

WOBURN PARISH PLAN 2008



Woburn Parish Plan

Woburn Parish Council discussed in great detail, the pros and cons of inviting the village to produce a Parish Plan. They decided the best course of action would be to invite the whole village to the Village Hall and see what reaction there was from local residents.

In March 2006 a letter was sent to every household in the Parish inviting them to an open meeting. This was not overly well attended but enough interest was shown by those who did attend to move the project forward.

A Steering Group was formed who an application made for funding from Defra. The Steering Group were Barbara Reeves (Chair), Budge Wells (Treasurer), Anne Eames (Secretary), Sarah Reeves, Stephen Eames, Steve Clark, John Butterworth, David Knapman, Rev Steve Nuth, Jemma McDonald (BRCC) and a representative from the Bedford Estate.

The group arranged several meetings to discuss the progress of the plan and to write a timetable of actions. The development of Woburn Parish Plan started.

Background of the Village

Woburn is first recorded in a charter of King Edgar granting land in Aspley Guise, it is referred to as Woburninga gemaere. In the Domesday Book of 1086 it is called Woberne. The name means “winding stream” from the Old English words who (twisted) and burna. The parish contains nearly 3,500 acres and is thickly wooded in parts, the soil is greensand, it is around 375 feet above sea level.

Woburn was long a market town, the original charter for a weekly market on a Friday being granted to the Abbey by King Henry in 1245. He also granted the right to hold a three day fair in September each year (a spiritual ancestor of the more recently created Oyster Festival). The local importance of the market can be seen at a glance by the number of inns, public houses and beer houses the village once contained. Ironically, King Henry VIII awarded two additional fairs to the Abbey, one in March the other in July, just nine years before he dissolved the institution.

Woburn declined somewhat in importance in the 20th century. It used to have its own Petty Sessional (Magistrates Court) District, its own Workhouse, receiving paupers from neighbouring parishes and poor Law Union to run it. The Petty Sessional District was created in 1830 and dissolved in 1953. The Poor Law Union created in 1835 was dissolved in 1899. Woburn's main importance now is as a place of tourists visiting Woburn Abbey and the Safari Park.

The village itself houses 200 listed buildings, most of the Georgian period.

The village has made a concerted effort to maintain an atmosphere of Georgian elegance, which is evident in the collection of shops selling gifts and antiques. Old St Mary's church houses the small heritage centre which tells the story of the village and its famous landlords the Dukes of Bedford.

A more modern piece of ecclesiastical architecture is St Mary the Virgin built by the 8th Duke of Bedford in 1865-68. The church originally had a tower, but this proved unsafe and was removed in 1890.

The 2001 census showed 457 dwellings with 945 residents. There are a number of websites which tell you about the village for instance www.woburnvillage.co.uk, www.discoverwoburn.co.uk, www.midbeds.gov.uk, www.bedfordshire.gov.uk.

Oyster Festival 2006

Once the steering group was formed, it was important to ask the villagers what they would like included in a plan. The first step was to have a presence at the Woburn Oyster Festival in September 2006. Despite the blustery weather a number of people visited the stand that was manned by the Steering Group Volunteers. Maps of the village were produced, these were laminated and the villagers were invited to write their comments onto post-it notes and place them on the relevant part of the map. The important message coming from this was the village residents were very concerned about the traffic, its speed and the use by the extraordinary number of HGV's using village and the amount of noise this created.

Planning for Real Event

Following the interest shown at the Oyster Festival, the group decided a good way to gauge the feelings of the residents of the Parish was to hold a Planning for Real event was held in the Village Hall, . This was attended by and supported by the Duke

and Duchess of Bedford. Maps were available showing every residence in the village. As parishioners came they were asked to show their comments on flags supplied and place them on the map.

Woburn Parish Plan – Community Questionnaire

As a result of what we discovered from holding the Planning for Real Event the steering group were able to prepare a very comprehensive questionnaire. (Particular thanks go here to John Butterworth and Steve Clark) The questionnaire was delivered to every household in the village. There were one or two hiccups along the way but we feel sure most people had the opportunity to complete one and give their views to the questions asked. (A copy of the questionnaire is available along with the results, these can be seen at the local village store or the village hall but can be made available on request to the Parish Council) It generated enough interest for 158 responses. This in fact is a 37% response rate and many thanks to all those who completed the questionnaire.

