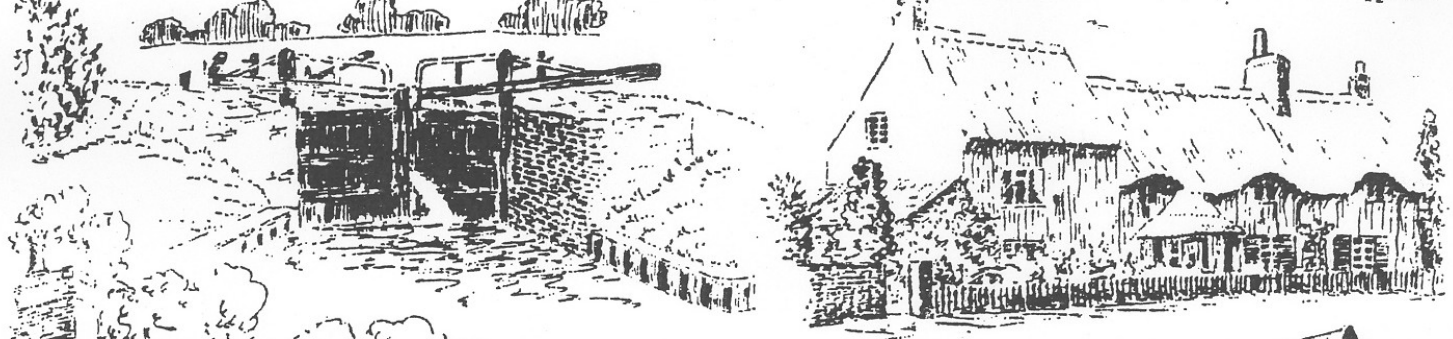
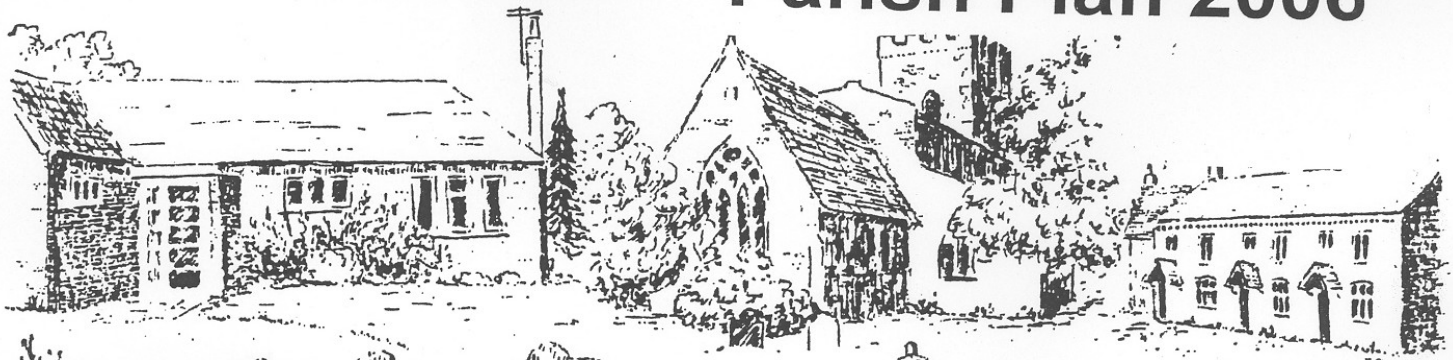


# COSSINGTON

## Parish Plan 2006



# THE COSSINGTON VILLAGE PLAN

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Cossington is a small, attractive village 7 miles south of Loughborough and a similar distance north of Leicester. It is situated towards the southern boundary of the Borough of Charnwood on the edge of the National Forest. The earliest mention of Cossington is in the Domesday Survey of 1086, identified as 'Cosingtone' but almost certainly there was a village much earlier, The suffixes 'ing' meaning 'son of' and 'ton' an estate or village suggest there was a Saxon settlement here. 'Cossing' may be a personal name and indicate the Saxon owner. Hence Cossington probably means 'The estate of the son of Coss'. ('A Short History of Cossington' by the WI published in 1935).

The present population of Cossington is 412 and its community facilities are limited to a 'Pub', 'The Royal Oak', an excellent church primary school, a tired village hall and a much cherished church which bears some evidence of its early origins. The village shop and post office has long since disappeared in a commercial sense but the property having been purchased by a speculator in its uncompleted conversion remains a constant source of aggravation.

The idea of producing a Parish Plan for Cossington was discussed at a parish meeting in March 2004. With the endorsement of the parish meeting and the support of the Rural Community Council a Parish Plan Steering Group of 9 villagers was formed supported from time to time by various others. A questionnaire was finally distributed to those over the age of 10 who live and work in the parish in June 2005.

The results were analysed and form the basis of this report, the

### **Recommendations and the action plan.**

A Parish Plan is a strategic document to identify issues currently affecting the village and to enable residents to have a say in how it wishes the village to develop in the future. It is developed in consultation with local service providers and addresses a range of issues including housing development, environmental issues and service provision. Whilst being grateful to those 220 residents who returned completed questionnaires the number overall is actually disappointing as is the very selective manner in which many residents responded to the individual questions. It has often been difficult to draw valid conclusions but the most significant issue is the low questionnaire return rate. It is an important document because it represents the views of those who took the trouble to respond, 53 % of the total population of 412, fortunately a majority, just!! It can guide local policy and planning decisions and can be used to identify needs and the acquisition of funds for local projects.

Recommendations have been included and these have formed the basis of the Action Plan. It is now up to the Parish Council, village organisations and the villagers themselves to decide on priorities and where appropriate to lobby for implementation.

Full results from the questionnaire analysis are available on line at

[http://www.data-sphere.co.uk/web\\_survey/results/index.asp](http://www.data-sphere.co.uk/web_survey/results/index.asp)(Note web\_survey)

To 'Underscore' hold down up the 'Shift' key press hyphen!

