

Barrow upon Soar

Parish Plan – Final Report

Ours is a good village – together we can make it better

Arthur Gardner
416204
Chairman,
Parish Plan Steering Group

Tel: 01509

email: parishplan@jardin1.demon.co.uk

Contents	Pages
A. Introduction	1 -2
B. Key Issues	
B.1 Heritage	3
B.2 Village Infrastructure	3 - 8
B.3 Community	8 - 9
B.4 Local Government	9
B.5 Youth Questionnaire	9 - 10
C. Action Plans	10 - 11
D. Acknowledgements	11
Detailed Action Plans	12 – 21

Annexes (not included in printed version but available on request on CD ROM or by email)

- **WORD** files of the analysed questionnaires. These include tabulations of all responses and comments offered spontaneously to the open-ended questions. These are the data on which the Final Report is based. The section numbers refer to the sections in the adults' questionnaire.

Section A.doc	(Population data)
Section B.doc	(Overall impressions of Barrow)
Section C.doc	(Transport and access)
Section D.doc	(Crime and community safety)
Section E.doc	(Barrow and the arts)
Section F.doc	(Keeping the village attractive and in good repair)
Section G.doc	(Barrow as a place to play)
Section H.doc	(Education and training)
Section I.doc	(Barrow as a place to visit)
Section J.doc	(Health and welfare)
Section K.doc	(Religion and the churches)
Section L.doc	(Local Government)
Section M.doc	(Employment)
Section N.doc	(Paying for facilities and services)
Section Y.doc	(Young people's responses to the youth questionnaire)

- Blank questionnaire for adults
- Blank questionnaire for young people

Barrow upon Soar Parish Plan – Final Report

A. Introduction

1. Parish Plans are an initiative by the Government to encourage local communities to find out for themselves how they want their villages to be improved. It is an exercise in grassroots planning from the bottom-up rather than top-down. At its heart is a consultation with the community to identify their wishes followed by a report (*this document*) to the service providers (transport, health, police, etc) at county and borough levels.
2. In Barrow upon Soar, the consultation was initiated by the Parish Council and the Rural Community Council (RCC). After an Open Meeting to explain the scheme, a team of volunteers formed a Steering Group – including representatives nominated by the Parish Council - and started work in July 2004 on receipt of a grant from the Countryside Agency (supplemented by contributions from the Parish Council and British Gypsum). Frequent presentations have been made to the Parish Council during the course of the project and this Final Report has its endorsement.
3. We decided, early on, to carry out extensive consultations in the village before designing a questionnaire. This included: articles in the village newspaper; invitations to submit ideas and questions; mailshots to the 70+ clubs and societies in the village; random mailshots to residents and businesses; ‘post boxes’ for suggestions (in the library, paper shop and health centre); and an open meeting to discuss concerns. The outcome was over 4 closely typed pages of specific suggestions for improving the village services and facilities! This became the basis for the Barrow-specific questions in the questionnaire. The RCC (Hazel Fish) helped enormously in finalising the format of these questions.
4. In addition, we incorporated a set of ‘standard’ questions, not specific to Barrow, reflecting the overarching concerns of Service Providers. These are questions which Service Providers seek to ask of all communities so that they can compare and contrast when assigning priorities for funding. These questions were endorsed by the Service Providers and the Parish Council.
5. Also, in consultation with youth groups in the village, we produced a ‘youth questionnaire’ aimed at the 10 – 18 yr olds. This contained Barrow-specific questions reflecting the particular concerns of young people.
6. The knock-on effect was that the issues thrown up in the initial consultations were more complex, apparently, than usual. Accordingly, the questionnaire was big (eg with separate questionnaires for adults and young people) and involved more complex than usual data input and analysis. With hindsight, it is obvious that this was inevitable since Barrow upon Soar is a big village (about 2500 households, population about 8,000) with a lively and well-developed community spirit.
7. The questionnaires were: distributed, in late May 2005, to all households; collected, during June 2005, by a team of volunteers; coded by the Steering Group; data input was by paid typists; and the Steering Group did the subsequent analysis of results. This process took much longer than any of us had expected.
8. 1190 replies to the ‘adults’ questionnaire were received from households representing about 52% of questionnaires distributed and about 2800 people. This is a good return given the length and complexity of the questionnaire. Also, the demographic make-up of the respondents is reasonably similar to that of Charnwood Borough as a whole (as revealed by available census data) leading us to regard the Barrow data as ‘representative’. In addition, 167 questionnaires were received from young people. We feel that these data provide a sound basis for action.

9. Both questionnaires were anonymous but we invited people to say if they wanted more information on anything (eg clubs and societies, help from social services, childcare) or wanted to offer to help with task forces to follow up to the survey. These details were collected on 'tear-off' contact sheets which have been/are being passed to those relevant to the requests received. Incidentally, this has identified a lot of new volunteers to help with village activities.
10. Following the data analysis, a draft was produced of the Key Issues and the proposed Action Plan. These were presented to the Parish Council and, subsequently, to the community as a whole at an Open Meeting in November 2005. A draft Final Report was then written based on these findings and comments. This was sent, in mid January 2006, to service providers as recommended by the RCC. They were invited to a 'question and answer' session in early February 2006 as a mutual check of understanding. This version of the Final Report was written in the light of comments made by the service providers.¹
11. Copies of the Final Report will be put on the village website and made available from the Library and the Parish Council Offices. A shortened version has been distributed to all households by way of feedback and a 'launch exhibition' held in the village. These generated additional names of volunteers.
12. The Steering Group is now concentrating on encouraging the formation of 'action groups' to follow up the recommendations of the Action Plan. Once these are up and running, the Steering Group will disband.