The Plan

The questionnaire was broken down into several sections which have formed the format for the plan.

1. Traffic and Transport

Question	Response	Action
1.1 Concerns about speed of traffic	94% are concerned about the speed of traffic	Pass to Parish Council and Bedfordshire Police for response*
1.2 Concerns about volume of traffic	98% are concerned about this	As above*
1.3 Do you think traffic calming is a good idea?	81% agreed traffic calming is a good idea	As above*
1.4 Speed cameras should be erected on the approaches to Woburn	80% agreed	As above*
1.5 Reduce the speed limit in Duck lane from 30 mph	There were 145 responses to this question many more than the residents of Duck Lane resulting in 74% residents agree this is a good idea.	As above*
1.6 Problem of traffic noise	96% responses were concerned about traffic noise.	As above*
1.7 Concerns about increased traffic as a result of Ridgemont Bypass	97% expressed concern	As above*
1.8 Should there be an HGV ban through Woburn	95% residents are in favour	As above*
1.9 Awareness of 'Help around Woburn' offering lifts to villagers with transport problems.	88% were aware of this facility	A good level of awareness to be passed to organisers of Help around Woburn
1.10 Difficulties with health services	The responses showed very little concern in this area	Results to be passed to the Health Centre, local PCT and Parish Council
1.11 and 1.12 Use of local bus service	Only 54 from 157 ever use a service and 24 of these were occasional users. An improved service would attract 102 users	The entire response needs further investigation by the relevant agencies. Parish Council to lead.

Question	Response	Action
1.13 Using pavements if they were better maintained	60% would make more use the pavements if they were better maintained	Work has started in this area since the questionnaire was produced, the results will be passed to the Parish Council
1.14 and 1.18 Additional pedestrian crossings especially in Leighton Street	80% agreed more crossings were essential and 82% wanted a crossing on Leighton Street.	To be passed to the Parish Council for a response*
1.15 and 1.17 Using a bicycle if there were cycle lanes and locking points in the village	Only about 50% would use cycle lanes and locking points in the village	Information will be passed to the Parish Council who will pass this Highways.
1.16 There should be strictly enforced parking scheme	71% want to see this actioned	To be passed to the Parish Council and Bedfordshire Police for a response*
1.19 and 1.20 Traffic Control at the centre of the village	A major concern 80% were in agreement with this. 73 responses in favour of traffic lights and 40 in favour of a mini roundabout.	As above* This suggestion is supported by Bedford Estates

*This drew the most response from residents and is clearly their most important concern. Once the Parish Council, Bedfordshire Police and any other agencies have consulted an open meeting should be called for these to be discussed with residents.

We would mention here that the Parish Council have worked tirelessly over the years dealing with the problems of traffic and are continuing to do so. The Bedford Estate has agreed the whole question of traffic and traffic noise remains a major concern and the Estate will continue to lobby the County Council for urgent action.

Most of the comments at the Oyster Festival in 2006 and 33% of comments raised at the planning for real event related to traffic. The speed of traffic passing through the village was raised as a concern, all traffic causes noise and pollution. Car Parking also raises concerns about personal safety. There were many comments from villagers about this subject most were very emotive. We even received photographs with a questionnaire, showing parking problems in Eleanor Close and Walk.

2. Local Facilities

Question	Response	Action
2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 asked whether residents thought the village hall, swimming pool and sports pitches were valuable to the village	We had more than 95% yes to this question.	It is essential these facilities are kept for the village use and the Village Hall Committee will be notified of this response
2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.10 questions about the use of the village hall, swimming pool and sports facilities	These results showed that the Village Hall and Pool were good places for private events, but publicity around this could be improved. There was also a question on Tennis Courts and flood lights on the playing field.	All these results will be passed to the Village Hall Committee for their consideration.
2.9 I would support a Cricket Club and Pitch on the old Recreation ground in Timber Lane	There was a 64% yes to this question	To ask the Village Hall Committee to look at the practicality of a Cricket Club and where this should be located
2.11 I would use a Chemist Shop in Woburn	An 84% yes vote to this one.	Consultation should be made between the local traders and the surgery. The surgery should be asked to make people aware of the dispensing facility.
2.12 We should retain facility for Post Office in Woburn	There was a 100% yes to this question	We should ask our local post mistress to keep the Parish Council informed of any changes or assistance she needs from the village to keep the facility open.
2.15 and 2.16 Would you use an open access 24 hour cash machine I there was one in Woburn, if yes would you still use this facility if a charge applied	99 people said they would use a 24 hour cash machine but only 15 were prepared to pay for this facility.	More research is needed to look at the feasibility of this request.

