



2008
RAVENSTONE
WITH SNIBSTON
Parish Plan



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Frontispiece - "The Ravenstone Community at Heart"

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RAVENSTONE WITH SNIBSTON PARISH PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND



View down Main Street

Ravenstone, an ancient settlement, existed well before its recording in the Domesday Book. Its rich history is evident today in the 14th Century Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels, the 18th Century Ravenstone Court, Ashby Road's Pinfold, Ravenstone Hall, the former Rope Walk site and the Conservation Area. [A more detailed but still brief history is at pages 27-29.]

For most of that time the Village has grown gradually. However, recent decades have seen much residential development about doubling the population to the present 2,100. This housing is mostly on the Village's periphery and has put a strain on its original character – most particularly its sense of community.



Ravenstone Hall



St. Michael & All Angels' Church – *"Now you see it... now you don't."*



This Plan's forerunner, the 1997 "Parish Appraisal", described conditions in the Village at that time. However, this did not result in an actual plan for how the Village should be maintained, preserved, developed and improved in the future.

Nevertheless, a number of the issues raised then have come about. Long awaited, the first-class Woodstone Primary School has opened, gives very broad satisfaction and is poised for ever continuing success. A Village Green is now in place and begging for increased community use. The much needed traffic lights at the junction of Leicester

Road with the A447 have been very warmly welcomed. These represent very considerable progress for the Village.

Elsewhere, however, remains much as it was. There is still an unsatisfied demand for a village newsletter. The lack of off-street parking continues to pose difficulties in the

same notorious areas. Dissatisfaction with 'bus services persists. Dog fouling and litter are as irksome as ever. Concern for traffic's excess speed is unswerving and the Church Lane/Coalville Lane junction with the A447 is increasingly seen as dangerous. Relatively little seems to have happened with regard to sports and leisure facilities (despite the excellent case assembled in the Appraisal). At the time a Lottery bid was pending. The seeming lack of progress since is most probably and mainly due to the bid's not succeeding.

So far

Gradually, the Parish Council has been building up a fund (at present amounting to £50,000).

This is in preparation for making further bids and will go towards the obligatory "match-funding".

To a point, matters seem to have taken a backward step with the winding-up of the Tennis Club. There continues to be a need to improve provision for children's and youth's leisure. A youth club was set up but eventually thwarted by a handful of trouble makers.

Thus, in May 2006 with the support of the Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (RCC) a public, open meeting was held in the Ravenstone Institute. This resolved to compile a Parish Plan as the next step on from the Parish Appraisal. A small group of interested volunteers formed the Parish Plan Steering Group (PPSG) in order to collect and analyse information for the Plan. Every one of the PPSG's subsequent meetings was advertised and completely open to any and all villagers on a drop-in basis. The Group has undertaken a full review to establish the community's present and future needs. This was to provide a framework for improving the services and lives of everyone in the Village.

For this a questionnaire was drawn up with RCC input. Funding came from the RCC, the Parish Council and an additional grant from Leicestershire County Council (LCC). The

questionnaire was delivered to all households throughout the parish. There were also special questionnaires for 12 to 18 year olds and for Woodstone Community Primary School children respectively.

Around 1800 questionnaires were sent out with some 350 returned. The unusually good response rate (almost 20%) gives a most satisfactory random sample from which to gauge Village opinion for the Plan's basis.

The questionnaires' analysis and forming the information into the Plan was a massive task. It finally rested with four PPSG members. This partly accounts for the length

of time taken to produce the Plan. Further difficulty arose from the questionnaire's structure (by no means entirely of PPSG's devising). Not only did this contain much quantitative data but also qualitative information in the form of most valuable comments added by repliers. As to be expected, they were very varied and wide-ranging and thus difficult to classify. Generally, only views representative of a significant number of people could properly be reflected in the Plan. However, occasionally minority ideas seemed too good to leave out and have so been included.

This Plan sets out the views, concerns and expectations of villagers *and* how they may be met. Statistics have been kept to a minimum but full details may be had on request. Direct quotes appear at intervals throughout and are colour coded to differentiate amongst adults, youth and children. The Action Plan at the Appendix identifies those authorities, groups or individuals responsible for meeting the needs identified. It also gives a time scale within which actions should be taken. Relevant action already taken or underway is also recorded in the "So far..." boxes. Important to note is that all appropriate, higher governmental and non-governmental bodies are obliged to take account of the Plan before making decisions affecting Ravenstone. It is also probable that the Plan will assist the Parish to attract additional funding.

Residents' awareness of this process has itself encouraged greater community spirit. Already a larger number and variety of community activities and events have resulted. The PPSG looks to villagers to support this growth. Only an increasing numbers of volunteers willing to give assistance can make Ravenstone an even better place to live.

There is very much to celebrate and for which to be thankful, in Ravenstone. Many other similar communities lack and envy facilities, such as the Village's sports fields, children's play areas, Pavilion, tennis courts, the Institute, Post Office, the magnificent Woodstone School, countryside etc. These will prosper in the longer term only with villagers' active support. Too often people realise how important something is only after it has gone.



Doorstep countryside



View from Leicester Road down Ashby Road – before & after the Plough

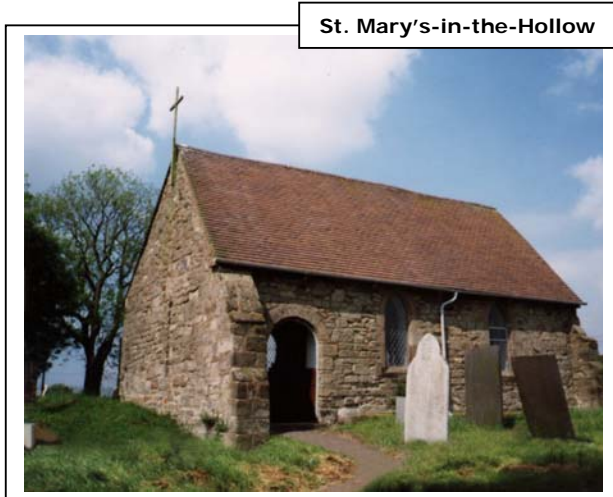


2. STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

Nevertheless, certain of these facilities can or need to be improved upon. The Plan provides for this but its realisation depends upon whole community support. Without this the Plan is no more than a "Wish List".