B. Key issues

13. This is a summary of key issues arising from the Parish Plan questionnaire surveys. A 'key issue' is taken as something which a substantial majority of people supported or rejected strongly. The questionnaire was long and probing so it is no surprise that it has thrown up a lot of issues. To make it easier to see where the evidence comes from, we provide cross-references to the question numbers used in the questionnaire (eg B.1 for the adult questionnaire, Y.1 for the youth questionnaire).
14. All percentages quoted for the adults are calculated against the base of 1190 – even though not everyone answered all the questions and the numbers answering (shown as "N=...") do not always cross-tally. We use the *total* answering – 1190 - because the strength of feeling about an issue can be deduced from the number endorsing a particular point of view or idea *and* the absolute numbers of people replying to each question. Where a large number of people chose to answer a question *and* a large number agreed or disagreed with a particular statement, then that issue has been taken to be particularly important. That said, replies to the open-ended questions throw up some suggestions or issues which we never anticipated when we formulated the questionnaire! Some of these are highlighted in this summary as deserving of attention even though the numbers involved are low. This is a matter of judgement. It is for the Action Groups, which follow up these recommendations, to look at the full details for themselves and decide what, if anything, should be done.
15. The issues are discussed under four, somewhat overlapping, headings: **heritage**, **infrastructure**, **community**, and **local government**. We have brought together replies from the **young people** in a fifth section.

¹ For information, the data from the questionnaires has been converted to Word files and is available to those requiring it (eg the Service Providers and Action Groups). However, since it adds up to about 70 pages of dense text, we are not going to run off copies if we can avoid it. The "Key Issues" section of this Report is a condensation of the data files and the "Action Plans" are derived from the Key Issues. Hence, all items in the Action Plans can be traced back to the data files.

B.1 Heritage

16. Barrow’s heritage – interpreted in its widest sense to include ‘environment’ - is highly valued and received some of the highest ‘scores’ of all in the survey. It matters to residents that they are **surrounded by pleasant countryside**, that they have **access to parks and open spaces**, and that it is **an attractive village**. For example:
- 93% rate as ‘very good’ or ‘fairly good’ Barrow’s “nearness to the countryside” (B.1)
 - 89% “want to protect the green spaces in and around the village” (I.1)
 - 85% think it an attractive village (B.1)
 - 73% want to conserve its buildings (I.1)
17. As to improvements, they want it made even more attractive by such things as:
- 75% think that “All the traffic islands should be planted out and maintained as nicely as Jerusalem roundabout” (F.1)
 - 67% want more flower baskets and the like (E.1)
 - 63% want to develop a continuous park from Cotes Rd round to the Millennium Park in Fishpool Way when the new Willow Way estate is built (C.14)
18. Many want more tourists to come to Barrow (45%, I.1) and, to that end:
- 58% want car parking for visitors by the canal/river (I.1)
 - 57% want more wildlife guides and 56% want more heritage guides (I.1)
 - 56% want an A-Z street guide on display and as a leaflet (I.1)
 - 42% want the Soar Valley made into a proper ‘countryside park’ (I.1)
19. The river valley, in particular, is seen as a special asset which we ought to be making the most of.
20. Against this background of positive comment, two issues stand out as negative and needing attention: the untidiness of the area around the Soar Bridge/Barrow Deep Lock/Proctors; and the depressing amounts of litter and dog fouling to be found in some places
- 72% say improve the Soar Bridge area (F.2) and 65% say clean up Proctors (I.2)
 - 68% want cleaner streets (B.1), 33% complain of dog mess (D.4), 67% want more litter bins and 55% want more frequent street cleaning (F.2)
21. Other specifics could be mentioned. ***The general point is that people are saying that this is an attractive place to live and they want it kept that way. They want their heritage protected and enhanced.*** (Many of the spontaneous comments documented at question F.1 in the data files are about resisting further expansion of Barrow in order to preserve its character.)

B.2 Village Infrastructure

22. A very wide variety of infrastructure issues is evident from the closed and open-ended questions. Some are praising Barrow and some complaining. The specifics (traffic, shopping, etc) are listed, below, in order of the strength of feeling they seem to generate – for or against!
23. The most heated issue is a criticism with 49% rating the level of **traffic congestion** as “very poor” (B.1) and only 2% saying “don’t know”. **This was the worst rating of any issue we asked about.** For those living in the village there are few surprises:
- 30% say they are “pretty badly’ or ‘very badly” affected by traffic flows (C.4) with congestion at its worst (C.4 and C.5) in the morning and evening rush hours and at school

closing times in the afternoons (particularly affecting High St/South St/ Bridge St/ Cotes Rd and the streets near to Hall Orchard school).

- And these are exacerbated when Slash Lane is flooded (C.14): 69% want Slash Lane and access to the A6 made so they don't flood because of the knock-on effects in Barrow.
- Many other suggestions were made for improving traffic flows (C.6, C.12 and C.14) of which the most frequently cited are to enforce parking restrictions in the High St and Hall Orchard areas (74%), and to improve the flows over the Soar Bridge (eg by removing or phasing the traffic lights (46%), by creating a new footbridge for pedestrians and cyclists (27%), and a new raised walkway/cycleway from Barrow to Quorn (66%)). 30% said that the main reason they don't cycle more is that they feel unsafe because of other traffic (C.11). There was relatively little support for the building of a by-pass (38%), which is somewhat at variance with earlier indications, so, perhaps, the options were not explained enough?
- The counterpart to improving traffic flows is **traffic calming** (C.12 and C.13) and the indications are that many want to *stop speeding on the approach roads to the village* but not, perhaps, if it results in slowing the traffic to the point of a standstill and causing more congestion. A delicate balance is needed in addressing these two sets of issues. That said, a case is made for a new pedestrian crossing in South St near to Bishop Beveridge Club and one across Fishpool way to the Millennium Park.

