



Mendlesham Parish Plan



December 2008

FOREWORD

This independently prepared Parish Plan will be a valuable and authoritative document for future planning needs within the Parish and will also be used as evidenced based information by the District Council (Mid Suffolk) for planning issues and decisions.

The Parish Council acknowledges the work done by Roger Drew, ably supported by other volunteers who formed the Steering Group to deliver the Plan to the Parish. Many thanks to the Steering Group and to those people, who took the time to respond to questionnaires, attend public meetings and otherwise contributed to the consultation process devised by the Steering Group.

The cost of the process has not been cheap and we can be grateful to County Councillor Clover for his support from the County Council locality fund, for a generous donation from the Community Council – who also supported the cost of the original Millennium Survey and to Suffolk County Council for their practical support in the youth survey. The total cost was underwritten by the Parish Council but the actual cost to the annual precept has been minimised by the above support.

The Steering Group have separately suggested an Action Plan, which they have derived from the consultation process, for the whole of the Parish to embrace. Where possible the Parish Council will take the lead but we will be looking for volunteers with the appropriate skills to take the issues forward. This is an important time for the Parish - we now have an update of wants and needs, let's take up the gauntlet, make a few things happen and reap the benefits of the improvements made.

from Paul Allen, Chair of Mendlesham Parish Council

SUMMARY

This document is the new parish plan for Mendlesham. It updates the Community Action Plan that was produced in 2002. It draws on a wide range of consultation activities with community members including:

- The household survey conducted in 2000
- Consultations through existing events, e.g. the Street Fayre
- A number of specific meetings
- A questionnaire among parish organisations and businesses
- A targeted consultation with young people

It is intended to identify our community's needs and to present them in a way which gives clear evidence of local priorities to guide decision-makers.

It is organised in two parts. The first part is a report which identifies priority issues based on the consultations carried out. It concludes that Mendlesham is a great place to live, containing a vibrant array of organisations and businesses. It also identifies a number of areas where actions are needed to maintain and improve the parish. The second part of the report is an action plan which seeks to identify the actions needed for these issues to be addressed. It is important to stress that the action plan does not 'belong' to the steering group, whose work is complete, now that the plan has been produced. Rather, it needs to be owned by the community, in general, and, in particular, by those bodies with responsibility for implementation, such as the Parish Council. A great deal of work will be needed to implement the action plan. It is essential for this to happen if the plan is to produce real benefits for the people of Mendlesham.

Based on the consultations conducted, the steering group have concluded that there are three 'big ideas' for action in the longer term.

- **Big Idea 1** – improved facilities for young people
- **Big Idea 2** – strategic development of the school/community centre as a single parish asset for the benefit of all in Mendlesham
- **Big Idea 3** – improved opportunities for walking and cycling in the parish

In addition, the steering group has identified five 'quick wins' which it considers could be achieved in the next 12 months. These could be included in current budgeting plans, e.g. those of the Parish Council. The steering group believes it is essential to deliver some 'quick wins' from the parish planning process in order to build further credibility and to counter the scepticism that exists in some quarters that processes like this do not produce change in practice.

The proposed 'quick wins' are:

- Development of ten-year strategic development plan for the School/Community Centre site
- Establish a pedestrian crossing outside Mendlesham Primary School
- Update and reprint the leaflet of circular walks in Mendlesham
- Further improvements to Millennium woodland, including removal of barbed wire, improved disabled access, bat/owl boxes and bird feeding station
- Leaflet from the Parish Council explaining what they do and their processes

It would not have been possible to have developed this plan without the commitment and enthusiasm of a large number of people. We now need to channel that enthusiasm into turning the ideas in this plan into reality.

INTRODUCTION TO MENDLESHAM

The Parish of Mendlesham is located just west of the A140 Ipswich to Norwich Road, 19 miles from both Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. Stowmarket Railway Station, on the main line to London is within easy reach. The Church tower can be clearly seen just north of Mendlesham Mast.

With a population of 1200, the parish consists of two picturesque villages, Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green and also outlying hamlets and houses.

The Parish has many historic and interesting buildings. The beautiful Church of St Mary the Virgin, dating from 1086, contains an ancient armoury. There is a conservation area in the heart of the village containing attractive historic properties of all sizes. There are many footpaths and the Mendlesham Millennium Woodland for leisure and recreation.



The Primary School and Community Centre, with playing fields and tennis courts, is a modern development close to the centre. There is an excellent health centre covering the district. Mendlesham Green also offers play facilities and a scout hut.



The Parish of Mendlesham is a lively community and is home to more than 60 businesses and recreational organisations. An Annual Street Fayre is organised by the Community Council to raise money for the Parish. It attracts visitors to the village from a wide area. Businesses in the parish include a village store, two public houses, and a fish and chip shop.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISH PLAN

What is a Parish Plan?

A parish plan, through a process of consultation, identifies a community's needs. It provides an opportunity for citizens to have a say in how their local area and services are managed. It provides clear evidence of local priorities to guide decision-makers.



Why does Mendlesham need one?

Mendlesham's Parish Council identified the need for a parish plan to guide their work and to provide clear documentation of the local community's wishes and needs. Such documentation is increasingly needed when seeking to raise funds for community projects. The existing community action plan, developed in 2002, was considered to need updating.

How did we go about it?

An initial community meeting was held on 14th March 2008. This meeting, facilitated by Annette Gray from Suffolk ACRE, decided that a Parish Plan should be developed for Mendlesham. It was agreed to establish a steering group to lead this process, consisting of volunteers from the community. Although the steering group included two Parish Councillors and received funding for the process through the Parish Council, it functioned quite independently.

Two key decisions were taken early on. First, the steering group decided that it was not able to develop a village design statement and referred this important issue back to the Parish Council. Second, the steering group recognised that this process was really an updating of the community action plan rather than developing a new plan from scratch. In particular, the steering group was able to draw on results of the survey conducted in 2000. For this reason, the steering group decided not to conduct a new village survey. This decision meant that the steering group was able to produce the plan in a relatively short time and without having to seek significant additional financial resources.