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Andy** , Helen**
Garwood; | Kevin |
| Ella & Holly Barker; | Liz |
| Hornsby** ; | Ian Lewis; |
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| Seddon** . | |

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St. Mary's-in-the-Hollow

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following assisted in various ways for which PPSG is most grateful:–

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 Colin Screaton.
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 Ravenstone History Group.
 Ravenstone Village Institute Trustees.
 Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council.
 Rural Community Council: Jennie Beeby and Charlotte Burt.
 The Kings' Arms.
 The Plough Inn.
 The 1997 Village Appraisal Working Group.
 Ravenstone Post Office & Village Shop.
 "What's Around" Magazine.
 Woodstone Community Primary School: Patrick Mullins (Head Teacher) & School staff.



View down Church Lane

4 LIVING IN RAVENSTONE



View down Leicester Road

Community Spirit & Activities

75% of respondents, in more or less equal proportions, regard community spirit as good or OK. In contrast 15% consider community spirit poor.

Adult's quote... *"Community spirit was certainly more evident during the opencast protests."*

It was even more apparent over the Travellers' issue. It would be sad, if this spirit were only to emerge in the face of threats.

Youth quotes *"Good area, nice countryside, good people." "Most people are polite. The Village has character." "Good sense of community." "Friendly area."*

Of concern is the 6% who felt positively excluded from the Village community and the 20% who felt partially excluded. Most common reasons were being on the Village's periphery (impacting perception of there being any real community at all) and personal circumstance (disability, ethnicity, loss of life-partner etc.).

Youth quotes *Better if, "asked to be involved in more community activities."
 "Village was more inclusive."
 "Bring the community together."
 "People actually treated people under 21 with respect...
 "Ravenstone more young people friendly." "Social events to meet people."*

There was much enthusiasm (in the range of 75 – 62%) for attending a variety of organised annual events. These are (in descending order) Summer Fête, Christmas, Open Gardens and Firework Night. Even the less popular events (Car Boot and Quizzes) commanded 49 and 38%. Most importantly between 23 and 7% would be prepared to assist at events and between 12 and 5% to help organise. It is hoped they and others will contact the PPSG members** as above.

So far... To meet this demand a *not-for-profit* group has already been set up – **Ravenstone Community Spirit Events Group (REG)**. Its Litter Pick, Hallowe'en and Christmas Parties were a particular success with the children and young people. But, to break even, greater attendance at future events is *vital*. It seeks promotion to a *not-for-loss* group!

Additional volunteers to progress separate elements of this Plan and to assist with organising and helping at events are much needed and should also contact members** of the Steering Group.

Likes & Dislikes about Ravenstone

There is very broad agreement about what is liked about Ravenstone living. Valued is the rural village feel and atmosphere with immediate access to the nearby countryside but also convenience for nearby towns' amenities. The environment's peace and quiet and comparative safety are valued. Generally, villagers are regarded as friendly and community spirit is viewed positively. Location at the heart of the major road network is seen as a significant benefit to communications. Ravenstone's historic past is seen as giving depth to its present character.

A variety of things were generally disliked: –

- Anti-social behaviour (underage alcohol drinking, vandalism and verbal abuse);
- Dog fouling;
- Lack of activities for young, younger *and* older people, of community spirit and of a

- Village focal point or identifiable Village centre;
- Litter;
- Opencast mining;
- Parish Council seen as inaccessible;
- Poor communication of Village events;
- Recent increases in house development;
- Speeding traffic; and
- Inadequate bus services.

Of these the most common complaint was litter (between 61 and 71% considering it a problem). Opencast also featured very frequently.

Dislikes – Children's quotes
Don't like "The litter and the dog mess."
"Too much traffic near my house to play at the front and litter."
"All the dog muck on the grass the owners should clean it up."
"I don't like the Plough being closed."

Dislikes – youth quotes
"Having to fight opencast."
"..not much for teenagers to do...nowhere to go."
"Nothing to do" "Nothing to do" "Nothing to do"
"Local youths anti-social behaviour."

Children's quotes
"I love everything."
"I like...everything about Ravenstone."
"...that there is places to play and you can go on walks and be safe...Plus everyone is really friendly."
"...the school and the village because they are friendly places."
"...the people in Ravenstone and I think it is a very nice place to live. My favourite thing is the park and the school and I find public events in Ravenstone fun."
"I am happy living in Ravenstone,"
"It's a very nice Village and I like it very much."
"It is a nice place we could do with more trees..."

Solutions – Youth quotes
"Electric fences." "BMX park."
"Get rid of idiots that trash things." "ASBOs"
"More activities, more community spirit."
"A café or somewhere to go in the evening."

So far... The Plough Inn has reopened and its car park greatly improved with tarmac resurfacing.



View from Heather Lane before UK Coal

The near universal plea is that all the many good things about the Village be preserved and enhanced. Further development whether in the form of opencast mining or house building is widely deplored. [An exception is for *local needs* housing but only if not rising above a first floor.] Residents believe the Village has reached its maximal size for the time being, if community spirit is to be regenerated and not further impaired. The physical environment is also thought to impact on this to the extent that pride in the Village is damaged, if litter and graffiti are not promptly removed.

So many of the children's and youth quotes are included to show the remarkably high level of agreement amongst them and adults about their likes and dislikes and possible solutions. This not only promises well for the Village's long term future but also indicates the responsibility today's adults owe to upcoming generations.

So far... The most significant issue facing villagers since Long Moor Opencast was the proposed Snibston Travellers' transit site. For the first time, the full, Parish Council draft case of objection was published on the Web so villagers would be consulted before submission to County Council.

Action planned: see 1 on page 21.

Adult quote	<i>"Get a better, more approachable Parish Council."</i>
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So far... From May, Parish Council has five new members, who have started on an in-house series of self-development and change management workshops to improve the performance of councillors individually and collectively. Council will be much guided by the Plan questionnaire's comments. An early product will be a Mission Statement soon to be published.

Adult quote	<i>"More Parish Council communication on what it's doing and consultation on decisions."</i>
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5 THE ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING



Chaplain's House & Ravenstone Court – Aerial View



Ravenstone Court

The Village's appearance particularly the older Conservation Area - Main Street, Ravenstone Court (the former Alms houses) and St Michael and All Angels church should be preserved as they are. Whilst some prefer living in older properties and others in those more newly built, almost all seem to appreciate being part of a village with a tangible history. The resulting old and new parts of the Village and its layout have led to some fragmentation. In turn, a sense of community cohesion is affected for the worse. However, a large majority is keen to see new or reinstated community "get-togethers" though puzzle how this might be done. One replier is much more definite and most probably controversial,

Adult quote

"Close the Village from Main Street to the Church for a community street party."



