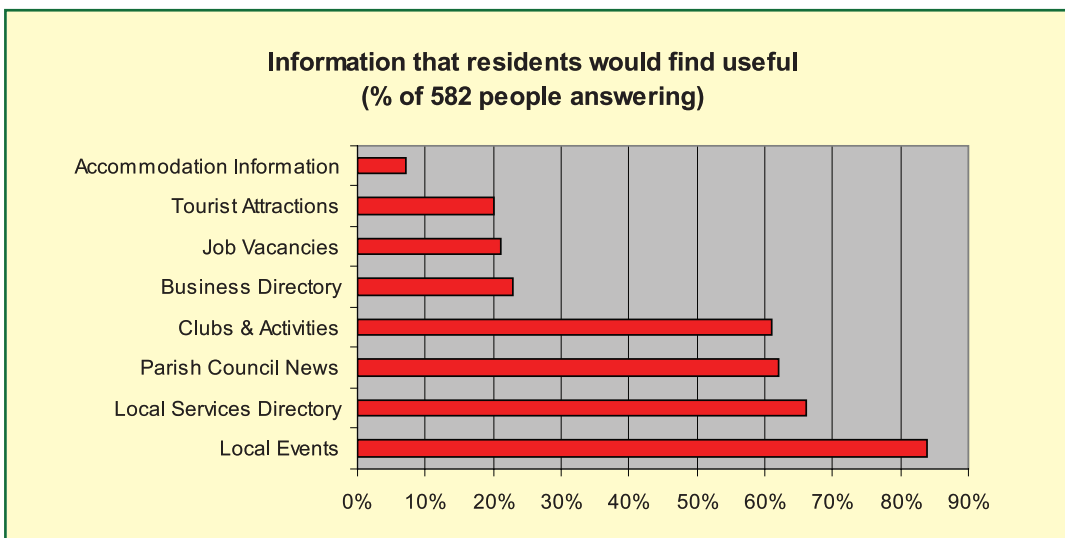
## Communication within the Parish

Residents receive information on events within the Parish in a number of ways ranging from the local newspaper, through to the Parish notice boards and notices placed on telegraph poles.

There are a number of **notice boards** situated throughout the Parish, though the results of the survey revealed that very few people looked at them on a regular basis. The majority looked at them occasionally (64%) whilst some 17% of people answering the question said they never looked at them at all.



Residents were also asked to specify the type of information they would find useful. In a well-answered return the largest vote went to information on local events, followed closely by the availability of local services, clubs and social activities and Parish Council news.



The issue of providing information for new residents was also raised with some 90% of those answering (569) saying 'yes' there should be such information available to new residents.

### ACTION

The Parish Council to investigate, with parish groups and residents, the introduction of an 'information sheet' for new residents of Wellow, which would provide information on the Parish and the facilities available within it.

## The Parish Council

The Parish Council is the statutory body responsible for the administration of the Parish at first tier level. It is made up of eleven members (unpaid), each elected for a term of four years and is funded via an annual precept on the council tax collected by TVBC. At present two of these councillors have also been elected to serve on TVBC.

The Council carries out a wide range of functions including the consideration of planning applications within the Parish that are submitted to TVBC or the NFNP Authority. It meets every month, with an Annual Parish Meeting held each year in April or May.

The Parish Council has established committees to help carry out its work which include Policy & Finance and Planning. Such meetings are open to the public, who may speak and raise their concerns at the beginning of each meeting.

The Council publicises its activities in various ways including official notice boards, a Parish Council newsletter and via the local press. The Council also has its own website although it is felt that this has not been utilised to its full potential. This issue was raised in our questionnaire and in answer to the question "Do you have access to the internet?" some 81% of those answering said 'yes' and in addition, in answer to the question "Would you access a parish website for information?" a total of 68% said 'yes' they would.

In answer to the more general question "How well does the Parish Council publicise its activities?" 50% of those answering thought that this was adequate. However, there was a significant minority (31%) who thought it was poor. This factor was also mirrored in residents' knowledge of their Parish Councillors. Whilst just over 50% of those answering our questionnaire said they knew who their Councillors were and how to contact them, a large number did not. A total of 42% of respondents did not know who their councillors are and some 36% did not know how to make contact with them. An improved Parish website would therefore be able to rectify this situation and the Council has already taken steps to improve its website and remedy this problem.

### **ACTION**

The Parish Council complete the task of improving and maintaining its website as soon as possible and take steps to resurrect a regular Parish Council Newsletter.

## Community and Leisure Facilities

### Village Hall

For many years the social centre of the village was provided by a Reading Room, erected in 1898 with support from Mr A. Coats of Embley, and situated beside the junction of Buttons Lane with Romsey Road. This wooden structure was replaced by the present Village Hall in 1980, built with support of grants and local donations, on land donated by the Locke family and has been refurbished in recent years.

The village hall is the most widely used facility in the Parish for social and leisure activities. These activities range from badminton, keep fit classes, short mat bowls, a lunch club for seniors and a toddlers' play group to meetings of local groups like the WI and the Wellow History Society. The hall is owned by a charitable trust and managed by a Committee of Trustees, independent of the Parish Council.

Parishioners were asked whether they thought any further improvements were required at this or any other indoor communal venue. All responses received related to the village hall, with the vast majority in favour of improvements to the car park area, particularly improvements to the lighting of the car park at night. A list of all suggestions is available for the Village Hall Committee to consider as part of any improvement programme.

The Parish Council has recently opened its office in an annexe to the hall, designed to make the Council more accessible to residents.

### **ACTION**

The Village Hall Committee to examine the list of further suggested improvements to the village hall.