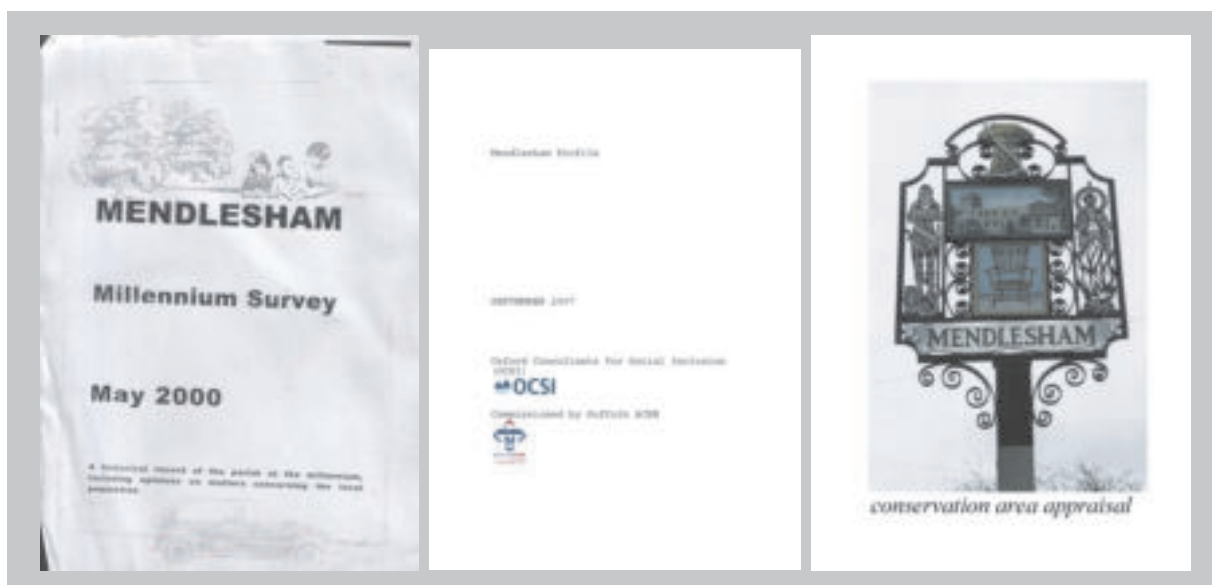
The steering group consulted with the community in the following ways:

- Through existing events, such as the parish open day, the annual parish meeting and the Street Fayre
- Through attending consultation meetings organised by others, e.g. the Safer Mid Suffolk meeting organised by the police
- Through administering a questionnaire to 67 parish businesses and organisations. Two thirds (44) responded.
- Through a focused consultation with children and young people. This included members of the steering committee consulting with members of Rainbows and children at Mendlesham Primary School and Bacton Middle School. It also included a questionnaire completed by almost 50 young people aged 11-19.
- Through open community meetings in both Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green to discuss emerging findings
- Through a community walk between Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green in September



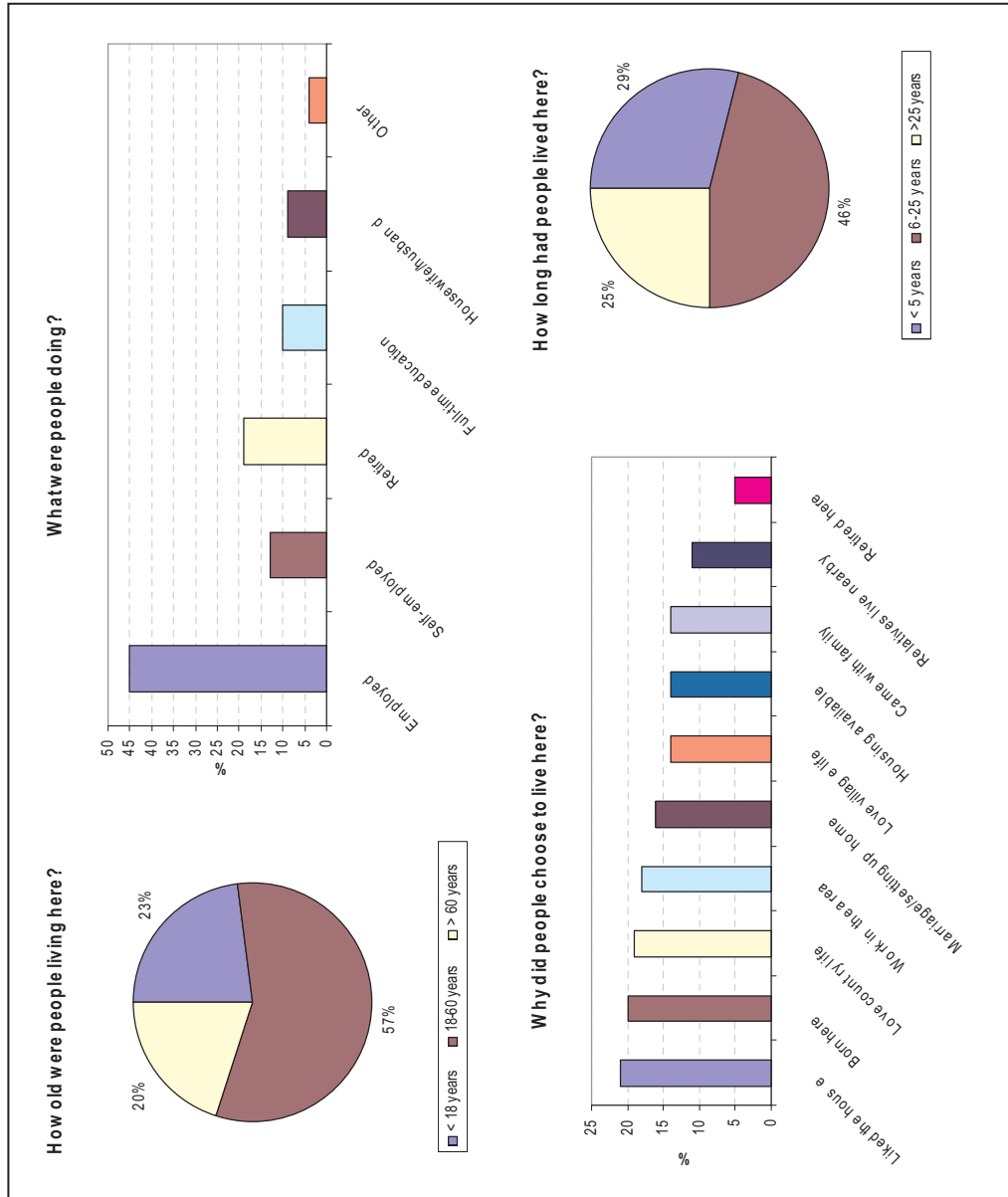
The steering group also referred to other relevant documents. These included:

- Mendlesham Millennium Survey, May 2000
- Mendlesham Community Action Plan, July 2002
- A poverty profile for Mendlesham produced by Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion, through Suffolk ACRE, in September 2007
- A document entitled Mendlesham Conservation Area Appraisal



SOME STATISTICS

From the 2000 survey which covered 465 households containing 1162 people



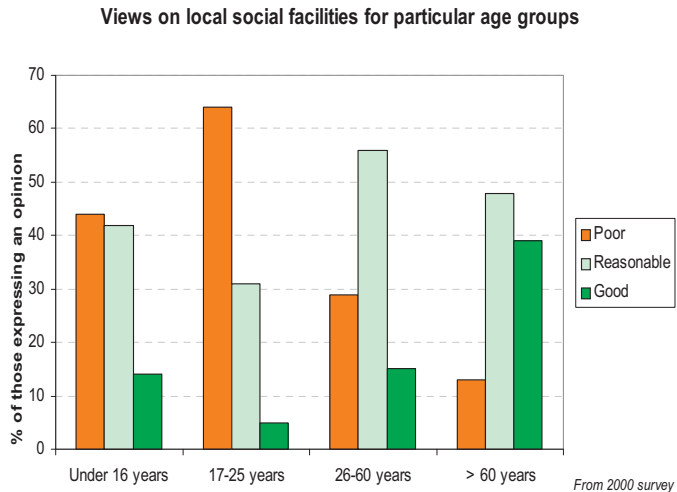
DID YOU KNOW ...?

According to a 'poverty profile' published in September 2007, Mendlesham's population increased by 3.8% between 2001 (827) and 2004 (858). According to that profile, in 2004:

- Almost three quarters (71%) of those aged 16-74 were economically active
- 10% of working-age people were claiming some DWP benefit
- Two thirds (67%) of households were owner-occupied. Of the remainder, almost two thirds (61%) were socially rented and almost one third (31%) were privately rented
- Over quarter (27%) of households were described as 'pensioner households' ...
- ...And nearly one third of households (30%) consisted of one person

SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

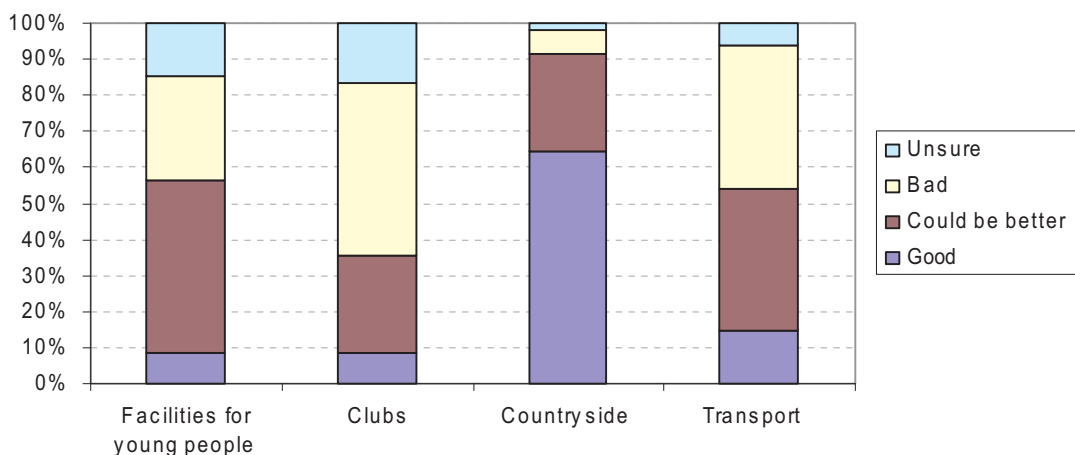
The 2000 survey showed that respondents believed social facilities for children and young people in Mendlesham were poorer than for other age groups. For example, almost two thirds (64%) of respondents thought local social facilities for young people (aged 17-25) were 'poor'. Only 5% thought they were 'good'. In contrast, only 14% of respondents thought facilities for over 60s were 'poor' and more than a third (39%) thought they were 'good'.



Consequently, the 2002 Community Action Plan recognised the need to provide facilities for young people and that the 'youngsters themselves' should be asked and the most popular facilities developed. Despite this, concerns over the lack of social facilities for young people in Mendlesham remain high. For example, almost two thirds (64%) of organisations responding to a survey identified this as a priority. Particular concerns expressed include the closure of the village's youth club and problems in recruiting people willing to work with children and young people. There appears to have been some improvement in facilities for children with the new play equipment in Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green.

Forty eight young people aged 11-19 completed a questionnaire for this planning process. Of these, very few (8%) thought that facilities for young people (8%) were good. More than three quarters (77%) thought that such facilities were either bad or could be improved.

Young People's Views on Life in Mendlesham



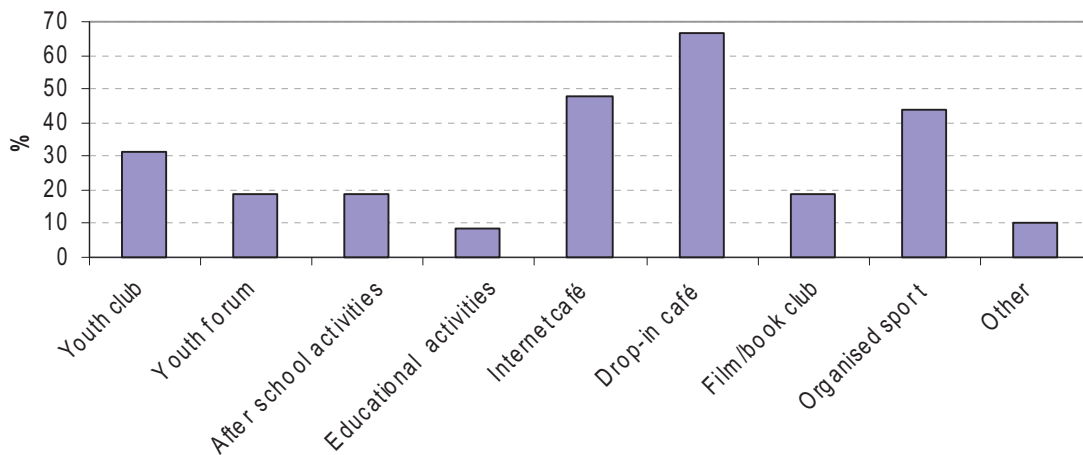
More than two thirds (67%) of the young people responding said they would use a drop-in café if one was available. Almost half (48%) said they would use an internet café, although one specified that it would need to be free. Only one third (31%) said they would use a youth club and one commented that she would only use it if it was not too organised but was a place to 'hang out'. However, almost half (44%) said they would take part in organised sport if available in Mendlesham.

