

# Housing Needs

Although the issue of social housing should not be seen in isolation, the Village Opinion surveys of 2001 and 2004 and the 2007 Housing Needs survey (see below) confirmed that the principal need was for affordable starter homes for young people.

There was also a visible requirement for single storey accommodation for the elderly and some other types of housing, but young people were the priority.

Historically social housing has been provided at Orchard Way, Russell Close, Dale Close, Leather Street and Leigh Crescent. More recently the 2006 Galanos development helped to meet demand but a survey taken the following year (see below) confirms the ongoing nature of the need.



The 2007 Housing Needs Survey undertaken on our behalf by the Housing Enabler for the Warwickshire Rural Community Council confirmed that the nature of demand within the parish was both extensive and complex.

18 respondents expressed a need for alternative housing, usually 2 or 3-bedroom and split equally in preference between owner-occupier, rented and shared-ownership accommodation.

This requirement was much lower than had been suggested by the 2004 Village Opinion and by Stratford District Council housing department but the Galanos development may account for much of the difference.

*The numbers quoted in the survey provoked valuable debate but they confirmed the requirement to maintain cohesion in the community and to take steps to enable access to affordable housing for those who wish to remain in the community in their own households.*

The needs are not limited to those who are experiencing difficulty in finding a suitable starting point in accessing the housing ladder. The survey also painted a clear picture of current householders who were actively seeking to move out of family homes into smaller houses following retirement and/or offspring leaving the family home.

**The 2007 survey was adopted by the LIPC in October 2007 and a Housing Needs Working Party was set up as a basis for developing a future plan and strategy.**

## Housing Needs *continued*

The initial assumptions of the LIPC Housing Needs Working Party are:-

1. That local open market house prices, mortgage availability and interest rates will remain at a level that makes access onto the housing ladder difficult for all but the more well off.
2. New developments need to be managed in such a way as to maintain the fabric, nature and character of the village and to resist creeping urbanisation. This Parish Plan and the 1999 VDS will be the guide.
3. Long Itchington is a thriving community in a desirable area, so although demand for affordable housing is variable it will continue into the future.
4. Future developments should provide a positive mix of housing with a policy of 'pepper potting' – that is to say smaller developments that avoid creating communities within communities.
5. They must be on sites that are reasonably close to all local amenities and which have ready access to safe routes to schools, shops and public transport.
6. Tenants of new social housing schemes must have strong local connections.

*The LIPC is not a housing authority; that duty remains with Stratford District Council. Yet the LIPC does have significant influence which must be exercised on the one hand if external pressures for developments that challenge the nature of the parish and its villages are to be resisted, and on the other if the needs of local residents are to be satisfied.*

On the basis of the 2007 survey and following a preliminary investigation of potential sites the next step, through the local Housing Enabler, will be to seek partnerships with housing associations, Stratford on Avon District Council, land owners and builders with the aim of creating over the next few years a number of small housing developments.

To date three potential sites have been identified and these are currently the subject of very preliminary discussions with principals and relevant authorities.

For the time being possible locations will have to remain undisclosed for reasons of commercial confidentiality but the aim is to hold full consultations with the community before any developments are approved.

**The current market and economic conditions may result in delays to the strategy but the will and overall objectives remain.**

### *Can Housing be Affordable?*

The LIPC aims to encourage the sensitive development of smaller, sensible and appropriate houses for local people wishing to continue their lives in and around the Parish.

The aim is for a minimum of three developments comprising eight to twelve units each between now and 2013 but success depends on the acquisition of land on convenient sites at a price sufficiently low to ensure that housing can be affordable.

#### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- LIPC to continue to investigate the possibility of partnerships to enable housing needs in the Parish to be satisfied.
- Agree location and detail of 1st development.

# Leisure & Recreation

The 2001 Village Opinion showed that children up to the age of 10 or 11 were reasonably well catered for by available play facilities in the village due largely no doubt to phase one of Play 2000, the brainchild of an enterprising volunteer group who installed a new childrens' play area at Green End.

However, the rating of facilities for teenagers declined rapidly over the age range 11 to 16. The 2nd phase of Play 2000, completed in the summer of 2002 and also at Green End, was specifically aimed at older children and went some considerable way to cater for them.

The other village play areas are at Short Lane, Leigh Crescent and Model Village (owned by Cemex) all of which are in need of some improvement, particularly the last.

*Provision must be made in budgeting to continually finance the routine checking, maintenance and - as necessary - replacement of all existing play equipment.*

When the opportunity came in September 2003, the LIPC purchased a 5.7-acre extension to the Green End playing fields (formerly part of Garrets Close) as a potential means of providing increased leisure and recreational facilities, including an overdue new pavilion, for all ages.



OLD PAVILION

Consequently the 2004 Village Opinion survey asked "What additional recreation facilities would you like to see provided?" and, in view of the less than adequate existing arrangements: "What facilities.....should be provided in a new pavilion?"

An encouraging 58% of those answering wanted walking, dog walking, picnicking, cricket, tennis, bowls, a golf practice area - and parking! And for younger people netball, BMX biking, roller-blading and a cyber cafe were suggested. In a new pavilion, changing rooms, toilets, showers, cafe, gym, kitchen and catering were requested.

