



**A REPORT  
FOR THE VILLAGE**

**March 2003**

## INTRODUCTION

Many of you will remember filling in your Village Opinion questionnaires 15 months ago.

We believe this exercise brought together the largest number of participants in any Long Itchington village project – 1471 individuals were involved!

Most of those who participated were very positive:

*“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a say without having to attend a stuffy meeting.”*

*“It’s good that the village is finally spending some time to find out what the youth of the village would like.”*

But some expressed doubt about the whole exercise. As one said:

*“We have had successive questionnaires. Do they really make a difference? May we have answers to these questions – publish the results.”*

Well, **yes**, they can make a difference!

The full report from Village Opinion @ Long Itchington has been adopted by the Long Itchington Parish Council and is set to be adopted by Stratford District Council at the end of March.

After that, the report must be consulted by Stratford District Council as supplementary planning guidance. In that role the results of Village Opinion @ Long Itchington will, it is thought, heavily influence any planning decisions for the Galanos House site.

Besides this, many matters raised in Village Opinion @ Long Itchington are already starting to be addressed and others are on the agenda to be tackled in the future – see the end of this document for details.

And **yes**, finally, the results are being published!

We apologise it has taken so long to do this. Many people took the opportunity to hear the results presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2002, but the printed word has taken a bit longer.

The only excuse is that the whole exercise has taken over 1,000 hours of volunteers’ time and we all have other calls on our time.

This document is a summary report being distributed to all households in the parish.

The full report, which weighs in at 93 pages, is available to read from the Parish Clerk or any Parish Councillor.

Finally, as part of this introduction, we want to thank all the people who made Village Opinion @ Long Itchington possible and such a success – the questionnaire distributors & collectors and everyone who took the time to fill in a questionnaire.

It is your village, and the results of this survey reflect the opinions of the vast majority of the village.

## WHY DID WE COLLECT THE VILLAGE'S OPINION?

When the Parish Council decided to conduct Village Opinion (or, to give it its formal title, our parish appraisal) they did so in order to:

- a) gauge parish needs, and public attitudes and opinions, on a wide range of topics and services but, in particular, on any future development of the Cement Works and Galanos House sites,
- b) get the views of young people,
- c) update facts and data obtained in the previous appraisal of 1995.

But there are also two other significant benefits:

1. When a parish appraisal has been properly conducted, presented and subsequently adopted by the Stratford District Council, it must be consulted by SDC as supplementary planning guidance.
2. Long Itchington's new status as a Local Centre Village in the Local Plan Review ensures that the parish appraisal will be very much taken into account when the planners are deciding on any application to redevelop the Cement Works or Galanos House sites.

In summary, we were looking to:

- Collect the opinions of villagers so that the major areas of concern could be identified and then tackled.
- Gather ideas for improving life in the village.

## HOW DID WE COLLECT THE VILLAGE'S OPINION?

A village open meeting was held in April 2001, called "Village Project 2001+". At this meeting about 200 people presented a large range of views, opinions and concerns about the village.

These issues were then included in a three-part questionnaire aimed respectively at the household, adults and children aged 5 to 16 years.

A team of around 50 distributors and collectors were assigned areas of the parish where they distributed the questionnaires, encouraged completion and collected them afterwards.

The Long Itchington Primary School also promoted the exercise by talking about it to pupils, showing them the questionnaires and getting them to design their own.

Distribution started on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2001 and most questionnaires were back within a week.

677 of the 811 occupied houses in the parish completed questionnaires – a staggering 83% response rate, which compared very favourably to the 45% in the 1995 Parish Appraisal.

The input of the school's efforts was clearly seen in that every household bar one with children at the Primary School responded!

Given the large response, Village Opinion @ Long Itchington is a source of accurate statistics, and can be taken as a reliable indication of the opinions, attitudes and needs of the parish of Long Itchington in late 2001.

## THE MAKE-UP OF THE VILLAGE

The households in the village break down into three main types:

- those occupied by families or groups of adults (42%)
- those occupied by couples (40%)
- those occupied by single people (18%)

A third of the households are occupied by people aged over 60.

