



The
Freshford
Parish
Plan.

2008

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The pump at Park Corner

Introduction

This plan has taken nearly two and a half years to bring to fruition, and even now it is more a pathway for further work than it is a destination. The objective has always been to involve as many as we could in the process to reflect the desires and aspirations of our community, primarily but not exclusively in the parish of Freshford.

So it is that we have had four public meetings, each attended by some 100 people who agreed the original committee which set about the task, reviewed and commented on questionnaire and results of local meetings, came together again to listen to and comment on the work of the working groups, and finally gathered to approve the plan.

Over so long a programme it is difficult to keep the same core team: circumstances change and some have found they have had to deal with unforeseen changes in their priorities. Even so, considerable contributions have been made over short timescales – for instance by Catherine Wainwright who almost single handed transferred the information on over 160 questionnaires, each embracing over 60 questions, to electronic form. Altogether over 50 people have been involved in getting to this point, and we are most grateful to them all.

I say ‘we’ because there have been just three others who have contributed throughout and who through the months have met regularly and been unstinting in their support: David Rogers has acted as Deputy Chair and also Treasurer and sometime Secretary, Hugh Delap has been an admirable bridge between the Parish Council and our activities and finally Louise Kirby-Garton who has never been slow in accepting tasks as they came along. Always of good cheer and constructive, it has been a pleasure to have them as colleagues.

Lastly, this process has occurred during a period of many changes: planning permission for development of the Freshford Mill site, the closure of the Post Office and Stores and the establishment of a short term alternative above the surgery, submission for a replacement shop and application for funds to restore the Village Hall which in fact serves several adjoint villages, and appointment of consultants to examine new ways of dealing with highways, roads and footpaths. Several of these projects will require capital, and this feature alone is likely to dominate when and in what order progress occurs. We have tried to include these and other short term matters, but also to point to the issues that will have increasing impact on the task of adapting while keeping the essence of present circumstances.

The Parish Council now takes over the baton in developing implementation, and in ensuring that this plan is regularly reviewed and kept relevant to village needs.

Paddy FitzGerald



Paddy FitzGerald
Chairman



David Rogers



Hugh Delap



Louise Kirby Garton

Methodology & Consultation

At the **first** village meeting in 30th November 2005, a committee and officers were agreed.

The committee determined that the core document would be a questionnaire and over a number of weeks this was developed. It was ambitious in running to 62 questions. An early question was whether the questionnaire should be aimed at individuals or at homes. In the end it was decided to issue the questionnaire to every home, but to allow for multiple responses where family members might have differing views.

The resulting database is very rich in information though for the most part only direct answers have been analysed. The relationships linking different answers remains a possible further stage for analysis.

At the same time a number of meetings of sub-communities based on localities or interests took place. In this way we were able to get some feeling for priorities and also to determine where further work was needed: for instance we discovered the general response over the supply of a skateboard ramp was at variance with the wishes of the teenage members of the village – who almost universally were in favour of this facility. It also became clear that we had missed out considering the use of the agricultural land surrounding the village, provision of housing for the elderly and consideration of the Freshford Inn - all important.

The results of these two exercises (questionnaires and meetings) were reported to a **second** village meeting on 12th October 2006. Through an interactive exercise at the meeting, a number of topics were identified and working groups formed to do further work on these. Examples included facilities and built environment.

With this data to hand, a strategy paper was developed identifying the main issues, to be used by working groups alongside questionnaire answers, and this was circulated to group leaders.



Following many months of endeavour these groups reported back to the **third** village meeting on 21st November 2007. In a final phase the groups developed the short term measures, as well as aspirations for a longer timescale.

Before the final **fourth** village meeting on 19th March 2008 which was convened to hear and agree the content to the plan a meeting was held with the Parish Council to enable them to be forewarned of the content and allow them a formal input to the scheme. As a result they were able to participate in the final meeting as joint supporters.

Finally mention should be made that while it was very difficult to find enough active participants for so many groups, the village meetings were each very well attended.

Topic	Questions										
	a	b									
Vision											
The household	1	2	3	4	5	6					
Communications	7	8	9	10							
Green Energy	11	12	13								
Waste	14	15	16								
The countryside	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Transport	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
Tourism	37										
Neighbouring communities	38										
Health	39	40	41	42	43						
The Church	44										
Employment	45	46	47								
Education	48	49									
Village Security	50										
The Parish Council	51										
Leisure	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59			
initiatives	60	61									

Questionnaire design: Number of questions by topic

The Nature and Character of the village

Most people living in Freshford recognise that it has a distinct character worth preserving largely due to its picturesque setting. This has been acknowledged by residents, writers and visitors for well over 200 years. In the 20th century it has been formally included as part of the Bristol/Bath Green Belt, the Cotswold AONB, and was given two designated Conservation Areas: the village centre and Sharpstone in 1979. These areas were extended in 2007.

The Jurassic belt on which Freshford is located was laid down 150-200 million years ago. This consists of alternating bands of limestone and clay, and as wearing and erosion has taken place, the typical Cotswold-type country of steep sided river valleys and relatively flat hill tops has evolved. Over thousands of years man has gradually removed woodland to create fields for animals and cultivation. Steep sided valleys, too difficult for cultivation, have been left as woodland. Here, and in adjacent parishes, a views is provided by woodland such as Friary Avoncliff Woods in Westwood, Murhill of the parish, the woodlands of the Midford

The village centre of Freshford is located of the river Frome. This developed first subsequently became an Anglo Saxon a medieval village. The church was built at in course of time large houses were built employers. Other hamlets of Sharpstone and spring line and were developed in the 16-18th industry. The farming hamlet of Pipehouse the west of the village after the demise of the In spite of much building in the 20th century, retains its isolation and specific identity. Most in the local oolitic limestone, either as cut unity as well as a charm to the village. This additions to buildings, infill, or any other new scale inappropriate to those already existing. A major intrusion is the derelict Freshford Mill, where the scale of building, and the materials used are out of character with this highly important site, and provide at present, an unsightly blot on an otherwise outstandingly beautiful landscape. Many overhead electricity and telephone lines are also intrusive.



distinctive backdrop to almost all woods in Hinton Charterhouse, Woods in Winsley, and in the west area.

near a prehistoric river crossing into a Roman settlement, and manor, a Norman manor, and then the centre of this community, and nearby by major landowners and Park Corner were established on the centuries for workers in the cloth was located on higher ground in parish of Woodwick in about 1460. each of these communities still buildings have been constructed ashlar or as rubble stone, giving a unity could easily be destroyed if building are in a style, character or

The views both into and out of the individual settlements are one of the chief features of the local landscape, such as the views towards Freshford centre and Sharpstone from Staples Hill, of the whole parish from Winsley Hill and the Avon valley towards Avoncliff, and views in all directions from the important green space of The Tynning, within the centre of the village. It is of prime importance that the fields around the village centre: The Tynning, Galleries, Cleaves,



Crabtree Mead, Ham, Fair Close, Higher and Lower Meads and Great Eatons are untouched by any development, and maintained with grass or appropriate agricultural use. Also that the separate hamlets of Sharpstone and Park Corner are maintained as islands of development within the framework of Sharpstone Field, Nurlton, Upper and Lower Ground, Fern Hills, Lower Woodweeks, and Lower Homewood.

Almost all fields in the parish are now permanent grass. This contrasts with the situation in the 1830s when the area of arable (cultivated) land exceeded the area of pasture, woods and gardens together. The arrangement of fields with distinctive walls and hedges has been constant for well over 200 years, and some boundaries go back to open field enclosure in the 17th century, if not considerably earlier. In the 19th century a desire for landscaped gardens led to the planting of both native and exotic tree species at Freshford Hall, Woodside, Abbotsleigh, Freshford Manor, The Old House and Tynning House. The mixed nature of this tree planting contrasts pleasantly with some unfortunate planting in the 20th century of rows of uniform cypress trees.

be farmed carefully and correctly, the character of the landscape will change dramatically. In the last few years a number of fields within the parish and on its borders have been removed from agricultural productivity to become horse paddocks, or have been over managed as manicured gardens with inappropriate tree planting. With the uneconomic uncertainties of farming, and the sale of some individual fields, these problems could become more acute. The change in farming practice during the last century has led to the redundancy of many farm buildings many of which have been converted into dwellings. There is little obvious maintenance of woodland within the parish (apart from the adjacent Friary Wood), and natural regeneration takes its course.

The predominant farming activities in the village are the keeping of beef cattle and sheep, and the growth of grass for hay or silage. Unless fields continue to

The high priority given by residents to preserving the existing landscape character is an indication of the importance to them of its visual attractiveness. The existing network of small lanes and the meshwork of varied footpaths are well used by residents and visitors alike, and provide an opportunity for observing the rich and diverse natural environment as well as safe thoroughfares. The increase in the number and size of vehicles is not only leading to the destruction of verges, but also to concern for the safety of pedestrians, in particular of children on lanes without pavements. A number of historically interesting road signs, both warning and of direction at key junction points, add to the character of street scenes, and they should be preserved and maintained. Likewise the pump at Park Corner, the pound in Freshford Lane, and fire engine house on Church Hill, are all indicators of a past community that was autonomous and self sufficient. The former autonomous nature of the village is also shown by Freshford and Dunkirk Mills, the Old Brewery, Old Bakery, Old Post Office, former forges, wheelwrights' and garage. Also three former chapels, and former shops and public houses.