In October 2004 a Green End Fields Preliminary Study Group (PSG) was formed in order to consider how to implement the 2004 survey results, and in March 2005 the L.I. Cricket Club said it would be prepared to move to Green End provided adequate funding could be found for the necessary facilities.

Following a village competition, the PSG adopted the acronym LILAC (Long Itchington Leisure and Community project) but although many, many meetings have been held, progress has been regrettably slow. *The situation now is that an injection of new blood and enthusiasm is required in order to bring many brilliant ideas to fruition.*

## Can LILAC be Gathered?

Much progress was made by earlier LILAC committees. Various field layouts were discussed and drawn up, costings were made, sources of funding identified and trees were planted. Little else has happened and the project now needs re-inventing.

Priorities include land drainage, a dog walking route to prevent fouling of play areas, and a new pavilion with adequate parking to alleviate congestion at Green End.

AGMs have been held and a constitution has been approved. Who will now join the remaining stalwarts to ensure that progress is made? **Any volunteers?**

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Revitalise the LILAC Group and develop Green End facilities such as pavilion, parking, picnic area, dog-walk, and more activities for teenagers.
- Refurbish the Short Lane and Leigh Crescent children's play areas.

# — The Pond and Open Spaces —

In the 2001 Village Opinion 44% wanted **the Pond** to be preserved at all cost, and another 29% felt the same about the Green and its surrounding areas, and trees.

87% of respondents to Village Opinion 2004 wanted an end to the pond almost drying up in hot summers, and 80% wanted the banks restored. Many requested swans and natural flowering plants and wildlife.

Consequently a Pond Working Group was formed and £48,000 raised to fund their project. The pond was drained, over 400 tons of silt were removed after which a bentonite clay lining was installed to prevent the leaching of water into the ground when the water table is low over the summer months.

In addition, the banks have been rebuilt and planted and a nesting platform created in the water in anticipation of swans returning. Colourful information notices have been erected and a viewing and dipping platform has been constructed for the added enjoyment of all, but especially for the use of children from the local primary school.

*The pond was re-opened amid much celebration in May 2007 and it has rapidly settled down to become, once again, the popular focal point in the middle of the village.*

**Footnote: In the 2007 Village Ventures competition this Pond Project won the Environment section, and was the overall Village Ventures runner-up.**



*Ongoing financial and maintenance commitments are no more than before and are restricted to periodic cleaning and tidying tasks around the periphery.*

**Seasonal bulb planting expeditions are to be encouraged; overfeeding of ducks leading inevitably to too many ducks and vermin, is definitely to be discouraged.**

## **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Annual tidying and planting.
- Improve floating nesting platform.

## — The Pond and Open Spaces *continued* —

Apart from the pond and the previously mentioned play areas, the other principal **open spaces** are the greens around the pond, the fields adjoining the main settlements, the Church Road allotments, cemeteries, the local footpath system, the road verges owned by either the village or by the county, the wildlife reserve at White's Spinney, the Grand Union canal and old railway systems and, of course, the River Itchen.

*The allotments, leased at a peppercorn rent, are a very important amenity. It has been suggested that the landlord should be asked to sell the area to the Parish (at an affordable price) or at least guarantee that any lease would be "in perpetuity".*

As well as these open spaces the trees that accompany them are an integral part of the scene and should be looked after and preserved.



*Of great importance also are the views from various vantage points within the parish, and again when entering or leaving the villages.*

The VDS notes the importance of the local footpath system linking the village to open countryside areas, and it lists recommendations for the treatment and preservation of all these open spaces. These VDS guidelines must be heeded when considering and planning all significant future building and landscaping developments.

To quote the VDS, *"The people who live here have chosen to do so because they can see trees and open spaces both within the village and across open agricultural land. Space is a valuable commodity that must be retained for its significant contribution to the nature of the village."*

At some time in the future the cement works site at the south-eastern extremity of the parish will be re-developed. Again quoting the VDS: *"it is imperative that open green areas be preserved between it and the existing village, and around Model village."*

**The monitoring, maintenance, protection and approved enhancement of all open spaces is the responsibility of the Open Spaces Working Party of the LIPC.**

### *A Local Space Race?*

There is always going to be a competition between developers and the guardians of our fine village views and open areas. Part of the rationale behind the Parish Plan is to ensure that all open spaces regarded as an amenity are preserved.

#### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Ensure all key open spaces are preserved and where possible improved.
- Look into the possibility of buying the Church Road allotments for the community.
- Through the Footpath Group persuade the authorities to repair footpaths where residents' safety is an issue e.g. SM2 in the allotments/graveyard area.

# — Road Lighting & Parking —

The LIPC has responsibility for the maintenance of nearly all the **road lighting** within the parish boundary with the exception of the main A423 and smaller private developments. In the last three years there has been a severe increase in the costs of replacing defective components and life-expired lighting columns.

The maintenance programme is to replace three life-expired street lighting columns per year. Odingsel Drive and Sabin Close lights have been deemed to be in most urgent need of replacement because the lighting columns are galvanised steel, which seem to rust badly from the inside. This replacement programme will continue pending recommendations from moves nationally to review light pollution and the cost benefits of certain “local lights” schemes. Electricity supply charges could rise significantly in the future so there is an obvious need to look at energy conservation schemes.

## *Lighting Up Time?*

From the LIPC: “We aim to replace a minimum of three street lighting columns per year for the next five years and in this period undertake a review of lighting needs across the Parish.