Question	Response	Action
2.18 We need additional facilities for Disabled People in Woburn	75 responded they would like to see additional facilities	
2.17 and 2.19 Woburn should have a Pay to Use public toilet	144 residents either strongly or simply agreed there should be a public toilet in Woburn. 96 said they would use a Pay to Use public toilet	This information will be passed to the Parish Council and Mid Beds District Council

25% of the comments raised at the planning for real event related to Local Facilities.

The village hall and swimming pool are well used thanks to a small team of volunteers, both committees would welcome new volunteers. If you are interested please come to the Village Hall at 7.30 on the first Tuesday of the month.

3. Environment

Question	Response	Action
3.1 Should there be more dog mess bins	87% wanted this	Pass to Parish Council
3.2 Should there be more planting of flowers and shrubs	77% would like to see this happen 1 response definitely would not	Pass to Parish Council
3.3 Should there be better street lighting in the village	78% would like to see this but 5 responses totally disagreed	Results to Parish Council
3.4 Overhanging hedges are a nuisance	68% found this to be a problem	Further investigation required to locations, Parish Council to take up
3.5 Walking should be encouraged along the Rights of Way and Bridleways by better surfaces signs and accessibility	87% thought this should be the case	Consultation with those responsible for Rights of Way, who will give advice and guidance results to be included in response to 3.10 and 3.11
3.6 There should be more public litter bins	90% agreed	Pass to Parish Council
3.7 There should be a public compost scheme	77% agreed there were 4 who strongly disagreed	Pass to Mid Beds Council for a response
3.8 The law on fly tipping should be enforced more strongly	98% want this to happen	a) Residents to be asked to be vigilant and report such events b) Response from Mid Beds Council and Bedfordshire Police
3.9 The law on riding motorbikes off road should be enforced more strongly	95% want to see this happen	a) Residents to be asked to be vigilant and report such events b) Response from Bedfordshire Police
3.10 and 3.11 Interest in the rights of way network	55% use this facility but would like to see improved signposting, better paths, better mobility accessibility, a circular route and more information	Results to be passed to those responsible for Rights of Way and the response will be published in News Around Woburn

Question	Response	Action
3.12 Interest in Parish facilities	<p>There was a lot of interest in a greater range of recycling facilities</p> <p>There was also interest in a community orchard, community woodland are, pond, allotments, more public seating and a picnic area</p>	<p>Recycling results to be passed to Mid Beds District Council as a separate topic for comments and response.</p> <p>Relevant agencies to be consulted and future plans published in News around Woburn.</p>
3.13 and 3.14 Interest in resources to adopt low carbon technologies	73% interest in this subject showing interest in Solar panels, ground source pump, small wind turbine and rainwater harvesting	Further consultation and advice will be sought on this subject and a published in News around Woburn
3.15 Hidden Britain	Whilst 62% expressed an interest in this subject, the village has tried to generate interest in taking this forward but will very little response in fact only 7 villagers have actually attended any of the meetings.	Another promotion article in News around Woburn by Beds Rural Communities

18% of comments raised at he planning for real event related to this topic

4. Older People

Question	Response	Action
4.1 Woburn is a good place for older residents	Most agreed this was a good place to live 91%	To be passed to relevant agencies for information
4.2 There should be day trips organised for older people	93% would like this to happen	Consult with Village Hall Committee and agencies such as Age Concern
4.3 Village hall should be used for social facilities for older people	96% agreed	Information to be passed to the Village Hall Committee
4.4 Sufficient information about facilities for older people	69% felt they were well informed	We need to continue to use the current forms but make sure we make use of all facilities available
45 Feeling Secure	90% feel secure.	We must be aware of the 10% who feel insecure. Information to be passed to Parish Council and Bedfordshire Police.