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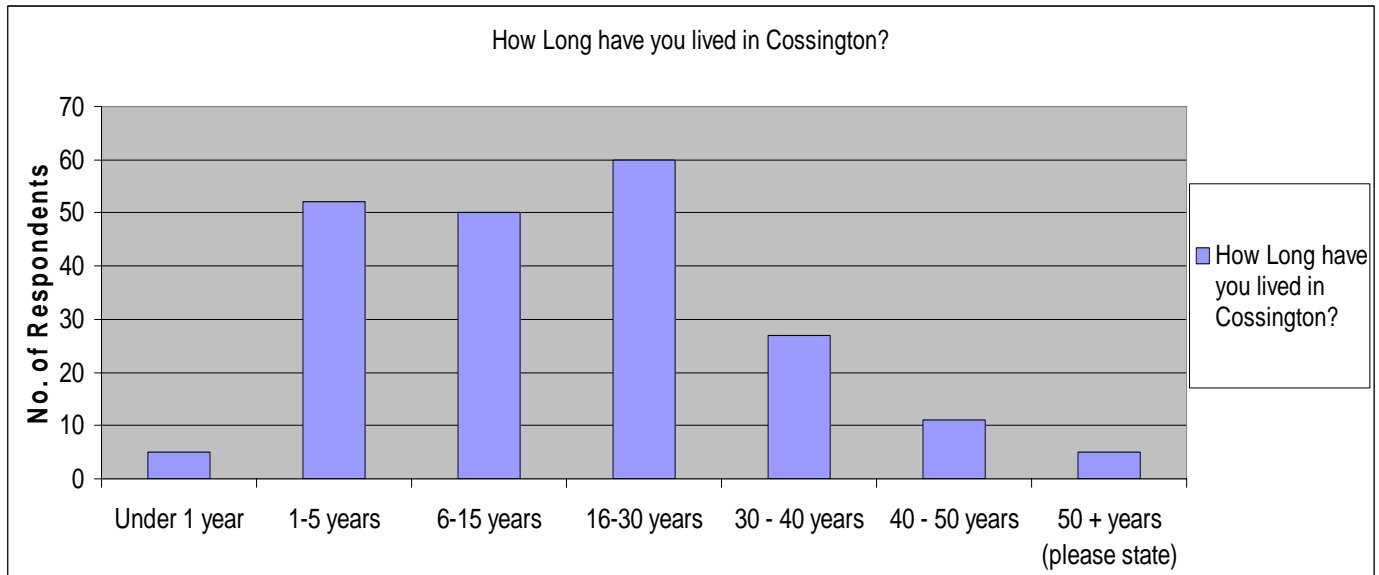
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For password enter dearson

Please feel free to access information.

## Demographics:

Below is a bar chart showing the length of time people have lived in the village:



6 people have lived in the village for less than a year, 52 for under 5 years, 50 between 6 & 15 years, 62 for 16 to 30 years and 46 for over 30 years.

## Youth Summit

As part of the Village Plan consultation process on a night in November 2004 21 young people between the ages of 10 & 16 gathered at The Royal Oak Skittle Alley to express their views on the village and what they would like to see in the future. This represented a 90% turn out. Very well done!

After a lively warm up groups of 4 were set up with an adult 'Hovering'! The initial consideration focussed on what was liked about living in the village:-

- It's quiet.
- In the country/Pleasant environment
- It is small.
- Good school (Great tribute!)
- Good Sunday school
- Good bus service
- Good age range of young people

- Community events were popular
- Play equipment in Platts Lane Field

Alternately these factors were disliked:

- Traffic speed & volume
- Poor access to Platts Lane
- Lack of a village meeting facility

Improvements:

Suggested improvements included a shop, leisure facilities, ranging from a leisure centre to a skate park, more realistically a hard standing area (like the school playground) a basket ball wall, and a bike track. Also mentioned were better lighting, wider paths, safer access to Platts Lane, more play equipment, the cricket pavilion could be extended to include a youth area or outside youth shelter.

The youth club suggestion was popular. Locations suggested, Platts, the church, (Project Group please note!) the pub skittle alley.

Organise trips, the theatre, bowling, theme parks, concerts, ice skating, etc. Art, music & a remote control model club. Ping pong/pool, charity evenings, skittle evenings, village sports day.

This was clearly a very worth while exercise. Thanks to all involved.

Recommendations:

1. Set up a working group to consider suggestions
2. Establish whether the school is a community school & therefore available for the community.
3. Explore the availability of youth activities in neighbouring schools

## Quality of Life

There is no mystery about the reasons why people like living in Cossington! The response level was high, virtually 100%.

Reasons for living in Cossington:

Access to beautiful countryside.	98%
Unspoilt traditional Leicestershire Conservation village	
Good primary school	91%
Excellent community spirit	82%
Friendly neighbours,	80%
Public school in the parish	67%
Close to friends and family	67%
Public House	65%
Church Support	57%
Close to work	55%

Other reasons given include peace, good communication & access, security, good location,' A largely unspoilt village'

*'Because Cossington is quiet & peaceful, the people are friendly and I enjoy living in a rural environment.'*

*'We have had for 53 years a hay meadow at the bottom of our garden,-moving as I write'*

## Environment, Design and Land use in Cossington:

Most people favour the appearance of the village as it is and no case is made for real change. Rather the key seems to be improvement of the existing lay out, landscaping, grass verges, tree planting & land use which are regarded as satisfactory.

*'Keep the aesthetic value-it is valued!'*

Verge bulb and flower planting are much appreciated and where feasible should be extended.

Several comments relate to a possible connection between traffic noise management and tree planting. There is undoubtedly a greater village awareness of traffic noise since new roads have been constructed in the vicinity of the village and there is evidence from other parts of the country that strategic tree cultivation can deflect traffic noise. What about the trains?