The ages of people living in the parish are shown in the graph below, compared both to 1995 and the UK population.

Around a fifth of the people living in the parish are children.

The age profile is not very different to 1995 and, compared to the UK population, we have fewer aged 22-39 and more aged 40-59.

Two thirds of the adults in the village work, mostly outside the village, but 15%, or approximately 300 people, work in the village, either from home or elsewhere.

In terms of how long people have lived in the village, 27% have lived here for 5 years or less, compared to 18% in 1995, reflecting the village's growth in recent years.

At the other end of the spectrum, 35% have lived in the village for over 25 years, which is very similar to 1995.

Sadly many of the older residents feel there has been a deterioration in the village over time and with the growth.

*"When I was little, there would have been no need for 'Village Opinion' because the Parish Council would have known what true villagers wanted and got on with it. No matter what we want, we get what Stratford want to give us. Worst luck."*

*"Long Itchington was a real village with a good community spirit 20 years ago. Sadly it is no longer the case."*

But others felt that the village had not been spoilt ... yet:

*"I have lived in Church Road for 40 years and seen many changes. But thankfully, so far, the Village has not been spoilt – apart from the parked cars and the development on Short Lane."*

AGE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE VILLAGE			
	2001 %	1995 %	UK %
0-16	22	19	21
17-21	4	5	6
22-39	19	21	27
40-59	32	29	26
60+	23	27	20

LENGTH OF TIME ADULTS LIVED IN VILLAGE		
	2001 %	1995 %
Less than a year	5	4
1 - 5 years	22	14
6 - 15 years	21	27
16 - 25 years	15	21
Over 25 years	35	34

## FACILITIES & SERVICES

We asked people to say what they thought were the best features of the village.

The main things mentioned were the pond (44%), The Green (17%), the church (10%) and the village's size (10%).

There was less consistency when they were asked what the bad features of the village were. 20% mentioned the roads & traffic, 12% the condition of the roads and 10% the condition of pavements and paths.

In terms of benefits or facilities people wanted introduced, the main ones were facilities & activities for the young (22%), more sports/leisure facilities (15%) and more shops (13%).

In addition to these questions where people could write in their answers, we also asked people to rate a number of different services and facilities in the village. Some of these were also asked about in 1995.

The left hand chart below shows the rating of those services and facilities which were rated the best.

Refuse collection and the main water supply are particularly highly rated and

both these services have a higher rating in 2001 compared to 1995.

There is also a very positive rating for the Long Itchington Diary, but not quite so positive for the amount of information about what's going on in the village, which is slightly down on 1995.

However, the biggest change in ratings from 1995 is on children's playgrounds, which is much more highly rated in 2001, no doubt thanks to the superb work of Play 2000.

All the other facilities and services on this chart are reasonably positively rated.

But moving on to the right hand chart we see some of the less well rated areas.