24. Criticism, too, of the condition of roads and pavements (30%, B.1) but without specific detail.
25. On a brighter note, the **shopping facilities** are particularly valued (eg 84% think them 'very good' or 'fairly good', B.1). It is important that changes made for other reasons (eg stopping parking in the High St) do not result in shop closures. It will not be easy to achieve a suitable balance between such competing issues but the community ought to try to do so otherwise it might lose the very shops it requires to be a viable village. We did not ask what additional shops they would like to see but one specific, mentioned by several people in connection with stimulating tourism, is a perceived need for a café in the village centre (I.2). At the time of writing this, a small café has been opened at the baker's shop in the High St.
26. The **housing available** – presumably its quality and variety? – is rated highly (eg 78% in B.1). That said, 167 people think there are not enough homes to be rented, 120 want more starter homes to be built, and 64 want more homes for the elderly or disabled (J.1 – J.4). And one of the most frequently mentioned comments is that Barrow is growing too big and "we don't want any more new houses" (F.1). The **cost of living** seems to be reasonable (73% agree in B.1).
27. Barrow produced a **Village Design Statement** some years ago but it seems that most of the community are unaware of its recommendations (52% say they are not aware, F.3) and 44 respondents (4%, F.4) say that they have made major external changes to their home in the last few years but did not follow the Village Design Statement (against that, 72 respondents, 6%, say that they did).
28. The **Health Services**, too, are highly regarded (78% approval, B.1). However, nearly 20% of all respondents living in Barrow are not registered at the Barrow health centre preferring other services, mainly those at Sileby (J.1). J.3 and J.4 asked searching questions of the Barrow health services and elicited a wide variety of comments:
 - Overall it is well liked - and there were no adverse comments about the quality of health care provided - but there *are* severe criticisms of the ways in which the services are organised and their capacity [eg it is not easy to get through to the centre by phone (23%), it is not easy to make an appointment (28%), you have to wait a long time to get treatment (13%), it is difficult to get a home visit (15%) or treatment in the evenings, at night or at the weekend (30%), you have to queue for an appointment (3%)]. These tend to be seen as the result of the centre being overstretched with not enough doctors/too many patients. A few people ask whether we should have a second practice to provide competition and increase the supply of

services (eg near the new Willow Way development). One practical suggestion: have a covered porch in which to wait until the surgery opens? (J.4)

29. There is less demand for other forms of welfare services but 322 (27%) households report having someone with a **long-term illness or disability** (J.5) and 37 (J.6) want more help (eg with housing and services). 97 (8%) are **carers** for someone with a long-term illness or disability (J.7) and 24 (2%) want more help J.8). 22 (2%) want more help from **social services** (J.9) but many more, 243 (20%), say they don't know how to get help if they needed it (J.10).

30. The issue of **car parking** in the village has many facets and raises conflicting and, sometimes, strong comments:

- Most (64%, C.7) think that it is usually easy to find **short-term parking** and 16% (C.7) think that finding **long-term parking** is easy. A vocal minority think exactly the opposite and say that it is often hard to find parking - 188 respondents, 16%, (C.7) complain about short-term and 37 respondents, 3%, (C.7) complain about long-term parking. Set this against the fact that substantial numbers of people use their vehicles to shop in Barrow (40%, C.1) or drive children to playgroups, schools, etc (8%, C.1). Of course, as suggested by several people, the 'solution' – if one accepts that there is a problem in the provision of car parking spaces - is to encourage people to *walk* to the shops and the schools (especially the schools!). This is underlined by complaints about traffic congestion in and around Hall Orchard (especially) and Humphrey Perkins at the start and end of the school day. Actually, we are surprised that more people have not complained: perhaps those who are responsible for the congestion didn't think to speak out against it? No one can doubt that **there is a considerable problem with school traffic and anti-social parking near the schools**.

- But the parking issue that agitates people, above all others, is the matter of people **parking on the pavements** (which does seem to have become a fashion all over the country): 76% want to stop all parking on the pavements (C.12) especially in the High St (C.13). Pedestrians (especially wheelchair users) are enraged by inconsiderate parking on pavements (C.9) with 340 respondents (29%, C.10) giving it as a reason for not making more journeys as a pedestrian in Barrow. The frequent requests for traffic wardens and stricter policing are very much tied up, we think, with this desire to control parking on the pavements.

- Against this is the point, made earlier, that several **shopkeepers in the High St and North St rely upon a passing trade** – not necessarily from village residents. They *do* want vehicles to be able to stop and park near their shops. Whether they should be allowed to continue parking on the pavements or on the zigzag lines of the zebra crossings or in the 'rush hours' is another matter. But the need to facilitate the passing trade is real and should not be overlooked. In that context, note that some people mention that they are reluctant to use the village car parks at night because they fear for their car's and for their own safety. They complain, in particular, about the poor lighting of the car parks - Sommerfield's and the old station. Whether or not this would stop people parking outside the take-aways in the High St and North St is a moot point.

- Long-term parking is a problem for those considering using trains on the Ivanhoe line (563, 47%, C.18).

31. Comments on **crime and policing** are closely related. Overall, there seems *not* to be a great fear of crime in Barrow (but note we do not have comparisons with other villages and crime is often underreported): Barrow is rated as "very good" or "fairly good" by 75% of respondents and only 9% think it "very poor"(B.1). It is possible that those most worried are the elderly but we have not done that analysis. 26% say they feel unsafe in parts of Barrow (D.2), especially after dark "where youths congregate" and in the poorly lit jitties (D.3). It would be interesting to check whether this perceived fear of crime is matched by actual crime statistics. It may not be. Nevertheless, 18% say that they have personal experience of vandalism and graffiti; 15% of damage to a car; 8% of damage to their home; 7% of theft of property from the home; and 3% of violence against the person – all in Barrow (D.1). We asked, too, about various forms of anti-social behaviour (D.4): the biggest complaints were about animals (27%

- mainly dog fouling and noise) and nuisance from vehicles (24% - mainly parking on the pavement or encroachment by neighbours). Interestingly, 14 (1%) complained of rough sleepers and 11 (1%) of prostitution.

32. Along with these comments, a few people complain that the police are not much in evidence in the village (D.1) and that, when they are, they ignore parking infringements (that concern again!). We did not ask about **other emergency services** but a few people complained that fire engines and ambulances can find it impossible to access some streets (Church St and Beveridge St especially) due to inconsiderate car parking. That is a worry even if it affects few people.