Almost one fifth (19%) of those replying said they would be interested in taking part in a youth forum in Mendlesham if one was organised. A similar number said they would be interested in being involved in a group for young people to implement changes.

Lessons learned from running a youth club in Mendlesham

When it operated, the youth club provided the older children of the village a place to catch up and socialise. It also offered, through 'Connexions', information about substance misuse, sex, careers and social issues, such as bullying. But the club doesn't operate now because of the amount of work involved and difficulties in finding help in running the club, including from parents. Particular problems were faced in relation to important organisational work, such as attending Parish Council meetings and fundraising.

What activities would young people use if available?



Based on this consultation, it appears that:

- Teenagers would like a place where they can 'hang out'. A drop-in café seems to be preferred to a more formal youth club
- Teenagers would like more opportunities for sports in the village. Resurfacing the tennis courts would be a good start.
- A small but significant number of young people would be interested in taking part in a youth forum and/or a group to implement changes

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY CENTRE SITE

An issue which emerged as of high priority during our consultation related to future developments of the school/community centre site. For example, more than half (52%) of those organisations responding to a survey identified this as a priority. The site is recognised as a great asset but there are concerns that the current management structure is fragmented and over-complicated. This runs the risk that its potential to serve the whole parish may not be fully realised. Several respondents expressed a desire for greater cohesion and for the site to be managed as a single parish asset. One respondent summed this up by saying, *'What is needed is an open minded willingness to work with interested organisations in considering how the site might be developed to the benefit of the whole community...'*



There are questions about the economic viability of the community centre. There were also a wide range of suggestions as to how the site could be developed in the future although there is uncertainty over the school organisation review. There appears to be strong support for plans to expand the site to the west.

There is a need to rationalise the site's management arrangements so that it can be run as a single asset. Achieving this should allow the production of a strategic development plan for the site, e.g. over the next five to ten years. It should be possible for such a plan to accommodate different scenarios in terms of the school's development.

Map showing current management structure of the site

VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Mendlesham has a wealth of village organisations and businesses offering a wide range of local services. More than 60 were consulted through the survey conducted. Their contributions include:

- Providing fun activities for children and teenagers
- Providing play facilities
- Providing employment, health care, education, postal services etc.
- Community fundraising for projects
- Providing a green area for residents
- Providing women opportunity to make friends and learn new skills
- Providing older people opportunity to socialise

However, the 2002 Community Action Plan expressed concern that people were unaware of the clubs and activities available. This does not appear to have changed significantly. Only seven organisations are currently listed on the Parish Council website. Relatively few contribute regularly to the newsletter. At least one respondent expressed the view that there were too many organisations with duplication of activities. Many organisations are facing similar problems including difficulties in fundraising and attracting people to join them.

Many respondents identified the need for improved cooperation among village organisations. Suggestions include improving the availability of information about organisations through the Parish Council website, the newsletter and, perhaps, by producing a welcome pack for newcomers to the village.

Organisations and businesses responding to the survey

Mendlesham Toddler Group
Over 60s
Baptist Church
Women's Fellowship
United Reformed Church
MCF
WI
Mendlesham Football Club
Mendlesham Primary School
FOMSA
Mendlesham School Governors
Community Centre Committee
Community Council
Newsletter
50/50 Community Shop
Parish Council
Woodland Committee
Guides
Brownies
Rainbows
Bowls Club
Pre-School
Junior Badminton
Karate Club
Mendlesham Charities Trustees
Mendlesham Memorial Playing Fields
Mendlesham Pilgrim Group
Primates Explorer Scout Unit
Youth Club
Mendlesham Health Centre
The Fleece
King's Head
Post Office
Fish and Chip Shop
Galloway
Beeline Upholstery
Acorns Kennels
Jaiger
Hawkins Riding Stables
Just Cats
Lummis Dairy
Michael's Hairdressers
District Councillor
Police

TRAFFIC AND ROADS

The 2000 survey showed that almost three quarters (72%) of respondents expressing an opinion thought there were major danger spots on the roads in the parish. Over two thirds (68%) thought that speeding traffic was a problem in the parish. However, the 2002 Community Action Plan reported that an assessment conducted by the Police Traffic Officer concluded that the problem in Stowmarket Road and Chapel/ Church Road was not severe enough for priority enforcement.



Nevertheless, speeding continues to be a concern in several locations, including by Hawkins Farm, the school, the health centre and at entrances into both Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green. Children at Mendlesham Primary School identified a pedestrian crossing as one of their main priorities.

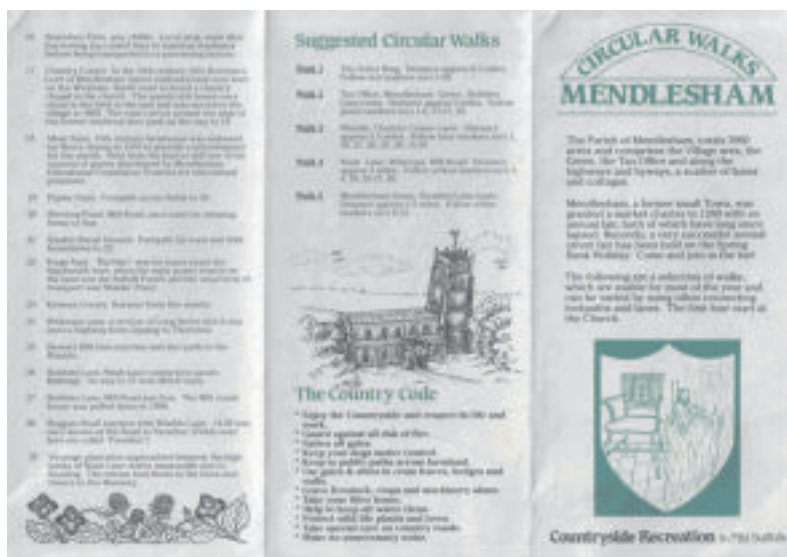


The 2000 survey showed that almost all (81%) of the respondents who expressed an opinion believed road signs in the parish were adequate. However, some concerns were raised on this issue during this consultation, e.g. at the turn to Tan Office and street names in Mendlesham Green.