For a small parish, Freshford has a wide range of ecological habitats including rivers, streams and field ponds, woods and hedges, large and small gardens, as well as the managed grassland. The rivers Avon and Frome, which join together in the parish, have carved their courses over millions of years. These rivers are well used and maintained and stocked by a fishing organisation located in the village. The Frome meanders from Iford to its confluence with the Avon with banks stabilised by alders and willows. Birds such as herons, kingfishers and dippers are frequently seen, and otters have been reported. The flat lush fields of the flood plain of Ham and Crabtree Mead are often flooded after heavy rain, and provide a safety valve for the Frome water when the River Avon is also in flood.

A stream runs from near the Village Hall, through the village centre to the River Avon. Only part of this stream is now visible and it provides an attractive and interesting feature in Freshford Lane. Because of the easy access to rivers, streams and springs, few artificial ponds were needed apart from some in the high fields of Pipards Farm, where they provided drinking water for cattle and sheep, and by a conduit supplying water to the hamlet of Pipehouse.

Although the parish has relatively small amounts of woodland apart from Cleeves, Hayes and Avoncliff Woods, there is much woodland in the vicinity. These woods have a distinctive flora which includes wild garlic, bluebells, wood anemones, orchids, herb paris and dog's mercury. Photographs taken of the village 100 or so years ago show a less built up, but less wooded village. Many erstwhile hedges have been neglected and have become tree belts, while many are well maintained and show a diversity of shrub species that indicate a long existence. Hedges around the Rudgeleaze, Pond Ground, and Brewer's Leaze near Pipards Farm, have distinctive mature standard trees of oak and ash. Many hedge banks are rich in red campion, and stitchwort, and in places are homes to badger setts and rabbit burrows.

The lack of intensive arable agriculture and the consequent low use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides has probably assisted in maintaining a wide bio-diversity of flora and insects. As a consequence many fields of permanent grassland, such as Upper Ground, Nurlton and Sharpstone Field are particularly rich in knapweed, scabious, yellow rattle, bedstraws and clover. Farmers/landowners might be encouraged to cut hedges at the correct time and with care, and to take hay and silage crops after plants have set seed.

Summary.

- (i) Woodland is an integral part, as well as a vital backdrop to the village landscape.
- (ii) Each settlement (village centre and hamlets) should be maintained as an island within a framework of fields.
- (iii) The character of the landscape is dependant on fields being used for productive agriculture. Agricultural practices and treatments should be used that maintain bio-diversity, encourage wildlife, and will protect walls and hedgerows.
- (iv) Visual eyesores should be improved/removed. These include the Freshford Mill site, plantings of cypress trees and overhead electricity and telephone wires.

Alan Dodge



The People of Freshford

Freshford has some 520 inhabitants living in 270 homes split amongst the hamlets that make up the village. In considering the population one can add an extra 80 households who live outside the strict boundaries of the Parish, but who geographically feel themselves a part of the community. Much of what follows refers to the questionnaire, to which there were 360 respondents from 161 homes.

In the first chart one can see the percentage of respondents to the questionnaire shown by age group, and for comparison the numbers nationally in the 2004 census. While some variability is to be expected, it is clear that compared to national figures Freshford has fewer inhabitants in the 15 to 44 age range, and more in the 45 to 74 age range. Most (79%) of those in the survey expected to stay in Freshford for the 'foreseeable future'.

If this gives a flavour to the population it is interesting to note that only some 13% had other members of the family in the village and only 5% cared for elderly family in the home. This suggests that in general people are born and brought up outside the village, and move into the village as adults. Moreover few children born to parents in the village then remain for their own adult lives.

The surgery is rated as 'a vital part of community life' by 45% and as 'important' by another 31%. 74% were registered with the surgery and 68% walked to the surgery when they visited. When the survey was made the shop was still open, and 63% used the Post Office at the time they visited the surgery; most used the dispensary as well. So there is evidence that the provision of surgery, pharmacy, shop and post office contributes to reduced traffic, and that it is the combination of facilities that is particularly attractive.

Already 60% of those who work do so for most of the time from Freshford or home showing the increasing importance of home as the centre of activities. Most think this is satisfactory. Of all respondents 73% felt it was important to have local work opportunities and 58% felt that affordable housing should be tied to provision of services to the village.

Some 35% of households had been victims of crime and 63% were concerned over levels of vandalism. 93% thought the Police presence was insufficient to deter crime, and in discussions many believed the speed of response from the police was a factor in this.



Picture courtesy of Bath Chronicle

The church is considered by the majority (79%) to be important in creating a sense of community, and about 66% go to church on special occasions, but only 22% are regular church attenders. The Old Bakery was created by public effort and subscription and runs events which have good visibility: in fact some 65% have been to an event here, but 44% would like to see more events in this venue, and many resent the planning restrictions imposed by BANES on its use.

Some 85% are satisfied with the Parish Council and almost the same number think they are effective in the relationship with BANES; they also believe the Council focuses on the right things at the right time. A note of caution is that a sizeable minority (34%) believes the Council does not speak for all in the Parish.

All the facilities have a core of about 13% of respondents who use them regularly, but about 86% use them at some point in the year. Use of Brown's field and the playground are untypical in that about 40% claim never to use them.

In terms of clubs and societies the four most popular are the "Friends of Freshford", Historical Society, Music and Drama Club and the Horticultural club. Many other activities are on offer, but attract modest support. Swimming is the most sought activity that is unavailable in the village.

Cubs and scouts have a hut within Brown's field but despite this both groups have ceased to be active – pointing up the difficulty and importance of maintaining continuity.

Freshford Parish

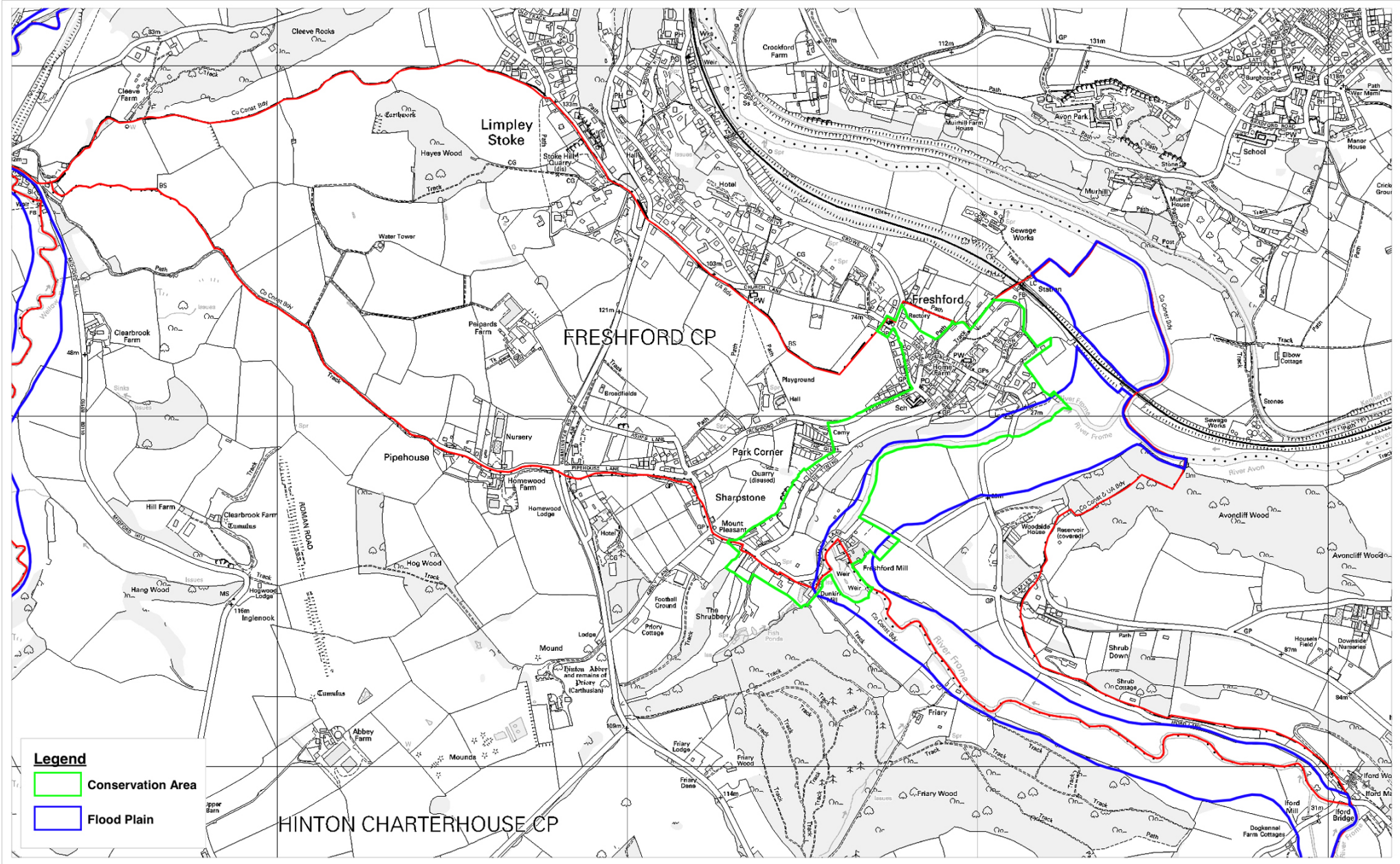
Conservation Area and Flood Plain

Compiled by GJH on 14 February 2008

Scale 1:10000



Bath & North East Somerset Council
Riverside, Temple Street,
Keynsham,
Bristol, BS31 1LA
Tel 01225 477000



The Pressures on Freshford

The central desire of the Freshford community is that the present character, form and attributes of the village should be preserved, and this includes the rural nature of the environment.