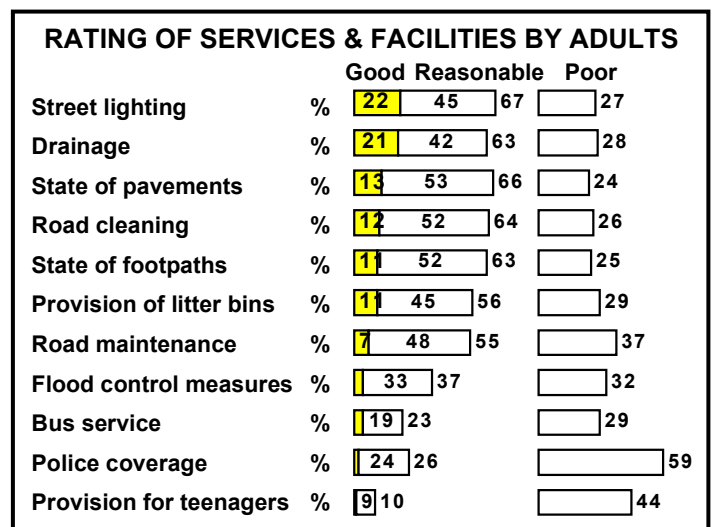
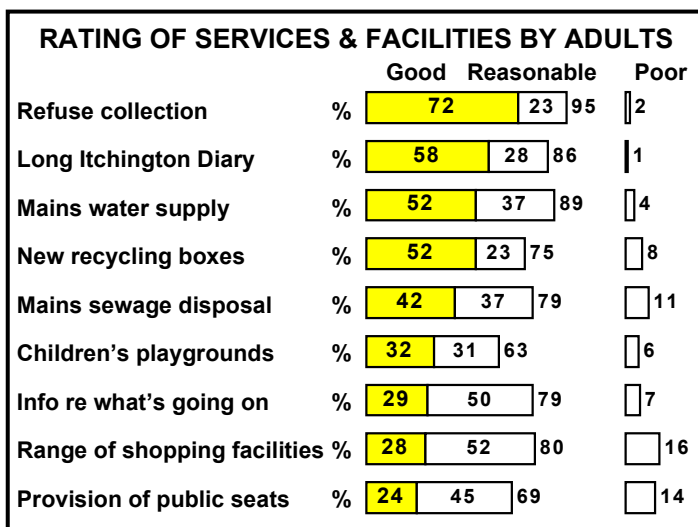
All of these have a substantial minority of villagers actually rating them poor.

This is particularly true for police coverage (which was rated worse in 2001 than 1995), facilities for teenagers and road maintenance.

While many people did not have a view on the bus service, more people rated this poor than reasonable or good.

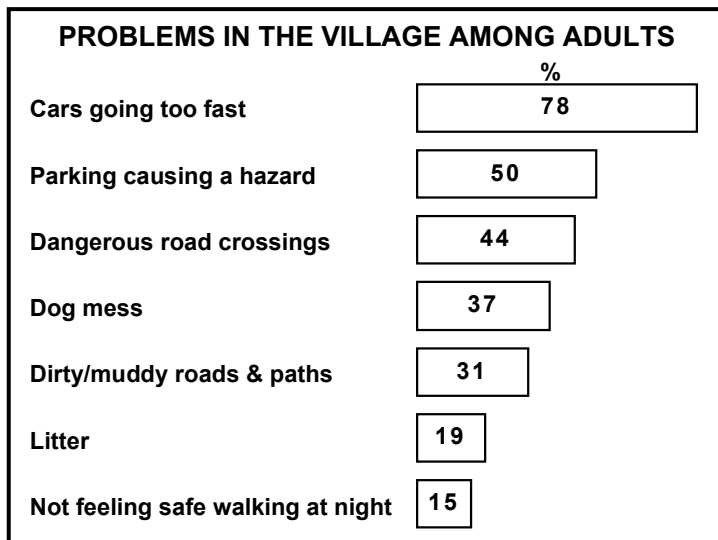
As one person commented:

*"At 77 years old, one does not want to waste what time is left in bus shelters."*



## PROBLEMS IN THE VILLAGE

As well as getting the adults to rate the facilities and services in the village, we also asked people to say which of a list of things they thought were problems in the village.



Not surprisingly, from the things people wrote down as the bad features in the village, the main concerns are about roads and cars.

Over three quarters of villagers say cars going too fast are a problem and around half think hazardous parking and dangerous road crossings are problems.

After these, dog mess was reckoned to be a problem by just over a third, and dirty/muddy roads and paths by just under a third.

We will look in more detail at each of these main areas.

### Problems With Vehicles

Perhaps not surprisingly, those who live on the A423, and those from Leather Street, are most likely to feel that cars going too fast and dangerous road crossings are problems in the village.

But wherever people live, cars going too fast is the area that is mentioned most as a problem.

Speeding cars is mainly felt to be a problem on the A423 and, to a lesser extent, on the Leamington Road.