The 2000 survey showed that most of those who expressed an opinion (55%) thought Mendlesham did not need a car park. The 2002 Community Action Plan concluded that no off-street parking options existed and that the police advised that parked cars control speeding. Despite this, concerns were raised about parking in some areas, e.g. in Front Street and near the Baptist Chapel.

ENVIRONMENT

The 2000 survey showed strong support for encouraging more 'environmental-friendly' activities including walking (77%), conservation (67%) and cycling (62%). Of those who expressed an opinion, more than two thirds wanted to see improved facilities for cyclists in the parish, including suggestions for a number of different routes for cycle paths. The 2002 Community Action Plan endorsed the high level of support for walking as recreation, expressed concern about the condition of some footpaths and the obstruction of others and identified the need for improved facilities for cyclists.



The consultation strongly reinforced the desire for safe opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding to be promoted in the parish. Specific suggestions included revising and reprinting the 1980s leaflet of walks around Mendlesham, establishing a footpath between the school and the woodland and establishing a foot/cycle path between Mendlesham and Mendlesham Green.

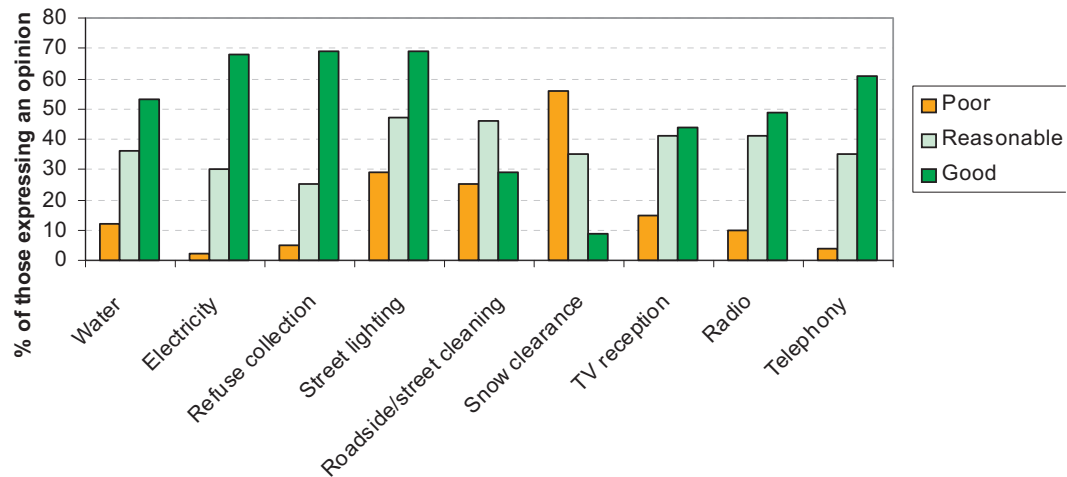
Several respondents raised the need for more dog bins to be sited in the parish. Children, in particular, are concerned about this issue. However, it is acknowledged that some of the problems are occurring in places where dog bins are already provided. Findings were broadly similar to those of the 2000 survey. In that, more than 90% of respondents thought there should be more dog bins, particularly on footpaths (61%) and verges (46%).



VILLAGE SERVICES

In the 2000 survey, the biggest concern raised about village services related to snow clearance and this issue was covered prominently in the 2002 Community Action Plan.

Views on the standard of local services



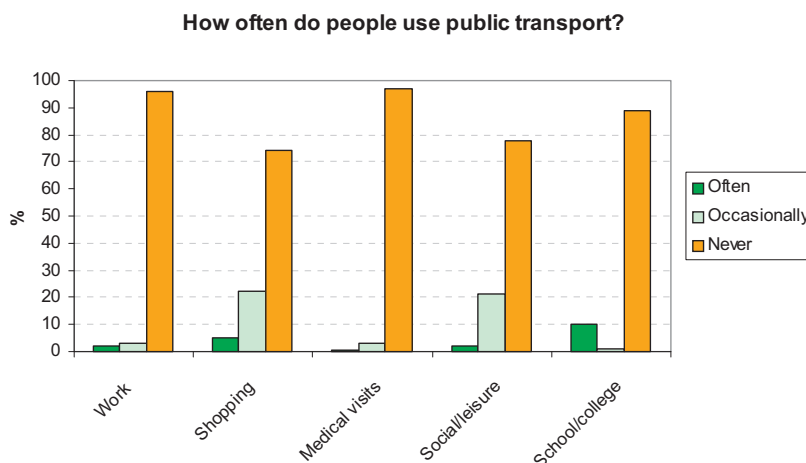
Results differed quite markedly during this consultation. This, perhaps, reflects different expectations of residents and businesses when considering services. For example, in 2000, almost all residents (98%) considered the electricity supply to be good or reasonable. However, during this consultation, a number of businesses expressed concern about the 'erratic' power supply. In addition, there was a desire from some businesses to see mains gas in the village and a concern about the number of overhead power and communication cables. This latter issue was also raised in the conservation area appraisal which commented that 'Mendlesham suffers from a surfeit of overhead wiring'.

In the 2000 survey, more than a quarter (29%) of those who expressed an opinion considered street lighting in the parish to be 'poor'. This issue was raised several times during the current consultation. In particular, the area around Mendlesham Primary School was highlighted as of concern.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In the 2000 survey, 11% of respondents often experienced transport difficulties and 26% occasionally did. These difficulties largely related to public transport services which were referred to as poor and infrequent. Those who never experienced transport difficulties recognised their dependence on cars.