No location in the UK is immune from change, and all face the effects of increasing population visible in traffic density, housing shortages, call on services and so on. However one can re-iterate that looking forward the Central Statistics Office is projecting almost stable numbers in the population from birth to 65 year old. This does presuppose balance between immigration and emigration, and any imbalance will be additional to the projections.

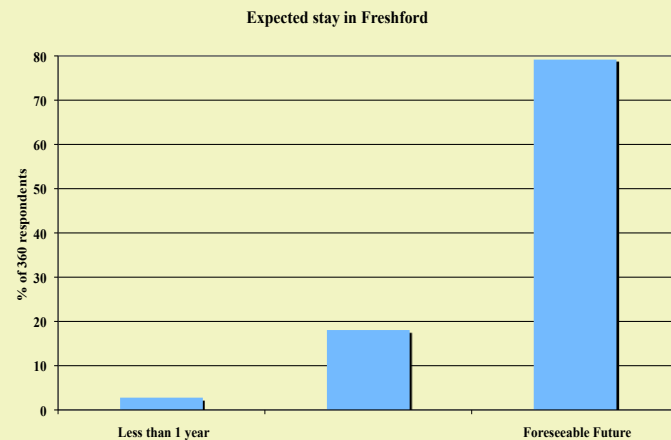
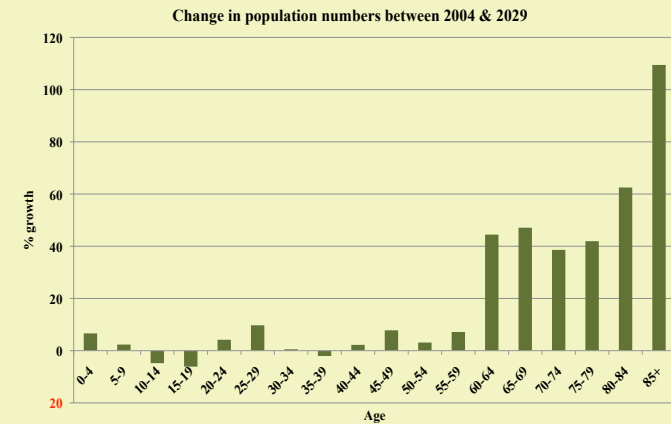
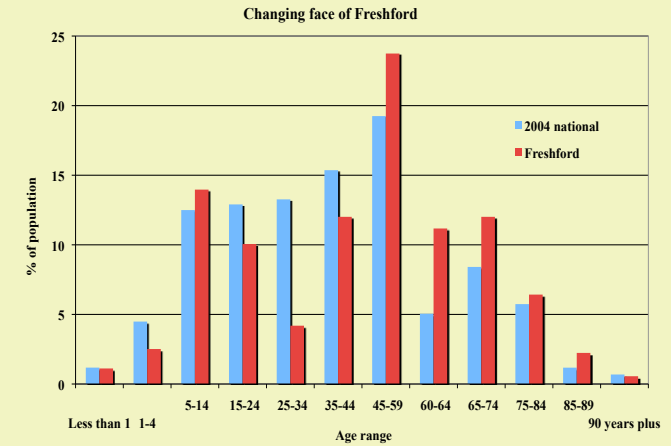
The effect of modern healthcare has been to prolong average life spans, which is why over the next 25 years there will be another 4 million inhabitants, all over the age of 65. The greatest growth will be in the 85 plus age group. These changes will shift the age distribution so that everywhere old age will be a more intrusive component of the environment, perhaps highest in rural locations such as Freshford. This will mean active consideration of the needs of the elderly, but also a programme to preserve the vibrancy that currently is part of the village's attraction.

One component in the lives of the older inhabitants will be less dependency on the motor car – indeed many will not have the health to use them while for others it will be a question of preference. This may offer some alleviation to parking problems but it also places much greater dependency on local resources, as well as on transport to towns and hospitals. This will mean increased store being set on a village surgery and dispensary, on local food outlets, on a Post Office, on a Hall suitable for a range of activities, on an informal meeting place and on better local transport available across the whole day and evening.

However in relation to housing stock it is clear the present inventory does not have much suitable for the infirm or disabled elderly, many of whom would prefer bungalow type housing close to supporting amenities. One solution is for the few sites that may develop in the village to be considered for private housing suitable for elderly inhabitants – recognising that such might lead to the release of larger properties capable of housing younger families to keep the vibrancy mentioned above.

There will also be new demands for supporting services – and these maybe facilitated by new villagers, some of whom will need affordable housing. This is difficult since it is in competition with elderly provision above, but also Housing Associations want such homes in a single group to make their management economic, and Freshford has no brown field sites or infill of sufficient size. It is clear that the solution is to place these on the periphery of the village – relying for their integration in the village on their involvement in village activities...as craftsmen of one sort or another or as carers.

In considering any peripheral expansion prime regard should be paid to ensuring the rural nature of the



village and the central green spaces are preserved. Freshford is not unique but is unusual in being an amalgam of several settlements like islands placed in a sea of green, and this is what gives it its character. Sharing facilities is what brings these settlements together.

But ongoing vibrancy needs to engage other age groups. In some, such as the very young, more robust arrangements for playschool are needed. Primary age children add to the age spectrum, but the school having become very successful is now a victim of this with not enough places to satisfy those who wish to live here. For many of those of secondary age and up to university entry the village appears dull and boring, and while many older residents fear that facilities to address this may imperil the nature of the village, it is time to enfranchise this age group and encourage them to shoulder responsibility for activities they want, such as skate ramps, a meeting room and teenage events.

Finally for the parents of these children life is also changing. One or more of each family is likely to be spending much time working from home, whether for one person businesses or for multinationals. By and large inhabitants of Freshford are well qualified and motivated and there will be scope for harnessing the energy into wealth creating business, perhaps justifying a Business Community Club.

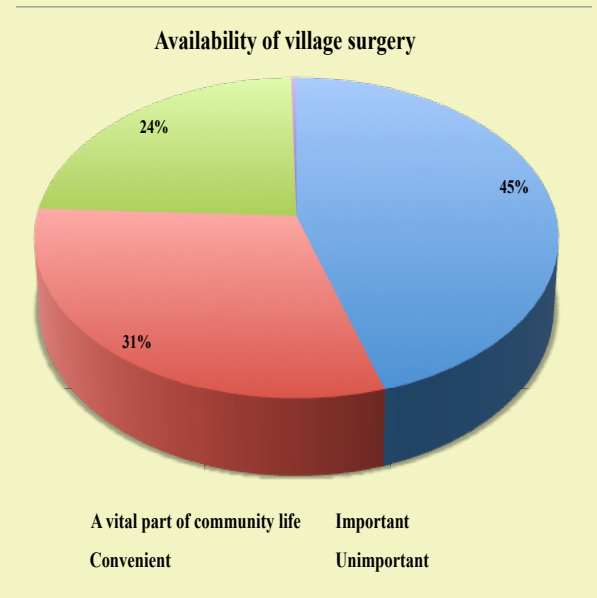
These three mechanisms for interaction: a teenagers 'centre', a business club and an 'all ages' coffee spot will allow much more community interaction and through Hall activities and other facilities provide the sense of belonging and mutual dependence necessary to underpin identity. The new website and proposed journal will provide the information exchange to underpin this.

Changes in working and living practice created in part by the communications revolution will allow more emphasis on the immediate family and offer opportunities for building more grounded families reliant on neighbours for mutual support.

Keeping the attractiveness of Freshford not just for families but for all those who live here adds to the importance of keeping the sense of rural living: that children are safe in moving round the village, that the surroundings remain green, that local produce enters the shop and waste is minimised and does not become an eyesore and that opportunities are grasped for energy recovery from the river.

This vision leads inevitably to a new template for the Parish Council. There can be little doubt that present inhabitants are content with the PC's past performance and activities and with those who support the PC, but by and large the Council has had a defensive posture, reacting and responding to the constant stream of pressures placed upon it. While difficult, the Council will have to change to a proactive role, where it determines the agenda and pursues this. It will achieve this by better grasp over the whole picture and also by considering the interacting nature of facilities. It will need to communicate to ALL village inhabitants (see communications later). More importantly there will be an increased need to initiate new ventures and monitor key old ones: for instance in Facilities and land usage, in the use of website and local magazine, and in taking action when significant activities are threatened by problems in succession over their direction.

As we look forward there are challenges enough, but also scope to keep Freshford as attractive as it has been. Whether the village is able to meet its objective of running hard to stand still and keep what everyone thinks is valuable will in no small measure be a function of how many are prepared to offer time or resources. In the end, the village will be no better than its inhabitants.



Freshford and the Future

Accurately to determine the future is an impossible task, yet it is feasible to anticipate major changes already in prospect and to telegraph their importance as factors in village development.

We have chosen to highlight five such factors we consider as most important:

1. Demographically our population is aging. More people are living longer lives, and since Freshford is a popular place to live, people will want to stay and as they grow older the average age is likely to increase. The Government promotes living in the community generally, but the housing stock is not conducive to elderly occupation and modest increase in provision of suitable housing for the very old is needed. This is true for Freshford where there are few presently over 90 years of age. Facilities too will need to reflect this changing demography. At the other extreme young people find it difficult to afford Freshford, and positive measures to attract needed skills into a village community may be required.
2. The 'green' agenda. This encompasses a much wider span than just global warming, important though this might be. Concern over energy is matched by increasing concern over the source and nature of our food, over the disposal of waste and over the use of land in our immediate environment. A particular issue is how to improve energy efficiency in a village with so many properties constrained by being listed. Following the development of Freshford Mill there is also an issue over how to extract energy from the river. Energy issues will grow in importance.
3. The rapid development of IT and communications technology and its use is creating a fundamental shift in how and where we relate to others. Increasingly people are working from home, even when they are employed by large organisations, and if supported this may lead to a re-creation of village life. While 'small is beautiful' has invaded the world of work, it may now be time to recognise similar benefits of small communities providing mutual support to its members.
4. Despite the above, villages should not become isolated from other communities and will find desirable services and facilities difficult to afford on their own. More direct involvement with adjacent communities will allow sharing to the benefit of all.
5. Pressures will remain for limited development within the village. If new buildings are built on the basis of low cost the visual amenity will be impaired. Finding designs that meld well with present building stock should be a prime criteria for any planning development.