33. A long series of questions (H.3 – H.17) asked about the local **playgroups and schools**. Note, however, that relatively few people have children of school age so the numbers expressing an opinion are correspondingly lower than for other questions. Note, too, that although the questions were addressed to those with children of particular ages, *now*, more people have responded than said they have children going to these schools. We suspect that people whose children attended these schools *recently* felt able to comment. This is helpful in that it swells the baseline numbers but it does mean that these numbers jump about a bit and make it a little tricky to know which number to quote in some instances. So, in this section, we are not using the ‘1190 respondents’ as the baseline for percentages used elsewhere. We quote the actual numbers answering in a particular way which varies from question to question:

- 102 households said they had children of pre-school age (H.3) and 82 said they sent them to one or other of the **Barrow playgroups** (H.4). We did not ask what they thought about the playgroups – they had space to write in comments if they so chose but almost no one did so. Seven people said they would send children to the Barrow playgroups if they had all-day provisions for working parents (H.5). The same point may be behind the request, from 73 people (J.11) that they want more help with **childcare**?

- 147 households said they had children of primary school age (H.6) and 135 that they sent them to **Hall Orchard** (H.7). About three quarters rated it as “excellent” or “very good”. The main criticisms offered were that class sizes are too big (11 people) and that security is poor (10 people).

- 110 households said they had children of high school age (H10) and that 85 sent them to **Humphrey Perkins** (H.11). Only about a third rated it as “excellent” or “very good” (H.12). Many adverse comments were offered (H.13) but there was no common theme.

- 105 households said they had children of upper school age (H14) and that 75 sent them to **Rawlins** in Quorn (H.15). Only about a quarter rated it as “excellent” or “very good” (H.16). Again, there was no common theme to the open-ended comments (H.17).

34. Closely related is the issue of **sports and youth facilities**. We did not ask for comments about the existing facilities (we will document these in a separate paper): instead we asked about the idea of “*a new, multi-purpose facility for sports and youth activities – that is a building in which a variety of active pursuits can take place? (Not a full leisure centre as at Loughborough or Mountsorrel, but a facility with room for indoor sports and, perhaps, an all weather outdoor pitch)... Are you for or against this in principle?*”. The context for this is a concern that there is little provision being made for teenagers (see more comments in B.5 on that later) and the fact that the Youth Club at Humphrey Perkins has been closed recently by the school. We note that Humphrey Perkins has started planning for a school-based ‘sports barn’. We would hope that such a facility – if it comes to pass – will take into account the needs of the community as a whole.

- 1130 replied to this question (G.8) which is a particularly high response rate. It suggests that the issue is very important to the community. The replies were:

31% strongly in favour
39% in favour

18% don't know
5% against
3% strongly against

- 179 added open-ended comments (G.9) of which the most frequent were: it needs to provide activities for young people and it needs to be open access to the whole community (meaning, perhaps, that existing sports facilities at the schools have restricted access for the rest of the community?).

35. Questions G.1 – G.4 were open-ended and asked about **sports, activities, clubs and societies** people do or want to try. The list runs to several pages, many of which are undertaken outside the village because there are no suitable facilities in Barrow. It is inconceivable that Barrow should try to provide for *every* interest but the list will be useful to those planning new ventures and buildings. See, also, para 59 for comments by young people.

36. Related, as well, is the issue of **social facilities** in the village. We did not ask for comments about the existing facilities (we will document these separately): instead we asked “*It has been suggested that we need a new, large, multi-purpose building (like a village hall) for social activities. Do you agree?*” The context for this is a perception in the community that the existing facilities at Humphrey Perkins (including the Community Lounge partly funded by the village) are less available than they used to be.

- 1145 replied to this question (G.10) which is a particularly high response rate. It suggests that the issue is very important to the community. The replies were:

26% strongly in favour
39% in favour
18% don't know
11% against
3% strongly against

- 230 added open-ended comments (G.11) of which the most frequent were: existing halls are good enough (117 respondents), that it could reduce revenue to existing halls in the village (22 respondents) not just the schools, and that it needs to be placed centrally (21). Several asked for somewhere for parties and wedding receptions and the like implying, perhaps, that existing venues are not seen as suitable? A few, however, made the point that it made more sense to work with the schools to achieve a mutually beneficial solution to the present impasse than to strike out independently.

37. We asked a lot of questions about **public transport** (C.1, C.15 – C.18). 62% think the available public transport is “very good’ or fairly good” (B.1) and 26% (C.2) say they use the buses to go shopping in Loughborough (84% use cars instead or as well). The buses and trains are criticised, particularly, for a poor service in the evenings and at weekends (C.16 and C.18) and, the Ivanhoe train for lack of parking near the Barrow station and for the difficulties people have in getting to and from the platforms if they are disabled or using a pushchair.

38. The **library** is much valued (H.18 – H.20) with 50% saying they use it (mainly for borrowing books) and praising the helpfulness of the staff. However, 46% want it open longer and more frequently.

39. As well as asking about playgroups we asked about the village **playgrounds** for young children (G.12 – G.15). Nearly everyone replied – indicating that it is seen as important – but nearly half said “don't know” or “not applicable” (G.12). Of those to who expressed an opinion, most think the existing playgrounds are “good” or “OK” but they do want improvements: more playgrounds (Willow Way/Fishpool Way/Sileby Rd), more imaginative play equipment, facilities for children with disabilities, and they want them better maintained and much cleaner.