The Druids Sick Club – *"When community spirit & mutual assistance were essential!"*

A large majority (75%) consider there has been quite enough development of recent years. They believe any further growth should be actively discouraged and that this Plan be a means to this end.

So far...

The District Council's recent housing land assessment excludes Ravenstone from any significant housing development up to 2016.

Ravenstone reports a 96% recycling take-up from kerbside collections with available recycling banks also being used regularly. The various and numerous residents' views notably included e.g. needs for cardboard, glass collection and/or a central recycling area for all the different types of waste. A number wanted to see textiles included. Moreover, after the fortnightly collections, there is significantly more litter is observed, believed to have been spilled or blown about before or during collection.

So far...

Since the survey, cardboard kerbside collections have been introduced and glass ones start from 4th March 2008.

Grass cutting is of some particular concern for not being cut regularly enough, left too long and the cuttings left behind. [The terrain to be mowed and expense of grass collection inhibit a ready solution.]

Hedgerows, most particularly around the Village Green, are considered to reach an unacceptable height and depth and too often encroaching onto nearby paths. Brambles and nettles on Church Lane cause similar concern.

So far...

REG held a second Litter Pick on 30th March and there will be a St. George's Sunday community event on the Village Green on 27th April.

The rural environment is of great concern. For instance, two thirds wish overhead cables to be buried underground.

So far...

As part of the new electricity sub-station work, Central Networks intends to bury some of the overhead cables along parts of the Conservation Area.

Better screening of operations at the much reviled Long Moor open cast mine is sought.

So far...

There is strong and vigilant Parish Council membership of UK Coal's quarterly Community Liaison Committee. Its brief is to monitor planning conditions' observance. Any breach or action that can lessen the impact is strenuously pursued.

Trees are universally valued and when necessarily cut down should be replaced and otherwise, along with hedges, kept in good condition.

So far...

Parish Council has recently had work done on the trees at The Limes and commissioned a survey of all "public" trees in the parish as the basis for a proper tree management programme.

Litter is the biggest complaint and especially in hedgerows. It is particularly obvious here as the Parish's arterial roads are flanked by hedge and ditch. Natural collectors of wind blown litter, these look very unsightly.

Dog fouling came a very close second. This attracts particularly strong criticism. Dog owners know when their dog fouls and can so easily and effectively clean up after them.

Action planned: see 2 on page 21.

6 RECREATION & SPORT



Ravenstone Village Institute

Ravenstone Village Institute

An overwhelming 83% support building a new Hall. Around 90% consider it important or very important for social events, fund raising, children's activities, public meetings and educational events. Over 60% similarly consider it so for health and fitness classes, private parties and a wide range of other more specific activities.

Desired Changes to Availability or Facilities

The range of structural suggestions include:–

- More attractive exterior;
- Larger stage area;
- Generally modernised facility;
- Improved kitchen and toilets;
- Better energy conservation;
- Ability to hold more than one event at a time;
- Better car parking;
- Larger building with frontage sited further back from Leicester Road.

So far...

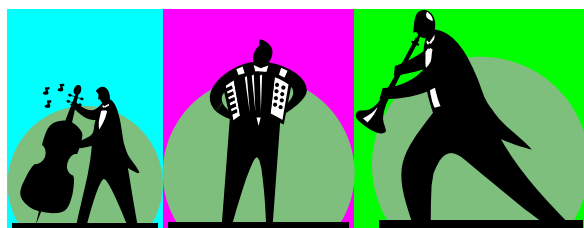
The Institute Trustees have anticipated all of these and they are included in their ongoing plans for demolition and erecting a new building. This awaits the funding needed which the BIG Lottery has recently turned down. Efforts continue to raise this elsewhere.

and more...

Efforts continue to raise this elsewhere. The Trustees have a development fund to go to "match-funding" and are seeking to add to it with villagers' continued support. Last year's Strawberry Fair and Quiz Night raised about £1,400!

Suggestions for improving service delivery are:–

- Improving bar stock (e.g. more draft beers);
- Easier access to booking and keys;
- Promoting better awareness and use of the facility;
- Better external signage; and
- Outside notice board advertising upcoming events.



Adult quote

"... more people prepared to help and a livelier programme at the Institute."

For hosting a youth club there is also very appreciable support amongst adults and youth alike (53%) though it is even greater at 65% for a sports club.

All of these will be taken fully into account by the Trustees.

6.2 Ravenslea Pavilion & Sports Ground

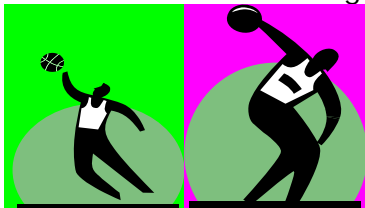
Desired Changes to Availability or Facilities

The Pavilion is seen as uninviting due mainly to the forbidding nature of the much criticised security fencing. [This has, however, reduced maintenance costs by 75%.] Others described it as a "no go area" or an eyesore in need of cleaning up.

Youth quote....

"I don't use the facilities because there are ..." "youth gangs hanging about – it's uncomfortable even if they aren't doing anything." "...burning the equipment and vandalising...it's quite scary."

Visitors wished to be free of real or potential harassment by youths, expressed as a desire for "safe passage". Contrarily, the Pavilion hosts each week the elderly ladies' Good Companions Club. They appear quite undeterred. Particularly younger children's use of the play facilities could be improved by provision of an outdoor toilet and a designated picnic area.



Notably, some respondents would have remained ignorant of the facilities available but for the questionnaire. Consequently, they consider: –

- The facilities should be more widely promoted;
- Booking and access made easier;
- Better outside signage; and
- Notices of activities prominently posted.

Better use could be made of it, if there was a café (possibly cyber-café), even if only for a few hours and periods each week.

So far...

The Ravenstone Football Club uses the football pitch to the maximum supportable during the season. A second pitch is under consideration to host a Sunday League Club. On most weekdays and weekends The Pavilion is hired to regular users.

Informed by a perceived under-use of these facilities, several possible additional activities are proposed i.e. athletics, cricket, tennis clubs, and lawn green bowls.

Structurally, comment centred on increased storage and making the facility a source of real pride, thus to encourage greater use.

So far...

The Ravenstone Sport and Recreation Trustees have active plans already to extend, improve and modernise the Pavilion building generally and substantially to increase storage. This also depends on funding.

The Trustees are to consider how they may act on the further suggestions.

Action planned: see 3 on page 22.

7 SCHOOLS & EDUCATION



Ravenstone School c.1905



Snibston School 1910



Woodstone Primary Day School 2008

60% have children under 18 years of age, and those with preschool children (73%) are generally satisfied with the availability of parent and toddler groups within the Village.