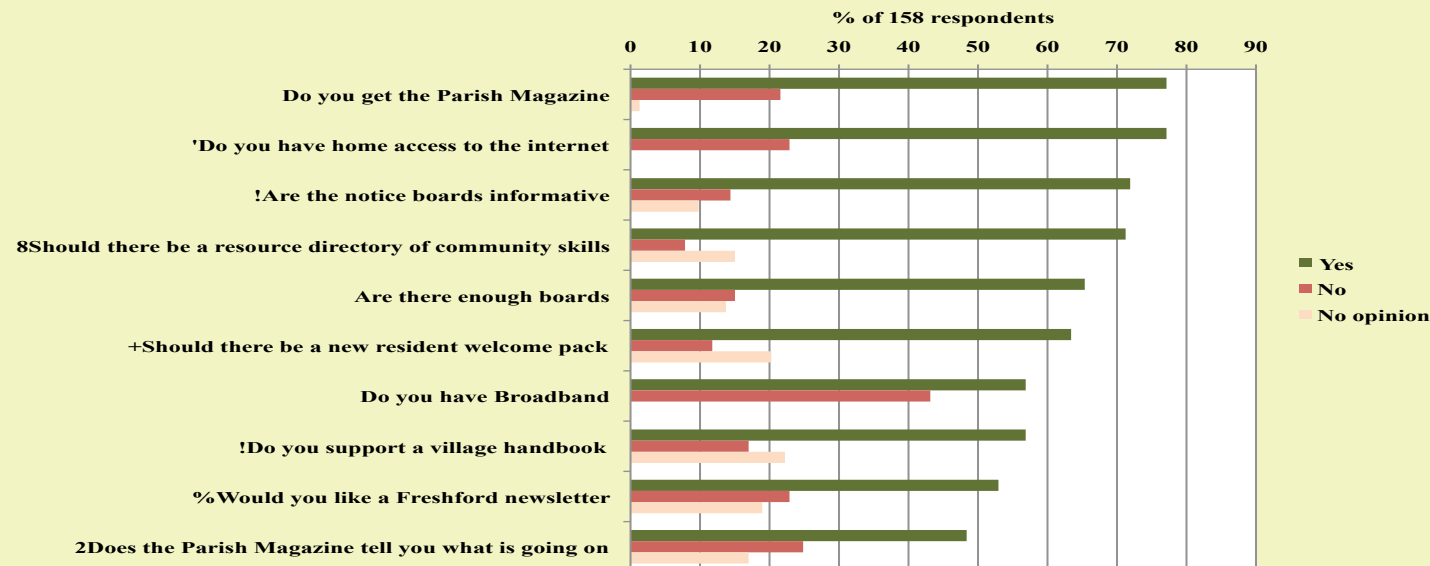
Freshford Mill and the flood plain in spate

These five factors are interdependent, and emphasise the importance of holistic planning. Since opportunities arise which require rapid responses, it will increasingly be necessary to have a clear view of how such opportunity fits into the overall framework.

The Parish Council

The plan committee have identified the need for the Parish Council to change its orientation, and in this regard:=-

1. The work on this plan has shown the village to have a number of facilities, most run by Trusts, which operate largely in isolation one from the other. We suggest the Parish Council have a standing committee embracing Chairs from each of these Trusts to plan their future more holistically. Such a committee might usefully include representatives from adjoining parishes.
2. The same principle applies to land usage. A committee to include major land owners would avoid significant changes occurring without notice.
3. The Council has already approved the principle of six affordable homes, but Housing Associations want these together whereas BANES wants them in the centre of the village. There are no identified spaces which are both sizeable and central, save on green field land. The way forward is difficult. The additional need for elderly accommodation represents an extra tension. It is suggested that the Planning Department of BANES and the Parish Council continue to engage in meaningful talks about both needs.
4. Effective communications and a common up to date accurate calendar of events is a crucial 'must have'. Especial emphasis should be placed on:
 - a. Developing the website to act as the point of first referral for villagers on events, facilities, services etc.
 - b. A village newsletter issued regularly either separate from or incorporating the present church monthly publication.
 - c. A directory of services available, perhaps integrated with a publication for newcomers.



The Groups

In order to widen the inputs to this plan, following the questionnaire and the village meeting that examined its results, the committee decided to implement small group working. These nine small groups reflected the major topics of interest emerging from the public meeting.

The second village meeting allowed the identification of leaders of the groups, and in turn these individuals solicited membership from volunteers and interested individuals. Together they worked to extract the issues of importance, and then they developed short and long term programmes related to these.

In order that a common base for all groups should exist, groups had access to the questionnaire itself and to a strategy document developed by the steering committee for the plan. Group leaders were asked to bear in mind that the answers to the questionnaire had the benefit of wide participation, and that as a result it would be important that their proposals were not at variance with the expressed wishes of this wider constituency.

In this way it was hoped to compensate for the over enthusiasm of any small group with particular agendas.

It was also decided that to try and impose a common format and style would be to restrict the freedom of groups to present their findings in the way they felt most appropriate. The plan thus includes a variety of styles in line with the above, and the committee hopes this will add to the integrity of the final document



The hamlet of Sharpstone

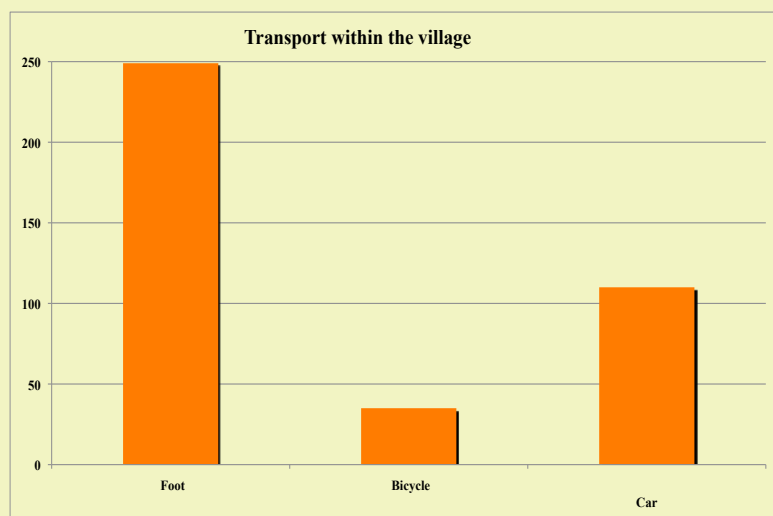
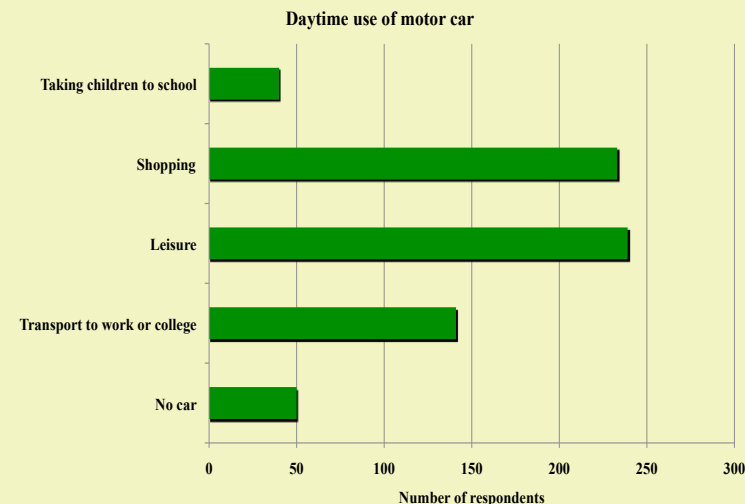
Group: Getting About

The increasing volume – and speed – of motorised traffic through the village, together with a growing demand for parking, suggests that a re-evaluation of the relationship between different modes of getting about, and the greater provision of different types of transport, would be timely. In this respect, Freshford is part of a larger national movement where it is felt that the time has come to address the detrimental effect traffic volume and speed can have on community life. Put within the wider context of increasingly costly, and uncertain oil supplies, and the environmental damage caused by motorised vehicles, the matter becomes more urgent.

The shared space initiative – where no mode of transport has automatic priority over another - is one means by which pedestrians, cyclists and motorists may acquire a mutual appreciation that roads through residential areas are there for equal use of everyone. The synergy such a concept involves would not only improve the quality of life of residents, at present anxious about the amount of traffic with which they have to contend, but it would also improve the physical attractiveness of the village by making unnecessary many of the signs and markings which disfigure roads. It is encouraging that the shared space idea has received such a positive response from many residents.

The removal of the dominance of motorised transport through Freshford would enhance the possibility of other forms of transport becoming safer and more attractive. At its simplest, within the village, it might encourage those who can to cycle or walk more than they do at present. Cycle stands placed, where possible, at strategic points would be of great benefit.

More challenging, but equally necessary, would be the aspiration to increase the numbers of people who make use of public transport to travel outside the village. The questionnaire indicated that a very large proportion of residents use their cars for journeys beyond Freshford. Welcome initiatives such as the school's Travelplan should be complemented by attempts to make public transport a more attractive and practicable alternative to the private car than it is at present.