40. Only 17% say they attend **adult education** classes (H.1). 27% say they are not interested and 14% that classes are not appropriate (H.2). We did not ask what they would prefer.
41. 32% say that **job prospects** in Barrow are poor (B.1) and 21% (M.2) that there is a lack of suitable jobs. Only 12 people say that job prospects are poor because of their lack of skills (M.2). M.1 asked about the ages of those looking for work. According to this, at least:
 - 48 aged 16 – 21 yrs old
 - 69 aged 22 – 60 yrs old
 - 23 aged 60+ yrs oldare looking for work.
42. A possibly related issue is that 103 (9%) say they **offer a business or service based in Barrow** (M.3) and 63 of these would like to be in a Village Directory (M.4).
43. Finally, as regards infrastructure, H.21 - H.23 asked about **IT and communications** in the village. There seem to be particular problems with reception for mobile phones (19%), access to broadband (17%), reception for Freeview TV (13%), and digital radio (8%). That said, quite a few people say they don't need such things. A few are prepared to help with **public access computing** (19) and some (41) with the **village website** but there is considerable ignorance of these topics (eg 44% saying they don't know whether the village website is a great source of information about Barrow (I.1)).

B.3 Community.

44. Second only to traffic congestion as a complaint, is a lack of **activities for teenagers** (B.1). Only 11% think they are "very good" or "fairly good" although 40% say they "don't know". This may link to the widespread worry about groups of young people hanging about on the streets and in the parks at night (D.1 – D.3) and the support expressed for a new sports building (G.8) as a place for young people. Note that the youth club that used to operate at Humphrey Perkins was closed earlier this year.
45. Against this should be set a perception of good **racial harmony** (63%, B.1) and that Barrow offers a good range of **community activities** (59%, B.1). The vast majority (78%, B.2) say that they feel a sense of involvement in or belonging to the community in Barrow with a fair number saying that they would be more involved if work was not so demanding (B.3). However, some (newcomers?) find it difficult to break in to ongoing activities and some suggested the need for a 'buddy' system of volunteers to help newcomers get involved. This may be worth thinking about in the light of the new Willow Way estate and the expected influx of hundreds of new families?
46. Barrow has a considerable number of **clubs and societies** which many people join or want to join (G.1 – G.4) (we will list these separately). There is no shortage of things to do and many more have been suggested (eg a canal boat festival, G.7). What is lacking, to some extent, is a good information service about "**What's On?**". 55% say they are very well informed about what's on in Barrow (G.5) but 34% say they want more information.
47. 43% think that the activities organised by or for **senior citizens** are good (B,1) with the Bishop Beveridge Club receiving several favourable mentions. That still leaves about 10% saying that the provisions are "very poor". We did not delve into this more deeply.
48. Over half of respondents (59%), say they have a **religious affiliation** (K.1): 42% CofE, 7% Methodist, 7% Roman Catholic, 5% Baptist and 3% "other". 53% say they have attended a religious service in the past 12 months (K.4) and most are willing to see the church buildings used for secular purposes for the benefit of the community generally (K.5). This should be noted in the debate which may ensue about the need for new social facilities.

49. The provision of **arts and cultural activities** in Barrow is not bad (eg 36% agree, B.1) with several recent events being cited as much appreciated (eg the sundial in the Millennium Park) but such things always divide a community with some people very much in favour and some very much against (eg one person singled out the new sundial as particularly ugly and said that it should be pulled down!). As might be expected, some people (2%) think that money should be spent on other things than public art (E.1 and E.2). They are “not bothered” about public art. One thinks of similar objections raised about the ‘sockman’ sculpture in Loughborough. By the same token, the suggestions made for **performing arts** (E.3 and E.4) elicit a strong response from some and indifference from most. We do not interpret this as meaning that concerts, plays, etc should not be organised - they are part of what makes Barrow attractive as a place to live - but nor should one fool oneself into thinking that such performances will attract large audiences. Of the sorts of events explored in the questionnaire, only the ‘Proms in the Park’ with fireworks attracts a strong positive rating.

B.4 Local Government

50. We asked a few questions (L.1 – L.5) about people’s perceptions of the **Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council** and the **Barrow Parish Council**. For example, do people know who are their local representatives and do they think they are aware of local issues?
- County: 34% know them and 11% think they are aware of local issues
 - Borough: 46% know them and 18% think they are aware of local issues
 - Parish: 52% know them and 30% think they are aware of local issues
51. On the face of it, it is a relief that more people know about the Parish Council than the County Council but it does seem to show considerable ignorance or apathy. That said, 35 people said that they would like to know more about the Parish Council and that they may want to join. The details have been passed to the Parish council.
52. Also, we asked if people would be willing to **pay more in their village precept** in order to get more improvements in the village. This is against the context that, over the years, there has been a belief in Barrow that the precept should be kept low. We wanted factual evidence for or against.
- 27% said they would *not* be willing to pay more to fund some of the improvements explored in the questionnaire (N.1) but a larger number, 49%, said that they *would* accept a rise in the precept.
 - Of those willing to pay more, the offers ranged from £1 pa to £50 pa with the average rise being £6.62 pa.

B.5 Youth questionnaire

53. 167 youth questionnaires were returned representing the views of at least 228 people aged from 10 – 18. These are in addition to the views expressed, as part of a household, in the adult questionnaires.
54. The key issues arising, from the young people, are in line with those expressed by the adults. The youth data amplifies these and the full data will be made available to the Action Groups that follow up our recommendations.
55. In particular, young people think that **Barrow is a good place to live** (78%, Y.3) with the **recreation grounds** receiving special mention (51% go there to meet friends, 46% use the areas to play games and sports, Y.19). Obviously, they are a valuable facility much

appreciated by young people. That said, 39% feel unsafe/intimidated on the playing fields at dusk and after dark (Y.21) - the same applies to the Brook Lane area and the jitties - and complain about gangs of youths who congregate in the playing fields (Y.5) and the smokers and drug users in the parks even at 'going-home' time (Y.20). That said, 28% say there is nothing to do for the older age groups (Y.5) and only 5% (Y.4) think the village has some good facilities for young people.

56. We asked explicitly about **youth clubs**: 143 answered (86%, Y.14), of these

- 30% want a youth club run by their school
- 23% want a youth club run by a church
- 41% want a youth club run independent of school or church.

57. As for **organised activities**:

- 51% want a cinema club
- 42% want a disco
- 35% want a café club
- 34% want an art club.