There is recognition, (65%), that footpath access in the village does not favour disabled people or indeed the infirm although it is understood that some action to improve this situation is in hand. Even so 38% of respondents would resist such change!

Signing is recognised as necessary but there are those who wonder whether some could be more aesthetically pleasing? For example could the village name signs perhaps make more of a statement as in some neighbouring villages e.g. Queniborough?

It is interesting and significant that whilst valuing the general appearance of the village respondents are critical of the levels of routine maintenance, a situation that should not be too difficult to rectify, e.g. litter control, the approach roads to the village are particularly mentioned, footpath clearance, weeding, grass mowing, tree and shrub pruning. Parish Council please note! Those responsible for keeping the village in good trim should be held to account, appreciated when they get it right and challenged when there are problems. Monitoring is an important responsibility related as it is to value for money.

The recent generous donation of land to the village for development as a church car park is appreciated, and will be more so when a suitable surface can be incorporated.

Some residents feel 'let down ' by neighbours who fail to maintain their front gardens thus not only spoiling the general appearance of the village but also diminishing the validity of participation in competitions such as 'Best Kept Village' .Could it be that some residents need help which could be supplied by a village 'Assist Your Neighbour' Scheme.?

Traffic behaviour or rather perhaps misbehaviour continues to feature prominently as a major concern and this is as much a local problem as it is a through route issue.

First prize to the 'Old Shop' for nuisance value and the level of resentment it causes amongst residents.

There appears to be some resistance (48% of 178 respondents) to the internal re-ordering of the church interior. Do the PCC & the Church Project Group know the reasons? Could these be the non-attenders who have either forgotten or were never aware of the ravages of time?

Perhaps people didn't understand the implications of providing a hard surfaced footpath from Marshdale Farm to the River Soar? This would be a huge boon for cyclists into Leicester.

Polly Pegg's footpath is much used by walkers to Sileby and is muddy and overgrown.

Crabtree Path has a hard surface but is in urgent need of weeding and clearance

Question 4 enquired about the Leicestershire & Rutland Wild Life Trust Development of Cossington Meadows which has been in place for 2 years & is related to the restoration exercise following the extensive gravel extraction. Most comments are strongly in favour of work that has so far been undertaken.

*'Continue the good work: the area is much improved.'*  
*'Excellent progress so far-the planners obviously know what they are doing-continue the good work'.*

However, praise should not allow criticisms and suggestions to be overlooked:-

*'Improve signing, especially to indicate cycleways and circuit footpaths. Walkers especially value the opportunity to return via a different route.'*  
*'Dog poo boxes as at Watermead-dog friendly as well as humans (sic)!'*  
*'Large notices exhorting dog owners to take home any deposits made by their animals'*  
*'Footpaths need to be kept in better condition'*  
*'Restore more of the original hedge row patterns'*  
*'Reduce the number of electric fences & the amount of barbed wire'.*

Several negative comments suggest more publicity is needed about Cossington Meadows. 'Don't know about this'

A small group, 21% of 205 respondents experience problems of access in the village. The details they provided are interesting:-

- Stiles in need of repair
- Farmers changing foot path sites when ploughing & planting
- 'It would be good to be able to access foot paths with a wheel chair' or indeed a push chair!
- 'Bring back the Countryside Code!' Did it ever go?
- Village boundary foot paths over grown, e.g: canal walks.

The borough council's strategic plans for the area are not familiar territory! Only 6 % of 199 respondents admitted to having seen them!

## Recommendations

1. Examine the possibility of hard surfacing Polly Pegg's Footpath. (Extension of emergency access to school field?)
2. Clear Crabtree Lane
3. Parish Council to review the frequency and quality of footpath clearance & maintenance.
4. Regularly remind the Parish Council of the need to manage change within the context of what is most valued by those who live & work in the village
5. Parish Council to re- visit the borough council's area strategic plan and publicise it.
6. Remind village residents that some change is inevitable. The challenge for everyone is to try to preserve an acceptable balance between old and new & to avoid resistance to change for the sake of it!
7. Courtesy letter from the Parish Council to those whose front gardens require attention
8. Village Society to organise a Cossington Sign design competition perhaps to coincide with 'Secret Gardens' or the village fete
9. Village Society to liaise with the Parish Council regarding neglected front gardens with a view to exploring the viability of a support scheme.

## Housing:

Type		House Ownership		Time in Village	
Bungalow	48	Self owned	145	Under 5 years	39
Semi-Detached	30	Privately rented	8	Between 6 – 15 years	43
Detached	102	Council rented	7	Between 16 – 30 years	50
Terraced	8			Between 31 – 40 years	20
				Over 40 years	16

A significant number of respondents enjoy living in the village because of the proximity to beautiful countryside and a wildlife reserve. They constituted 58% and have no plans to move away

Respondents were also asked about the type of future building they would like to see in Cossington. 66% felt there was a good balance of properties in the village with any new developments being both limited and geared specifically to more affordable housing for younger people. Any new building that does go ahead should be in keeping with the character of the village. However, the greatest number of respondents, 70%, felt there should be no future building developments

in Cossington and a massive 96% felt the 'green wedge' between Cossington and Sileby should be protected from any future developments.

**Recommendations:**

1. Parish Council to lobby as strongly as possible against any proposals to build executive style housing
2. A working group in collaboration with the Parish Council should produce a village design statement based on the results of the village questionnaire

**Pollution:**

As might be expected there is considerable variation of opinion about what constitutes nuisance in the village since much depends on location but the response level was high.

The topics mentioned in the questionnaire are re-arranged here in order of severity rating by residents. This can be compared with those concerned but less so & interestingly enough there is quite a correlation between the 2 ratings!