From 2000 survey

The survey identified many ways in which the bus service could be improved including a better timetable (30%), more routes (29%), more availability of information (24%), improved reliability (16%), improved bus stop location (16%), reduced cost (15%) and better access for disabled people (15%). It also showed that very few people used public transport. Just less than a quarter of respondents used it



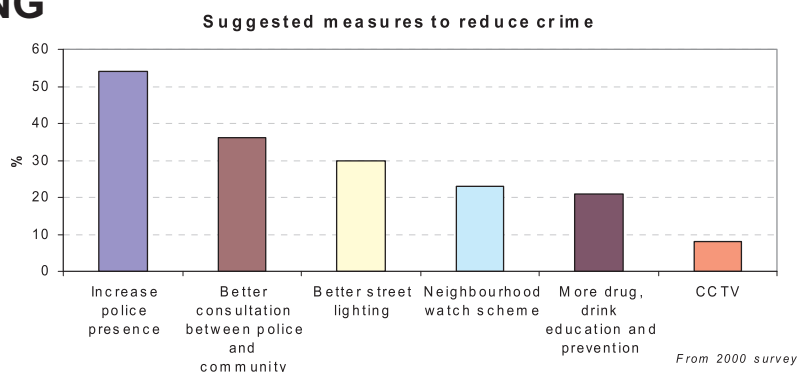
occasionally for shopping (22%) or social/leisure activities (21%) while 10% used it regularly to attend school or college. It is unclear how much usage would improve if services improved. Only 4% of respondents indicated they would use a voluntary car service if provided, while two thirds (66%) said they would never use this.

When young people were asked for the one thing they would change about Mendlesham if they could, the largest single group (23%) related to improving transport.

The Community Action Plan 2002 focused on the need to improve information about the availability of public transport. During this consultation, there was recognition that bus services to Ipswich had improved but respondents expressed the desire to have services to Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds. The need for a bus shelter in Mendlesham was identified. The health centre raised concerns about lack of transport for people to get to them and made suggestions as to how this might be addressed, e.g. by setting up a 'dial-a-ride' service.

CRIME AND POLICING

In the 2000 survey, over one third (34%) of respondents were not aware of the community police services. Of those who expressed an opinion, 12% thought they were good, 48% reasonable and 40% poor.



Respondents perceptions of crime were relatively high. Problems reported included speeding (61%), drugs (18%), burglary (17%), vandalism (16%), theft from vehicles(8%), drunkenness (6%) and car theft (6%). Experience of crime was lower, although for some crimes, e.g. vandalism, many (50%) of the crimes experienced were not reported to the police. Many suggestions were made to reduce crime in the parish, particularly increased police presence.

The 2002 community action plan included a section on community safety focused on the decline in active support for the neighbourhood watch scheme and concerns that perceptions of crime were higher than actual statistics.



During this consultation, a number of problems were raised including unwanted visitors on the school site, ensuring the security and safety of that site after hours, reported thefts from farms and businesses, and damage to the football dug out. Concern was raised about the lack of a visible police presence in the village and little feedback on specific incidents. However, some respondents reported that policing had improved since responsibility for this had transferred back to Debenham from Elmswell.

The police responded to our questionnaire prioritising the need for more facilities for young people in Mendlesham. They restated their commitment to providing a visible and approachable police presence whilst acknowledging challenges of resources and time.

HOUSING

The survey in 2000 showed that opinions on housing in the parish are sharply divided. Around half of respondents were either reasonably or very satisfied with the appearance of new buildings and the planning process. However, a similar number were either slightly or very dissatisfied.

More than two thirds (68%) thought there should be new housing development in the parish including small family homes (38%), conversions of redundant buildings (37%), homes for young/single people (29%), more rented housing (23%), single dwellings as 'infill' (21%), more sheltered accommodation (19%), more homes for disabled people (18%), small groups of less than ten houses (17%), expansion on the edge of the village (17%), larger family homes (15%) and larger groups of more than ten houses (6%).

The 2002 Community Action Plan highlighted the possible expansion of Mendlesham using brownfield sites and also called for the development of a Village Design Statement. This has not yet been produced.



This consultation identified strong and divergent views, particularly on the issue of shared equity/low price housing. Many respondents emphasised the need and value of more such housing, particularly for local young people. The school requires more housing to maintain and expand enrolment. One employer highlighted the lack of affordable housing as a barrier to recruitment. But a very small number expressed strong

opposition to this approach. For example, one person stated their view that there was now enough of this low cost/shared equity housing in the village.

MILLENNIUM WOODLAND

In 2000, the Parish Council acquired 12 acres of land to develop a woodland as the parish's millennium project. This was financed by the sale of unwanted allotment land. At the time of the survey, many suggestions were made as to the future development of this site, including a nature reserve/conservation area (62%), nature trail (52%), picnic area (42%), bird hide (34%), children's play area (21%) and fetes (12%).



Although at the time of the survey, a number of people stated that they did not know about the project or that they doubted its value, views during this consultation showed that most people were aware of the woodland, had visited it and valued it. There still seems to be some tension over the extent to which the woodland should be left in its natural state or developed for recreational use. This tension is perhaps most clearly seen in comments relating to whether or not there should be more seating in the woodland, and what type this should be.