But also we need to investigate means by which energy saving and efficient use of electricity supply can be applied whilst meeting local lighting needs”.

The LIPC is acutely aware of the issues of vehicle **parking** within the Parish. Village Opinion 2001 reported an estimated 220 vehicles parked on the street and 50% of people thought parking a hazard. At Annual Parish Meetings since, repeated complaints suggest that the problem has got worse, e.g. APM 2008 (see page 26).

**Areas of special attention are in Church Road opposite the Church, Green End near the Buck and Bell pub, Model Village, and around Leigh Crescent and the school in the ‘top end’ of the village.**



In recent months a campaign to increase awareness of the village car park just off the pond area has had some positive results.

Whilst in certain situations parked vehicles can be of benefit in slowing traffic, they are more often a nuisance in blocking pavements and vision and in preventing free access to road sweepers and emergency service vehicles should they be called.

There is no easy solution to this but to continue to work in close liaison with the local police and the County Council to encourage responsible parking.

*Furthermore, LIPC sees an obvious need to complete a survey to see whether additional off-road parking spaces can be made available in badly affected areas.*

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Continue programme of inspection and replacement of street lights.
- Review lighting needs and energy conservation policy.
- Investigate pros and cons of providing more residential parking areas.
- Encourage responsible parking and reporting of dangers to the Police.

# — Road Safety & Maintenance —

In 2001 78% of respondents to the Village Opinion survey thought traffic speed a problem and 44% remarked on the danger when crossing roads - the A423 in particular. In recent years there has been a marked increase in numbers of heavy goods vehicles.

*Road safety problems are raised at almost every Annual Parish Meeting - see page 26.*

Following publication of the 2001 results, the Parish Council had a number of discussions with the County Council's Highways officers and after more consultations with police and residents a 30 mph scheme with extended 40 mph stretches, crossings and interactive speed warning signs was introduced into the village in May/June 2004.

After a settling-in period the new scheme undoubtedly had beneficial effects in that average speeds were reduced. However, critics claim that both 30 mph and 40 mph limits should be extended and it is evident that at least one centre refuge is so poorly positioned that is in fact a hazard being almost always in a traffic-damaged condition!



*Today concern is freely expressed over those who have little regard for speed limits, and over the sheer volume of heavy goods vehicles passing through Long Itchington.*

It seems obvious that to address these concerns the following steps should be taken:-

- Traffic police should devise a simple, widely available system whereby suitably trained volunteer residents could obtain photographic evidence of speeding which would then be used by the police to deter offenders.
- GPS systems in the cab should be programmed to include more motorways and dual-carriageways and fewer minor roads in recommended routes.
- Following the very well attended village meeting on 15th November 2008 and concern raised at the 2009 APM (page 27) residents should continue to object, on environmental grounds, to the current planning application to manufacture Climafuel at Long Itchington, and road-haul it Rugby.
- Impose a 20 mph limit in Stockton Road, from the School down to the A423, during school hours only.

**Warwickshire County Council has now agreed to reduce the speed limit in Bascote to 30 mph. It is expected that this work will be carried out in 2009.**

## *The Long Itchington Raceway* —————

Here the traffic may not be as fast or as noisy or as smelly as at Silverstone but too often now it seems like it! The A423 may be a main road with anyone having the right to use it but....

....IT IS TIME THE SAFETY CAR CAME OUT!

*And safety should be driven by the authorities who can make our roads more acceptable.*

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Strive to achieve the above four traffic control measures.
- Ensure Bascote 30mph speed limit is installed.

## — Road Safety & Maintenance *continued* —

As far as **road maintenance** is concerned all roads within the village were surface-dressed between May and November 2006, and white-lining followed. The A423 was re-surfaced prior to that, and the Leamington Road into the village has been “re-haunched” and resurfaced.

Repair of pot-holes and raising of sunken drain covers is dependent on reports from the LIPC or the public to County Highways whose response time is usually reasonable. Because of high traffic levels the A423 can deteriorate quite rapidly and response times can be extended. Otherwise the general condition of roads in the parish is quite good.

Pavement surface defects present a health and safety hazard, particularly to older residents of which Long Itchington has many. *County Highways should place a much higher priority on keeping pavements in good repair.*

Long Itchington is on a flood plain, yet drain and gully cleaning and repair is an infrequent and haphazard affair which should be reviewed.



**Road safety** at specific points within the parish should be improved as follows:-

1. *The crossroads at Bascote is dangerous!*

Many traffic accidents have occurred there at various times of the year. The perimeter wall at Crossroads Cottage has been damaged or demolished four or five times in recent years and the owner has witnessed vehicles coming down the hill from Bascote Heath not stopping in time, and sometimes travelling over the junction at great speed. Clearly the signage must be improved, and a 30mph speed limit through Bascote Heath plus other warning devices such as rumble strips should be installed.



***Otherwise there will, undoubtedly, be a more serious, if not fatal, accident.***

2. Another safety hazard is where the eastern end of Church Road meets the Leamington Road at the Pond. There have been several traffic accidents at this junction and measures need to be taken to reduce the danger.



3. In Bascote Road, Leamington Road and Church Road heavy farm and haulage traffic has damaged soft verges making them sink well below road level. This has caused tarmac to break away with hazards for unwary drivers. Repair &/or white-lining of road edges is required.

