West Bergholt Parish Plan

Moving forward together

ABOUT THE VILLAGE

1. Village Location and Setting

West Bergholt lies in an attractive rural setting North West of Colchester. The generally flat landscape is bounded to the south and east by the sloping valleys of the River Colne and St Botolph's Brook. To the north and east are arable farmlands interspersed with small woodlands and bushy hedgerows.

The village is a largely compact settlement situated 3 miles north-east of Colchester with a population of 3294 persons.

The village is conveniently placed for those residents who work in Colchester and its close proximity to the A12 means that it is well placed for people who work in Ipswich or Chelmsford. Being only 1.5 miles from the main railway line into London has meant that West Bergholt has become a desirable location for commuters.

West Bergholt is served by several bus services, the principal ones are:

- 66 West Bergholt - Colchester - Old Heath (Mondays - Saturdays), operated by First Essex, every thirty minutes throughout the day, hourly in the evenings
- 753 Sudbury - Great Cornard - Bures - West Bergholt - Colchester, (Monday - Saturday) operated by H C Chambers & Son, hourly
- Various services serve the secondary schools

2. Village Origins and Latter Day Expansion

West Bergholt name can be traced as far back as 1086 when it was known as Bercolta. The name Bergholt means "hill-wood" and is derived from "beorg" (hill) and "holt" (wood). It was named Bergholt Sackville after the Sackville family who held the main manor from the early 12th century until the late 17th century. It was called 'West' to distinguish it from East Bergholt in Suffolk.

The village has grown considerably over the last 200 years as the table below reveals.

Date	Population	% increase on previous census
1801	552	0
1851	852	54
1901	1,050	23
1951	1,272	21
1961	1,294	2
1971	2,326	80
1981	2,977	28
1991	3,027	2
2001	3,294	9

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The village grew up originally around the vicinity of the Queen's Head pub with more isolated buildings fronting the main routes through the village: Lexden Road, Colchester Road and Chapel Road. The village expanded significantly in the mid to late 1960's and the recorded census population figures show this fact revealing an 80% increase in population between 1961 and 1971: Since 1971 the village has expanded by a further 42%.

The growth in population was a result of new estates being constructed and a variety of styles mark this expansion such as those around Lexden and Mumford Roads, those around Pirie Road as well as the more recent development on the old brewery site

3. Village Character

The village has 34 buildings listed for their architectural merit. The only Grade 1 listed building is the Church of St Mary in Hall Rd. Now redundant but still consecrated the building was originally Saxon in origin. The 11th century masonry church, which overlies its timber predecessor, was heavily remodelled in the late 13th and 14th centuries with the addition of the squared chancel and south aisle.

Other buildings of note are:

- Cooks Hall (grade 2*) in Cooks Hall Rd a medieval house with 16th, 17th and 18th century additions;
- Horsepits Farmhouse (Grade 2*) in Cooks Hall Rd a 16th century or earlier timber framed building
- The White Hart Public House, Nayland Rd (Grade 2) a two storey 17th century timber framed building.

Part of the village is designated as a special landscape area and there are some seven sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. A village appraisal conducted in 1984 documents the various characteristics of the settlement and a reference is included in the appendices at the end of this document; the appendices also contain a plan of the village with the most relevant features highlighted.

4. Village Facilities

West Bergholt is favoured with a number of useful facilities and services within its boundaries – a thriving primary school of between 350 to 400 children; a GP's surgery; a pharmacy; a recently rebuilt and enlarged Co-Op general store from which operates the local Post Office; a hairdressers; a nursery group; a mobile library which visits fortnightly; a large village hall; three conventional children's playgrounds; a village green; over 80 allotment plots; a cricket pitch; two open areas of green space for informal recreation and ball games; a multi-user games area; a Church and Methodist Chapel with halls attached; a scout hut; three public houses and a social club attached to the main Orpen Village Hall.

Village surveys and research revealed nearly 50 businesses (mostly private individuals operating small family owned non retail companies and private concerns) and over 40 local clubs and societies.

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First Issue

PARISH PLAN - THE PROCESS OF PRODUCING THE PLAN

1. STEERING GROUP AND VILLAGE ENGAGEMENT

The process started with a public information stall at the Village Fayre held at Heathlands School in June 2005. This was followed up by a drop in workshop style event (July 2005) part hosted by the Borough and Parish Council in the John Lampon Hall. At this event names and addresses of interested villagers were recorded and an open evening held in October 2005 to begin establishing a committee to oversee the plan's production. A committee was established in November 2005 and adopted a constitution at the public meeting in February 2006.

Since this time a number of public engagement activities have been carried out overseen by the operating committee, known as the Steering Group. These activities are listed in the appendix but have included village surveys, village fayre information stands, use of the Village Bulletin newspaper and the Village website.

2. COLLECTING VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE VILLAGE

Like all plan processes it is important to establish an evidence base of how people in West Bergholt view their village and their community and what they see as priorities for the future.

A community workshop was organised in July 2005 at which villagers held a brainstorming session on their likes, dislikes and ideas for improvements within the village. As a result of the success and interest generated the West Bergholt Parish Plan group was formed by a number of volunteers from the village.

The results of the initial public meeting were discussed and it was agreed the best way to gather evidence was to develop several questionnaires. Over the course of a few months meetings were held involving a core of volunteers who drafted:

- **a household questionnaire** covering all the issues raised at the public meeting - this was distributed with the local village bulletin to all the households in the village in September 2006. The local Co-op, Ashes store and the GP surgery kindly acted as drop off points for the completed questionnaires. To encourage a good response rate a completed questionnaires were entered for a prize draw. Several dedicated villagers then spent many hours inputting the findings into a data base from which the analysis has subsequently has taken place.