Nuisance	Severe	Mild	None
Traffic Speed	121	61	20
Unsolicited phone calls	73	86	42
On street parking	65	105	43
Traffic noise	50	114	43
Horse droppings	41	96	60
Fly tipping	41	84	69
Dog fouling	35	119	42
Railway noise	26	128	50
Litter	22	123	55
Cat fouling	21	89	85
Fireworks	21	80	100
Bonfires	20	62	113
Door step cold calling	16	125	60
Aircraft noise	14	108	81
Noisy neighbours	10	46	142

Other matters mentioned included:-

- Clay pigeon shooting in the village
- Some lighting including poorly focussed private security lamps eg. The Royal Oak
- Wanlip Sewage Plant Smell
- Quarry blasting
- Children (And sometimes adults) playing ball games in streets, close to areas where there are open plan gardens
- Keeping too many ferrets which stray into neighbouring gardens!

Recommendations:

1. Revisit traffic management via Parish Council
2. Provide publicity about blocking of unwanted cold telephone calls
3. Make available advice about noisy neighbours

**Leisure and Recreation:** (176 responses)

Judging by the range and variety of responses health, happiness and hobbies are mostly alive and well in Cossington, leisure and recreation playing significant parts in the lives of those who live in the village! The 80% response rate to the question about main leisure activities within the village revealed a wide range of interests and pursuits.

- Allotment keeping and gardening
- Astronomy
- Bird watching
- Bridge
- Church Activities
- Computing
- DIY
- DIY & quietly sniggering at the 'At home' antics of the urbane middle managers!
- Dog Walking, Walking, Exercise, Tai Chi
- Embroidery
- Home
- Music/choir/singing
- Pub/Socialising/eating out/visiting friends
- WI

The lack of activities and facilities sometimes characteristic of a small village do not have to be a deterrent to community engagement. There are activities to be had 'out there' although access to transport is a problem for some.

- Angling/Fishing
- Antiques
- Archery
- Art Societies/theatre
- Ballroom dancing/dance/drama
- Bridge
- Caravanning/camping
- Church Recording
- Cinema
- Classic Car Events
- Clay pigeon shooting
- Shopping
- Skiing
- Swimming
- Tennis

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that the Church Project Group is aware of the need for leisure activity accommodation which reduces the need for transport out of the village

#### **Health and Social Services: (168 respondents)**

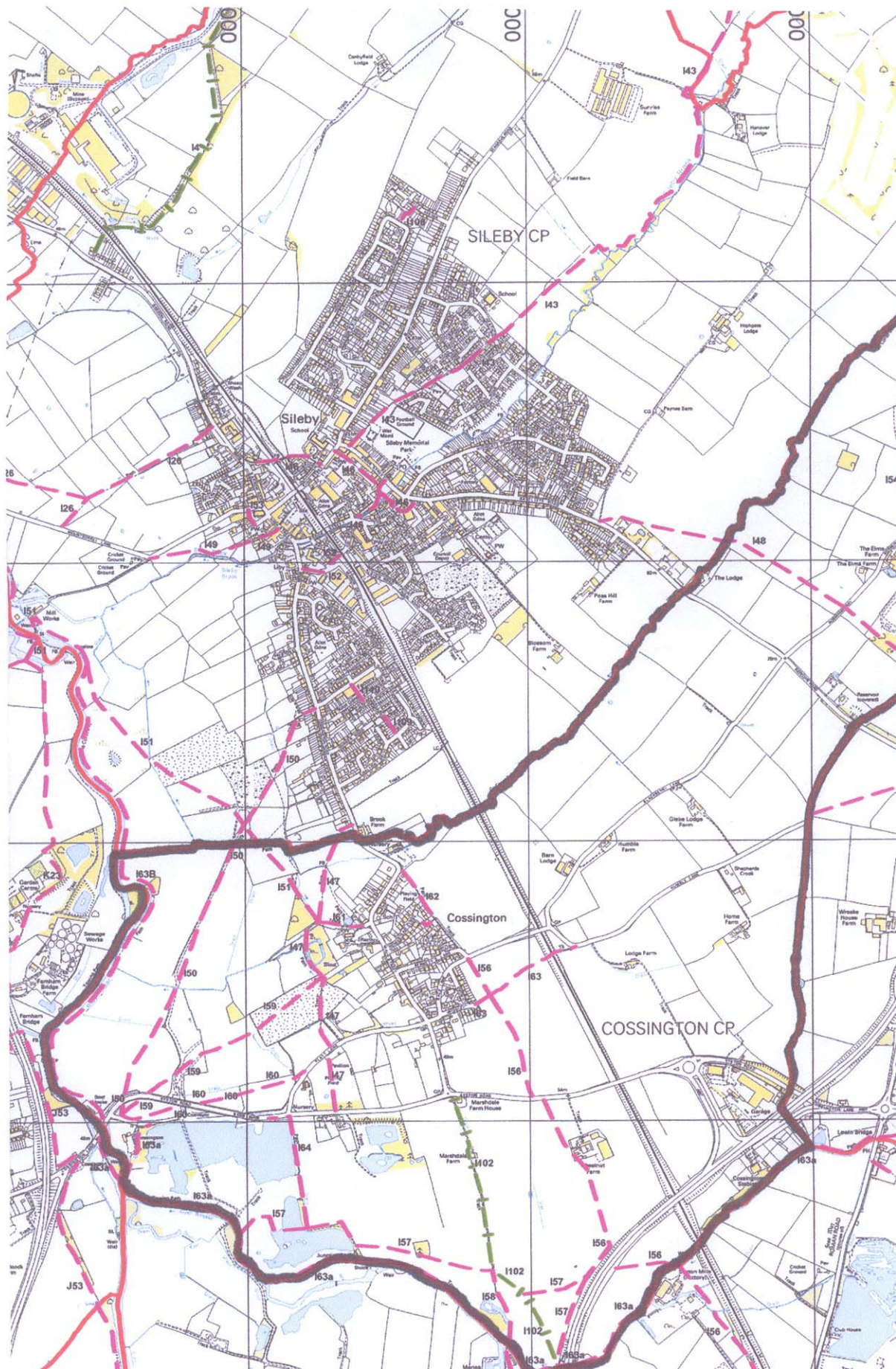
Registered GP Services:-

The Banks	43
Dr. Hurwood & Partners	42
Dr. Lakhani	22
Dr. Roper & Partners	30
Other	31

154 responded to the evaluation of GP Services. 63% rated them as good, 36% as satisfactory, 11% as poor & a healthy 11% 'Had no experience'!