## **Scout Hut**

The Wellow Scout Group building, located in Canada Road, is on land originally leased from Eastlands House for the past forty or fifty years. Up until the late 1970s, it consisted solely of a small wooden hut some 10 metres by 7 metres, which was more than enough for the small Cub Scout pack and the small Scout troop. In the mid 1970s, a brick extension was added at the rear of the wooden hut to provide toilets, a kitchen and storerooms.

In the late 1970s, the Scout Group was offered the former West End Church Hall, providing it was removed from its site within 2 weeks. This feat was achieved using help from many Scout parents. Over the next year, the building was rebuilt in the position it now occupies. This provided a 28 metre long hall, which was sufficient to cater for the expanding Group with Beaver Scouts, two Cub Scout packs and two Scout troops as well as a Venture Scout unit. The new hut was originally built of wood, and, as funds became available, the roof was tiled and the original external wooden wall replaced with brickwork.

Over the subsequent years, there have been other internal improvements as well as the construction of a separate Venture Scout hut at the rear which is now used by the county-wide Hampshire Scout Expeditions group as its equipment store hut following the transfer of the Venture Scout unit to Romsey District.

## **Clubs and Societies**

There is a wide range of clubs and societies within the Parish. These include the Royal British Legion, Scouts and Guides, Keep Fit Groups, Local History Society, Lace Making, Painting, Short Mat Bowls, a Spinners Group, the W.I. and several others.

Many people are also involved in activities associated with their church. In fact there are a total of six churches within Wellow – all well supported by their parishioners. The Parish Church of St. Margaret of Antioch in East Wellow is well known internationally as the burial place of Florence Nightingale and receives many visitors each year. In addition to this church many attend the regular services at the three Methodist Chapels at Maurys Lane, Canada Common or Wellow Wood, together with the Pentecostal Community Church at Canada Corner or the Gospel Chapel in Canada Road.

## **Sports and Recreation**

Wellow is particularly fortunate in that it has two large well-used recreational areas providing a wide range of leisure and sporting opportunities; both are owned and managed for the village by the Parish Council. The Recreation ground in Lower Common Road is the older of the two areas and houses a children's playground, hard court for basketball, a small football pitch. In the centre is the cricket pitch and pavilion, home to the very active Wellow and Plaitford Cricket Club for adults, but complete with its large (mixed) junior section of six teams for ages between 7 and 18 years. This vibrant group is active all year round with winter training arranged at nearby indoor arenas.



Much of the summer youth training for cricket takes place at the Hatches Farm sports ground on Romsey Road – a large multi-sport area, again with its own pavilion (complete with changing rooms and a meeting room), as well as another Club House belonging to the privately run Wellow Tennis Club. There is a proposal currently under discussion, for the latter to manage two “pay as you go” courts for public use, on behalf of the Parish Council.

This sports area is also home to the Wellow Football Club (adults) and its newly formed and enthusiastically supported junior section. The Wellow Youth Football Club is proving very popular; run and managed by village parents, it at present musters four teams for children from 7 to 18 years of age, with year round training. Around the periphery of the sports ground is the recently appointed Fitness Trail, comprising some nine stations for use by all ages but predominantly for those who do not otherwise engage in any formal exercise. Adjacent to Hatches Sports Ground is the privately run Wellow Soccer Academy which provides football coaching to children both regularly and by way of school holiday courses.

Popular outdoor pursuits that take advantage of the New Forest and adjacent areas include cycling, walking (including Weekly Health Walks, an initiative of Test Valley Borough Council, led by Parish residents), and horse riding. Hursley Pony Club is very active with children and young adults in and around Wellow; it organises hacks onto the New Forest at Canada Common, Prince Philip Cup Training and also Dressage Training in conjunction with local stables. The Club helps to prepare children for the Tetrathlon, including training in shooting and running. Much of the road experience on horseback is practised in and around Wellow where the speed of traffic is of great concern, particularly the 60 mph limit on Woodington Road. Along the stretches of the Blackwater River there are several fisheries and also fishing clubs at three other sites. Wellow has a Fitness Centre and its own Golf Club on Ryedown Lane and there are other golf clubs nearby.

Surprisingly our survey showed a mixed response to the provision of sports and leisure facilities within the Parish. There was general satisfaction with facilities for adults and the elderly but not for other age groups, particularly young adults. A total of 33% of respondents were of the opinion that leisure facilities for young adults in general were poor, with ratings specifically for sporting activities also poor at 24%. What was also surprising was the number of respondents who did not have any opinion as to whether such facilities were good or poor.

A question was also asked relating to desired improvements and additions to recreational activities. This brought a large response including proposals for a squash court, swimming pool, youth club, and bowling green to name but a few. However, there is particular anxiety over the poor state of the existing pavilion and playground at the recreation ground in Lower Common Road. These concerns are being actively addressed by the Parish Council at the present time. There were many requests for an all weather surface area (preferably covered) at Hatches Farm with the addition of floodlights for the Hatches Farm ground and tennis courts. The provision of a covered area would be a major asset and provide a venue for basketball, netball and evening and year round training opportunities, particularly during long wet winters. Interestingly requests were also made for activities that currently exist, which leads one to the view that publicity needs to be given to all the current activities both by the clubs themselves and the Parish Council.

### **ACTION**

The Parish Council to

- Complete their plans for the recreation ground in Lower Common Road, including the replacement of the pavilion and playground, so as to create a focal point for the village.
- Examine the feasibility of meeting some of the sporting and leisure wishes as expressed by residents through the survey.