*The role of the LIPC will continue to be the eyes and ears of the community and to encourage the responsible authorities to understand our highways maintenance and safety needs. The LIPC will continue to work in close partnership with the County Council to improve matters wherever necessary.*

**The maintenance of street lighting and the monitoring of highways and traffic is the responsibility of the Highways and Lighting Working Party of the LIPC.**

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Continue to list all road, pavement and storm drain defects and strive to get them fixed reasonably quickly.
- Endeavour to get the above three safety hazards rectified.

# — Cleanliness & Tidiness —

Litter - identified as a perennial problem in Long Itchington from Village Opinion 2001 through to APMs 2007 and 2008 (page 26) - can be controlled by the provision of sufficient bins and with litter picks by council employees or volunteers from the parish.

***Litter can be dangerous.*** Broken drinks bottles, many indicating under-age alcohol use, are found frequently in the Green End fields where young people congregate. These areas are regularly inspected and broken glass removed - but unnecessary accidents can happen.

Plastic bags get blown around looking unsightly when snagged on hedges, and can be a danger to children, farm animals and other wildlife.



In the 2001 Village Opinion 37% of respondents saw **dog mess** as a problem and in the Green/Central and West areas of the village the complaint level rose to around 50%. Particularly affected were footpaths and pavements, Church Road and Stonebridge Lane.

This survey concluded that there were nearly 300 dogs in the parish, and one resident later calculated that they would produce about 15 tons of ordure per annum! If 20% of this is unretrieved by owners it is easy to understand why there is a problem.

At the 2007 and 2008 Annual Parish Meetings dog fouling was either top or second in importance in the lists of parish concerns - see page 26.

The Green End fields have to be checked regularly and offending offerings removed before the fields can be used for football matches and village events.

Short of sampling, having registered the DNA of every dog in the parish, control is limited to regular reminders on notice boards, the Parish Diary and village meetings - and clean-ups. A review of services available from District and County might help.

*Also it has been suggested that a dog owners' club or committee of some sort could improve education and cooperation by keeping contact with the sources of the problem, and by increasing the incidence of reporting of offenders.*

Field layouts suggested by the LILAC group included a fenced dog walk and play area with bins etc. Perhaps this part of the project should be accelerated.

Apart from fouling footwear of unwary passers-by, dog faeces can carry larvae of the roundworm toxocara and other 'nasties' which if inadvertently ingested can cause a range of unpleasant human diseases. Children can be particularly vulnerable: a carefree roll in the February snow caused at least one load of extra washing due to what lurked underneath the inviting whiteness!

*Regular reminders and education are necessary via notice-boards, the Parish Diary, meetings etc. and - hopefully - by parents, guardians and teachers of young people.*

## **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Continue to warn, inform and educate those who would leave litter, dog mess and graffiti. Get the Police and Stratford Dog Warden to help where applicable.
- Investigate District and County services, and continue the valiant clean-up!
- Persevere with the idea of forming a dog owners' club or committee.

## — Cleanliness and Tidiness *continued* —

Over the past 2 years or so, more **graffiti** have appeared on the walls of toilets, bus shelter at the Pond, Leigh Crescent garage doors, road signs and again the skate-board ramp.

By adding to and consulting their library of ‘tags’ the police have been quite successful in tracing and dealing with miscreants.

Treatment consists of the labour-intensive cleaning of brickwork and other surfaces, and repainting internal walls, sometimes with the participation of offenders.

*Long Itchington has not been entered for a Village of the Year type of competition for a number of years but there is a re-awakening of interest within the Parish Council.*

The Warwickshire’s Best Village competition now has a revised format with six categories which are community projects, community buildings, communication, environmental projects, business in the community, and history & heritage.

*One or more of these classes could present an opening for our volunteer groups to gain recognition for all the unsung hard work that goes on in our village.*

Warwickshire’s Calor Village of the Year® event is more involved and all four categories of community, business, sustainability and communication must be entered together with a General section.

These competitions give UK’s smaller communities the opportunity to put their village through its paces and in doing so maybe win a prize in one or more of the various classes.

Also they entail a search for the most vibrant, enterprising and sustainable communities but, as with all similar events, it is the taking part that counts. Entrants reap real benefits from working together as a village, engendering a genuine sense of community spirit.

Our local organiser is the Warwickshire Rural Community Council based at Stoneleigh, and first moves would be to download information from [www.ruralwarwickshire.org.uk](http://www.ruralwarwickshire.org.uk) or the Guidelines and Health Check from [calorvillageoftheyear.org](http://calorvillageoftheyear.org).

*In doing so all residents would no doubt re-discover the importance and satisfaction associated with a clean and tidy village, and would have to decide whether or not remaining eyesores could be eliminated.*

### *The Unsociable Few*

Generally the nuisances of litter, dog mess and graffiti are caused by a small minority of irresponsible residents who are not always juvenile - except in behaviour.

The LIPC would remind this irresponsible group of four things:-

1. As well as being unsightly litter, dog mess and graffiti can be extremely dangerous to the health and safety of all but, especially, young children.
2. Clearing up after offenders is expensive and adds a significant amount annually to the costs incurred by the Parish Council which then have to be passed on to residents.
3. Leaving litter, dog mess or graffiti is an offence and, with the active assistance of the police, local offenders have been successfully prosecuted.
4. The statutory penalty for dog-fouling can be up to £1,000!