From a more detailed analysis of responses it is clear that The Banks patients are experiencing difficulties.

The 'Other services' experienced by residents, hospital 59%, optician 56%, and pharmacist 61%, dental services, 56%, were rated as good or satisfactory. Only 11 recorded use of 'Out of hours' medical care but it may be significant that 4 rated the experience good, 1 satisfactory and 6 as poor.



21 residents had contacted Social Service Agencies during the last year:-

Child care	1
Elderly provision	4
Home help	2
Transport	2
Disabled person services	8
Visual impairment	2
Hearing impairment	4
'Lifeline'	1
Care services	5

13 residents care for someone who has a long term illness, physical, mental health or learning disabilities at home.

Recommendations:

1. Work towards increasing satisfaction with GP Services in the village. This may involve a more focussed consultation
2. Review village support for carers to reduce isolation and to increase opportunities for participation in village life.
3. Investigate the reasons for poorly rated 'Out of hours 'medical care

### **Security and Crime:**

Cossington is one of the most secure and crime free communities in Leicestershire. There were 5 reports of burglary or attempted burglary but 90% of respondents reported no experience of crime in the village during the last 3 years. There are several reasons for this but the most relevant is Cossington's excellent 'Neighbourhood Watch' which has been recognised nationally & good support from various community officers.

Those who recorded incidents referred to house alarms sounding whilst owners were away, reporting a burnt out vehicle, front door left open and reporting registration numbers of speeding vehicles, 4 incidents of vandalism and 2 of unruly drunkenness.

Interference with cars in the pub car park is of concern but the recent installation of CCTV cameras should be a deterrent.

75% of respondents knew the identity of their 'Watch' street representative. But 25 % did not.

16 people responded positively to the invitation to consider joining the 'Watch' team.

In the last 3 years 13 residents have reported incidents to the police and all were satisfied or very satisfied with the responses.

Recommendations:

- 1 Cherish the local representatives & value collaboration with the local police.
- 2 Conduct a publicity campaign to inform those unaware of their street representatives.
- 3 Follow up offers of 'Watch' help.

### **Traffic and Transport:**

It is not only the residents of Main Street who are concerned about an increase in the speed of traffic through the village. 92% of all respondents identified this as an issue of major concern. Some likened the current traffic flow to a race track and advocated a range of means to slow the traffic to a safer and more acceptable speed. They also suggested several sites where safety is of particular concern. These included:-

Different locations along Main Street, but particularly around the vicinity of:

- The school,
- The bend leading to Derry's Nursery
- Back Lane where there are no pavements.

By far the most popular speed reducing measure is the introduction of 'speed bumps' 58% felt flashing speed indicators would be effective, only 15% believe the solution is a by-pass. Much concern exists about the number and size of vehicles passing through the village. 71% wish to see an effective method of reduction.

But by far the highest level of concern relating to safety is the inconsiderate and down right dangerous parking by parents when delivering and picking up children from school.

58% identified parking on footpaths as a contributory factor in compromising pedestrian safety.

A number of respondents registered concern about increased pollution caused by through traffic.

### **Bus Use:**

The village bus service is used by a small but dependent number on a regular basis through the week. Almost 60% of respondents never use it! Those who do rated highly the convenience of bus times as well as the reliability. Opinion is divided about the helpfulness of the drivers, some are better than others! Only 30% are happy with the range of routes on offer. A popular additional destination would be Syston particularly to enable access to the Health Centre. This may become very significant when the construction of the new centre is under way.

Not all buses have low floors or space for pushchairs.

There is evidence of a need for an evening bus service especially to & from Leicester and it is felt that an improvement in the journey time to Loughborough would attract more passengers.

Railway use:

Sileby (154 responses)      49

Syston (134 responses)      11

Syston Railway Parking: Opinion is divided but there does not seem to be a valid problem.

Sileby Railway Parking      78% thought it satisfactory

Frequency of trains:      Good but more needed.

Access to trains: There are problems but no more than elsewhere.

Cycles on trains: 4 responded 1 pleased to use the service. 1 enquired if it was a catch question!

Community transport schemes

'Dial a Ride' service used by 4 villagers. More information needed.

All aspects of traffic are causes of concern in the village. Effective traffic calming is seen as a priority as is parking during school runs.

A vehicle weight restriction for HGVs would contribute to pollution reduction & improved safety. Alternative routes are possible?

Recommendations:

1. Re-open the debate about village traffic calming measures and refuse to take no for an answer.
2. Seek to enforce speed limits and clarify the 20mph legal position. Only during school hours?
3. Examine options to reduce dangers at identified village trouble spots, Bennetts & Back Lanes
4. Examine strategies to encourage more considerate and safer parking at peak school times
5. Examine weight restriction issue
6. Negotiate with bus companies concerning a possible Syston service, the routing of the Loughborough service & the possibility of a Cossington
7. Evening service to Leicester.

### **Education and life long learning:**

'A prophet is not with out honour except in his own country' and amongst some Cossington residents it would seem never a truer word was spoken!

Following the most recent Ofsted inspection in 2005 Cossington Primary School was judged to have no issues requiring attention except shortage of accommodation which is a matter beyond the scope of the school itself.