58. 97(62.99%) said that it is **not easy to find information** about suitable activities/sports taking place in Barrow but note that 25 (17.24%) said that they would be willing to join a group to suggest and help organise events for young people.

59. We have a long list of **sports of interest to young people** (Y.12 and Y.13) of which tennis (28%) football (22%) and swimming (17%) stand out. There is no facility for tennis in the village. Swimming is available at Humphrey Perkins but that facility is not well regarded (95 claim to be regular swimmers (Y.18) but only 25 say they use Humphrey Perkins, preferring to go to Loughborough, Rawlins and Mountsorrel). The Leisure Centre at Mountsorrel is the place most cited as where young people would like to go by public transport (34%, Y.10). There is no such direct service.

60. 133 (80%) say they use **public transport** (Y.9), mainly to get to Loughborough, Leicester and Quorn. 23% say they would use a **late bus service** between Barrow and Loughborough on Friday and Saturday every week.

61. 76% say they nearly always **walk, to get somewhere in the village**, rather than use some other form of transport.

C. Action Plans

62. The key issues discussed above have been turned into **Action Plans** in the pages that follow.

63. Each action Plan has the same format:

- The issues are grouped into 24 sets of issues, each with a “**main target**” and “**enabling targets**”. Typically, these ask the ‘authorities’ to maintain or improve particular features or services.
- For each enabling target, we offer an opinion as to the **timescales** in which this should be done. These are loosely defined but note that we think that some should start now – either because they are very important or are relatively easy to do or get started.
- We list the **key stakeholders** we think should be involved in planning or carrying out each activity. Typically, these are a mix of service providers and village organisations.

- We make **recommendations and comments** about the actions needed to address these targets. Typically, these express the view that **Action Groups** should be created to take the recommendations forward. We assume that village people ought to be prominent in running these Action Groups – the principle being that the community should lead the planning of improvements to the village – with the help and advice of the various authorities. We have offers to be involved with many of these Action Groups and some volunteers have been recruited already. We recognise that it may be difficult to get enough volunteers to take-on all these recommendations. We must be pragmatic and do what we can.

64. An important consideration is that ways must be found to **plan, monitor, control and motivate follow-ups to this parish Plan**. This is the subject matter of Action Plan 24. From comments received to earlier drafts, we know that some people are concerned at the possibility of a “free for all” between the Action Groups. We address this with the recommendations that **the Action Groups should be linked to the Parish Council and/or the Community Association** (as existing, overarching bodies) and that **a Parish Plan Open Forum should be created as a meeting to which all Action Groups and other stakeholders should report**.

D. Acknowledgements

65. This project could not have been completed without financial and in-kind contributions from many sources:

- Financial assistance was received from The Countryside Agency, Awards for All, Charnwood Borough Council, Barrow upon Soar Parish Council, and British Gypsum.
- Members of the Parish Plan Steering Group were: Barrie Atkinson, Ann Childs, Sue Foster, Arthur Gardner, Pauline Ranson, Judith Rodgers, Sue Rodgers, and Olwen Spiers.
- The ideas in the questionnaire were the result of a very wide consultation and the survey was conducted with the help of 60+ volunteers.
- Hazel Fish and Diana Cook of the Rural Community Council were a constant source of advice and support.

Thank you to all of these.

Arthur Gardner
Chairman
Parish Plan Steering Group

Heritage in its widest sense (eg ‘Best Kept Village’, tourism, history, environment)

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>1. Keep Barrow as an attractive place to live</p> <p>(see paras 5 - 9)</p>	<p>1.1 Protect and enhance access to the green spaces in and around the village.</p> <p>1.2 Protect the buildings and other features that give it its unique character (eg enforce the Village Design Statement, resist unsympathetic developments).</p> <p>1.3 Make more use of flowers, shrubs and trees as decorative elements (cf Jerusalem roundabout and hanging baskets in the High St).</p> <p>1.4 Extend the concept of the Millennium Park to other parts of the village (eg Willow Way estate).</p> <p>1.5 Clean up the area around the Soar Bridge/ Deep Lock/ Proctor’s.</p> <p>1.6 Keep the village cleaner generally.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Start planning now</p> <p>Medium term</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council • Heritage Wardens • Tree Wardens • Millennium Group • CPRE • Charnwood Borough Council Planning Dept • Parish Council • Parish Council • Gardening Club • Millennium Group • Parish Council • Charnwood Borough Council Planning Dept • Developers • Millennium Group • Parish Council • British Waterways • Proctor’s • Parish Council • Village volunteers • Charnwood Borough Council Cleansing Department • Leics County Council 	<p><i>[These issues – 1.1 to 2.3 - are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i></p> <p><i>We recommend the creation of a ‘Heritage Action Group’.</i></p> <p><i>We already have an approved Village Design Statement.</i></p>
<p>2. Make Barrow an attractive place to visit.</p> <p>(see paras 5 - 9)</p>	<p>2.1 Make the river/ canal even more visitor friendly (inc car parks and better access and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists).</p> <p>2.2 Make the Soar Valley into a</p>	<p>Medium term</p> <p>Long term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council/ Tourism/ • Charnwood Borough Council • Parish Council • British Waterways • Leics County Council • Charnwood Borough 	<p><i>See comments at 1.1</i></p>

	<p>‘countryside park’.</p> <p>2.3 Provide more visitor information (eg walks and heritage leaflets, better signage, A-Z street guide, guide to amenities).</p>	Start now	<p>Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council • Community Association • CPRE 	
--	--	-----------	--	--