In some areas of the village, especially Sharpstone, parking for cars poses a significant problem for car owners. Where possible, additional space should be provided, and the most effective use should be made of the garage parking available.

To conclude, a re-balancing of the priority given to motorised transport would bring significant benefits to residents, for while we are all car drivers we are all pedestrians, too. Better public transport, more sympathetic to family needs, would go some way to reducing traffic on our roads, while also helping to address the much larger environmental problems which we all face. Every effort should be made to provide those car owners for whom parking is difficult and sometimes hazardous with safer alternatives. With its plentiful number of well-used footpaths, Freshford offers the recreational walker ample diversity. The challenge it faces with regard to getting about is how best to provide for the needs of travellers of all kinds, while ensuring that the quality of life particular to living in an attractive village is not displaced.

ACTIONS

Short Term: to be completed within one year from commencement

- **Improvement** of existing public transport
 - Investigate the possibility of providing a bus service from Freshford to Bradford-on-Avon
 - Negotiate a fully accessible bus to serve the village with space for pushchairs/wheelchairs/shopping trolleys
 - Increase frequency of bus service, including an evening service
 - Increase bus usage by pupils at Monkton Combe and King Edward's Schools
 - Negotiate and publicise better group/family discounted tickets on the bus and train.
- **Support** continuation of the Link Service
- **Run** a range of social or promotional events to increase pedestrian and cycle presence on the roads of Freshford
- **Redistribute** village walk booklet to all households in the village
- **Install** cycle stands at the church, surgery, school, Old Bakery, Memorial Hall, Browns Field
- **Work** with Freshford School to ensure its TravelPlan meets its target of reducing car travel to and from school by 20%



The problem of large vehicles in narrow lanes

Medium Term: to be completed within one to three years from commencement

- **Determine** the possibility of new allocated Residents' and visitors' parking areas in high-need locations within the parish
- **Determine** the possibility of an accessible pedestrian/cycle crossing (ramps/lifts) of the railway line at the station to serve the far platform and the proposed cycle bridge across the River Avon.
- **Determine** the possibility of a cycle and pedestrian bridge across the River Avon
- **Determine** the possibility of safe cycle and pedestrian link to Hinton Charterhouse and Midford
- **Install** covered cycle parking at the station

Long Term: to be completed in more than three years from commencement

- **Improve** safety of pedestrian crossings/on-road walkways at identified danger spots, through the concepts of ‘shared space’ or other forms of traffic engineering/calming
- **Construction** and completion of any of the following projects which have been proved feasible in the mid-term
 - New allocated Residents’ and visitors’ parking areas in high-need locations within the parish
 - New accessible pedestrian/cycle crossing (ramps/lifts) of the railway line at the station to serve the far platform and the proposed cycle bridge across the River Avon.
 - New cycle and pedestrian bridge across the River Avon
 - New safe cycle and pedestrian link to Hinton Charterhouse and Midford

John Jenkins

The shared space philosophy and what it can do



Group: Facilities

The facilities that currently exist within Freshford provide a feeling of ‘community’ that exists not only within the village of Freshford but also affects the surrounding rural area

including Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse. These villages are not limited to BANES.

The key facilities central to village life are the: -

- o School
- o Surgery & dispensary
- o Shop and Post Office
- o Village hall
- o Church

The support for village life should include all age groups from the new born to the elderly, needs to engender the mixing of all age groups and satisfy the resulting diverse needs.

The main survey findings as regards facilities were to:

- Retain essential facilities within the village
- Enhance support services
- Develop pre-school facilities (e.g. toddler group)
- Develop services for home workers
- Create enhanced social interaction facilities (e.g. café, meeting place)
- Share facilities with neighbouring villages

It was identified, partly through the survey and partly through research, that there are further facilities that are wanted by many that would further enhance the village life. The main elements by age group were:

Age Group	Major Requirements
Young People (0-5)	Playgroup/pre-school facilities
Youth (less than 18)	Meeting place (e.g. café) Youth activities (playground areas)
Home Workers	Business services (e.g. photocopier, fax, temporary workspace) Meeting place (e.g. café) Creche
Retired	Meeting place (e.g. café)



*Village Hall with parking in front and playground to the rear
Would this house playschool and additional facilities ?*

Each of the facilities within the village is managed by controlling committees or by individuals. These processes work individually, but there is a need for greater co-ordination both across facilities within the village and also across the surrounding villages. Utilisation and revenue would both benefit from this.

A key issue that is common across all facilities, with the exception of the village hall, is parking – which is handled in the ‘getting about’ section.

Future Planning

The next steps required for a cohesive plan is to:

- Work with the school to ensure its future and its place within the community
- Support the Village Shop initiative
- To look at the services required in terms of the buildings and sites available
- Consider employment within the community, such as:
 - o A village shop/Post Office
 - o Playgroup/ Pre-school facilities
 - o Social centre providing business services, café etc.
- Use an holistic approach for a long term plan taking into consideration all other aspects of the village, such as traffic, the environment and social elements



The School seen from the busiest crossroad in Freshford

Detail on the Facilities

School

Freshford village school is located in the heart of the parish and comprises an old Victorian building together with a newly built modern style extension and a limited playground area. Parking at the school is minimal. For sports, the children walk to the village hall and also utilise the field behind the hall for outdoor sports.

The school provides education for infant and junior age groups and is a recognised educational success. The majority of children come from Freshford and neighbouring villages: surrounding villages are seeing an increase in the number of young children, which will increase the pressure on an already over-subscribed school.

In order for the school to remain successful it is important for the community to continue to support the school and also for the school to interact with the village. Quality of education and availability of places are key to attracting young families to the village. It is also a potential venue for evening adult education.

A key issue is that the School requires an additional two classrooms to satisfy demands and to obtain further funding. This further funding is required to reduce the pressure on available places at the school. Current lack of space within a conservation area makes it challenging for the school to expand, even though it can be difficult for children within Freshford to gain a place at the school.

Potential options for achieving this aim include:

- Use a portion of the surrounding field for recreational facilities.
- Utilise another area for expansion, and combine a pre-school facility with the infant class elsewhere. A possibility would be to undertake this in conjunction with a village hall refurbishment. This would provide more space within the school and place the younger children alongside the playing field area and away from the traffic adjoining the present school.

Surgery

The surgery currently uses the ground floor of the building attached to the left of the old village stores, with the pharmacy adjoining it in the old village meeting rooms. The lack of a disabled access can prevent local residents from being able to use the surgery, especially as the only access is via steep stone steps, which can be slippery and extremely hazardous. As Accessibility grows in importance within Building Regulations, present arrangements will come under increased pressure.

The Surgery provides health services for Freshford and the surrounding villages, through daily sessions attended by doctors and /or practice nurses. It is a satellite of a main doctors surgery in Beckington. The only way of reaching the Beckington surgery is by car, which increases the importance of retaining this Health service within Freshford. There is also a traffic issue, since in responses to the questionnaire, 68% of users walked to the surgery.

The upper floor temporarily hosts the replacement village Post Office facility, but is in a poor state of repair and unsuitable to double as a shop. The Trust that manages this facility has few reserves and receives only modest rent for its use: the building is in poor shape and needs repairs.

A most important factor, given the popularity and importance of the surgery is how its future is to be secured. There is also scope for new use of part of the building which the surgery does not use. It might be possible to utilise the extra space to provide a location for business services e.g. meeting place, meeting rooms, lounge/café area.



On the right, with car in front is the old village shop now closed. Centre the curved building was the village meeting room but is now the dispensary. To the left on the ground floor is the surgery, with above it the temporary Post Office.

It is possible to see that surgery and post office are accessed by stairs downwards (and then up to the PO) - unfriendly for the frail or disabled.

Opposite the old shop is the school, and all of these sit on the busiest crossroads in the village. There is little parking in any direction.

Shop / Post Office

The old village shop building is opposite the school, and valued by both children and parents for its position. The main village shop/Post Office has closed due to retirement. The space available was restrictive and prevented commercial expansion.

There are plans for a new shop to be built centrally near the village hall with shared parking which gained near unanimous support at the third village meeting for the plan. Such a shop would alleviate the difficult parking situation at the school, and would act as a further incentive to get parking for the school displaced to the village hall car park.

Village shops are generally under threat, though recognised as essential ingredients in village life. The recent loss of a shop in Limpley Stoke makes the existence of a shop in Freshford all the more important, and Limpley Stoke Parish have been very supportive of the proposal for a new shop.

Village Hall

The Freshford village hall is the largest within the wider community and is also used by the surrounding villages. While the village hall is a relatively recent build it was built with a limited lifespan and is now in urgent need of refurbishment if not redevelopment. It is located at the centre of the Parish and has its own car park.

The village hall is fundamental to the Freshford community due to the wide variety of functions held there, including many village activities such as plays, concerts and general meetings. Whilst Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse both have village halls, and can only cater for smaller numbers.

Liaison between the different village hall committees could be used to provide a wider service with increased communications to the community and increase funding opportunities.

Church

The Freshford Church (St. Peter's) is a wonderful example of older church design and houses an organ. It is linked with 2 other parish churches – St. John's in Hinton Charterhouse and St. Mary's in Limpley Stoke. Main services are held in rotation. The Vicar for all three lives in Freshford.

The Church maintains good relations with and provides a pastoral responsibility to the combined villages. This creates a wider feel of community, though this brings parking issues when the service is held at St. Peter's church.

The Church has strong links with the school and fully engages with the children.