The remaining 27% less satisfied and the 10% who are dissatisfied may be partly attributable to lack of awareness of the services available and partly to lack of available spaces in preschool groups. Advertising of groups and increasing availability of places needs to be investigated.

The majority of primary age children attend Woodstone Community Primary School (60% of respondents) and virtually all comments about it are favourable. ○ ○

Adult quotes

"Woodstone is a first class school..."
"Woodstone is the best thing to happen to the village for years."

However a number of comments were made regarding the 'community' use of the school. These comments are further supported by the preference at Section 15 for attendance at courses provided within the parish.

Adult quotes

"Woodstone Community School should be just this – available for the use of the community."
"Our new school should be opened up for after-school activities for the village community."

Speaking volumes, 57% of the children completing the on-line questionnaire at Woodstone School would also like to use the school during the school holidays.



Encouragingly 35% of children either walk or cycle to school. The remainder are equally split between travelling by car or by school bus.

School bus services are generally regarded as good but on some routes buses are considered "quite old and often dirty".

"..Hurray for Mr. Mullins!"



Action planned: see 4 on page 22.

8 CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY

The statistics are striking. 97 to 84% respectively feel safe or very safe walking the Village or its near countryside alone in daytime. The numbers feeling safe alone at home during daytime or after dark are comparable. However, only 59% felt safe or very safe walking alone in the Village at night. With regard to the questionnaire's nine crime categories, between 35 and 73% do not know of any being committed locally.

However, views on local policing seem contradictory. Very many proposed that there should be a greater, high visibility police presence particularly on foot. Little or no sign of any police officers was frequently mentioned.

This apparent conflict of opinion may be attributable to villagers' feeling personally relatively unthreatened yet significantly unsettled, even distressed, by such as the various forms of anti-social behaviour.

The extension of Neighbourhood Watch to cover the entire Parish attracted an overwhelming 91% support. Whilst some areas already have this cover operating satisfactorily, others seemingly do not. This may be due to schemes never being set up or former schemes falling into abeyance. Complaints include purchased signs never being put up and monthly meetings with the police not happening for 12 months.

More cycle ways get considerable support for potentially making Village travel safer and for improving local access to such as Sence Valley Country Park. In this regard a number also sought better pedestrian provision from Ravenstone. These could encourage people from their motorcars and to exercise more regularly.

Action planned: see 5 on page 23.

9 TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL



**Just because the car *can*, doesn't mean you *have* to.
Kill your speed, not a villager!**

Excess traffic speed along the Village roads again resurfaces as a most frequent concern.

Policing speeding and dangerous or irresponsible parking are very prevalent concerns. There is a frequent call for speed reduction measures along all the Village's main routes.

So far...

The Parish Council has agreed to *enable* setting up a volunteer Community Speed Watch team. Its becoming a reality depends on at least 200 villagers signing a pledge in support. Forms for this will be made available at the Post Office & Village Shop, The King's Arms and the Plough Inn.



Traffic calming introduced to some areas is seen to have transferred problems to others. Thus "rat runs" had developed in Jenny's and Church Lanes. By far the most popular form of traffic management proposed was flashing speed signs. Speed cushions, humps and tables were intensely disliked for their perceived noise, excess pollution and limited effectiveness.

Results for mode of transport used within the Parish according to activity were unsurprising. 83% use their private car for most tasks. The other two options taken together, 'buses and walking, average less than 8%. Private car use creates parking problems, especially where residents have no off-road parking of their own. These are

all too obvious and acute in certain areas. There are particular difficulties for Wash Lane and Swannington Road (including Upper Church Lane) residents due to the large volume of through traffic. How these may be solved needs further investigation. Private car sharing seems at least partly influenced by actual ownership. The notion overall is rather less than averagely popular (45% as a driver and 35% as a passenger).

Action planned: see 6 on page 23.

10 COMMUNICATION



Communication amongst the various elements of the Village, its residents and the three local authority levels strongly influences community spirit. Residents clearly wish to be better informed about issues affecting the Village, whether regarding the local councils or Village social activities.

Although 87% consider the Parish Council notice boards helpful sources of information, their condition and maintenance attracted some adverse comment.

Adult quote	<i>"Keep notice boards tidy and updated regularly."</i>
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As the notice boards are only of use to those who walk the Village, communication to individual households is preferred. For example, "What's Around" was thought helpful by a massive 91%. Free newspapers were also considered useful. However, some residents no longer receive these, which should be rectified for those wanting them.

A Village newsletter, perhaps on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, is numerously suggested by either a new publication or extending the existing Parish Magazine.

62% think that a "Welcome Pack" for new residents would be useful. This would include local information such as bus services, church services, dentists, doctors, hospitals, local businesses, schools etc.

11 SERVICES

A Village map would be welcomed and also thought useful for each of the notice boards.

There is a bewildering array of websites referring to Ravenstone but two serve it specifically:–

www.leicestershirevillages.com/ravenstone (neither frequently nor regularly updated) and

www.ravenstonewithsnibstonparishcouncil.org.uk (which is). The need either for greater consistency between the two or promoting a focus on the latter will be investigated.

Not everyone has access to the Internet, so its use to find or impart information is limited. However, 46% would find a routinely updated website useful and 24% very useful. Encouragingly, 23% would pursue training that demonstrated how it could be used across the Village.

Although a total of 66% seldom or never attend Parish Council meetings, 27% still consider them very important and 52% important. This anomaly may be explained partly by the 25% unaware that these meetings are open to the public.

Council meetings are held in the Pavilion on the fourth Thursday of each month (except currently July and December). They are advertised on seven notice boards (with agendas also posted), on the website, in the Parish magazine and in "What's Around". An appreciable number proposed flyers to individual households to publicise dates of future meetings both to encourage public attendance and to canvas views. [This method would be labour intensive and could also serve very little practical purpose.]

The 25% dissatisfied want communication of information from County, District and Parish Councils to be improved. Contrarily, about 50% have no opinion on the matter.

Action planned: see 7 on pages 23 and 24.



With Coalville and Ashby so relatively close, Ravenstone can sustain few local businesses. These are:–

The Post Office and Village Shop;
Beesleys' Nurseries and Garden Centre;
F.R. Coombes;
The Kings' Arms and Plough Inn public houses;
MC Motors (car sales); and
Ravenstone Garage.

In addition, there are also some smaller businesses often run from home e.g.