Village Infrastructure: traffic and pedestrians

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>3. Improve traffic flows.</p> <p><i>(see paras 11, 17, 24)</i></p>	<p>3.1 Reduce congestion in the village centre (eg reduce traffic through the village, enforce parking restrictions in the High St and near Hall Orchard school at peak times, improve the off-road car parks).</p>	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council Highways • Charnwood Borough Council • Police • Parish Council 	<p><i>[These issues – 3.1 to 6.2 - are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i></p> <p><i>We recommend the creation of a ‘Traffic Action Group’.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Encourage people to walk to the shops and schools (ie not use their cars in the village centre).</p>	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council 	
	<p>3.3 Make Slash Lane/access to the A6 so they don’t flood, thereby reducing extra traffic through Barrow.</p>	Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severn Trent • Leics. County Council Highways • Charnwood Borough Council Planners 	
	<p>3.4 Enable two-way traffic over the Soar Bridge so that it is no longer a bottleneck (eg create a new foot bridge for pedestrians and cyclists).</p>	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council Highways 	
	<p>3.5 Create a new, safe, flood-free route for pedestrians and cyclists between Barrow and Quorn.</p>	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorn/Barrow Parish Councils • Leics. County Council Highways 	
	<p>3.6 Continue to</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council 	

	explore the possibility of a by-pass and a better route to the A6 without traffic going through the village centre.		Highways • Charnwood Borough Council Planners • Parish Council	
4. Reduce speeding traffic. (see para11)	4.1 Reduce speeding on the approach roads to the village.	Start now	• Police	<i>See comments at 3.1</i>
5. Make it safer and easier to walk in Barrow (inc users of wheelchairs and pushchairs). (see paras 11 and 17)	5.1 Stop all parking on pavements. 5.2 Create a pedestrian crossing in South St (near to Bishop Beveridge club) and across Fishpool Way to the Millennium Park.	Start now Start now	• Charnwood Borough Council Parking Enforcement • Police • Leics. County Council Highways	<i>See comments at 3.1</i>
6. Maintain a wide variety of shops in the village. (see para 17)	6.1 Enable 'passing trade' without worsening traffic congestion in the village centre. 6.2 Improve short-term and long-term parking near to the High St.	Ongoing Medium term	• Parish Council • Leics. County Council Highways • Charnwood Borough Council • Village retailers • Parish Council • Leics. County Council Highways • Charnwood Borough Council • Village retailers	<i>See comments at 3.1</i>

Village infrastructure: housing

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
7. Control the housing stock. (see para 13)	7.1 Resist pressure to build more, large, housing estates.	Ongoing	• Charnwood Borough Council Planning Department, Local development Plan • Parish Council	<i>This is the responsibility of Charnwood Borough Council and the Parish Council. It does not need a</i>

	7.2 Encourage the building of more 'starter homes', places to rent, and homes for the elderly and disabled.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics Rural Housing Enabler • Charnwood Borough Council Housing Department • Parish Council 	<i>separate 'action group'.</i>
--	---	---------	---	---------------------------------

Village infrastructure: health services and welfare

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
8. Make the health services more accessible. <i>(see para 15)</i>	8.1 Provide more staff and better facilities (eg consider an extension or second centre in the Willow Way development).	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charnwood and North West Leicestershire Primary Care Trust • Barrow Health Centre 	<i>[These issues – 8.1 to 9.2 - are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i> <i>We recommend the creation of a 'Health and Welfare Action Group'.</i>
	8.2 Improve the appointments system.	Start now		
9. Improve provision for those with a long-term illness or disability. <i>(see para 16)</i>	9.1 Provide more help for those with specific needs and for their carers (eg a village 'friends' bureau).	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charnwood and North West Leicestershire Primary Care Trust • Barrow Health Centre • Leics. County Council Social Services Department • Charnwood Volunteer Bureau and CVS 	<i>See comments at 8.1.</i>
	9.2 Provide a better link between the village and the service providers.	Start now		

Village infrastructure: crime, policing and other emergency services

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
10. Keep the 'fear of crime' and the actuality of crime to a low level. <i>(see paras 18 and 19)</i>	10.1 Provide a more conspicuous police presence.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Neighbourhood Watch • Charnwood Community Safety Partnership • Police • Leics. County Council Youth Service • Charnwood Borough Council 	<i>[These issues – 10.1 to 11.1 - are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i> <i>We recommend the creation of a 'Crime and Community Safety Action Group'.</i>
	10.2 Tackle the causes of crime, especially involving young people.	Ongoing		

<p>11. Help the emergency services. <i>(see para 19)</i></p>	<p>11.1 Ensure that emergency vehicles can access all streets.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics County Council Highways • Parish Council • Police • Neighbourhood Watch 	<p><i>See comments at 10.1</i></p>
--	--	----------------	--	------------------------------------

Village infrastructure: playgroups and schools

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>12. Improve the provision of education and childcare. <i>(see para 20)</i></p>	<p>12.1 Explore ways of providing more places at playgroups and full-time childcare.</p> <p>12.2 Liaise with Hall Orchard and Humphrey Perkins schools about criticisms made.</p> <p>12.3 Liaise with providers to preserve and improve adult education in the village.</p>	<p>Medium term</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council Children’s Information Service • Parish Council • Relevant Schools • Parish Council • Leics. County Learning Partnership • WEA • Humphrey Perkins 	<p><i>We recommend the creation of an ‘Education and Childcare Action Group’.</i></p>

Village infrastructure: youth, sports and social facilities

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>13. Make better provisions for young people. <i>(see paras 21, 26 and 31)</i></p>	<p>13.1 Explore the practicalities of creating a new youth club in the village.</p> <p>13.2 Improve the children’s playgrounds and provide additional playgrounds near Fishpool Way and in Sileby Rd.</p> <p>13.3 Compile a list of activities for young people.</p>	<p>Start now</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humphrey Perkins • Community Association • Parish Council • Leics. Voluntary Youth Club Organiser • Charnwood Youth service • Parish Council • Charnwood Borough Council Sports Development Officer 	<p><i>[These issues – 13.1 to 15.3 - are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i></p> <p><i>We recommend the creation of a ‘Youth Action Group’.</i></p>