The Old Bakery

The Old Bakery is located in the High Street, and is a recently renovated commercial building, which is owned by the Church. BANES placed planning constraints against the recent refurbishment that require the Old Bakery solely to be used for Church events.

In order to enable increased usage the planning constraints need to be reviewed and relaxed. This approach has broad support from the controlling committee and also the questionnaire findings.

The location of the Old Bakery, like that of the church, the school, the surgery and the shop/post office provides significant parking issues.



The Old Bakery (far building) with a former retail shop in the foreground

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The Scout Hut on Browns Field - now in poor condition

Browns Field (in the Parish of Hinton Charterhouse)

Brown's Fields is an area of open land on the outskirts of the village near Homewood Park, which is privately owned by the football club. The grounds include the scout hut and changing rooms. The football and tennis clubs are the main users of Brown's Field.

The field is an underused resource. The owners would welcome other usage of the field to help fund the maintenance of the facility. The Scout Hut is in need of repairs, but at present is barely used and might form a basis for youth facilities.

John Adler

Group: Communications

Summary and overview.

Our local community contains a rich and diverse mix of groups, profiles and individuals, all with different outlooks and interests. There is also a huge amount going on. Freshford is blessed with many individuals who give generously of their personal resources to provide us with fetes, plays, clubs, talks, cycle rides, Christmas markets, garden parties etc. We do very well indeed!

However, the questionnaire reveals that our respondents feel that communication of our news, events and activities could be improved.

- 75% of respondents receive the Parish Magazine
- Over half (53%) of respondents don't think the Parish Magazine tells them what's going on.
- Over half (55%) would like to see a more generic Freshford publication
- 68% support the idea of a residents welcome pack
- 58% would welcome the idea of a village handbook

A well-considered, central communications planning process will provide an opportunity for everyone to form part of a wider, more inclusive Freshford. An improved exchange of information will lead to a greater community awareness and a fundamental sense of belonging.

What already exists? General communications and that relating to specific events are currently both served via the following media:

Parish News

Produced monthly by the Church. This printed publication addresses church issues and areas of wider community interest. It provides a forum for news, events, general interest articles and local advertising. It is delivered to those who subscribe.

Web site (www.freshfordvillage.co.uk)

Fairly recently set up this is an on-line resource hosted and maintained locally that provides a forum for news and events. Presently it is not kept up to date enough to be the point of first reference by villagers.

Notice Boards

A number of notice boards sited around the village used on an ad-hoc basis as a medium for publicising local events and information. These are supplemented by colourful and creative advertising chalkboards that are commissioned.

Local Groups

From church services to toddler groups, PTA meetings, pub users, WI meetings to Brownies, these social groups provide informal forums for the exchange of information and news.

Parish Council

Recently have provided a newsletter relating to their activities. An important addition it fails in being an ad hoc publication produced at indeterminate intervals.

All these methods provide partial coverage. The key problem is a lack of co-ordination.

This means that information rarely reaches everybody in the village all at the same time. In the past this has led to occasions when events have been planned for the same day leading to fixture clashes / congestion and, ultimately, disappointment and frustration amongst organisers and attendees alike.

Objective

We need to produce a coherent and practical approach that encourages a consistent, representative and highly functional information exchange system for all within the Freshford community.

Recommendations

Communication is at the heart of village affairs. It deserves to have a champion within the PC and to be an activity whose progress, health and economics are regularly appraised by the PC. In particular there needs to be a single hand overseeing the various communication channels described below, and an editorial group separate from the PC itself.

There is, of course, an opportunity here to get together with Hinton Charterhouse and Limpley Stoke which would help to maximise the precious resources of all three villages.

The Future For Freshford Media

Freshford (Limpley Stoke & Hinton Charterhouse ?) Village Magazine

An evolution of the existing Parish Magazine to provide a better balance of church and secular issues with a more contemporary and dynamic design and editorial style. Greater depth and breadth of content and a central events calendar updated each issue ensuring a wider appeal and relevance and a greater penetration across our wider community. Free distribution funded through government grants and an increased appeal to advertisers. This directly addresses the ultimate objective

Web site

An expanded web site to act as an information centre featuring a central events calendar, contact details, digital versions of features appearing in the village magazine supplemented by additional latest news. A contemporary resource for a contemporary community.

Ancillary features could include chat rooms and forums for young and old with mutual interests. This provides a great opportunity for contact and inclusiveness within our community especially for those who can't get out much. (An informal system of initially helping those who aren't familiar with the technology could easily be put in place)

Advertisers in the magazine would also be given a presence on the web site, increasing the exposure and therefore the perceived value for money.

Notice Boards

Attractive and charmingly low tech, they will remain an important publicity tool for events and information. They will be used to publicise the communications and events process and contact details. They should also promote the web site as the best source of up to date information.

Local groups

Encouraged to provide news, stories and other relevant information for use across village media.

‘Hub in the Pub’ / Reclaim The Local

In addition to ad hoc events a quarterly formal event based in the village pub providing a forum for debate on local issues and an opportunity for local people to meet. Could also try to generate interest in regular pub based social activities - quiz nights etc.

New residents welcome pack / Village Directory

A new residents welcome pack to be placed in every home when it’s sold or let. This will include the local directory that lists emergency phone numbers, school, doctors, water, electricity, buses, trains etc. along with other useful information about shop and post office opening hours (time of post collections), recycling etc.

Next Steps

To put into place the recommendations made in this section of the report will require a short term but significant level of commitment and effort from a small group of dedicated people who will be needed to make up the working group.

- Establish working group
- Create existing event calendar
- Identify initial broad user groups
- Identify and summarise potential areas of need and past clashes
- Engage with existing providers and influencers (Parish Mag, Webmaster, church, council, school...)
- Agree action plan
- Appoint editorial team and section heads
- Create and circulate questionnaire asking for feedback on desired magazine / web site content
- Gather, collate, publish results on web site
- Secure funding commitments
- Develop revised magazine format based on feedback from community.
- Agree new magazine design
- Review web site design and seek some coherence in navigation and design.
- Gather information, features, compile events calendar for first issue.
- Pre-sell magazine to advertisers
- Draft first issue and revised web site
- Publish and enjoy

Louise Kirby-Garton

Group: Employment

Analysis from the answers to the questionnaire revealed some interesting facts:-

- The major attractiveness to living in Freshford was not about work, which was a poor fifth in the ranking.
- Most residents use their cars for shopping and leisure whilst only about 20% use them for work.
- Of the 356 respondents more than 20% worked in Freshford, which has very few employers, (The Pub, the Shop, Homewood Park Hotel, Rentokil Plants, Mills Landscaping, The Surgery and local farms, providing in total only a few jobs). Most of these were home workers working either for themselves or for major companies from home. 26% worked locally in Bath and just under 20% worked outside of the local area.

The consequences of these facts are important to understand

- The balance between those in work, those seeking work and those retired is critical for the general well-being of the society. Assuming the balance is about right now we need to be aware of changes in the future that may dislocate it.
- Finding work for the poorly qualified young and local part time work is, and will continue to be a challenge to be addressed.
- The examination of national trends in employment, particularly with respect to the changing retirement age for women, the growth in flexible employment, - including all types of working arrangements such as job sharing; flexible hours; working from home; and hot-desking will be of generally positive interest both to our older workers and to our young families. There is also much national evidence of many more people working on into their 70s than has ever been the case before. Their advice and expertise has rarely been in such demand
- The growth of social enterprise is becoming increasingly important to UK village economies, of which there are some excellent examples providing interesting employment for all ages in villages across the UK. We expect our new shop will be a typical shining example.
- Speculation on radical changes in work in the next 10 years is likely to be wrong but it is likely that employee jobs will remain the bedrock of employment, more jobs will be appropriate for the older community and the growth in the many forms of flexible employment can only provide positive opportunities. There are of course a number of actions that we can consider in both the short and longer term to further improve employment opportunities for village inhabitants, of all ages.

ISSUES	SHORT TERM ACTION	LONGER TERM ACTION
Home Working	Publish on website register of skills and interest.	Establish a community business club/meeting place for home workers to provide social contact and networking.
New Ventures	<p>Set up a working group to explore types of small businesses that could be easily set up in the village.</p> <p>Establish a small fund administered by the PC to encourage the development of appropriate new employment opportunities in the village.</p>	<p>Identify local buildings/land that could be used for incubating new businesses.</p> <p>Promote local business development in Freshford. Establish “Village Skills” training, around environmental projects and village improvements.</p>
Part Time Employment	<p>Establish a register to provide local childcare/ parent care to allow some part time working.</p> <p>Advertise all local part time jobs on website</p>	

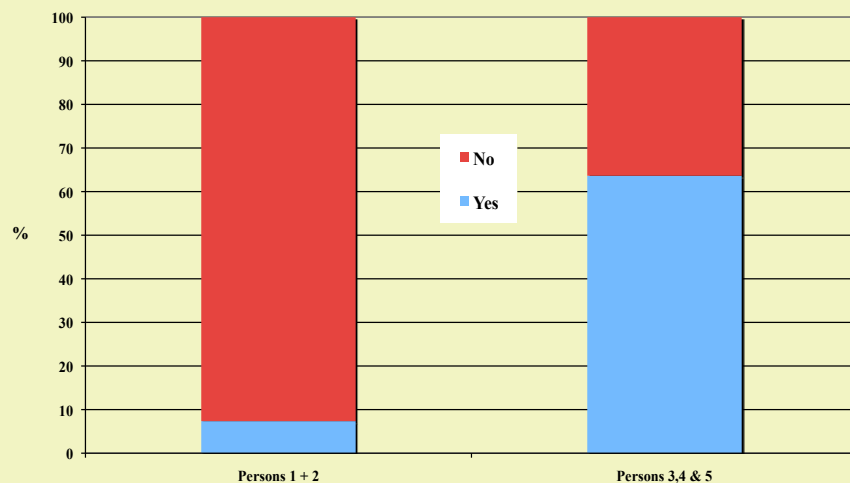
Group: Children & Youth

The issues surrounding Children and Youth, in addition to being covered in the questionnaire were further reviewed through a series of interactive discussions with representatives of the different age groups. They were given the opportunity of discussing ideas in small groups and then all together. They were encouraged to explore what they wanted under different headings, facilitate it and then come together with a consensus view.