***Never in our fields has so much unpleasantness been given to so many by so few!***

#### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- List, survey and improve remaining unsightly areas in parish.
- Encourage more interest in entering Village of the Year competitions.

# — The Wider Environment —

L.I.F.E was formed in Long Itchington in 2006 and became “Long Itchington and surrounding villages for the Earth” to reflect the support and membership from neighbouring parishes. It is independent of, but supported by, the LIPC.

L.I.F.E. is a group of about 60 people mainly from Long Itchington who are concerned about climate change, and whose aim is a) to raise awareness locally and b) to show people how, by taking often simple steps, they can reduce their carbon footprint and, in turn, their impact on our environment, thereby helping to tackle global warming.

Work to date has included holding Open/Green Days with displays, exhibitors and speakers on related issues. L.I.F.E. members attend various local events with displays and information promoting projects, speaking to and working with local organisations and groups including the Long Itchington Cof E Primary School.

In 2008 key projects focused on the advantages of Insulation in the Home, awareness of recycling both at the kerbside and also at the Stockton recycling Centre.

Speakers at 2008 meetings included representatives from the Warwickshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (now Act on Energy), the Warwickshire Climate Change Partnership, and Garden Organic from Ryton.

As a result of the Insulation project, 71 new installations were completed in Long Itchington, and a second phase is being considered for 2009 along with Growing Your Own and National Tree Week projects.

Future work could involve improving the energy efficiency of community buildings, as well as our homes and other buildings, and alternative sources of energy.

L.I.F.E. will continue to examine ways of reducing the carbon footprint of the village and to this end will seek to work closely with and alongside other village organizations, our residents and the LIPC.

***Should the Parish Council decide a carbon reduction policy with the help of L.I.F.E?***

***This question should be part of the next Village Opinion.***

## *Carbon Neutral - Myth or Maybe?*

Ashton Hayes, a village of 1000 residents in Cheshire is aiming to become the first carbon neutral village in the U.K. In two years their parish council, backed by a large majority of residents and a team of 30+ enthusiastic volunteers, report that carbon emissions have been cut by 20%, and are convinced that their ultimate aim will be achieved.

***The website [www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk) is fascinating. Could we do it?***

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- With the help of L.I.F.E. implement all reasonable “green” steps to take now.
- With the help of feedback from the Parish, agree a longer term approach.

# Population Groups

Village Opinion 2001 reported that 26% of residents were under the age of 22, and 23% over 59. It also found that 25% of residents were retired and that in 33% of households the residents, either singles or couples, were over 60.

Village Opinion 2004 found that the age profile of responders was fairly similar to 2001 and that 53% of the population were over 50.

Comparison with UK statistics suggests that Long Itchington would seem to have slightly fewer younger people but more older residents than the national average.

Village Opinion 2001 also showed that in the age-group 5 to 10 years, **young people** seemed happy with the way they were provided for, but from 11 to 16 years satisfaction declined rapidly - *which is probably a trend to be expected but very difficult to reverse.*

Strong links exist between the Primary School and the community via events such as the Spring and Autumn Shows, by residents working at the school and with Pre-School and Parent/Toddler Groups. Other key childrens' organisations run by skilled volunteers include Brownies, Guides, Junior Cricket and Football Clubs, Tennis and Youth Clubs.

Whilst life for younger children having close contact with parents and school can be safe and full, for **older children** life can be different. Increased demands by them for more freedom, and on parents to work long hours, inevitably cause reduced involvement with their children who then become less supervised and more liable to turn to their peers for company - and for diversions not always approved by the community.

In Village Opinion 2001, suggestions by older children for new facilities to be provided included some already available in the village such as football and tennis, and some available in Southam such as swimming, bowling and rugby. The 2007 WRCC Housing Needs Survey reported 26 returns asking for more youth activities of which 8 were for a Youth Club which already exists in Long Itchington. ***So is communication a problem?***

In Village Opinion 2004 facilities requested for teenagers again included tennis but also Netball, BMX biking, roller skating/blading, scootering and a cyber cafe. Consideration of these suggestions is perhaps dependent upon a revival of the LILAC group (page 9).

For some the Youth Club, Cricket, Football and Tennis clubs fill a void and since 2002 the phase 2 of Play 2000 provided others with the skate-board half-pipe requested in 2001, and also a games area. *But dissatisfaction still remains, along with evidence that not all teenagers are "sporty", and many think that life in Long Itchington is "boring".*

So what must a caring community do to improve the lives of bored young people including, presumably, the unsociable element responsible for the small but significant amount of nuisance and vandalism in the village?

*The Targeted Youth Support initiative from the Division for Young People of the WCC Young People and Families Directorate offers suggestions based on the principles of "something to do, somewhere to go, and someone to listen".*

***But, inevitably, providing more facilities for young people will require partnerships with extra willing volunteers!***

## *Are You Willing?*

Village clubs and activities depend on the availability of willing and capable volunteers so it is not possible to provide every requested facility. The Parish Council will strongly support groups who organise youth activities so that families without their own transport are not penalised and so that children of all ages can develop strong bonds with the community and other age groups within it.

## Population Groups *continued*

There are good village organisations such as the Wednesday Club and the W.I. which cater for **older residents**. Village Opinion 2004 found that over half of our residents are over 50 and as this group gets bigger there is the potential for many more older people to become socially isolated.