## **Environment and Landscape**

Whilst the population of Wellow has doubled over the past 50 years the Parish still maintains and values its rural character. In the Survey over 90% stated that the rural environment is important to them and over 85% regard the proximity to the NFNP as of importance.

Part of the Parish lies within the boundary of the National Park, which follows the line of the A36 on its south-western side. Within the Park sits the hamlet of Canada together with Wellow Common. Over 71% of residents considered it important that part of our Parish lies within the National Park. This was further highlighted by over 90% of respondents who believed that the planning authority should pay particular attention to this when considering planning applications within the Parish.

In 1959 The Nature Conservancy and Forestry Commission agreed that the New Forest's "important nature reserve status" should be recognised because it included very rare lowland heath, mires, ancient pasture woodland and riparian and bog woodland. Extensions to the initial areas took place in 1974, 1979 and 1987. West Wellow Common was listed in the English Nature document "Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

West Wellow Common, owned by the Parish, and managed by the Parish Council, also forms part of an area designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Directive 79/409EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EC Directive 92/43EC on Natural Habitats, and as a Ramsar Site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Blackwater Valley is also a very important area for conservation and is covered in more detail below.

Parishioners value their environment and resist any interference or damage to it. Some of those concerns are mentioned in the following paragraphs but it is appropriate to group others at this stage. There are many concerns caused by neglect – these include uneven pavements and overhanging hedges which can impede the safe passage of residents with pushchairs and wheelchairs, blocked ditches, potholes, people not clearing up after dog fouling, noise pollution from traffic (particularly the A36) and general damage caused by vandalism.

The Parish Council is urged to maintain its liaison with the relevant agencies to eradicate these nuisances as far as possible.

In parts of Wellow where the land is nearly level drainage relies heavily on the existence of ditches. Unfortunately some ditches are not properly maintained and some have been filled in. This problem is also highlighted in the **VDS**.

Many of our residents expressed great annoyance at the copious amounts of litter on our lanes and verges. The increase in fast food outlets is often cited as a factor but fly tipping (including abandoned vehicles) on verges and lanes is a prime cause of concern. Whilst residents acknowledge the problems in eradicating this irresponsible behaviour it is their strong wish that the local authority and police redouble their efforts to catch the perpetrators.



*Fly tipping near Rixes Ford in Foxes Lane.*

### **ACTION**

The Parish Council continue to

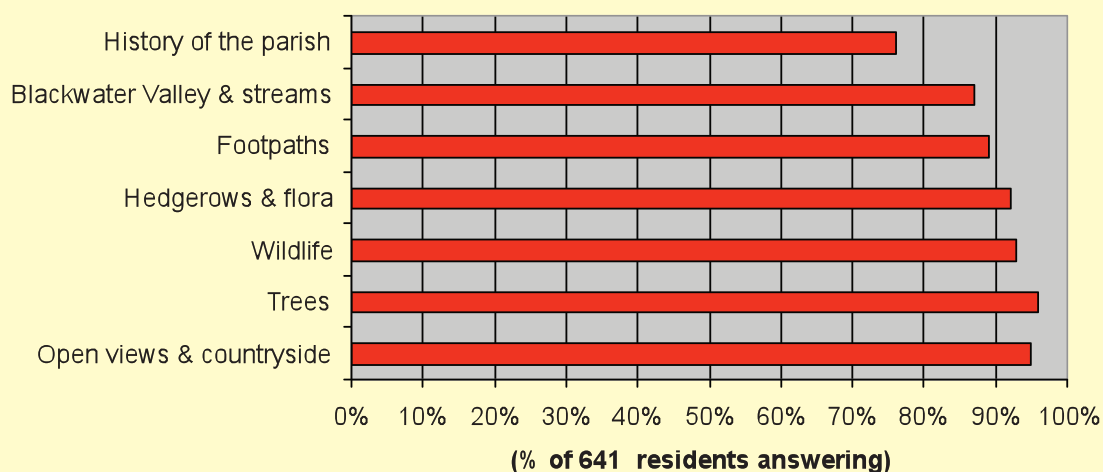
- Publicise the importance of residents properly maintaining ditches for which they are responsible, and
- Put pressure on the appropriate authorities to do the same.

## ACTION

The Parish Council continue to

- Encourage everyone to refrain from dropping litter and also help to clear it
- Continue working with Test Valley Borough Council and the police to remove fly tipped material as soon as possible, and to seek ways of preventing further occurrences.
- Encourage landowners to maintain their hedges where they overhang pavement areas.
- Make representations to the relevant authorities to maintain pavements and roadways when reports of defects are received from residents.
- Work with all partners in order to prevent vandalism.
- Work with TVBC Dog Warden Service in order to promote responsible dog ownership and for
- All parishioners to take responsibility for cleaning up after their dogs have fouled pavements, footpaths and open spaces and to dispose of the waste responsibly.

### Features of the parish that are considered very important by residents



## Trees and Hedgerows

The Parish is fortunate to have many areas of woodland. Both larger areas of estate woodland and smaller copses interspersed among agricultural land have existed for hundreds of years, and some of them are recognised as genuine ancient woodlands. These areas form vital refuges for diverse wildlife, as well as contributing to the patchwork texture of the landscape that is so characteristic of this part of Hampshire.

Early maps of the Parish show many small fields, each surrounded by hedges. Over the years many hedges have been removed, both to make larger fields and to make narrower field boundaries with wire fences that do not require so much maintenance. In most parts of the Parish there are some surviving ancient hedges. There are fewer hedgerow trees than there were formerly, and, with the loss of elms to Dutch Elm disease, those that remain are mostly oak or ash trees. The modern flail cutting of hedges generally prevents the establishment of new trees (and perhaps restricts diversity), so that remaining hedgerow trees tend to be older, well-established specimens, and few new ones have been planted. There is a need to look to the future and establish new indigenous trees within hedgerows.