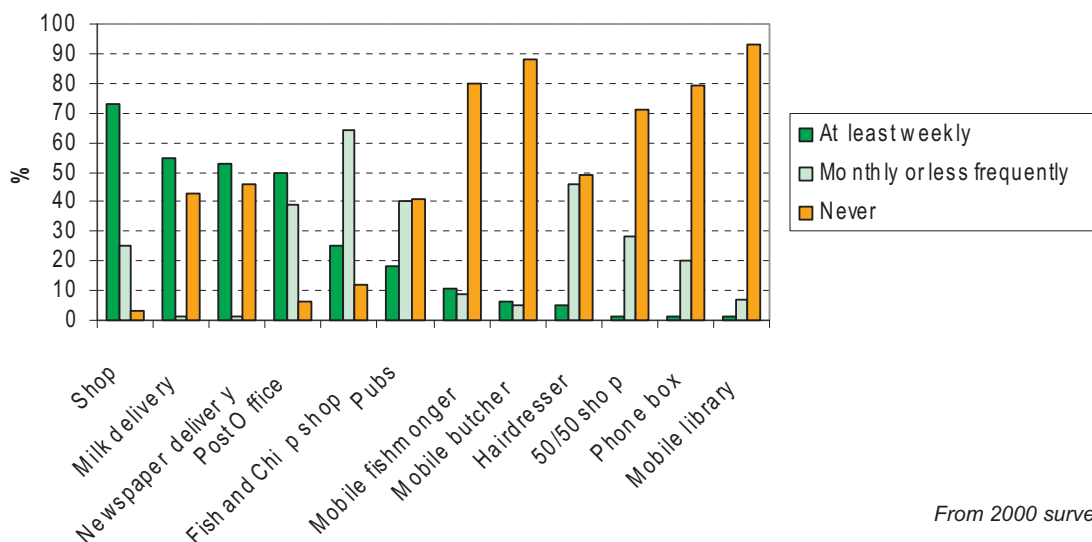


On balance, most respondents seem to favour the development of the woodland for greater use, particularly where the activities promoted relate to the natural environment. Specific suggestions received to improve the woodland included including owl/bat boxes, improving access for disabled people, establishing a bird hide/feeding station and removing the existing barbed wire fence.

The suggestion of a footpath from the school/community centre to the woodland would appear to have strong support.

ECONOMIC

How often were people using different businesses?



From 2000 survey

In the 2000 survey, respondents identified how often they used different businesses in the parish. Those most used at least weekly were the shop (73%), milk delivery (55%), newspaper delivery (53%) and the post office (50%). Other services used at least occasionally included the fish and chip shop (89%), local pubs (58%) and the hairdresser (51%).

The 2002 community action plan recognised the need to encourage new businesses to stimulate economic activity in the parish, through publishing information about assistance to rural businesses, promoting ideas for new businesses generated through the survey and including small businesses in activity days.

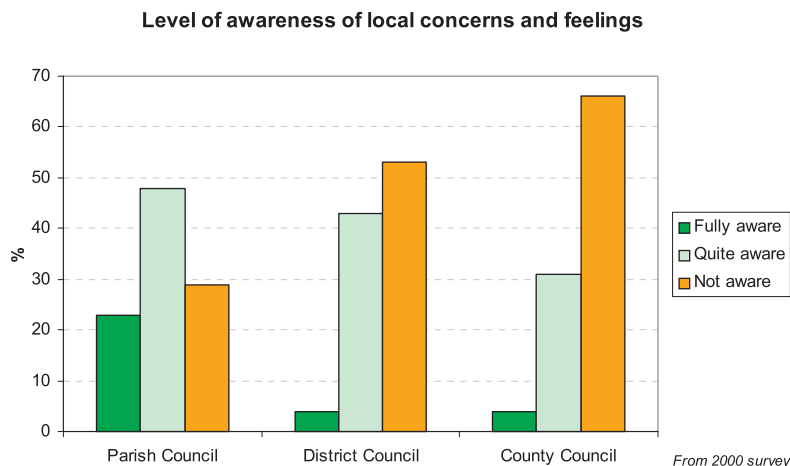
The current consultation identified that many businesses were quite pessimistic about the future. Concerns included competition from supermarkets, e.g. on milk and low price alcohol, rising costs, e.g. of gas and fuel, increasing number of competitors, e.g. selling second hand clothes, underutilisation of village services, e.g. post office, poor public perception and use of pubs and the high business rates and cost of waste disposal. Two respondents commented very enthusiastically on the idea of a farmers' market.



PARISH COUNCIL

The 2000 survey revealed that most respondents had a positive view of the work of the Parish Council. For example, almost three quarters (71%) thought they were aware of local concerns and feelings, as compared to less than half (47%) for the District Council and just over one third

(35%) for the County Council. Although more than a quarter of respondents (29%) did not know how the Parish Council spent its precept, almost all (82%) of those who did know were either very or reasonably satisfied with the way it was being spent. Almost two thirds (64%) reported that the Parish Council publicised its agendas, decisions and activities reasonably well.



The 2002 Community Action Plan identified the need to improve public understanding and confidence in local government and to encourage more candidates for Parish Council elections.

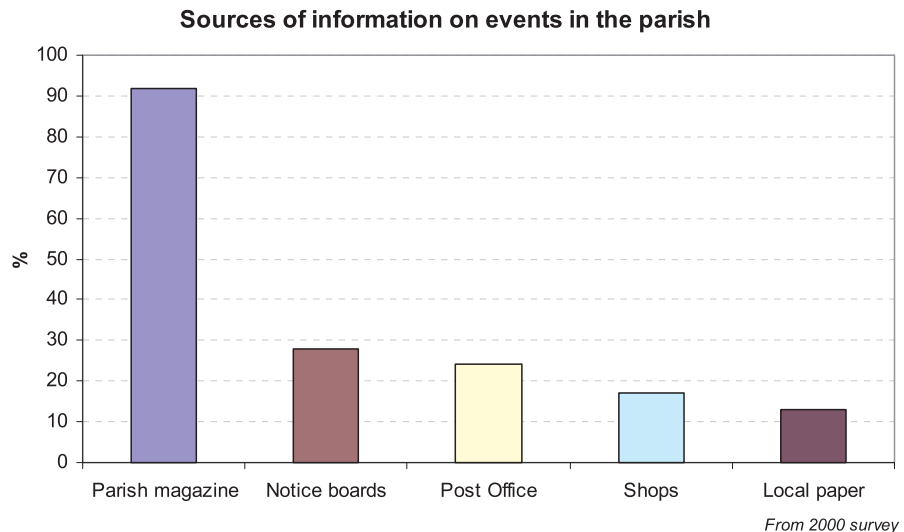


In this consultation, apart from responses from the Parish Council and the District Councillor, there was little mention of the Parish Council. It is unclear if this is because respondents are happy with the work being done by the Parish Council or feel it is not that relevant to their concerns. One respondent did express concerns about the relative age of the parish councillors feeling that the 'village is governed by an older generation'.

Although the Parish Council gets feedback on contentious issues, there is little feedback on routine business and public attendance at meetings is rare. When members of the public do attend meetings no information is provided to them on the role and procedures of the Parish Council. As a result, it can appear somewhat baffling. The role of Parish Councillor is demanding and unpaid. There have not been enough candidates to have elections. Most Parish Councillors are male and over 40. There is uncertainty about planned changes in local government, fears that budgets are declining and concerns that rural areas are being sidelined.