In the 2007 WRCC Housing Needs Survey 6 returns mentioned the need for older persons' activities, and at the 2008 Annual Parish Meeting care of older residents was in the top 10 of concerns expressed (see page 26).

Many elderly residents do not take part in village activities and groups because they choose not to, but some are housebound or do not have friends to accompany them.

In 2008 residents with representatives on the Parish Council formed a new group to produce a very well-received calendar for the village, the proceeds from the sale of which are ear-marked for activities for the elderly.

*Without wishing to patronise older residents LIPC wishes to encourage the broadening of activities within the village specifically for this age group.*

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Village Opinion 2001 reported about 40 households had registered **disabled** residents, and also that 8% of residents were **working from home**. More information on these two groups and their needs should be obtained in the next Village Opinion survey.

### *Make a Date with the Calendar Group!*

What a great idea - the Village Calendar! The 2009 copy sold out after two production runs and is already a collector's item. The whole idea was to make a bit of money to be used in projects involving some of our older residents. And how it succeeded! The next step is to decide how the money might be spent. If you've any ideas - *make a date with the Group*.

**So make sure you order next year's in good time!**



### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- ❑ With the help of young people, to explore further activities which might be provided for them within the village.
- ❑ To take more proactive steps in tackling youth misbehaviour, by talking with families and by closer liaison with the Police, schools, village groups, and the WCC Targeted Youth Support scheme.
- ❑ To support the work of the The Calendar Group in providing a more diverse range of activities for the elderly.
- ❑ To determine the extent of needs by researching three population groups in more detail i.e. older, registered disabled, and working-from-home residents.

# –Crime & Neighbourhood Watch–

Hitherto Long Itchington has been a relatively low crime area with incidents falling mainly into car crime, domestic burglary, bogus callers and nuisance youth categories. *In 2008 fewer incidents were reported than in any other parish in the Southam area.*

*A good working relationship with local Community Police, and a Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme help reduce crime levels, but nuisance youths are an increasing problem.*

Under a co-ordinator about 30 NHW members undertake to keep an eye on what goes on around their homes and those of their neighbours, especially with respect to suspicious vehicles and callers, and they are also ready to assist elderly residents who live alone.

Good neighbourliness demands that rogue builders and tarmac gangs, or phoney “men from the council” are reported to the police as soon as they are observed.

In recent years, however, much troublesome activity has entered unobserved in the form of cleverly misleading emails and phone calls offering, for example, fire and burglar alarm systems which can be much more expensive than at first perceived. NHW can help greatly in warning and advising the more vulnerable in our society.

A lesser known fact is that some home insurance companies offer reduced premiums if the area has an approved NHW scheme.

Long Itchington is fortunate in having a very helpful Southam Police team who issue a weekly neighbourhood crime bulletin with lots of advice on crime prevention which can then be communicated to the village.

*Problems of youth crime were raised by several residents at both the 2008 and 2009 Annual Parish Meetings. Marauding gangs of teenagers, some from outside areas, are causing an increasing amount of wilful damage, offensive graffiti, and harassment of villagers in their homes at all hours. Their behaviour is often fuelled by alcohol and drugs as is evidenced by litter left behind by them. Complaints were voiced that the Police are slow to respond to cries for help, and that little seems to be done to deter such behaviour.*

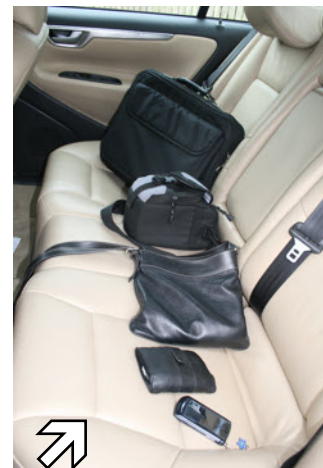
**LIPC and other villagers have held several encouraging meetings with the Police in order to find ways of discouraging such behaviour and of protecting victims.**

## *Stop Monkeying Around!*

We might agree that in their day the three monkeys might have been wise. But nowadays there is plenty of evil about. If you see or hear anything evil - or become merely suspicious - **SPEAK OUT!** Report all incidents promptly to either the police or your nearest NHW member.

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- ❑ **Continue meetings with the Police in order to reduce troublesome teenage behaviour.**
- ❑ Support Neighbourhood Watch and help the group to develop further.
- ❑ Remind residents, particularly the elderly, how to protect property, deal with doorstep cold-callers, and whom to contact if they need help.
- ❑ Continue a campaign of warning and education using efficient communication.