Young people would like more facilities and activities. There is, in particular, large support for developing the playground behind the hall for the under-nines. There was also a request to provide a more regular meeting place through a village social club with pool tables, such as at Westwood, or a youth kiosk. Many young people would like a skate board ramp, and more activities such as family picnics, barn dances, parties and bands in the hall.



Q57b Desire for skateboard ramp by 'age'



Person 1 & 2 will in most cases be the parents, while Person 3, 4 & 5 will be younger members of the family

Children and young people have the same rights for their views to be expressed as any other member of the community: working with young people to explore the community in which they live has uncovered, and will continue to do so, new problems and challenges which can be addressed immediately. Involving young people can bring a fresh perspective and new ideas regarding ways of tackling issues within the village. Their involvement means that projects can be designed on actual rather than presumed needs and with full youth participation. Such involvement will give the young people of our village the chance to gain ownership of projects and be valid members.

Environmental projects are a good way to get young people interested their surroundings. Whilst there are a considerable number of activities and clubs in the village, over ten active, very few cater for the needs of young people. There are a number of benefits to involving children and young people in consultation and projects, both to young people and to the wider community. Young people can build on existing skills and develop new ones; they may better understand local issues. There is a wider benefit to the community including fostering a more vibrant local democracy through the active involvement of children and young people.

AGE GROUP	ISSUE	SHORT TERM SOLUTION	LONG TERM SOLUTION	
Primary	Safety	Provide temporary road crossings at three key points – Glebe to Memorial Hall, Freshford Lane to School, and Sharpstone Lane to High Street.	Provide integrated solution with the village Shared Space Initiative.	
	Facilities	Improve playground facilities for under nines.	Have a balanced inventory of playground equipment for the primary age group.	
	Activities	More organised activities for families in playing field e.g. picnic and rounders, spaces.		
	Communication		Establish under-eleven section on village website.	
			Establish young people' section in all relevant media, use what's on; items for sale/swap; school news/summer job offers, etc	
			Ensuring complete village mobile phone coverage for easy parental contact..	

AGE GROUP	ISSUE	SHORT TERM SOLUTION	LONG TERM SOLUTION
Youth (11 – 15)	Recreation	Identify an area that can be unobtrusively well lit for informal groups.	Provide youth based meeting place.
		A meeting place hut on Browns Field.	Permanent village youth base.
		Look for suitable unused buildings/farm/pub etc.	
		Provide area of rough ground for mountain biking.	
		Enlist volunteers to widen village youth sports activities.	Dedicated activities equipment in association with the village youth base.
		Encourage/recruit youth leaders.	Skateboard ramp on playing fields.
		Youth Club extend the age group up from 14 to 17 years of age.	Recruit/train village youth leader.
	Youth led village projects		
	Develop appropriate initiatives.		
	Village Involvement	Set up a number of adults and youth village projects	
PC to form a youth sub committee – youth counsel comprising young people, counsellors and interested villagers, dedicated to youth activities.			

Group: The Built Environment

There are sixty listed buildings or parts of buildings in the parish of Freshford. The whole of the parish is in the Green Belt and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Responses to the questionnaire emphasized that any change must be sensitively done but did not presume that good contemporary building cannot be introduced and live happily alongside the older. The very recent reappraisal and extension of the Freshford & Sharpstone Conservation Area (CA) supports the opinion that any new building or alteration to existing buildings, whether within or adjacent to (and therefore capable of affecting) the CA must be viewed with great care. The limits of the Housing Development Boundary (HDB) will mean that any new buildings must, in almost all cases, be built on 'in-fill' sites.

But the expression 'The Built Environment' covers also the other man-made parts of the parish: walls, utility lines and pipes, pavements, fences, lighting, signs and sign-posts and indeed all those things which are necessary for the movement and parking of the car and bicycle. The effect of the car, in particular, on the appearance of the village is enormous – whether by its parked presence on the street or the off-street parking areas and garages which are so widespread as to require special measures to contain them. The shared space initiative which will demote the importance of the car is the principal measure being taken to tame it.

The dry-stone walls of the parish must be maintained and retained and proposals to move or remove them to cater, almost inevitably, for the car must be resisted.

Street lighting should be effective, but subtle. In fact, there was not a great call in the questionnaire for either more or less lighting but there is a minority of people who only feel safe if the lighting is adequate. By the Parish Council's (PC) direct funding of street lighting it is possible to meet that need sensitively.

The public utilities must be encouraged, by whatever means, to bury any new pipes and lines and when replacing old ones to do so also.

The recent rash of road signs must be reversed. Again the introduction of the shared space concept will see many of these being removed; but it would be a shame if the older more elegant cast-iron direction posts could not be smartened and retained. The PC has allocated funds to share with B&NES the cost of doing this.

In summary, it behoves all of us to ensure that the built appearance of the village is not just maintained but improved. We have it in our own hands to ensure that the parts for which we are personally responsible are kept up to scratch and that the public parts receive all our support in achieving the same aim.



Proposals for the Built Environment

Short term - up to one year

New shop and PO: Ensure that the new community shop is a credit to the community in architectural and visual terms as well as being the best in meeting the community's needs

Cycle parking: Press for the provision of more cycle parking places at the station and elsewhere in a style that is in keeping with their surroundings

Street lighting should be effective, efficient and its appearance in keeping with the surroundings. It should be kept within the care of the Parish Council as at present

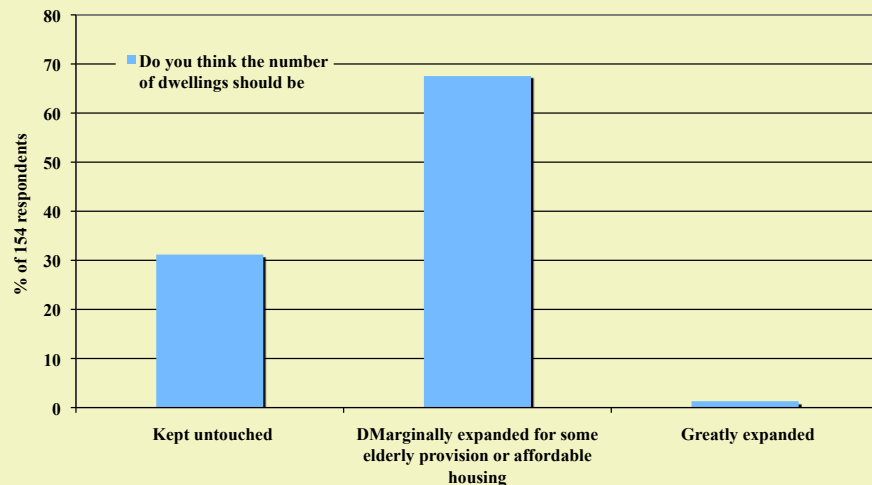
Dry stone walls: Retain and maintain all dry stone walls. Discourage breaching of any such walling for access other than at existing gateways and entrances. Consider very carefully any proposals for removal or changes to existing walls

Public utility lines and pipes: Encourage the burial of all public utility lines and pipes. For example, pipes and lines should go below walls rather than up and through them

Fencing: repair and maintain existing metal post and rail, resist and encourage replacement of chain-link and the like



Number of dwellings in the village



Medium term - from 1 to 3 years to complete

Shared space: Link with the 'shared space' initiative to ensure that all the physical aspects of it are appropriate - materials, finishes, colour

Bus shelters: Agree sites for shelters (e.g. St Peters, School, Rosemary Lane) and liaise with the PC, B&NES and the bus companies to ensure that any shelter is of good design as well as appropriate

Long term - more than 3 years to complete

Affordable housing: Probably the most pressing need in the parish. Having settled on sites the quality of the housing must be the very best that the budgets can stretch to

New Building: Continuously press for any new building or renovation to be of the best quality and suitable. There should be no presumption against the modern whilst it must respect the surroundings and the Conservation Area character. The PC reviews and vets all planning applications as a matter of routine but it is up to everyone to be aware of what is happening in their neighbourhood and commenting, constructively, on any applications to change it