Church Lane Farm House (guest house),
G & T Catering,
"What's Around" monthly magazine,
Mobile Hairdressing etc.

Although the Post office is considered vital to the community, it is underused for other than postal related services, particularly purchasing stamps.

Its other services, such as banking, paying bills and foreign exchange are relatively rarely used. For example, only 11% of respondents use the banking facilities or ATM cash dispenser on a weekly basis, and 72% never used these services.

Heightened awareness of the range of Post Office services is needed in order to compete with the Internet and services available elsewhere.



Post Office deliveries were generally thought to be good to average. Adverse comments related mainly to the reduced frequency of Village collections.

So far...

Ravenstone Post Office has survived the recent round of national closures. That Heather's and Packington's have not serves to show that Ravenstone's will remain open only with full-hearted villager support. Use it or lose it!

The LCC mobile library service, visiting the Village fortnightly, is used by only a few. Many are out of the Village when the van visits or prefer to use libraries in Coalville or

Ashby. However, this is still considered an important service for those who can use it.

Few also seem to use the Leicestershire libraries website, mainly for renewing books. This may be due to lack of awareness of this service.

Of those who regularly use a library, the majority visit Coalville, although only 12% visit once a month and 27% less often.

Extending the range of goods in the Village Shop, including local and/or organic produce, was often suggested. 57% wish to have more organic produce available. There is also a demand for a variety of mobile shops touring the Village e.g. butcher, grocer, wet fish and fish and chip vans. The possibilities will be further investigated.

12% of people sometimes have problems getting to shops. However, the majority have no difficulty accessing services such as shops, banks, and libraries with most using the facilities in Coalville and Ashby. Ibstock is also important for these and for leisure and adult education facilities.

Action planned: see 8 on page 24.

12 HEALTH



Whilst Ravenstone has no Doctor's or Dentist's surgery, the majority of people have had no problem with registering or obtaining healthcare. Of the 12% who experienced problems many related to finding an NHS dentist.

Any problems obtaining healthcare mainly related to difficulty in getting appointments when needed.

90% of people have to travel less than 5 miles for a doctor and Pharmacist but only 42% had a dentist within this distance.

NHS Direct telephone help line is used by 80% of respondents.

There are no Accident and Emergency Hospitals within 10 miles of Ravenstone and everyone has to travel.

Only 8% of respondents smoke and 10% of these would like help to give up. Most smokers do not seemingly wish to give up.

A large majority (69%) would like to increase their activity and fitness but 33% of them consider lack of time to be a barrier. Half never do any strenuous activity although 23% consider they engage in mild activity such as easy walking every day.

Motivation is cited as a major reason for lack of exercise and for a less than healthy diet.

Various activities in the Village may encourage healthy living. Respondents' suggestions included walkers groups, off

road cycle tracks and more readily available fresh local produce.



Action planned: see 9 on page 24.

13 EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS



A variety of future developments are thought potentially beneficial. Between 40 and 44% favoured craft workshops, additional retail outlets or tea rooms. Small business workspace units, a take-away food outlet and social enterprise undertakings received between 28 and 10% support respectively.

A remarkable 36% own or manage principally home-based businesses within the Village across an impressive range of economic activity. These include:–

Childminding/Pre-school provision;
 ITC, human resources & management services consultancies;
 Fair Trade representation;
 Heating engineering & Plumbing;
 Motor vehicle maintenance & repairs;
 Arable & livestock farming;
 Post Office and general retail store;
 Stone masonry reclamation.

Physiotherapy;	Holistic equine practice;
Building;	Carpentry/joinery;
Guest house;	Landscaping;
News agency;	Hairdressing;
Venue catering;	Textiles;
Physiotherapy;	Holistic equine practice;
Artist;	Heavy welding;
Engineering.	



The glad reaper's

Of these, 76% wish for a local business directory, 48% access to free web pages and 43% formation of a local business club. Between 29 and 33% want easily accessible printing facilities, less expensive Broadband Internet access and to be able to share costs and common services.

62% of these businesses work with the local community and 52% employ local people. As for training, 29% expressed a need and 8% are considering setting up a new business. There is no compendium of these businesses limiting the support (including talks, training and tutorials) they need to expand and deters their being invited to tender for Parish Council contracts.



The way it was.



Action planned: see 10 on page 24.

14 CHURCH, RELIGION & FAITH



St. Michael & All Angels

Adult quote

"A vicar who stays in the parish....could build up a decent congregation."

The majority of respondents are Christian and 60% consider St. Michaels and All Angels to be important as a place of worship. Only 8% consider it to be unimportant. However, attendance is perilously low. The next few years are critical to its survival as a consecrated church with its own dedicated priest. No shop remains open for business purely on the off chance that people will buy their last minute Christmas or birthday presents there. The Church's upkeep is expensive and priests need paying (amounts for which most people would "not get out of bed"). The Church is arguably little different from any other business, except perhaps more taken for granted.

A larger proportion (63%) considers Church use for baptisms, weddings, and funerals to be very important; only 5% consider it at all unimportant.

A large number believe it is important to retain the Church as an historic building and as a visual asset. Furthermore, 70% believe the Church should be used for other Village meetings or events to increase its usefulness to the Village

18% travel to another Church and 6% require an alternative place of worship.

Generally, the Parish Church is regarded as a considerable asset to the Village and to the community. It should continue to promote the times of services and other events.

In addition, the Parish Priest should be supported, not least in his pastoral work, as a link across the whole Village community and as a means to improving community spirit.

Action planned: see 11 on page 24.

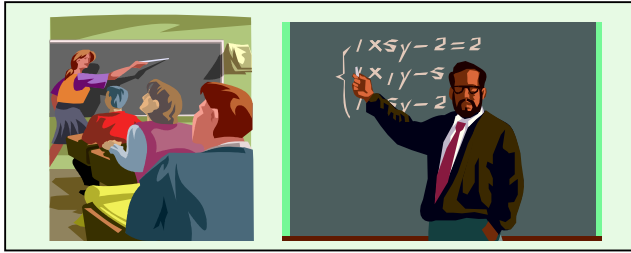


Ravenstone House:
"Would its demolition be allowed today?"



Ravenstone House:
Maid serves Edwardian tea party.

15 ADULT EDUCATION, SKILLS & CAREER DEVELOPMENT



Those who would attend any type of course invariably favour provision within not outwith the Village. Recreational courses (e.g. pastime related such as flower arranging) are most popular (47%) followed by computer and language skills (30%) and wellbeing and healthy living (29%). Between 17% and 5% are, in descending order, interested in courses leading to accredited qualifications, related to work or getting back to work.