The village is most fortunate to retain a primary school at all, largely thanks to Sileby parents living near the school who prefer to use Cossington School. The actual statistics are interesting, only 19 of 108 youngsters attending the school are from Cossington, 2 from elsewhere and 87 from Sileby.

There were 44 responses to the question relating to residents' use of the school, 69% do and 32 % not.

The reasons for school attendance elsewhere were not particularly revealing ranging from 'Attendance at public school as boarders' to 'Decided to use fee paying school!'

However comments about state secondary education & preference for private schools are more significant.

*'Better facilities, less disruptive children, no confidence in the state system, local schools appear to change the attitudes of youngsters-not good'.*

There was also 1 request for more choice of schools at 11.

Educational need within the village was focussed mainly on the primary age range and on the needs of working mothers.

72 responded:

- 71% Holiday Play Schemes
- 64% Mums & toddlers
- 56% Registered Child Minders
- 45% Play Group
- 31% Nursery School

Suggestions about ways in which school provision could be improved attracted only 29 responses the bulk of which concentrated on pre and post school provision:-

Hobbies, leisure activities, homework supervision and breakfast availability!

One comment gladdened the heart, 'none -school excellent!—but then 'Too many working mothers'!!

Community access to the school computers was mentioned,

Returning the school house to the school to alleviate accommodation difficulties,  
Improved buildings,

And of course “better car parking”!

Travel to & from school elicited no surprises! 90% walk and responses to school improvement included the suggestion that more children should be encouraged to walk to and from school! But this has to be off set against very real safety concerns most notably the speed of vehicles using Main Street where the school is situated. But a range of other factors were mentioned, most often associated with parents themselves who are inconsiderate when they pick up or drop their own children. Pavements are obstructed, walking the large dog with the children frightening other children who then step into the road to give the animals a wide berth.

Lower speed limits adjacent to the school have been introduced but with little effect.

There are also problems of visibility or the lack of it, e.g. the junction of Bennetts Lane with Main Street where the situation is often aggravated by inconsiderate vehicle parking by local residents and or their visitors. The junction of Back Lane with Main Street is also mentioned as is Back Lane itself with its absence of pavements.

Attendance at further and adult education courses is relatively low, only 25% of the 145 replied positively although the possibility of opportunities in the village itself raised the level of interest to 54% .A wide range of suggestions included:-

- language learning
- physical exercise
- arts and crafts

But by far the most popular demand is for IT and computer courses.

And a heart felt ‘It would be nice to participate in something which did not need transport to attend’!!

The big disappointment was the response to the possibility of after school computer availability. Only 32% of 146 respondents expressed any interest.

This has to be balanced against an expression of interest in all matters IT!



#### Recommendations:

1. Explore the possibilities of organising a regular holiday play schemes for village children
2. Follow up suggestions for village IT support possibly village school based
3. Establish whether the school is a community school (Links with possible youth use)
4. Liaise with community police re greater visibility at peak school run times

#### **Employment:**

Some might say that Cossington is either primarily a 'commuting' village where people prefer to live in preference to their place of employment or a pleasant area to which to retire, this in spite of the absence of community facilities. The difficulties about commuting and retirement are the likelihood of reduced availability/willingness to participate in community activities and local affairs.

There is a wide variety of work places ranging from neighbouring villages, the cities & towns of Nottingham, Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Loughborough to Birmingham, London and Coventry. The vast majority either work from home (13) or within 15 miles of the village.

101 respondents are in paid employment and 99 said otherwise, 18 of whom are 'Retired'. Does this mean that 81 people undertake voluntary unpaid activities or that there is an unusually high rate of unemployment in the village?! There is an intriguing range of occupations and as might be expected the bulk are in the skilled, professional and managerial categories.

Question 65 is an important one inviting people to offer skills to village organisations and the community. Well done the 19 who responded positively, 6 each in the Education, Health and Music categories respectively followed by 5 'Nature' and 4 IT

On the face of it 108 responses to question 66, concerned with the donation of prizes, equipment, sponsorship, etc. is encouraging but only 20 actually expressed willingness to donate personally or to negotiate with employers.

#### Recommendations:

1. Village Society to examine the possibility of a village skills data-base
2. Village Society to formulate a rota for approaching donor offers/sponsorship

#### **Religion:**

Someone once wrote that the English do like having a church not to attend! This certainly could apply to Cossington! A high percentage (81) of 159 respondents

claimed to be of the Christian Faith but only 31% of 201 respondents felt the church to be important for personal Sunday worship! But it is encouraging that a high percentage (63) of residents value the village church as a historic building, believing it should remain at the heart of the village community and be available for christenings, weddings, funerals and burials. Also mentioned were such occasions as Remembrance Days and of course the Church of England Communion Celebrations at Christmas and Easter.

*'Although I worship at a church of a different faith I feel strongly that our village church is at the heart of the village'.*

It is encouraging also that 35% of respondents make the connection between church and community,

*'We hope when our church is fully restored and replenished it will be available for many community activities'.*

Of the 149 who responded to the question on preferred facilities to be incorporated in the renovated church building most mentioned a 'community hall and toilets' closely followed by kitchen facilities, small meeting rooms and of course car parking!

Surprisingly residents fail to make a connection between the church and the school! Only a single comment makes a connection between the school accommodation problems and the nature of the improved church provision!

But whilst a small percentage (19%) do not regard the church as important in any way there are those who whilst supporting the refurbishment and reordering of the building wish to retain the traditional design and use for Christian worship only



The question on 'Other faiths' revealed that there is 1 Buddhist and 2 Hindus living in the village and a mysterious 2 'Other' but the questionnaire did not seek further enlightenment!

For most people travel to and from places of worship does not seem to be an issue since destinations are within a 3 mile limit of the village

Recommendations:

1. Ensure the 'Friends of All Saints Church', Cossington and the PCC are aware of the results of the village appraisal
2. Maintain the church at the heart of the community

3. Encourage and support the Church Refurbishment Project Group to incorporate community space and associated facilities

### **Local Government:**

Recent years have seen the growth of a malaise in relation to politics and a decline in the number of adults prepared to cast their votes in national elections. Responses to the village questionnaire seem to reflect the national situation although some would argue that disaffection with local affairs is the underlying cause of national cynicism!