Dangerous road crossings are mainly seen as on the A423, then the Leamington Road (particularly the Buck & Bell junction).

There were lots of comments and suggestions on this subject:

*“How many more deaths do we have to have on the A423 to actually do something about speed in this village!”*

*“The main road is extremely dangerous. Many people have had serious accidents.”*

Hazardous parking is felt to be most of a problem on Church Road, followed by Stockton Road and Leigh Crescent.

And, once again, we were not short of suggestions about how this could be tackled:

*“Parking in Church Road would be improved if parking was only allowed on one side of the road.”*

*“One way system around the village.”*

*“If the grass verge on Stockton Road was made into a parking lay-by, it would stop a lot of aggression by motorists and residents.”*

*“Parking cars in Leigh Crescent – make the wasted grass areas into lay-bys for parking.”*

These suggestions, along with many others, need to be considered as a way of tackling the problem of hazardous parking in the village.

There is clearly an issue with the number of vehicles in the village. Most households have cars, and the average number of vehicles per household is 1.6, as opposed to 1.5 in 1995.

So as well as having more households, the number of vehicles per household is increasing.

From the responses in the questionnaires, we estimate there are around 1,300 vehicles in the village – 1,155 cars, 80 vans/lorries and 65 motorbikes/mopeds.

While most people claim to park these in a garage or on their own drive, this still leaves around 220 parked on the street or pavement.

## Problems With Animals

Overall, 37% of adults feel there is a problem with dog mess in the village, but this rises to half among those living in the central areas of the village (around The Green) and the west of the village.

Not surprisingly, this subject gave rise to strong feelings from both sides.

Here are just a few illustrations of the comments made by those who saw dog mess as a problem:

*“The dog mess in the village is disgusting. There should be something done about this. It is not healthy for the children.”*

*“All people found letting their dogs foul the footpaths should be named and shamed in the Long Itchington Diary.”*

But those with dogs expressed dissatisfaction with the ban of dogs on the playing field:

*“The ban of dogs at the playing field should have been done differently. Fencing off an area for dogs only.”*

*“Does anyone go to the playing field now dogs are prohibited? I regularly used to take my dog (clearing up mess if necessary) and never saw anyone except dog walkers.”*

As well as looking at the problems with animals, we also found out how many pets there were in the village.

26% of households have dogs (there are around 290 in all) and 21% have cats (around 270). In addition to these, there are 515 other animals, giving us around 1075 pets in the village!

## Other Problems

Just under a third thought that dirty/muddy roads and paths were a problem in the village, but this rises to over half of those living in Model Village.

As some people said:

*“Filthy and dirty main road through the village.”*

*“The road sweeper does not come into Model Village often enough.”*

Around a fifth felt litter was a problem, rising to around a quarter among those living in the central (Green) area and the west of the village.

Some people felt this was a real concern:

*“More waste bins are a priority for the village to try to keep it clean.”*

Only 15% said they felt not feeling safe when walking at night was a problem, but it is clear from the comments people made, that many were talking about the lack of street lighting in some areas.

Particular areas where this lack of street lighting was identified as a problem were on the Leamington Road near Galanos House and certain parts of the A423.

## YOUTH

A key area that came up in this survey was the provision of facilities for young people.

We have already noted that facilities for youth came up most often as the thing adults wanted introduced to the village. We have also seen that the rating of facilities for teenagers was one of the worst rated items.

This is partly in contrast to the excellent improvements in facilities for younger children:

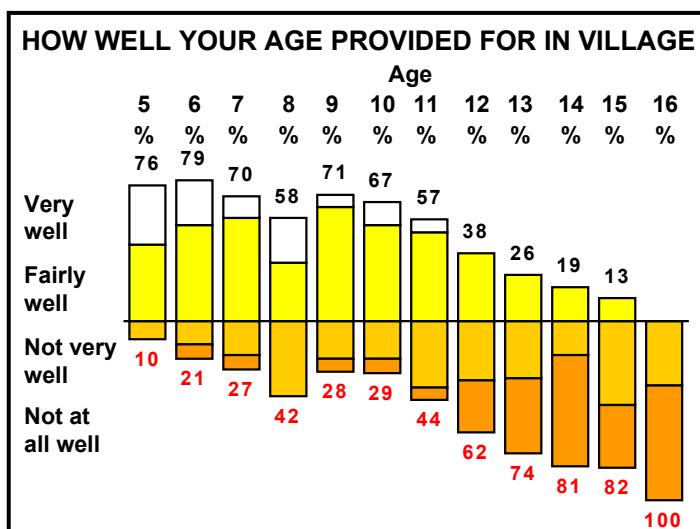
*“Some provision for teenagers, following the excellent play area.”*

As we have already mentioned, the rating of the children’s playgrounds has improved dramatically since 1995.

In 1995, 45% rated these as good or reasonable, but in 2001, this was up to 63%.

This shows the success of Play 2000, but it should be noted that this survey was done before the completion of the second phase of Play 2000.

We asked those young people aged 5 to 16 to rate how well their age group was provided for in the village.



Overall, around half said very or fairly well, and half not very or not at all well. But this differs dramatically by age as the chart shows.

Up to the age of 10, children seem pretty happy with the way their age group is provided for, but above this age, it declines rapidly.

There were lots of suggestions for improving the facilities for teenagers:

*“Facilities for teenagers by making more use of the Community Centre as a youth centre or club. Employing an officer to get the kids involved.”*

*“A cyber type café so that young people can meet together in the evenings so that they do not just hang around outside (boring!). Could be used in the day for mums and old people to meet and chat. I feel strongly about this. Teenagers need somewhere to go and so do young mothers and older people who are on their own – just to meet up and get out of the house.”*

Some go further and suggest:

*“A mechanism for involving younger people in local events/issues. A youth council for the village?”*

And there are clearly young people who want to be more involved:

*“Me and my friends will make a dirt track if you could supply the dirt. Contact me on ... if you are interested.”*

But, as always there are two sides:

*“Because teenagers are teenagers it is virtually impossible to provide what they think they want.”*

*“Just because my friends and I are aged 16 and over, does not mean we are a load of yobs.”*

## BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS

Because of the situation at the Cement Works and Galanos House, a number of questions were included in the survey about these sites and housing development in general.

However, there was a very clear desire not to destroy the character of the village:

*“Don’t destroy the typical features of a typical English village.”*

*“If I wanted better facilities, I would live in a town or city.”*

The adults were asked which types of housing they felt were needed in the village, and which they would like to see at the Galanos House site.

	HOUSING NEEDS (ADULTS)	
	Needed In Village %	Galanos Site %
“Starter” homes for young people	49	38
Accommodation for elderly	35	37
Family housing	26	25
Bungalows	20	22
Rented accommodation	20	12
Shared equity property	18	14
Luxury/executive houses	6	7

Starter homes for young people and then accommodation for the elderly came up as the types of housing most felt to be needed in the village.

Presumably because of its past, people feel starter homes for young people & accommodation for the elderly are equally appropriate for the Galanos House site.

In more general terms, we also asked people what types of housing they felt would be acceptable in the village.

Houses at Galanos House were acceptable to half – some way ahead of houses on the Cement Works site.

While some people felt that infill was acceptable, hardly anyone felt that expansion beyond the built up area was.

TYPES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IN VILLAGE		%
Houses on Galanos site		50
Houses on Cement Works site		30
Single houses in built up area (infill)		29
Small groups of houses in built up area (infill)		23
Expansion beyond built-up area		4
Larger estates beyond built up area		3

We also asked people to rank some options for the development of the Cement Works site, and say which would be unacceptable.

The most popular option, by a long way, was use of the site for recreational/leisure facilities, followed by light industry.

Around a half found ‘green’ landfill and heavy industry unacceptable.