*Goldfinch in Canada*

## ACTION

The Parish Council and Borough Council to encourage landowners to plant, replace and maintain indigenous trees, in order to preserve the future visual character of the local landscape.

## Flora and Fauna

A list of the identified flowering plants and trees of Wellow published in 2002 included over 540 species present in different parts of the Parish, indicating the wide diversity of habitats. This diversity is also reflected in the range of animal species found in the Parish that is listed in the VDS.

In our survey it was clear that the majority of people valued the proximity to wildlife and many concerns were raised concerning their future and safety. Speeding traffic along country lanes was blamed for a high percentage of road kills. Some 45% of respondents were of the view that we should be doing more to protect wildlife habitats.



*Comma butterfly*



*Donkey on Wellow Common*



*Corn Marigold*

## ACTION

The Parish Council, in conjunction with interested residents, HCC and relevant agencies, to set up a project group to identify and preserve the habitats of wildlife species.

## The Blackwater Valley

Mention has already been made of the River Blackwater that flows through the Parish from west to east and on to join the River Test. This river is an extremely important feature of the landscape as it serves to drain considerable areas of arable and wooded land and provides varied scenery and habitats. It also passes through several land ownership areas and as such receives differing levels of care and maintenance. It is important that this river is kept clear of detritus (especially after heavy rainfall) and its banks are maintained if it is to retain its good environmental qualities.



*Woodington Fishery Lake*



*River Blackwater at Rixes Ford*



The low-lying land alongside the River Blackwater is largely occupied by unspoilt meadows of permanent grassland and woodlands. These, together with a number of managed fisheries, provide an important area for wildlife and nature conservation. This ribbon of land across the Parish is recognised by residents as a botanically rich haven for wildlife and many have commented that this is an area that deserves to be formally designated as a conservation area and environmental heritage site.

### ACTION

The Parish Council to

- Liaise with the relevant authorities, including the Environment Agency, with the aim of declaring the River Blackwater Valley an environmental site meriting special protection.

## Public Rights of Way

Although Wellow has 24 public footpaths the only circular routes that exist expose walkers to speeding traffic. Most footpaths are well used by local people and visitors, who value them highly. Our Survey highlighted residents' concerns regarding their maintenance and preservation. Examples were given of neglect by some landowners such as broken stiles and gates, missing finger posts and even cases of deliberate obstruction. There is strong feeling that action should be taken to protect and safeguard our footpaths and also to establish new routes for the future.

### ACTION

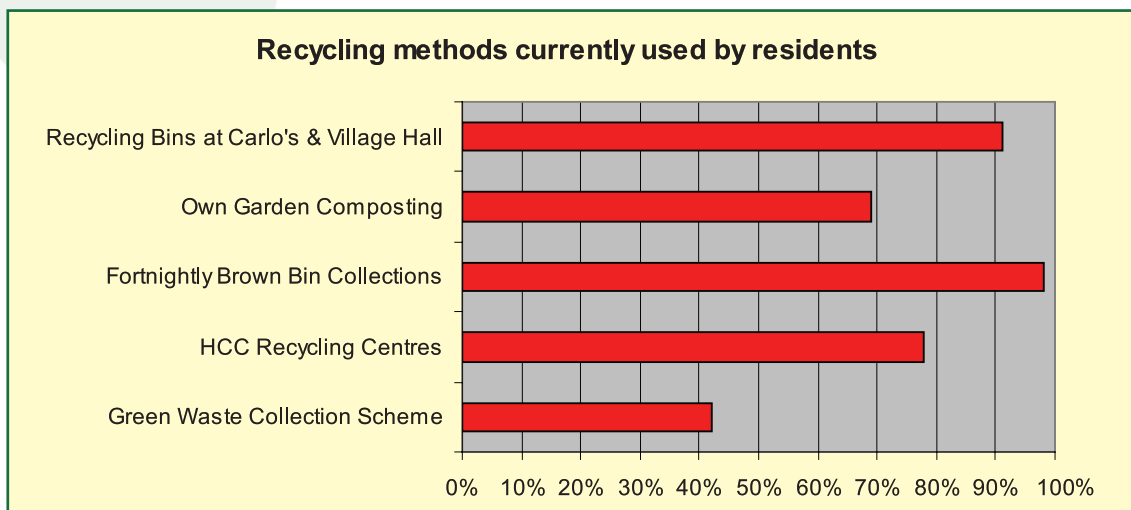
A Project Group be established, in conjunction with interested residents and Hampshire County Council, to promote and protect all footpaths and rights of way in the Parish.

This Project Group to have both short term and long term goals including -

- Ensuring that our footpaths are properly safeguarded, maintained and publicised.
- Examine the possibility of reinstating footpaths which have been lost over past years
- Seek to establish, in conjunction with relevant agencies, a new permissive footpath across the former Embley Estate in memory of Florence Nightingale, which may be used on special occasions to commemorate her association with Wellow.
- Seek to establish, with the agreement of the relevant landowners, a permissive footpath near the River Blackwater.
- The continued replacement of some stiles with gates so as to improve access.
- Investigate the options for a footpath to Wellow Primary School from the Whinwhistle Road area of the Parish.

## Recycling

It is clear from our questionnaire that the residents of Wellow are well versed in the methods of recycling. The table shows that recycling centres run by Test Valley Borough Council are well used, as well as the recycling bins at the Village Hall and Carlo's.