5% of comments raised at the planning for real event related to older people.

Over 27% of Woburn residents are aged 60 or over.

5. Housing

Question	Response	Action
5.1 Would you support the building or more homes in Woburn and 5.2 Should vacant plot infilling be allowed for new housing	More than 100 questionnaires answered no to these questions 69% of those who answered.	Results to be passed to the Parish Council
5.3 a,b,c,d,e and f were questions relating to the types of housing supported for building	No development was the firm favourite and other forms starter homes, key worker homes received a similar response with about 33% in favour. Most were against executive housing being built.	Results to be passed to the Parish and Mid Beds District Councils
5.4 Do you believe priority for affordable housing should be given to village residents?	137 answered in favour, only 17 disagreeing	Results to be passed to Parish Council for discussion

4% of comments raised at the planning for real event related to Housing.

There were a number of comments expressing concern for buy to let and multiple occupancy, particularly from Timber Lane area.

There is a lot of support for starter homes and key worker homes for village residents.

We also noted comments concerning housing for our ageing population

6. Young People

Question	Response	Action
6.2 I believe Woburn is a good village to bring up children	Of those who answered this question 96% gave a positive response.	
6.3 Do you believe the village school should be kept open?	134 were in favour of the school being kept open most strongly agreeing there were only 4 responses who said the school should not be kept open	This information will be passed to the Board of Governors and actioned with their support and suggestions,..
6.4 Will you or do you send you child to the village school?	Only 55% gave a positive response to this question	The school governors should be consulted on how to proceed with this response especially with response to 6.2
6.5 Do you believe there are sufficient amenities for the under 12's?	Only 43% agreed or strongly agreed there were sufficient amenities for the under 12's	A sub committee to investigate this further using the comments made in the questionnaire as a starting point.
6.6 What additional facilities would you like to see for 12 – 18 years	Skateboard Park, Internet Facility, Basketball Hoop, Youth Club and others	The information to be passed to Parish Council and Village Hall Committee
6.7 Do you believe there are sufficient amenities for the 12 – 18's	74% thought the there were insufficient amenities in the village for this age group	Same as above for 6.5
6.8 The state of footpaths and lack of cycle ways is a major issue for children in Woburn	Less than 8% of those who answered this question thought there was a problem	This information to be passed to the Parish Council and Highways.
6.10 (originally marked 6.8) Would you use a Registered Childminding facility if one was available in Woburn?	27% said they would use such a facility	A sub committee should be formed to discuss this with the school and social services.
6.11 Would you be willing to help out at a youth club if one was able to be set up	Unfortunately only 11 people said they would.	This information to be passed to the village hall committee.

15% of the comments raised at the planning for real event related to children and young people.

7. Crime and Policing

Question	Response	Action
7.1 I feel secure in Woburn	There was a 92% positive response to this question	Response to be noted to relevant agencies
7.2 Have you any problems with the following* see below	Traffic and anti social behaviour were by far the most common concern	All results to be passed to Bedfordshire Police and Parish Council*
7.3 There is a neighbourhood watch scheme in Woburn	From 46 responses 35 were not interested 6 wanted to join and 5 act as coordinator. A very disappointing response	Pass results to organisers of neighbourhood watch
7.4 How would you describe the service provided by the police in Woburn?	56% who responded thought the service was poor and 23% has no opinion	These results will be passed to Bedfordshire Police for a response*
7.5a A more regular visible police presence and better consultation between police and local people	Both these questions raised positive responses 90% and 87% respectively	These details to be passed to Bedfordshire Police for a response*
7.5b Better consultation between police and local people	88% want better consultation between the police and local people	These results to be passed to Bedfordshire Police for a response*

*Comments as follows: Mugging -2, Burglary – 14, Vandalism – 31, Traffic – 64, Anti-social – 38 Graffiti – 4 Fly Tipping – 15 and other – 12

*These results will require a response from the Police and they will be asked for a timetable when the responses can be expected by the village and what actions they intend to take. The Police will be asked to attend a public meeting for villages to discuss this.