COMMUNICATIONS

The survey in 2000 showed that almost all (92%) respondents got information on events in the parish from the parish magazine. Almost everyone (90%) ranked the information it provided as good or reasonable.



Just over half (53%) thought that the magazine would benefit from additional materials. A wide range of suggestions were received, including reports of Parish Council activities, bus timetables, letters, items for sale, something for children and young people, and maps of locations and walks in the parish. Some of these have been incorporated, including a regular Parish Council report.



In the consultation for this plan, the person responsible for the magazine acknowledged the challenges faced in making the magazine informative and interesting, and in encouraging people to provide articles. Some comments were received questioning the number of adverts. However, these cover the cost of the magazine and allow it to be provided for free. In addition, a number of respondents commented that they keep their copy near the phone to find useful local numbers.

NEXT STEPS

This parish plan is now being printed and, as a result of the kind financial support of the Community Council, we plan to distribute a free copy to each household in the parish. More information related to the work conducted by the steering group will continue to be available on our website, which will be accessible from the Parish Council site.

It is critical that the work encapsulated in this plan leads to concrete actions. Some actions are proposed in the attached action plan. This has been developed by the steering group as the final product of the planning process, in close consultation with the community, in general, and the Parish Council, in particular. It is critical for the success of this action plan that it is not seen as owned by the steering group, who with the development of the plan have now completed their work. Rather, success of the plan will be judged by whether it is owned by the parish, as a whole, and particularly by those bodies that are recognised as having key roles to play in implementation.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Throughout the consultation and plan development process, the steering group encountered a degree of healthy scepticism from some community members about whether or not the planning process would produce any real change for the benefit of the parish. It is essential that this question be kept under review through a process of regular monitoring. It is suggested that the main means of doing this be an annual review of progress in implementing the plan, and that this take place at the annual parish meeting. It is also suggested that the clerk of the Parish Council be asked to ensure that this process takes place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A huge number of people have worked extremely hard to make this plan a reality. In particular, thanks are due to members of the steering group, namely Roger Drew (chair), Rachel Roshier (secretary), Bryan Allen, Roger Burrows, Cindy Clements, Mike Favager, Helen Orton, Darren Williams, Doug Williams and Jill Wiltshear. Thanks are also due to Mendlesham Parish Council for their financial and moral support. Particular thanks are due to the council chair, Paul Allen, and clerk, Sharon Jones. The steering group are also grateful for financial support received from Jeremy Clover, our County Councillor, and from the Community Council, to cover the cost of printing the report. The group would also like to thank Andrew Stringer, our District Councillor, for his ideas and suggestion, and Annette Gray of Suffolk ACRE for her support, particularly in the early stages of the process. The group also appreciate the work of Mark Straw in consulting with young people. Particular thanks are due to all individuals with the parish and representatives of parish organisations and businesses who attended meetings, completed questionnaires and, generally, shared their opinions. Without these, it would not have been possible to produce this plan.

ACTION PLAN (* denotes a 'big idea', ** denotes a 'quick win')

Priority	Action	Lead Responsibility	Other Partners	Time Scale	Resources
1*	Services for young people				
	Establish a Youth Forum/Implementation Group	Parish Council	Youth Services	End June 2009	Volunteer time; technical input from youth services
	Consider establishing a drop-in café for young people	Youth Forum	Parish Council, Youth Services	To be determined	Premises; staff, volunteers
	Consider improving sports facilities for young people including resurfacing tennis courts	Youth Forum	Parish Council	To be determined	Funds
2*	School/Community Centre site				
	Commence discussions to establish a management structure to allow the Community Centre/School site to be managed as a single parish asset	Parish Council, Mendlesham Primary School and Community Centre Committee	All users of the facilities	End March 2009	Volunteer time
**	Develop a ten year strategic development plan for the Community Centre/School site based on consideration of different possible scenarios	Parish Council, Mendlesham Primary School and Community Centre Committee	All users of the facilities	End June 2009	Volunteer time; planning expertise
3	Village Organisations				
	All organisations to have a page on the Parish Council website	All organisations	Parish Council	End March 2009	Volunteer time
	Increase the number of organisations contributing regularly to the parish newsletter	All organisations	Newsletter editor	Review end June 2009	Volunteer time
4	Traffic and Roads				
	Introduce traffic calming measures at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school 	Parish Council		Detailed plan to be developed by end June 2009	Funds

Priority	Action	Lead Responsibility	Other Partners	Time Scale	Resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The health centre The entrance to Mendlesham from Brockford The entrance to Mendlesham Green via the scout hut The corner by Hawkins Farm 				
**	Build a pedestrian crossing outside Mendlesham Primary School	Parish Council		June 2009	Funds
	Review and improve road signage and road names	Parish Council		Detailed report and plan developed by end June 2009	Volunteer time
5*	Environment				
	Establish a working group to improve opportunities for walking and cycling in the parish, including a focus establishing foot/cycle paths connecting Mendlesham Green, Mendlesham and Millennium Wood	Parish Council	Mendlesham Primary School	March 2009	Volunteer time
**	Reprint and update leaflet entitled 'circular walks in Mendlesham'.	Parish Council		June 2009	Volunteer time; printing costs
6	Village Services				
	Improve street lighting around the school	Parish Council	Mendlesham Primary School	End 2009	Funds
7	Public Transport				
	Review feasibility of establishing a 'dial a ride' service for the health centre	Health Centre	Parish Council	June 2009	Volunteer time; technical advice
8	Housing				
	Develop a village design statement	Parish Council		End June 2009	Volunteer time;

Priority	Action	Lead Responsibility	Other Partners	Time Scale	Resources
9	Economic Review the feasibility of establishing a farmers' market in Mendlesham	Parish Council	Community Council	2010	technical planning advice
10	Millennium Woodland Promote more use of the Millennium woodland based on conservation principles.	Parish Council		June 2009	Volunteer time and some funds
11	Parish Council Improved communication from Parish Council	Parish Council		March 2009	Printing costs for leaflet
**	Promote greater diversity among Parish Councillors, e.g. more women and younger people	Community		Ongoing	