Parishioners were asked whether they would be willing to use a system for the disposal of waste cooked food if it was economically available. A total of 341 people (58%) said 'yes' they would be interested.

Judging from the response to the Survey there is certainly a commitment to recycling. In summary 41% of respondents felt we could do more as a community to improve recycling and 59% would be happy to see an extension of recycling facilities especially for the processing of a greater variety of plastics. Many comments were received on these particular aspects, far too many to list here, so this is one area which the relevant authorities may wish to pursue with the community.

**ACTION**

A Project Group be established, in conjunction with TVBC, to work with residents, with the objective of agreeing improvements to the existing recycling methods and performance.

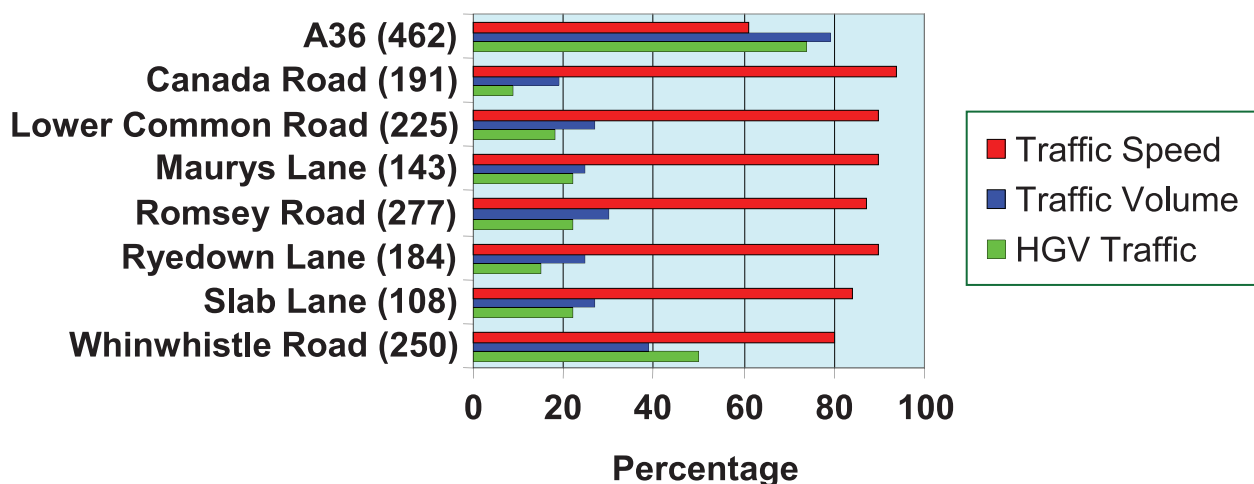
## Transport and Roads

### Roads & Footways

Between the A36 and the A27 are several minor lanes that provide access to the farms and small centres of population within the Parish. These are all narrow lanes with sharp bends and without pavements; many are single track without designated passing places.

The survey revealed that the volume and speed of vehicles, particularly HGV traffic, using these roads are of major concern to residents. Whilst the table below highlights only certain roads, these concerns also apply to many other lanes. These include Embley Lane, Tanners Lane, Scallows Lane, Gardeners Lane, Tutts Lane and Woodington Road.