Course subjects suggested also include bridge; car maintenance and self-defence for women; crafts; gardening; parenting; welding; and those specifically aimed at young people's interests.

Action planned: see 12 on page 25.

16 CONCLUSION

First and foremost, the Plan has not been put together by bureaucrats or town planners. It is what Ravenstone residents say *they* want for the Village. It is far-reaching and certainly ambitious. Some of its elements require large sums of money. Achieving even the more modest or less expensive proposals will take time and much effort. But these resources are available amongst the Village's unquestionable wealth of talent that exists throughout the Village. Only if the many give a little, so that the work is widely spread and shared across the whole community, is the Plan achievable. Such commitment – Team Ravenstone – is vital to success and brings very substantial rewards.

All those who accept responsibility for the Plan's implementation need the will to succeed, determination, a clear sense of purpose and perseverance. But others looking to benefit need to temper their expectations with some patience and realism and be prepared at times to roll up their own sleeves.

The Parish Council is quite properly indicated for lead responsibility on a wide range of issues. It should be remembered that its financial and manpower resources are small. The money comes from its precept on the Council Tax, the total amount depending on how much villagers are prepared to pay. To meet the District Council's timetable, the precept for 2008/09 has already been submitted. Thus, where significant sums are needed, elements of the Plan may well need to wait until 2009 and beyond.

The Plan is a process, not an event. It should therefore be a dynamic, living record continually reviewed, adapted to changing circumstances and updated at least every year.

Next steps?



Next steps!

Prior to publication, the parties to be involved in implementing the Action Plan have been consulted. Some have agreed the proposals; others simply noted them. As the Plan represents the will of the people, villagers are strongly encouraged to use it actively with all the relevant authorities and other bodies in order to support, prompt or monitor achieving its goals...&

*..Keep the Plan alive! Keep track of all those issues important to you! Keep the implementers on their toes. Lend a hand wherever and whenever you can - at least on *your* important issues...&*

..“Ask not what” Ravenstone “can do for you but what you can do for” Ravenstone...&

*..Tell the Steering Group, Parish Council & the other bodies what *you* think of the Plan & keep on telling, especially when you think it needs amending.*

2008 Parish ACTION PLAN

Key to abbreviations at page 21.	Category	Action	Responsibility/ Partner(s)	Priority// Timescale in months	Resource Implications
1	LIVING IN RAVENSTONE	1. Regenerate & develop community spirit	PC, RCVO/VB & Community	H// Ongoing/∞	VLTR, Village website & Community
	LIVING RAVENSTONE IN	2. Develop, improve & use all available communication media for advising residents of relevant official, social etc. information	PC, RCVO/RB & Community	H//<6	VLTR, Village website & Community
		3. Encourage & support development of more approachable, businesslike, proactive & responsive PC	PC & Community	H// Ongoing/ <12	PC time & some training resources
	LIVING IN RAVENSTONE	4. Investigate potential for creating a central Village focal point	PC	M-L// >12	PC time & survey/design costs
2	ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING	1. Maintain & improve village appearance	DC, PC, PHW, PTW, UKCLC & Community	H-M// Ongoing/ <12/∞	All available
		2. Base resistance to further housing (other than "local needs") on Parish Plan	CC, DC, PC & Community	H// Ongoing/∞	Negotiation with all Councils
	ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING	3. Recycle glass from kerbside	DC	H// Ongoing	Now allocated
		4. Expedite transfers to PC of Village Green & Leascroft play area ownership.	PC, DWH, RH & DC	H// Ongoing/ <6-12	Community support for PC pressure
		5. Improve Village Green grass & hedge cutting & promote greater usage as an amenity	DWH pro tem & PC long term	H// Ongoing/< 12-18	Negotiation with PC & between PC & DWH
	ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING	6. Preserve rural environment & atmosphere	PC, DC, CC(HTWM), RCC etc., Sustrans, LPA & Community	H// Ongoing/∞	Time & funding/ support for VLTR
		7. Eliminate litter & dog fouling	Community, PC & DC	H//<6-12/ ∞	Negotiation with DC Street Environment

Category	Action	Responsibility/ Partner(s)	Priority// Timescale in months	Resource Implications
3 RECREATION	1. Maintain momentum for new Village Institute & maximise Community involvement in its development & fund raising	RVIT, Funding Bodies & Community	H// Ongoing/ >12/∞	Very large capital/ project management costs
RECREATION	2. Promote use of Village Institute	RVIT, RCVO, VB & Community	H// Ongoing/< 12/∞	Advertising/ publicity costs
RECREATION	3. Promote use of RSR Pavilion & improve image.	RSRT, PC & regular/other users	H// Ongoing/ <12/∞	Advertising/ publicity costs
RECREATION	4. Investigate outreach education potential at all suitable Village locations	CC(ALS), WCPS, Ibstock & Stephenson FE Colleges, RVIT, RSRT	M//12–24	Funding for venue hire & teachers
RECREATION	5. Further develop plans for Pavilion's extension & improved facilities & obtain funding required	RSRT, Regular Users & Community	H–M// Ongoing/ </>12	Large capital/ project management costs, RVIT & VLTR time
RECREATION	6. Investigate demand & support for more sport & young people's activities	RSRT, RSC, WCPS & Community	H–M// 12–18	RVIT' & VLTR time & survey costs
RECREATION	7. Investigate potential for a Limes children's play centre	PC, PPI, The Limes' residents	M// 6–18	PC & VLTR time & possible survey costs
4 SCHOOLS & EDUCATION	1. Create more available pre-school places.	CC(CYPS)	M//<12–18	Accommodation & trained staff availability
SCHOOLS & EDUCATION	2. Improve school buses' standards.	CC(CYPS)	M//<12	Better quality buses' availability
SCHOOLS & EDUCATION	3. Create Community access to Woodstone School	WCPS/BG & Head Teacher	M//12–18 /∞	Requisite permission & community events' demand
SCHOOLS & EDUCATION	4. Monitor School class sizes & teacher/pupil ratios	WCPS/BG & Head Teacher	M//<12 /∞	WCPS Management, PTA & Parents