***GIVE THEM THE BOOT!*** ↗

# — Local Facilities & Services —

Facilities, amenities, organisations and services in the parish of Long Itchington include:-

Shops (3)  
Post Office  
Public Phone Box  
Broadband Internet Connection  
Pubs and Restaurants (8)  
Holy Trinity Church  
Congregational Chapel  
Bus Services  
Community Centre  
Primary School  
Parish Council  
Bimonthly Parish Diary  
Notice Boards (6)  
Parish Council website  
New Community website  
Parochial Church Council  
□ □ □  
Heartstart  
Neighbourhood Watch  
Long Itchington Educational Foundation  
Baby, Child and Teenager Organisations (about 8)  
Other Clubs and Societies (about 15)  
□ □ □  
Community Police  
Allotments  
Litter Bins  
Salt/Grit Bins  
Play Areas and Fields  
Electricity, water and gas  
Mains sewage and storm drainage  
Waste and recycling collections  
Weekly Mobile Library  
Village Handypersons  
Footpaths and Bridleways  
Annual Carnival  
Annual Bonfire Night  
Spring and Autumn Shows  
Public Seats  
The Pond  
Open Spaces  
Flood Defences

*This list which is certainly not exhaustive shows what a wide range we have at our disposal and also how many willing volunteers there must be in Long Itchington.*

**In the 2007 Housing Needs Survey additional facilities requested included an improved bus service, more and better shops, a doctor's surgery (the Long Itchington Branch Surgery, Thursdays at 8.30am, closed in 2003) and a chemist.**

**Sadly it is not always possible to provide all the facilities asked for!**

## **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Wherever possible, to provide population groups, especially the young and elderly, with facilities not currently available - provided willing volunteers come forward.

# Emergency Procedures

In the event of a mass emergency the Parish Council is usually in a good position to take charge and organise help for those affected. The LIPC Emergency Working Party meets from time to time to review risk, procedures and facilities.

In partnership with the Emergency Planning Unit at Warwickshire County Council the Parish Council has developed a Parish Emergency Plan with a booklet containing first steps to evaluate any threat and mobilise resources, and which lists the contact names and numbers of anyone who might have a useful skill or item of equipment which can be called on in an emergency. The plan is updated annually and training sessions are held at the County Council from time to time to keep everyone updated on procedures.

In the past the major threat to a large section of the village has been flooding due to a combination of heavy rain and the overflowing of the River Itchen.

*Housing developments have reduced drainage areas which has no doubt exacerbated the problem, and widespread flooding occurred in Church Road and Stonebridge Lane from Maundy Thursday 1998 and 20th July 2007.*

These recent events have shown that the raised river bank and flood walls no longer afford sufficient protection against the more frequently occurring extreme weather conditions. A major effort by the LIPC has resulted in a Flood Alleviation Scheme being designed by the Environment Agency. This involves realigning the river east of Bascote Road to make room for the northern river bank to be raised and the improvement of flood walls as far as the Green Man pub. Work should commence in Summer 2009.

*Also, the Parish Council obtained a flood grant from Stratford District Council to carry out a survey of the storm drains in Church Road and Bascote Road. This proved that there were faulty connections and extensive damage underground. Severn Trent Water and the Highways Department are looking at the results and repairs are expected. This grant also enabled the Council to purchase a pump which, with several tons of sand and bags, will be kept ready in the vicinity.*

As far as personal emergencies are concerned, since March 2001 the village has had **Heartstart**, a fully trained and self-financed team of first responders complete with defibrillator and oxygen equipment. *The increase in administration demanded by the Warwick Ambulance Service has not helped Heartstart recruitment, but it is hoped that these difficulties can be overcome quickly.*

**Keeping information and procedures up to date is the responsibility of the Emergency Working Party of the LIPC.**

## *Emergencies Can Happen!*

**On 21st April 2006 the Emergency Plan was tested when at about 11pm a car crashed into a gas governor outside Model Village causing a severe gas leak.**

With the help of the Police, about 20 residents and three pets were evacuated to the Community centre, a valuable resource of shelter, kitchen and communications facilities. Care was provided by Parish and County Council members until the area was declared safe at about 2.20am.

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Ensure the Emergency Plan, training and equipment are kept up to date.
- Check condition of all suspect storm drains. Organise repair and jetting.
- Liaise with the Environment Agency on the Flood Alleviation Scheme.

# — Efficient Communication —

There are many communication methods between the various sections of the community. The Parish Council currently maintains six Notice Boards around the parish. There is also a large noticeboard at the Community Centre. The Parish Clerk has the responsibility for regularly updating the boards.

The Long Itchington Parish Diary dates from 1988 and is a 4-side A4 pamphlet published by the Parish Council bi-monthly with a volunteer editor. The Clerk and representatives of other local groups provide copy by e-mail and the Clerk liaises with the editor over priorities and suitability for inclusion. The Diary is compiled using MS Word and e-mailed to the printer. Copies are delivered by paid volunteers to every household, together with any inserts such as approved circulars and fliers or the Annual Information Sheet which lists contact details for local and area services, and village organisations.

Parish Council meetings are held monthly (except August) with the Southam police and the County/District Councillor in attendance. Residents often attend to air problems.

Other Public Meetings are organised by the LIPC to inform residents and receive their views on matters of local importance, such as a new housing or industrial development. *The Annual Parish Meeting, also arranged by LIPC is a statutory event of general interest.*

The Parish Council website was introduced in 2008 and is still at an experimental stage. Subjects include details of Councillors and Parish Clerk, minutes of Public, Council and Annual Parish meetings, copies of the Diary, information on the Parish Precept, Footpaths and Housing, and News items. *Regular and prompt updating is still a problem.*

The new Community Website run by an independent group with the approval of the Parish Council, is expected to become live during 2009 with a range of non-Council topics.

As the Pond is the focal point of the village permission is granted by the LIPC allowing certain important events one week of advertising using banners on perimeter railings.

With so many facilities and meeting points the parish Bush Telegraph is alive and well!