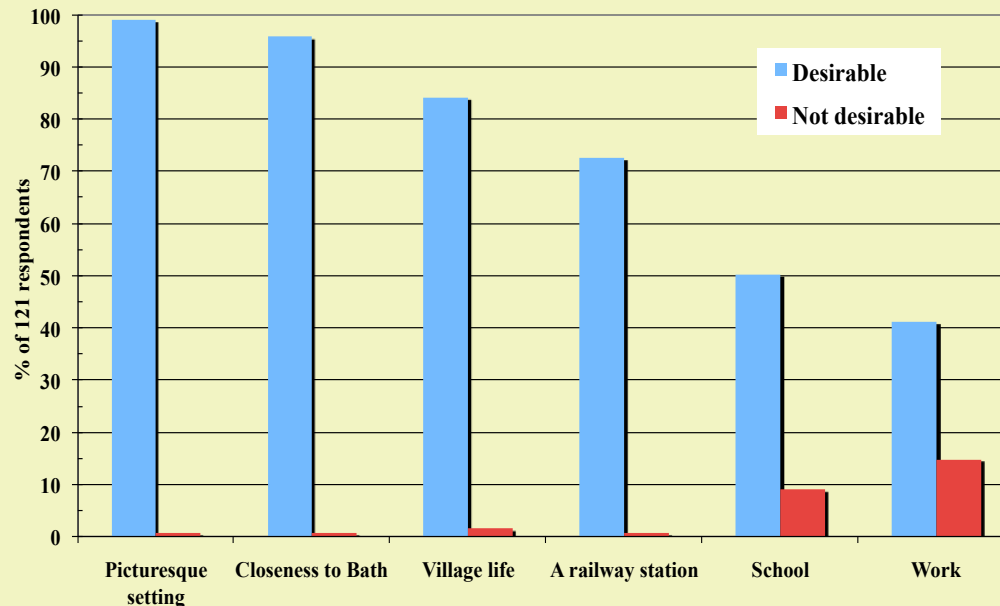
Footpaths and pavements: In the context of the shared space initiative, pavements may be reduced considerably in extent and number. Where they are required they must be of natural materials

Foot and cycle bridge across the river to link with the canal footpath

Ramp across the railway lines at the station



Q22 Attractions of Freshford



The Natural Environment

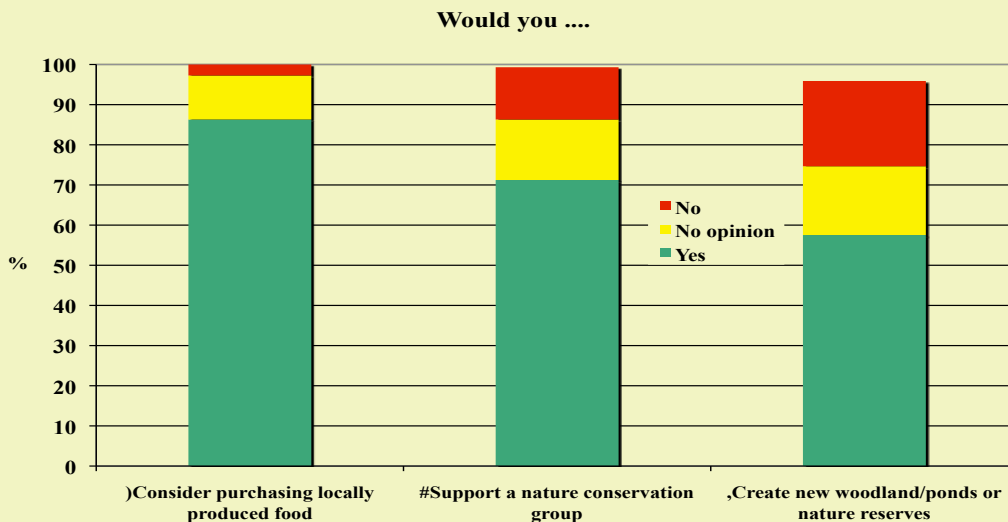
Short term - Projects involving minimal cost:

- Organise a series of regular guided walks to explore and discover more about our local natural environment.
- Make available the Village Walk Booklet (i.e. from Surgery/ P.O/ School)
- Organise a range of social or promotional events (i.e. alongside Village Fete or Friends of Freshford events) to discover, explore and celebrate all aspects of our natural environment.
- Set up and support local wild life group or British Trust for Conservation Volunteers initiatives (i.e. getting involved in national bird counts or hedgerow planting or taking up opportunities to discover traditional countryside skills e.g. dry stone walling & hedge laying)
- Working in conjunction with Freshford School on wildlife and natural environment projects.
- Investigate and record the diversity and variety of locally occurring flora and fauna.

Medium Term - Projects involving some cost and enthusiasm.

- In conjunction with local landowners, ensure continued safe access to green spaces and the entire local footpath network for present and future generations.
- In conjunction with local landowners, negotiate a policy of sensitive preservation of verges and hedgerows as vital habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.
- Replace village litter bins with separate bins for recyclable materials. Suggested locations: Memorial Hall, Browns Field, outside school.
- In conjunction with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust or Avon Wildlife, construct community composting facility for green garden waste.
- Establish a village pond to attract and encourage wildlife.
- Establish a Butterfly Garden to redress loss of butterfly habitat,
- Initiate a programme of hedgerow planting using native species, over time replacing existing barbed wire fencing with natural hedging and creating habitat and shelter for wildlife.
- Create an easy to use facility for lift/ car sharing to reduce the impact our cars have on the local and global environment. (liaising with the “Transport” and “Getting About” groups.)
- Introduce a Garden Sharing Scheme whereby those with under-used gardens could be encouraged to “share” their garden with other local residents who are keen to garden but do not have the opportunity to do so.
- Introduce a policy of appropriate lighting to avert excessive light pollution.
- Establishment of “Village Orchard” through the purchase of a large quantity of a variety of fruit trees for distribution at cost price throughout the village.

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Longer Term - Projects requiring some cost, lots of energy and enthusiastic commitment:

- Establish village allotments providing local residents with an area of land on which to grow fruit and vegetables.
- Set targets and implement strategies to significantly reduce our carbon footprint as a community.
- Introduce an ongoing schedule of events for all ages related to our natural environment.
- Explore the possibility for local generation of power for the village e.g. using water or wind power. Encourage the preservation of water i.e. swift reportage of water leaks, rainwater harvesting and the installation of water butts, and use of “grey water” for garden irrigation.

Candy Harrison



Short Term Action Plans

Getting About	Facilities	Communications	Emplo
Promotion of "shared space" project	Develop shop project	Appoint communications person on parish council	Develop ideas on h
Agree a minimum number of road signs in "cast iron" style	Review scout hut and develop proposal in the context of youth facilities	Develop 'editorial' board	Locate possible me shop
Obtain a bus service to Bradford on Avon	Examine need for toddler group	Introduce 'village' magazine	Develop register of (village handbook
Cycle stands at key points e.g. station	Consider Hall future in terms of school needs	Develop website	Enable a childcare
Address need for bus and train covering regular service including evenings	Progress with BANES constraints on Old Bakery use	Provide notice boards with same information at key points	Advertise local par website
Village walks booklet	Develop overall facilities co-ordination body	Initiate village handbook	
With other villages consider A36 crossing	Secure future of surgery and pharmacy	Implement central village calendar of events	

ment	Youth & Children	Built Environment	Natural Environment
ome workers	Promotion of "shared space" project	Push for utilities to be underground	Pursue bridge over canal
eting place/coffee	Find 'safe' crossing to A36	Develop new shop	Control lighting over very late hours (including station)
f skills available (?)	Obtain a bus service to Bradford on Avon	Keep street lighting as it is, minimising light pollution	Arrange regular monitoring of river quality
register & service	Develop youth based social club e.g. using scout hut	Preserve dry stone walls	Consider central village energy purchasing
t time jobs on	Create village skateboard ramp	Pursue bus shelters at key points	Maintain access to river, including at weir
	Improve playground	Develop strategy for infill and use of green space in village	Village walks booklet
	Negotiate public transport to cover evenings	Develop permanent 'coffee shop' facility	Develop village composting facility

Implementation

The lengthy process of producing this plan and allowing so many people to contribute to it has meant that the number of items identified for implementation is large – yet all of these have been derived in a way that ensures they do not reflect the views of just one or two people with special agendas.

We have been careful not to be prescriptive about implementation. We have produced a community based document but it is the province of the Parish Council to fix priorities and pursue implementation.

We would suggest that a number of issues should be considered for each item:

1. Is there a “product champion” in view ? Past experience shows that at a minimum such a person must exist if the project is to succeed. It still maybe that enough people are not forthcoming to support this person, but if there are no takers to lead the project it will founder.
2. Are there the financial resources to enable the project ? It may require a feasibility project looking at likely sponsors and amounts they may provide. Are such funds only available for the project in mind, or is there a need to prioritise which project should be supported.
3. In what way does this project support the longer term aspirations of the Council ? Attractive short term projects can be implemented at the cost of others with more strategic relevance.

And for the project portfolio as a whole,

4. Is the diet of new projects digestible ? It maybe a question of limiting innovation according to finance and people available. Starting too many new hares running is a recipe for many initiatives failing.
5. What are our arrangements to ensure continuity of effort. Sooner or later the original innovator will wish to pass on the baton. This is a time of great risk for the activity or resource in question, and the parish has examples already - for instance the village handbook – where it used to exist, is still lamented, but none stepped up to the plate quickly enough to keep it going.
6. Finally how will this plan be kept up to date ? In the world of commerce an annual rolling review is frequently used, but press on those prepared to contribute may mean that a 3-5 year review is more practical. Again we would stress that the important factor is that the issue should be resolved, or it maybe that reviews dissappear through inaction.

Thanks

We are indebted to ***Quartet Community Foundation*** for the funds that have enabled us to complete this plan, and to ***Jacqui Ward*** who as ParishPlans Officer of Community Action RCC has been a continuing source of help and advice. Her workshops have permitted networking with other planning groups and a process of learning for the team.

Plans have also to reflect issues in Local Authorities, and ***Andy Thomas*** has been of immense use in encouraging us and in enabling us to get inputs and resources. We are grateful particularly for the two maps provided by BANES and for some discussion over the problems of changing demography.

Finally thanks to our own Parish Council and to its ***Chairman Stuart Campbell*** for encouragement and support over a long process. Much appreciated.

Copies of this report and of supporting documents will be available on a CD from the Freshford Parish Council Clerk, or from the village website www.freshfordvillage.com

Photographs provided by Brigid Baker, Louise Kirby-Garton and Paddy FitzGerald