Category	Action	Responsibility/ Partner(s)	Priority// Timescale in months	Resource Implications
5 COMMUNITY SAFETY & CRIME	1. Secure increased Police presence & raised visibility throughout Parish	LPA/LPU, Beat Officer & PCSO & PC	H//6–18 /∞	Police time & resources
	2. Reduce % of residents concerned for, & incidence of, public disorder/anti-social behaviour/vandalism towards zero tolerance	LPA/LPU, Beat Officer & PCSO, PC, NHW & Youth Services	H//<6	Police time & resources Community time vigilance
COMMUNITY SAFETY & CRIME	3. Pursue all means to enforce vehicle speed, parking & other restrictions	LPA/LPU	H//<6–12	Police & VLTR time & resources
COMMUNITY SAFETY & CRIME	4. Promote extension of Neighbourhood Watch & related schemes across the Parish	LPA/LPU, NHWA & Wardens & Community	H//<12	Community/ VLTR time
	5. Investigate potential for extending dedicated cycle ways across the village & beyond	Sustrans & CC(HTWM)	M//>12	Sustrans & CC(HTWM) time & resources

6 TRANSPORT & TRAVEL	1. Produce an integrated village-wide approach to road traffic management & off-road parking.	CC(HTWM), DC, BC RBs & RCVO, PU & Community Working Group/ Speed Watch	H//<12–18	LCC(HTWM) resources [flashing speed limit signs not speed humps etc.]
	2. Improve 'buses' availability, destinations & frequency	Bus companies & PC/CC(HTWM)	H–M//<12–18	BC resources

7 COMMUNICATION	1. Improve dissemination of LCC information affecting the Parish.	CC & PC	M//<12	Negotiation with CC.
	2. Improve dissemination of NWLDC information affecting the Parish.	DC & PC	M//<12	Negotiation with DC
COMMUNICATION	3. More communication from Parish Council about important issues.	PC	H//<6–12	Negotiation with PC
COMMUNICATION	4. Keep local websites updated & more informative.	Community, Website Administrators & PC	H//<6	Finding volunteers & information sources
	5. Create community newsletter	Community, websites & PC	M//<12–18	Finding volunteers & information sources

Category	Action	Responsibility/ Partner(s)	Priority// Timescale in months	Resource Implications
COMMUNICATION (continued)	6. Free local newspapers delivered to all residents	Publishers via PC	H//<6–12	Negotiation with publishers
	7. Create welcome pack for new residents	PC & Community	M//<12–18	Volunteers & printing/distribution costs
8 SERVICES	1. Support Post Office (& promote its available services) & Village Shop	Entire Community	H// Immediate /∞	Negligible costs
	2. Contact MBO (e.g. fish & chips, fishmonger, greengrocer, butcher) with potential for serving Village	PC & Community	M//<12 months	PC & VLTR & some Community time
	3. Investigate Village Shop's potential for stocking extended range (including local fresh/organic produce)	PC, VSO & Community	M–H//<12 months	PC time & VSO time & likely some investment
9 HEALTH	1. Ensure best targeting of & access to information on home care services available	PCT & CC(ASCS)	M//<12 months	PCT, CC(ASCS) & Voluntary Sector resources
	2. Investigate local fresh & organic foods supply potential	Community, DC PC, RB, & VSO	M//<12–18	Time
	3. Establish local walking group to promote exercise, improve residents' health & community spirit	Community, DC & PC	M//<12–18	VLTR time
10 EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS	1. Investigate potential for Village-based businesses' development e.g. craft workshops, workspaces, shops etc.	PC, Present & Intending RB, DC/RCC EDU	H–M//<12–24 /∞	DC, RCC, PC & RBC time & resources
	2. Arrange meetings for RBC to investigate potential for establishing club/forum, directory, ongoing support etc.	PC, Present & Intending RB & DC/RCC EDU	H–M//<12 /∞	DC, RCC, PC & RBC time & resources
11 CHURCH, RELIGION & FAITH	1. St. Michael's to continue promoting church service times & events.	PCC & congregation	H–M// Ongoing & ∞	Minimal
	2. Support Parish Priest to prevent church closure & as link to community.	Church Diocese, PCC & community	H// Immediate/ ∞	Community & Volunteers

Category	Action	Responsibility/ Partner(s)	Priority// Timescale in months	Resource Implications
12 ADULT EDUCATION, SKILLS & CAREER DEVELOPMENT	1. Establish on what bases education providers & similar will mount courses/ events etc.	CC(ALS), Local FE Sector, PCT, WEA, VLTR Community Experts etc.	M//<12- 24 /∞	Lead RCVO & VLTR Time
	2. Survey range and detail of real community course demand & match to available facilities/venue(s)	WCPS, RVIT, RSRT	M-L//>12 /∞	Possible small extra survey costs & RCVO/ VLTR Time

PPSG/NCS/03 April 2008

Parish Action Plan Key

Abbreviation	Full Description
BCs	Bus Companies
CC/	Leicestershire County Council/
(ASCS)	Adult Social Care Services
(CYPS)	Children & Young People's Service
(ALS)	Adult Learning Service
(HTWM)	Highways, Transport & Waste Management
DC	North West Leicestershire District Council
DWH	David Wilson Homes
EDU	Economic Development Unit
FE	Further Education
H	High (based on %age response)
∞	Infinite or indeterminate
<	Less than
LPU	Local Police Unit
L	Low (based on %age response)
LPA	Leicestershire Police Authority
M	Medium (based on %age response)
MBO	Mobile Business Owners
mm	Months
>	More than
NHW	Neighbourhood Watch
NWLCVS	North West Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Service
PAW	Archaeological Warden
PC	Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council
PCC	St Michael & All Angels Parochial Church Council
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PHW	Parish Heritage Warden
PPI	Parish Play Inspector
PTW	Parish Tree Warden
PU	Public Utilities
RB	Ravenstone-based Businesses
RBC	Ravenstone Business Community
RCC	Leicestershire & Rutland Rural Community Council
RCVO	Ravenstone Charitable & Voluntary Organisations
RH	Redrow Homes
RSC	Ravenstone-based Sports Clubs
RSR/T	Ravenstone Sport & Recreation/Trustees
RVI/T	Ravenstone Village Institute/Trustees
SUSTRANS	Sustainable Transport
UKCLC	UK Coal Mining Ltd. Community Liaison Committee
VLTR	Volunteers/Voluntary
VSO	Village Shop Owners
WCPS/BG	Woodstone Community Primary School/Board of Governors

A Brief History of Ravenstone in the County of Leicester

"The village is large, stands mostly on an eminence and has a very pleasing appearance on the road from Ashby to Leicester. It is three miles south-east from Ashby de la Zouch; and thirteen miles north-west from Leicester; and is bounded on the north by Swannington and Cole Orton, on the west by Alton and Normanton, on the south by Hether and Ibstock and on the east by Snibston. It is middling land; mostly inclosed pasture and has several considerable coal-delphs in and about it".