169 villagers (72% of the total respondents) i.e. less than half the enfranchised population responded to the enquiry about parish council election participation. The borough council elicited a similar response but virtually all had voted at county council level!

Asked about levels of satisfaction with representatives 76% were satisfied or very satisfied with the performance of parish councillors, and similar levels were recorded for borough and county representatives.

41 people had attended parish council meetings at some time. On the subject of communication the letter remains the preferred method, closely followed by personal contact, and then e-mail and telephone.

Parish Council Web address: To view council meeting agendas & minutes.

<http://www.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/cossington/>

5 people said they would consider standing for election to the parish council, (Not the current members one hopes!) 2 for the borough council and 1 for the county council.

'Elections are due next year 2007, the changes proposed by the present government are far reaching and younger members are needed to look after our mutual interests'. (Parish Councillor)

There were some worrying comments from those who were dissatisfied with representatives.

*'I don't know who they are',  
'More surgeries with the hard to find Mr Stephen Dorrell'  
'Never see them, do not know what they are doing'.  
'We only seem to hear from elected representatives at election time—a periodic flyer—a commentary on achievement might be nice!*

Whilst there is an onus on people to keep themselves informed there is also a small matter of accountability! Parish councillors may feel they are taken for

granted but the essential message is greater parish council visibility and some pro-activity!

**Recommendations:**

1. Consider ways of encouraging Cossington Parish Council to raise its profile and significance in the local and national situations. An 'Open Evening' perhaps, Come and listen to your representatives at work and then enjoy a glass of wine & discussion afterwards, sponsored perhaps by Cossington Village Society?
2. Consider ways of encouraging younger villagers to serve on the parish council
3. In collaboration with the local MP's Office consider ways of raising his profile in the area
4. Examine communications between the village and the local MP
5. Discuss wider publication of parish council minutes and agendas

**COSSINGTON PARISH PLAN - ACTION PLAN**

<b>RCOMMENDATION</b>	<b>ACTION-using task and finish model</b>	<b>LEAD PERSON – PARTNER</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>OUTCOME/ FUNDING</b>
<b>YOUTH SUMMIT</b>				
<b>1) Consider suggestions for activities</b>	<b>Set up working group to take suggestions forward</b>	<b>Steering group; 2 reps from youth; Village Society; Babington Trust; County Voluntary Youth organiser (Mary Sage)</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Community Champions Fund; Community Projects Fund; Babington Trust</b>
<b>2) Establish whether the School is available to the local Community</b>	<b>Open meaningful dialogue with appropriate school authorities</b>	<b>Steering group; Head teacher; Village society</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>3) Explore availability of activities with neighbouring schools</b>	<b>Research range of activities available at neighbouring school and match with requests made.</b>	<b>Steering group; reps from village youth; L/A youth worker (Trevor Wise); Village Society</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Community Champions Fund; Community Projects Fund; Babington Trust</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND LAND DESIGN</b>				
<b>1) Promote access to Polly Pegs footpath</b>	<b>Examine the possibilities of hard surfacing of Polly Peg’s Footpath</b>	<b>Parish Council</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>2) Enable access to Crab Tree Lane</b>	<b>Parish Council to promote a clearance of Crabtree Lane and review the frequency of such clearance schedules</b>	<b>Parish Council</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>3) Parish Council to manage change within context of what is valued by villagers</b>	<b>Regular consultation between villagers and Parish Council.</b>	<b>Steering group member; Village society; Parish Council</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>4) Parish Council should publicise Borough Council strategic plan</b>	<b>More pro-active use of Newsletter by Parish Council to publicise their activities</b>	<b>Chair Parish council; Editor</b>	<b>High</b>	

<b>5) Remind villagers that some change is inevitable because village is a dynamic entity</b>	<b>Make use of Newsletter and occasional public meetings.</b>	<b>Chair Parish Council; Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>6) Improve village maintenance</b>	<b>Courtesy letter from Parish council to those whose front gardens require attention; and explore viability of a support scheme to those in need.</b>	<b>Clerk to Parish Council</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>7) Improve village environment</b>	<b>Village Society to organise a Cossington Sign design competition. Perhaps linking it with either Secret Gardens event of Village Fete</b>	<b>Village Society; Chair Parish Council; Steering group member</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>HOUSING</b>				
<b>1) There should be limited but appropriate building within the village</b>	<b>Parish Council should lobby as strongly as possible against any proposals to build executive style housing.</b>	<b>LCC Planning Authorities; Parish Council; Village Society</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>2) To support villagers views there should be a village design statement produced.</b>	<b>A working group in collaboration with the Parish Council should produce a village design statement based on the results of the questionnaire/survey which reflects the views of villagers</b>	<b>Parish Council; Village society; Charnwood Borough Council</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>POLLUTION</b>				
<b>1) Revisit traffic management via Parish Council</b>	<b>See traffic and transport number 1) page ?</b>		<b>High</b>	
<b>2) Provide publicity to villagers about blocking unwanted cold telephone calls.</b>	<b>Use newsletter to pass on information</b>	<b>Editor of Newsletter; Rep from Steering</b>	<b>Medium</b>	