	CHOICES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CEMENT WORKS			
	1st	2nd	3rd	Unacceptable
Recreational/leisure facilities	52	22	81	3
Light industry	19	29	23	71
Housing	19	18	51	23
‘Green’ Landfill	21			45
Heavy industry	10			54

## **SPECIFIC NEEDS AND PROGRESS TO DATE**

Village Opinion @ Long Itchington has shown that action is required in many areas, and already much progress has been made by the parish, district and county councils.

### 1. Control of speeding traffic.

*Warwickshire County Council now accepts that there should be a 30mph limit in the village, and it is hoped that the proposed scheme will be finalised and installed in 2003/4.*

*Possible traffic calming measures have still to be examined.*

### 2. Road and footpath maintenance.

*Warwickshire County Council has assured that substantial repair and resurfacing work will be carried out in 2003/4.*

### 3. Reduction in vehicle parking hazards.

*Still to be looked at.*

### 4. Flood control and drainage measures.

*All surface water drains are continually checked and cleaned. Sewage and flood pumps have been substantially upgraded. The village emergency plan has been updated.*

### 5. Increased police presence.

*We are informed that more police manpower has been allocated to the parish. Our community beat officer regularly attends Parish Council meetings.*

### 6. Extra lighting in Leamington Road and Marton Road.

*The possibility of getting more lighting will be looked at in conjunction with the*

*30mph scheme and the Galanos site development proposals.*

### 7. More facilities for younger people and more sports and leisure facilities generally.

*Since this appraisal, Play 2000 has completed phase 2 to install play facilities for children and young people in the Green End playing fields. This has gone a long way to satisfying needs, but also the Parish Council is currently looking at a new sports pavilion project.*

### 8. More shops.

*Not within the Parish Council's power.*

### 9. Preservation of good features of the parish.

*This appraisal, when adopted by Stratford District Council, together with the previously published Village Design Statement will help to preserve natural features and good appearance of parish buildings.*

### 10. Improvement in bus services.

*Warwickshire County Council and operators have made many improvements to services over the past year, and these will be promoted and explained to villagers at the next Annual Parish Meeting.*

### 11. Reduction in litter and dog nuisances.

*More litter bins have already been provided, but new initiatives to control dog fouling, preferably led by responsible dog owners, are now required.*

### 12. Satisfying housing requests from, particularly, the younger and the elderly.

*Redevelopment of the Galanos House site will go some way to providing current housing needs.*

## WHAT NEXT?

Obviously much more work remains to be done.

The first requirement is to get "Village Opinion", the Long Itchington 2001 Parish Appraisal, adopted by Stratford District Council, with the immediate aim of enabling housing needs data to be used as guidance in considering planning applications to develop the Galanos site.

The next priority is to apply to the Countryside Agency for the necessary grant to complete a Parish Plan, in which specific aims and needs of the parish arising from this appraisal, could be further investigated and solutions identified.

Supplementary questionnaires might be required to help finalise and prioritise opportunities in a Parish Plan which could well include some or all of the following list:-

- Traffic calming measures and parking
- The provision of a new sports pavilion and facilities
- Condition of roads, paths and pavements
- Helping elderly people
- Safe road crossings
- Public transport
- Disabled needs
- Housing needs
- Village archive
- Street lighting
- A public dog walk
- A new village news sheet
- A regularly updated web-site

But the most important requirement, as far as the Village is concerned, is for an active group to start working on the Parish Plan.

Many of those on the Village Appraisal Working Party are intending to take things forward in this forum, but new blood is also required.

If you would like to join this group, working to develop a plan for the parish, you would be most welcome.

But there is still lots that people who don't like the idea of working on a committee can do.

All the areas detailed in the previous section, and this one, need committed volunteers to progress them.

Having given everyone who lives in the village the opportunity to express their views, we now know the key issues to be tackled.

The next step is to find more people to help us progress them and make life in the village better for everyone.

The information we have gathered is only useful if we can act on it and take things forward.

There is a real opportunity for those who want to contribute to do so.

The Annual Parish Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2003 at the Community Centre will allow you to volunteer. Alternatively, you can contact David Cobley on 817676.