So John Nichols describes Ravenstone in the early 1800's in his history of Leicestershire. Although much enlarged over the last 50 years the village has retained its agreeable appearance and retains its own individual identity. The oldest building in the village is not, surprisingly, the parish church of St Michael and All Angels which is of mainly 14th century construction, although there is evidence to suggest that an older church stood on the site. The church is situated on the northern fringe of the village in a pleasant location adjacent to the Hall and the Hospital at the joining of Main Street, Church Lane and Hospital Lane. The older cottages and houses are 17 to 19 century in date and straddle Main Street and part of Church Lane.

Some of the older cottages at the southern end of Main Street were demolished in 1958 and Hall Farm which stood opposite the Hospital was demolished for housing development in the early 1970's. The centre of the village is now designated a conservation area which will give some degree of protection for the village for the enjoyment of future generations.

Ravenstone is an old village, how old can only be conjecture. Certainly Roman coins and pottery have been found within the parish and in 1981 the remains of what has been described as "a Roman small town" was discovered in the fields near Kelham Bridge. As the area was due to be cleared for opencast coal mining, only a rescue excavation could be carried out on two pottery kilns. There is also evidence of a Roman road crossing the southern part of the parish and through the Roman site. The route of this road has been traced from Ryknield Street in Staffordshire to Ibstock

and it probably continued on to Leicester. The part of this road that passes through our parish and Normanton-le-Heath is presently under threat from proposed opencast mining.

The first settlement in the village proper was probably by the Anglo Saxons. This is suggested by the name which is probably derived from's Tun. Hrafn was a Saxon invader who decided to establish a farmstead here by erecting his stockade or "tun". It is interesting to note, however, that Alton, one of the two 'lost villages' in the parish means old farm so may have been established before Ravenstone.

The first documentary evidence of the existence of the village is in the great survey of England carried out by King William in 1086, later known as Domesday. Ravenstone was unusual in that it was recorded as being in part of the county of Derby and Leicester. In 1086 about 240 acres lay in Leicestershire and 120 acres in Derbyshire much of it lying waste and reduced considerably in value since the time of King Edward. This anomaly persisted until 1888 when all of it was included in Leicestershire.

Soon after Domesday a castle was erected in Ravenstone and was located, according to Nichol, "on the north side of the town". It was unlikely to have been a stone built castle but probably consisted of an earth mound and ditch surrounded by a wooden palisade. A treaty concluded between 1147 and 1153 by the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Chester would have resulted in the destruction of any castle threatening their respective estates and it was this treaty that led to the demolition of Ravenstone Castle. So effective was the destruction

that the site of the castle has so far never been established.

The land in Ravenstone has passed through many hands over the intervening centuries including the monks of Garendon Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. It was during this period that monastic farms were established at Alton Grange and Snibston Grange. The usable land in the parish increased over the years as it was won from the surrounding scrub land. The land was originally composed mainly of heath land as suggested by the names of the nearby villages of Heather and Normanton-le-Heath. Some of the old field names also suggest this; Longmore close, Bottom Heath close, Gorsy close and Broomy close. The land in Ravenstone was probably only ever in the hands of a few landowners. In 1630 the only freeholders were Thomas Elliot and John Barwell.

In the 1680's an estate in Ravenstone was purchased by John Wilkins as local coal owner where he built a very large house of brick and stone with gardens, orchards and fishponds. He was the son of William Wilkins a yeoman farmer from Coleorton. Through a combination of hard work and an advantageous marriage to Rebecca Wollaston, John Wilkins became by 1700 the most influential mineowner within the coalfield. He led an active social life and was appointed Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1693. Following the death of John's son, Francis, in 1711 at the age of 21, Rebecca Wilkins directed in her will that all the proceeds from their estate after her and her husband's death should be used to establish a hospital or almshouse in remembrance of her son. The hospital was to house "30 poor, blind, aged or impotent women, widows or maids". The hospital was open for women from Ravenstone, Swannington and Coleorton. The building work did not commence until after the death of John Wilkins in 1726. Further wings were added in 1784 and the building completed in its present form by 1814.

The estate of John Wilkins, amounting to 462 acres, was sold to Roger Cave of Stanford Hall in 1726 and after his death in 1740 it was purchased by Leonard

Fosbrooke of Shardlow. Leonard Fosbrooke pulled the original house down soon after

purchase and built the attractive house we see today and know as Ravenstone Hall. The estate was broken up and sold as individual lots in 1962.

The main occupation in the village, despite it being a coalmining area, has been agriculture. Prior to the Enclosure Act of 1770 farming in the parish was carried out mainly in three large fields, the Alton field, Granno field and the Heather or Little field. Each farmer would have an allocation of land in each of the fields. Early will inventories give us a fascinating insight to the possessions of these early farmers. William Clarke who died in Ravenstone in 1637 lived in a house, probably timber framed, consisting of a main hail, open to the roof, used as a living and eating area with trestle tables and forms, brass and pewter pots and pans and wooden dishes and plates. There was an inner and outer parlour used as bedrooms with beds complete with mattresses, blankets and sheets made of flax or hemp. Painted cloth coverings hung on the walls. There was also a buttery with earthen pans, pancheons and barrels. The kitchen contained tubs, spits, pots and pot hangers. A stable was occupied by two grey mares, a colt and two bullocks.

The only evidence of coal mining visible in the parish today is the altered landscape caused by opencast mining. There is documentary evidence however to suggest that limited mining was carried out centuries ago. Mineral rights were reserved in 1596 for "the cole mynes and cole pyte" south of Ravenstone mill. There was certainly coal mining and also stone quarrying at Alton Grange when it was sold in 1805. Brick making was also carried out in Ravenstone. We have Brickiln Lane leading to Brickiln Piece and Brickiln Close shown on the 1770 enclosure map.

In times past, the people of the village were in the main employed in the village itself, self employed, working for local farmers or as servants for the Fosbrookes

at the Hall and the Creswells at Ravenstone House. Before the days of convenient transport most goods and services would be supplied in the village. The census of 1851 gives the range of small businesses carried out: maltster, shoemaker, butcher, grocer, rope maker, framework knitter, dressmaker, inn keeper, blacksmith,

wheelwright and of course the local schoolmaster, doctor and rector.

Like most communities Ravenstone has grown in size over the past centuries from Hrafn's enclosure of mud huts to the village of 850 houses we see today. With growth inevitably comes change. Ravenstone is still a pleasant community – let's hope that with all our efforts we can keep it so.

[Reproduced from the 1997 Village Appraisal]

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