**What concerns do you have about traffic on the following roads ? Numbers answering for each road given in brackets.**

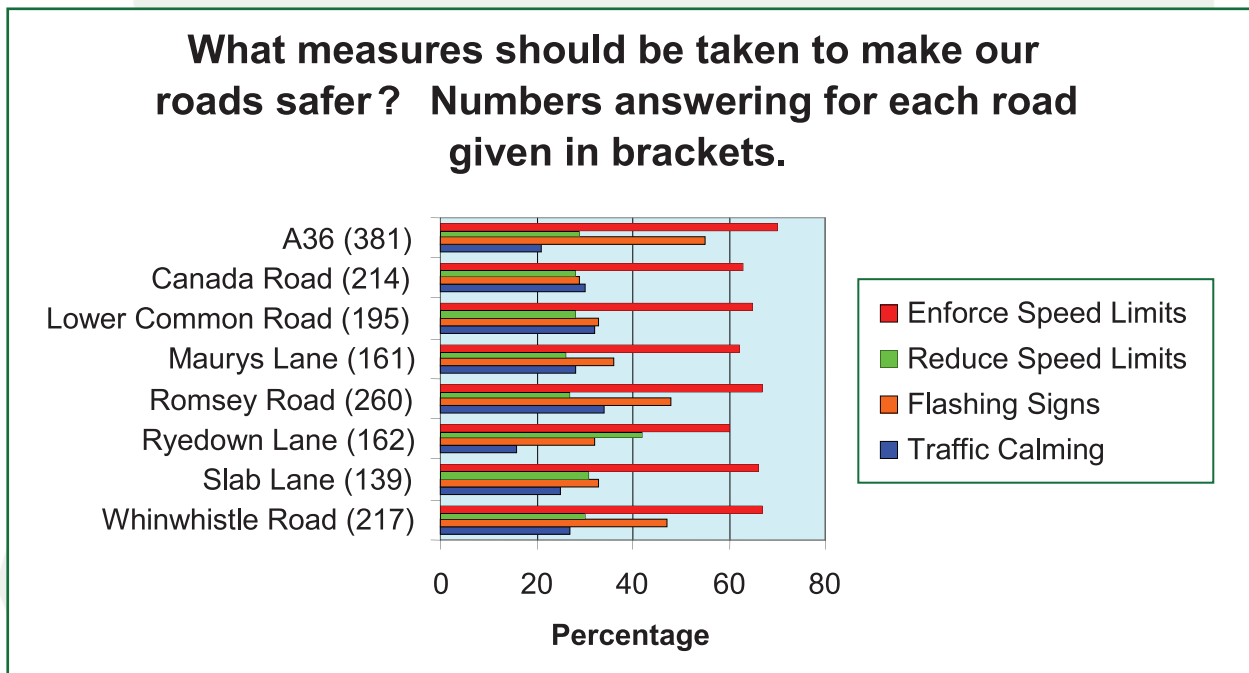


Except for the A36, these are residential roads or rural lanes, which are considered to be totally inappropriate for heavy goods vehicles. This, together with the general disregard of speed limits endangers other road users, particularly pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. With this in mind it may be appropriate to consider adopting some of these lanes as bridleways (with restricted vehicular access) at some future date.

Who is at risk on our roads?	Other Vehicles	Pedestrians	Horse Riders	Cyclists
	%	%	%	%
A36 (397)	79	66	32	59
Canada Road (196)	45	84	66	58
Lower Common Road (191)	57	76	47	64
Maurys Lane (134)	50	87	66	69
Romsey Road (256)	53	85	59	69
Ryedown Lane (164)	68	56	45	63
Slab Lane (103)	60	77	54	65
Whinwhistle Road (232)	68	61	54	60

(Nos. in brackets denotes no. of answers to question)

When asked the question “What measures should be taken to make our roads safer?” the responses were fairly mixed, ranging from the enforcement of speed limits to traffic calming. However it is the speed of traffic that residents want to see controlled and the re-direction of HGV traffic away from rural lanes except for essential access. As part of the Parish is also within the NFNP it may be considered more apposite to look at speed limits and traffic management using similar guidelines to those operating within the National Park. Another concern raised by residents related to access points to the A36, particularly at the junctions with School Road and Whinwhistle Road.



It is therefore clear that residents want to see real improvements in traffic management throughout the Parish area and this is recognised in the recommendations being made in the action plan attached to this document. The effects on traffic generation have also been referred to in the **VDS**.

**ACTION**

The Parish Council to establish a Project Group, in conjunction with the Police Authority and Highways Authorities, to work with residents to produce a traffic management plan for the Parish. This plan should be capable of being implemented within the short to medium term and include the adoption of speed limits appropriate to the various roads.



Wellow and its main roads, lanes and linkages

## Transport

The Parish is served by public bus services to Romsey, Salisbury and Southampton and there is also a “Dial a Ride” service operated by Test Valley Community Services. Many residents also benefit from a community led “Good Neighbourhood Scheme”, where transport is provided for occasional shopping, hospital visits and medical appointments for those unable to use public transport.

There were several comments relating to the provision of bus services to and from Wellow – with general agreement on the need for improvements in frequency and timing of service – particularly to Romsey. At the present time this service, between Romsey and the main centres of population within the Parish, is considered to be poor.

As regards accessing destinations from Wellow via public transport only 14% of the 540 respondents who addressed this question considered services to be good, whilst 25% said they were adequate and 19% poor. The lack of public transport at suitable times is of particular concern to young people as they are unable to travel

independently and therefore rely on others to transport them to and from social activities, particularly at weekends. The remaining 43% of these respondents did not use the bus at all, a fact that highlights the predominance of car ownership in the Parish. On the more general question relating to which mode of transport residents normally use, the vast majority (95%) use their own car, 53% will also travel on foot, 43% by bicycle and only 28% use a bus service or combination of car/bus/train. However, for those parishioners who do not have a car, the availability of a public bus service is essential and as such must be protected.

When asked to give some improvements to services that would encourage people to use the bus service more regularly a number of comments were received. These include services which:

- Connect with rail services
- Reach the whole Parish not just parts
- Extend into the evening and weekends
- Have a greater frequency to Romsey

#### **ACTION**

The Parish Council, together with interested parties, to make contact and liaise with transport companies and authorities to improve the provision of transport services to all parts of the Parish.

## **Young People's Section**

Part of our survey was devoted to collecting the views of young people. A total of 140 young people under the age of 16 responded. They attend a large selection of schools and colleges and have an equally wide range of interests. Their wish list for additional activities is also very diverse with the most popular being a swimming pool!

Many are concerned over what they see as an inadequate public transport system and 71% of those young people who addressed this question in our survey rate the service as poor. They also feel that there is a shortage of facilities for young people in the Parish and a number of suggestions were received. The most important one relates to an indoor meeting place such as a café or Internet café where they can meet friends and feel safe. This could also cater for other activities such as pool and table tennis. They also felt that the recreation ground at present is not a safe or welcome place.

Their views and concerns very much echo those of adults. They generally see Wellow as a friendly community where they feel safe and, like adults, they value the proximity to the New Forest and the countryside around them. However, there are specific challenges which they feel they have to face including

- Public transport issues as stated above
- Expensive housing – 64% saying they would like to live independently in the Parish one day but are prevented from doing so by cost
- Lack of a pathway between Whinwhistle Rd and the Primary School
- General anti-social behaviour

Bearing in mind that we will be bequeathing our Parish to them, it is important that the concerns and opinions of young people are identified and addressed. This should be considered as a project separate from the preparation of a parish plan and as such it is strongly recommended that the Parish Council enter into a dialogue with young people and seek to address their concerns.

#### **ACTION**

The Parish Council to make a further attempt to carry out a consultation exercise with young people in order to identify their needs and concerns, and respond to the issues they raise.