Reporters from the Local Press will usually contact a councillor on matters of importance and interest, and a volunteer correspondent writes a weekly column on village events for the Leamington Courier.

Parish “Village Opinion” Surveys are a valuable way to gauge needs and problems, likes and dislikes. *The last was in 2004, so the next is possibly overdue.*

## “E” or “Snail”?

These days email has largely superseded the telephone on grounds of convenience, cheapness and, if required, a permanently stored record. However the personal approach by telephone is still often to be preferred. Letters (snail mail) have all but disappeared - “More’s the pity” some say, especially those not yet connected to the internet.

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Improve the look and speed of maintenance of the PC website and support effort to get the Community website up and running.
- Consider having a parish email directory to enable quicker and more widespread information exchange, reduction of door to door Diary etc deliveries & wider contact to achieve greater attendance at village events etc.
- Review the format of the Dairy. Also a supplement could be produced which might include correspondence, advertising, competitions, special features, etc.
- Organise the next Village Opinion as soon as the LIPC think it necessary.

# — An Effective Parish Council —

Parish Councils are corporate bodies of which there are about 9,000 in England and Wales, and 109 in the Stratford District. They have wide powers and deliver a vast range of services and representation at a community level in response to observed needs. Funding is by means of an annual precept collected by the County Council.

Parish Councils, elected every 4 years, form the first level in the 3-tier system of local government after which come Stratford District and then Warwickshire County Councils.

*The Long Itchington Parish Council dates from 1890 and today consists of nine Councillors and the Parish Clerk. Formal meetings are held monthly in the Community Centre on the first Wednesday of every month except August.*

The LIPC has seven working parties to report on Planning, Open Spaces, Housing Needs, Highways & Lighting, Finance, Community Centre, and Emergency matters.

*Many references in this Plan refer to the need for efficient communications. A new LIPC working party has been proposed which will oversee parish communications, ensure adequate and efficient links for all residents and groups with the Parish Council, and assist groups and new initiatives e.g. The Beer Festival, to achieve aims more rewardingly.*

**An effective Parish Council will ensure that the parish and its facilities are maintained and improved to an agreed satisfactory state, and that community problem areas are identified and rectified - all within an acceptable budget.**

In order to be effective it is likely that the majority of councillors should be **elected** which means they have agreed, and have been given community approval, to take an active part in “running the village”. Councillors should also agree to some training, in whichever role is assumed, to improve knowledge and capability.

Other essentials for an effective Council are a well qualified Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, good communications between all sections of the parish and smooth transfer of responsibilities between successive councils.

**Finally, all successful organisations need a business plan with a statement of intent and Parish Councils are no exception. Long Itchington is a Local Centre Village, its Parish Council has Quality Status, and an up-to-date Parish Plan will help ensure that the community continues to be well served into the future.**

## *Nothing Succeeds Like Succession!*

The question of succession will come under discussion in Council whenever long-serving members give notice of retiring or standing down at Parish Council elections.

Good continuity will be achieved if the four PACE factors are available:-

- P**lan - An approved Parish Plan
- A**dvice - available from retired Councillors and other helpers
- C**lerk - A well qualified resident Parish Clerk
- E**xperience - gained and provided by continuing Councillors

The production of this Parish Plan will ensure that the new Council will proceed with PACE.

### **FUTURE ACTION?**

- Formation of a new working party to ensure efficient communications between individuals, groups and new initiatives, and the Parish Council.
- For good continuity in Council following the May 2010 elections ensure all PACE factors are available.

# Concluding Remarks

*It has already been remarked that the Parish Plan is a statement and vision of what local features and characteristics the community wishes to preserve, and how it wishes to develop to the benefit of as many as possible, over the next five to ten years.*

## **A good Parish Plan should also be the 3 Rs:-**

- ❑ **A Reference** document - a valuable source of background information for all, but especially for newer parish councillors, helpers, and for project and village organisation managers.
- ❑ **A Reminder** of the very wide range of village tasks and projects, needs and aspirations that must continually be considered by the Parish Council and also of what is good and bad in the parish.
- ❑ **A Rationale** - a logical means of deciding a program of work to achieve agreed goals, *the Action Plan*, on the basis of amenity, need, urgency and cost.

*All the suggested Future Actions in this Parish Plan are listed in Appendix B together with overall aims and other basic information.*

**Generally speaking the Action Plan for the year will consist of all ongoing and maintenance items in the Action List together with all high priority items, plus any further work the Council thinks it has the resources to tackle.**

As time passes aims will be achieved and new priorities will be agreed. So as a general rule it is recommended that the Long Itchington Parish Council should review the Action Plan annually when budgetting for the coming year, but should be aware that events and new information during the year may cause a further shift in priorities.

To be effective, the Parish Plan must be kept up to date by means of Village Opinion surveys, wide-ranging perhaps every 4 to 5 years, and on particular topics as and when the need arises.

***On the basis of this last point, the next Long Itchington Village Opinion survey is possibly overdue and one will be organised as soon as practicable. The resulting data a) will help to fill some of the unknowns in the Action List, and b) may well lead to a review of project priorities.***

## *The Long Itchington Parish Plan is* \_\_\_\_\_

A description of how our community is now

An expression of what we want our villages to be like

*A declaration of intent to make the Parish how we would all like it to be.*