	13.4 Help to publicise events for young people.	Start now		
<p>14. Make better provision for sport in the village.</p> <p><i>(see paras 21 and 23)</i></p>	<p>14.1 Explore the practicalities of building a new, multi-purpose facility (a 'sports barn') for use by young people (and the rest of the community).</p> <p>14.2 Liaise with existing clubs and providers to identify the need for new facilities and/ or for better use/ co-ordination of existing facilities.</p> <p>14.4 Explore the practicalities of providing all-weather sports pitches/ running tracks.</p> <p>14.4 Produce a free guide to all sports clubs and facilities.</p>	<p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charnwood Borough Council Sports Development Officer • Humphrey Perkins • Village sports clubs 	<p><i>See comments at 13.1</i></p> <p><i>We recommend the creation of a 'Sports Action Group'.</i></p>
<p>15. Improve the social facilities in the village.</p> <p><i>(see paras 23 and 35)</i></p>	<p>15.1 Explore the practicalities of building a new, multi-purpose, social facility in the village.</p> <p>15.2 Liaise with existing providers (eg schools, churches, pubs and clubs) to make better use/ co-ordination of existing facilities.</p> <p>15.3 Produce a free guide to all social clubs and facilities.</p>	<p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council • Village social clubs • Village organisations offering facilities for hire 	<p><i>See comments at 13.1</i></p> <p><i>We recommend the creation of a 'Social Facilities Action Group'.</i></p>

Village infrastructure: public transport

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>16. Improve the public transport serving the village.</p> <p><i>(see para 24)</i></p>	<p>16.1 Provide an evening and weekend bus service to Loughborough.</p> <p>16.2 Maintain the Ivanhoe Line and improve evening and weekend services.</p> <p>16.3 Provide car parking near to the Ivanhoe Line train station.</p>	<p>Start now</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics. County Council Transport Department • Bus operators • Railtrack • County Council • Charnwood Borough Council • Parish Council 	<p><i>These are the responsibility of Leics County Council. A separate 'action group' is not needed.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed Traffic Action Group can contribute.</i></p>

Village infrastructure: library

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Relevant authorities	Recommended actions and comments
<p>17. Improve the Library.</p> <p><i>(see para 25)</i></p>	<p>17.1 Keep the Library open more often and for longer.</p>	<p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council Library Service 	<p><i>These are the responsibility of Leics County Council. A separate 'action group' is not needed.</i></p>

Village infrastructure: jobs, businesses and services

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Relevant authorities	Recommended actions and comments
<p>18. Make Barrow a better place to work.</p> <p><i>(see paras 28 and 29)</i></p>	<p>18.1 Advertise job opportunities in Barrow.</p> <p>18.2 Create a directory of Barrow-based businesses and services.</p>	<p>Start now</p> <p>Start now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Centre Plus Connexions 	<p><i>We recommend the creation of a 'Businesses and Services Action Group'.</i></p>

Village infrastructure: IT and communications

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Relevant authorities	Recommended actions and comments
19. Improve IT and communications in Barrow. <i>(see para 30)</i>	19.1 Ensure that Barrow has up-to-date facilities. (eg good access to digital communications).	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • Library Service • Village website group 	<i>The existing Barrow village website group is expanding its role to look into these issues.</i>
	19.2 Explore the need for and the provision of public access computing.	Medium term		
	19.3 Continue to improve/co-ordinate the Barrow website(s).	Ongoing		

Community spirit: community activities

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
20. Create an even better sense of community in Barrow. <i>(see paras 32-34)</i>	20.1 Help newcomers to become involved in the village (eg a 'welcome pack', a 'buddy' system).	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council • Community Association • Barrow Website Managers • Barrow Voice Editor 	<i>[These issues – 20.1 to 21.2 – are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i> <i>The Community Association is expanding its role to take on these activities.</i>
	20.2 Create a free, monthly 'What's On' service. Co-ordinate with the full range of existing providers.	Start now		
	20.3 Organise more activities for the whole community (eg a river festival).	Medium term		
21. Stimulate the provision of arts and cultural activities in the village. <i>(see para 36)</i>	21.1 Provide more public art in Barrow (eg in Willow Way recreation areas).	Start planning now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charnwood Borough Council • Parish Council • Leics County Council • Charnwood Arts • East Midland Arts • Community Association 	<i>See comments at 20.1</i>
	21.2 Provide more cultural performances in Barrow.	Ongoing		

Local government

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Relevant authorities	Recommended actions and comments
<p>22. Enable people to be more involved in local government.</p> <p><i>(see paras 37 and 38)</i></p>	22.1 Keep the village informed of local government issues and policies.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leics County Council • Charnwood Borough Council • Barrow Parish Council 	<p><i>[These issues – 22.1 to 23.3 – are related and should be considered together rather than as separate actions.]</i></p> <p><i>These are the responsibility of the local government bodies. A separate ‘action group’ is not needed.</i></p>
	22.2 Explain to the community the responsibilities and powers of the various tiers of local government and service providers.	Ongoing		
	22.3 Encourage people to attend and stand for the Parish Council.	Ongoing		
<p>23. Enable the funding of local activities.</p> <p><i>(see para 39)</i></p>	23.1 Raise the village precept to pay for additional services.	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council • Rural Community Council • Charnwood CVS • Parish Council • Parish Council 	<p><i>See comments at 22.1</i></p>
	23.2 Assist village organisations to bid for funds for village projects.	Ongoing		
	23.3 Keep village organisations aware of funding sources and opportunities.	Start now		

Monitoring and facilitating progress with the Parish Plan

Main target	Enabling targets	Timescale	Key stakeholders	Recommended actions and comments
<p>24. Plan, monitor, control and motivate follow-ups to this Parish Plan.</p>	24.1 Encourage and enable the creation of ‘action groups’ to bring about the improvements recommended in this Parish Plan.	Start now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Plan Steering Group • Parish Council • Community Association • Action Groups • Leics. County Council Environmental and Heritage Watch Service • Leics County Council • Rural Community Council 	<p><i>The Parish Council and the Community Association have agreed to expand their activities to oversee and co-ordinate the Action Groups.</i></p> <p><i>It is highly desirable that all the follow up actions are</i></p>
	24.2 Help these groups to obtain the resources needed to operate.	Ongoing		