Few of the comments recorded at the planning for real event. The comments made on the questionnaire, show there is a lot of concern in this area, these are valuable and will be actioned.

Y1 Young Peoples Section

This section was specifically designed for young people to respond to with their family.

General

Question	Response	Action
Y1.4 I believe the village is safe to allow children to use the playing fields and play areas unsupervised	60% did not agree the village was safe for children unsupervised.	Consultation with police and child services at Mid Beds District Council
Y1.7 I believe the village should target more resources and amenities for younger people	90% agree this should be the case	A consultation will need to take place to establish need and assistance from child services at the district council to be sought
Y1.8 State of footpaths and lack of cycle ways is a major issue	78% thought this to be an issue	To Parish Council and Highways for a response
Y1.9 Cycle lanes would make a difference to allowing children to cycle more	65% agreed this would make a difference	as above
Y1.10 and Y1.11 child minding facilities for school children	There was an 84% yes result to this question with equal wanting pre school and an after school provision	To be discussed with School Head and governors.

Under 12's

Question	Response	Action
Y1.5 Sufficient amenities for under 12's	63% did not agree	Establish what amenities would make a difference and consult with necessary agencies to move this forward
Y2.3 Attendance at the under 12's disco arranged by the Police	Only a third of those who answered attended	Discuss with police the effectiveness of the disco and whether they require more support from say the Parish Council or

Question	Response	Action
Y2.4 More events and clubs for under 12's at village hall	92% agreed they would like more events and clubs for the under 12's at the village hall	Pass this to the Village Hall Committee for consideration

The questionnaire showed the new playground was a good facility and all those who responded used it. However, there is growing concern about the maintenance of the areas as it has been attracting broken glass and rubbish.

12 – 18's

Question	Response	Action
Y1.6 and 3.2 Sufficient amenities for 12 – 18's	81% did not agree	Establish what amenities would make a difference and consult with necessary agencies to move this forward**
Y3.1 Is there enough for teenagers to do in Woburn?	92% of responses showed there is not enough for teenagers to do	As above we need to establish what the teenagers want and consult with the necessary agencies to move this forward**
Y3.3 I feel restricted due to lack and cost of public transport	62% responses agreed that lack of public transport and the cost were causing them restrictions.	Again further consultation with the young people will establish when and what public transport facilities would make a difference to their lives.**
Y3.4 I feel safe when I am out in the village	92% gave a positive response to this	No further direct action appears to be required, but the result can be highlighted to the police.
3.5 I would use a bike more often if safe cycle lanes and other area were available.	62% gave a positive response	To be highlighted to the Parish Council and Highways department

** The best way to move this forward would be to form a steering group of adults and teenagers to consider these questions.

Y3 Young peoples section – Outdoor Activities (results are given for information)

Suggestion	Response	Action
Y3.6 I would like to see a skating or roller blade park	Almost a 50:50 split	**
Y3.7 I would like to see a BMX park	A 50:50 split	**
Y3.8 I would like to see a motorised biking park here	Only a 4% agreement to this suggestion	No further action is suggested
Y3.9 I would like to see more hard sports areas	75% agreed they would like to see this happen	**
Y3.10 I would like to see more sports coaching here	93% Agreed	**

**To move things further it will be necessary for some Parishioners to form a steering group as suggested above

Y4 Young peoples section – Indoor Supervised Facilities

Suggestion	Response	Action
Y4.1 I would like to see a youth club here	86% agreed	**
Y4.2 I would like to see a drama club here	80% agreed	**
Y4.3 I would like to see an after school club here	77% agreed	This information will be passed to the school as they might wish to action this
Y4.4 I would like to see a music club here	87% agreed	This information will be passed to the school as they might wish to action this
Y4.5 I would like to see a film club here	86% agreed	
Y4.6 I would like to see a summer club here	86% agreed	This information will be passed to the school as they might wish to action this

Suggestion	Response	Action
Y4.7 I would like to see an internet facility here	79% agreed	**
Y4.8 I would like to see an indoor skating or roller blade facility	A 50:50 split	**

**To move things further it will be necessary for some Parishioners to form a steering group as suggested above

The Woburn Parish Plan Steering Group would like to thank everyone who took part in the compilation of the Parish Plan.