		<b>Group</b>		
<b>3) Provide advice to those villagers experiencing noisy neighbours</b>	<b>Greater usage of Newsletter</b>	<b>Editor to liaise with Borough Council Noise Abatement Officer</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>LEISURE AND RECREATION</b>				
<b>1) Ensure that the church project group is aware of the need for leisure activity accommodation within the village</b>	<b>Formal liaison meeting</b>	<b>Steering group; Project group</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>1) Increase satisfaction with GP services.</b>	<b>Identify which practices and specific reasons for dissatisfaction e.g. is it related to treatment; the surgery system; attitude of staff.</b>	<b>Steering group; Practice Managers; Patients' Advisory Liaison Service (PALS).</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>2) Review village support for carers</b>	<b>Identify obstacles that prevent participation in village life</b>	<b>Carer representative (to be nominated); Village Society; Steering group member in collaboration with Charnwood CVS Health Support Worker</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>3) Consider how to resolve the 'poorly rated' out of hours medical care</b>	<b>Identify dissatisfaction</b>	<b>PCT representative; steering group member; CVS Health support worker</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>SECURITY AND CRIME</b>				
<b>1) Cherish local reps.</b>	<b>Name and praise through</b>	<b>Chair of</b>	<b>High</b>	

	<b>newsletter</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Watch; Editor</b>		
<b>2) Regularly publish reminders about local reps</b>	<b>Campaign to publicise and then keep names fresh in peoples' minds</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Watch; Editor of newsletter; Village Society.</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>3) Follow up offers of help.</b>	<b>Pass details to Chair of Neighbourhood Watch</b>	<b>Chairs of Village Plan Group and Watch group</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT</b>				
<b>1) Take positive action to introduce calming measures and seek to enforce speed limits.</b>	<b>Re-open the debate with appropriate authorities which will result in a reduction of speed to legal limits</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Watch; Parish Council; Steering group; Quorn Local Policing Unit; Highways County Council</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Set up a traffic watch group (through Neighbourhood Watch) to take positive action through use of equipment at suitable times and liaise with county through Councillor</b>
<b>2) Reduce the level of danger at known spots in village</b>	<b>Examine option available to reduce dangers at identified trouble spots</b>	<b>Traffic Watch Group and Neighbourhood Watch</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>As above</b>
<b>3) Address the need for safer parking during peak school times</b>	<b>a) Consider and then implement strategies to encourage more considerate parking b) Liaise with police to obtain greater visibility at peak school times</b>	<b>Head teacher; Parent Governor; Steering group</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>4) Seek to introduce transport weight restriction.</b>	<b>Introduce appropriate/acceptable</b>	<b>Traffic Watch group, Steering</b>	<b>Medium</b>	

	<b>weight restriction throughout the village</b>	<b>Group. Highways LCC; Quorn LPU..</b>		
<b>5) Extend/expand current bus service to make it more user friendly.</b>	<b>Negotiate Kinchbus to include journeys into Syston as part of the route to Leicester. Additionally explore how it might be possible to introduce an evening service to Leicester. Examine more direct route to Loughborough</b>	<b>Steering group Kinchbus; Village Society</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>EDUCATION AND LIFE LONG LEARNING</b>				
<b>1) Consider ways of occupying children during school holidays and investigate possibility of ‘after school’ club.</b>	<b>Examine current holiday play schemes in vicinity and if appropriate set up one for village children</b>	<b>Head teacher; Babington Trust; Village Society; LCC Youth Services LCC Education Service</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Explore funding opportunities if viable; local charities</b>
<b>2) Explore possibility to establish IT classes and support through the school</b>	<b>Follow-up the possibility of using village school facilities and if not other venues.</b>	<b>Head teacher; LCC Adult Education Service; Steering group member;</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>3) Establish village school community status</b>	<b>Establish whether the school is a community school. Then consider what this means for the village.</b>	<b>Head teacher; Village Society; County Hall Education Dept; School Governor.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>				
<b>1) Update village handbook, and add skills data-base</b>	<b>Consider how it might be possible to harness skills in the village and publicise their availability.</b>	<b>Village Society; Steering Group; Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>2) Encourage suitable rural enterprise of economic and social benefit to the village</b>	<b>Publicise Funds available for suitable Rural and Social Enterprise</b>	<b>Steering group; RCC</b>		<b>Explore Business Initiative FundS,etc.</b>

<b>RELIGION</b>				
<b>1) Publicise result of questionnaire to project group</b>	<b>Inform FASC and the PCC of the results of the appraisal so that they may harness the support.</b>	<b>Reps from PCC and FASC; Chair of Parish Plan group</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>2) Maintain the church at the heart of the Community.</b>		<b>Diocese/vicar; PCC Project group; FASC; village society.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>3) Incorporate community and school space and associated facilities in the refurbished church</b>	<b>Urge Church Refurbishment Group to take note of questionnaire results and incorporate community space in refurbishment plans</b>	<b>Village Society; PCC Project Group; Steering Group Head Teacher; (County Council and Rural Community Council if building is for use of the whole village and school)</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>If a village and a community room next to church is envisaged, then RCC will advise and many funds are available.</b>
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>				
<b>1) Make Parish Council more open and raise its profile</b>	<b>Discuss different strategies that will enable the Parish Council to raise its profile and status amongst villagers</b>	<b>Parish Council; Village society; Steering Group rep;</b>		
<b>2) Encourage younger villagers to stand as Parish Councillors</b>	<b>Publicise work/role of Parish Council and its significance to sustaining village life</b>	<b>Parish Council; Steering group rep.</b>		
<b>3) Publicise wider Parish Council Minutes/agendas, using all avenues of communication</b>	<b>Discuss options available and publish these</b>	<b>Parish Council; Village society; Editor; IT specialist; Steering group rep.</b>	<b>high</b>	

<b>4) Improve communication with local MP and raise profile</b>	<b>Open discussions with MP's Office making them aware of the communication systems in the village</b>	<b>MP's Agent; Parish Council; Steering group</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>5) Explore viability of politician surgeries in the village</b>		<b>Borough and County Councillors; Village Society; Parish Council</b>	<b>High</b>	
<b>6) Seek to activate village website</b>	<b>Encourage volunteers to come forward to help with website</b>	<b>Editor newsletter; Parish Plan Group; Village Society; Parish Council.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	