## Planning & Development

All planning applications within the Parish are submitted, in the first instance, to TVBC or the NFNPA as the statutory planning authorities. The views of the Parish Council are then sought. The Planning Committee of the Parish Council meets every month to consider such applications. Parishioners who are directly affected by the proposed plans are invited to comment and all residents are entitled to attend the start of those meetings where they can express their views on any specific issue. After due deliberation the Parish Council will then submit their recommendation to the statutory authority for a final decision.

As has been stated above, parishioners greatly value the rural character of their Parish and are keen to see it protected. When asked the question “Do planning policies protect the special features of the parish?” many answered positively, but there were significant numbers who disagreed. For example, 35% of those answering thought that planning policies did not protect the character of the area, 28% thought that infrastructure issues such as drainage were not properly addressed and concerns over the general rural environment were voiced by 26% including footpaths (14%), hedgerows (18%) and trees (15%).

There was general dissatisfaction with the way in which some development has been carried out in previous years. There have been cases of infill development within gardens whereby one modest-sized dwelling has been demolished and replaced with two or more larger properties. These types of developments are considered to be totally out of keeping with the character of the area and neighbouring properties and do nothing to enhance the environment or indeed the housing needs of the local community. In addition there appears to be insufficient consideration given to the effect on the public utility infrastructure, such as drainage, when these applications are approved. There is also a perception amongst residents that planning decisions are not always enforced equitably. Examples were quoted of caravans being parked illegally, and their presence used as a pretext for planning applications, plus far too many approvals being given retrospectively without penalty.

These issues are also addressed in the **Village Design Statement** but it is the wish of residents that proper consideration be given to these concerns not only by the Parish Council but also the Statutory Planning Authorities.

## Housing

The results of our Survey show that parishioners are virtually unanimous in agreeing that any future development should be individual properties on appropriate sized plots and only within existing residential areas. Total opposition to any overspill into greenfield sites was voiced by 75% of respondents to this part of the survey, and some 70% were opposed to any multi-build sites. There is a recognised need, however, for a greater mix of housing to benefit young people wishing to purchase, older people wishing to downsize and for anyone with specific housing needs. All these three categories should be borne in mind when consideration is given to future planning applications. This could include the construction of shared ownership units for younger people wishing to gain entrance to the housing market and groups of smaller, individually designed, high-quality bungalows for those people wishing to downsize. If this policy were followed it would allow people to remain in the area and thus provide for the Parish to remain sustainable in the long term.

## Commercial Development

Residents were asked to identify those commercial developments that they would generally support. Bearing in mind the rural environment of the Parish, it is not surprising that in most cases they would approve those applications relating to agriculture. This opinion was held by 95% of respondents to our Survey. However, when looking at changes of use it is important that those changes do not adversely affect the present environment. Of equal importance is the issue of increased traffic movements that such an application may generate. Many of the lanes within the Parish are unsuitable for HGV traffic and this should be borne in mind when considering any planning applications.

When asked a question relating to other commercial development proposals, some 87% of residents favour small retail applications and 64% those relating to tourism. Applications to be discouraged include those relating to large retail (81%), road haulage (78%) and construction (72%).

These matters, along with previously mentioned issues of drainage and roads are also dealt with in more detail in the **VDS** and readers are therefore encouraged to refer to this document.

### **ACTION**

- 1 When considering any applications for housing development within the Parish of Wellow, the Parish Council and the Statutory Planning Authority should take note of the opinions of residents as expressed in this plan and also the guidelines contained within the Village Design Statement.
- 2 When considering applications for housing development, both the Parish Council and the Statutory Planning Authority should seek to ensure that those applications meet the agreed local needs of the Parish.
- 3 On significant planning issues, the relevant Planning Authority should offer advice and guidance to the Parish Council, including attendance at meetings as considered appropriate.

## **Postscript**

The Steering Group members who have worked on this plan have done so on a strictly impartial basis. With the publication of this document the group will disband and its members will return to being “interested parishioners”.

This plan will be put into effect by members of the Parish Council, though not necessarily actioned by them. Other agencies will also be involved. However, for the Parish Plan to be really effective it is important for residents to become actively involved either as individuals or groups. They should not assume that “someone else will do it”.

We believe that this plan provides a sound basis for the future development of our Parish. Everyone accepts that we are fortunate to live in this special area but there are issues to deal with and improvements to be made. However, for this to happen, it is important that

- the Parish Council appoint one, or several of its members, to oversee the implementation of the Action Points and
- residents take responsibility and play their part in the community and its future.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many people have contributed to the creation of this Parish Plan.

Particular thanks are due to –

- Awards for All (National Lottery)
- Hampshire County Council for their financial support
- Test Valley Borough Council for their support – both practical and financial
- Community Action Hampshire for their support and advice
- Officers from Test Valley Borough for their advice and continuing support particularly Marianne Piggin and David Bibby
- The Steering Group from the Parish of Wellow who led the process
- All those residents who completed our questionnaire, attended our Open Days and gave us their opinions, suggestions and comments

## **The Steering Group**

Allen Brown  
Tony Boyle (Chair)  
Pam Field  
Alan Fowler (Treasurer)  
Katie Goodall (Parish Councillor)

Jane Halle  
Jean Kenny  
Fiona Mobbs  
Susan Newby  
Michael Sleigh

Heading	<b><u>SUMMARY OF ACTION PLAN</u></b> <b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
<b>1. Amenities</b> Local Shops	1.1 All public bodies, representatives and residents, to do their utmost to ensure the continued presence of the Post Office within the parish.  1.2 The Highways Agency, to provide clear signage on the A36 indicating the location of the local shops in Lower Common Road.  1.3 Hampshire County Highways to examine the issue of parking within the vicinity of the local shops in Lower Common Road.	PC/Residents/ Councillors/ MP's  HA  HCC	ongoing  Dec 2010  June 2011
<b>2. Communications</b>	2.1 The Parish Council to investigate, with parish groups and residents, the introduction of an 'information sheet' for new residents of Wellow, which would provide information on the parish and the facilities available within it.  2.2 The Parish Council complete the task of improving and maintaining its website as soon as possible and take steps to resurrect a regular Parish Council Newsletter.	PC  PC	June 2011  Dec 2010
<b>3.Community/Leisure</b>  Village Hall  Sports and Recreation	3.1 The Village Hall Committee to examine the list of further suggested improvements to the village hall.  3.2 The Parish Council complete their plans for an improvement programme for the recreation ground in Lower Common Road, including the replacement of the pavilion and playground, so as to create a focal point for the village.  3.3 The Parish Council to examine the feasibility of meeting some of the sporting and leisure wishes as expressed by residents through the survey.	VHC  PC  PC	June 2011  June 2011  Dec 2010
<b>4. Environment</b>  Public Rights of Way	4.1 A Project Group be established, in conjunction with interested residents and Hampshire County Council, to promote and protect all footpaths and rights of way in the parish.  This Project Group to have both short term and long term goals including - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that our footpaths are properly safeguarded, maintained and publicised.</li> <li>• Examine the possibility of reinstating footpaths which have been lost over past years</li> </ul>		Dec 2010



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to establish, in conjunction with relevant agencies, a new permissive footpath across the former Embley Estate in memory of Florence Nightingale, which may be used on special occasions to commemorate her association with Wellow.</li> <li>• Seek to establish, with the agreement of the relevant landowners, a permissive footpath near the River Blackwater.</li> <li>• The continued replacement of some stiles with gates so as to improve access.</li> <li>• Investigate the options for a footpath to Wellow Primary School from the Whinwhistle Road area of the parish.</li> </ul>	PC/HCC/ Residents	Ongoing
Flora & Fauna	4.2 The Parish Council, in conjunction with interested residents, HCC and relevant agencies, to set up a project group to identify and preserve the habitats of wildlife species.	PC/TVBC/ HCC/ Residents	Mar 2011 & Ongoing
The Blackwater Valley	4.3 The Parish Council to liaise with relevant authorities, including the Environment Agency with the aim of declaring the River Blackwater Valley an environmental site meriting special protection.	PC/HCC/ TVBC	Dec 2010 & ongoing
Drainage	4.4 The Parish Council continue to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise the importance of residents properly maintaining ditches for which they are responsible and</li> <li>• Put pressure on the appropriate authorities to do the same.</li> </ul>	PC/TVBC/ HCC	Ongoing
Litter and Fly Tipping	4.5 The Parish Council continue to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage everyone to refrain from dropping litter and also help to clear it</li> <li>• Continue working with Test Valley Borough Council and the police to remove fly tipped material as soon as possible, and to seek ways of preventing further occurrences.</li> <li>• Encourage landowners to maintain their hedges where they overhang pavement areas</li> <li>• Make representations to the relevant authorities to maintain pavements and roadways when reports of defects are received from residents</li> <li>• Work with all partners in order to prevent vandalism.</li> <li>• Work with TVBC Dog Warden Service in order to promote responsible dog ownership and for</li> <li>• All parishioners to take responsibility for cleaning up after their dogs have fouled pavements, footpaths and open spaces and to dispose of the waste responsibly.</li> </ul>	PC/HCC TVBC/ Residents PC/Police/ landowners	Ongoing
Trees & Hedgerows	4.6 The Parish Council and Borough Council to encourage landowners to plant, replace and maintain indigenous trees, in order to preserve the visual character of the local landscape.	PC/TVBC/ landowners	June 2011

Recycling	4.7A Project Group be established, in conjunction with TVBC, to work with residents, with the objective of agreeing improvements to the existing recycling methods and performance.	PC/TVBC/ residents	Dec 2010
<b>5. Transport/Roads</b>	5.1 The Parish Council to establish a Project Group, in conjunction with the Police Authority and Highways Authorities, to work with residents to produce a traffic management plan for the parish. This plan should be capable of being implemented within the short to medium term and include the adoption of speed limits appropriate to the various roads.	PC/HCC/ Police Auth./ Residents	Dec 2010
	5.2 The Parish Council, together with interested parties, to make contact and liaise with transport companies and authorities to improve the provision of transport services to all parts of the parish.	PC/ Transport Companies	June 2011
<b>6. Young People</b>	6.1 The Parish Council to make a further attempt to carry out a consultation exercise with young people in order to identify their needs and concerns, and respond to the issues they raise.	PC	Oct 2011
<b>7. Planning &amp; Development</b>	7.1 When considering any applications for housing development within the Parish of Wellow, the Parish Council and the Statutory Planning Authority should take note of the opinions of residents as expressed in this plan and also the guidelines contained within the Village Design Statement.	PC/TVBC/ NFNPA	Ongoing
	7.2 When considering applications for housing development, both the Parish Council and the Statutory Planning Authority should seek to ensure that those applications meet the agreed local needs of the parish.	PC/TVBC/ NFNPA	Ongoing
	7.3 On significant planning issues, the relevant Planning Authorities should offer advice and guidance to the Parish Council, including attendance at meetings as considered appropriate.	PC/TVBC/ NFNPA	Ongoing





**PARISH PLAN FOR WELLOW  
HAMPSHIRE  
2010**