- **a business questionnaire** which was sent directly to the 52 known businesses operating within West

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Bergholt with a stamped addressed envelope for its return

- **a questionnaire for all the social groups and voluntary organisations** operating in the village which was directly posted to them with a reply paid return envelope

- **a youth questionnaire** which the local state schools agreed to distribute to all their pupils aged 11 to 16 years of age from West Bergholt – the schools kindly collected the completed questionnaires on our behalf

In addition those children aged 5 to 11 years of age attending Heathlands Primary School were consulted through their School Council as to what they would like to see happening in the village.

The reports of Survey are attached as appendices to this document.

In order to establish priorities for the many issues and ideas generated by the various surveys a further consultation was undertaken in Spring 2008 to determine which areas of the plan should be pursued ahead of others.

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HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

1. Introduction

The household survey carried out in September 2006 attracted 215 responses which equates to a 15% response rate. This is a statistically significant return rate and provided the main stay of the information about household composition and employment.

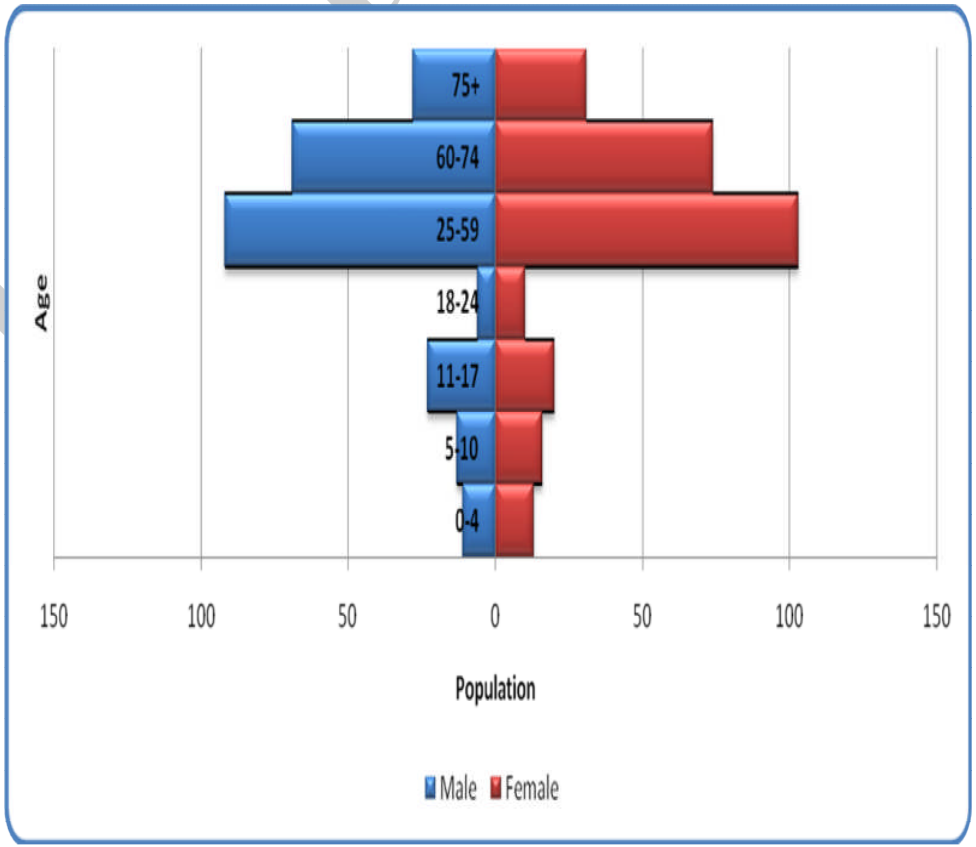
2. Key Features

The following statistical information was recorded by the survey:

- 242 males and 267 females, including 246 children/students
- Roughly equal numbers of employed and retired people
- 22% of households had lived for five years or less in the village, 70% for 15 years or less and 96 for 50 years or less

3. Comparison with 2001 Census

Comparisons with the last census revealed a slight bias in our sample with more retired people answering the household survey than would have been representative of the census.



First Issue

SECTION ONE:

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

1. Introduction

This section of the plan explores the attributes of the village and whether residents consider it a desirable place to live. It is concerned with the opportunities available within the village for social activity and the advantage taken of the activities that are available.

The village has a number of features that are attractive to residents. Prominent among these are its location, setting, good facilities, a flourishing village school and a thriving community spirit as indicated by the number of clubs and societies and the support they receive.

2. Survey Questions

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey, the survey issued to clubs and organisations, the discussions with pupils on Heathlands School Council and the survey distributed to young people through the secondary schools that they attended. All had questions relating to these areas of interest and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance.

3. Main findings from the surveys

a. Clubs and Organisations

Over 50% of the respondents to the household survey attend at least one club regularly and in 13% of the households three or more clubs are supported. The most popular organisations are the Women's' Institute and History Club followed by the Workers Educational Association, Gardeners' Association, Friendship Club, Flower Club and Friends of Hillhouse Wood, to mention but a few.

The responses to the survey of the clubs themselves (30% of the 47 contacted) shows there is a good variety although more daytime clubs were suggested. Overall sports provision is deemed to be good although tennis coaching could be provided and more use made of the courts. It was suggested that clubs could do more to encourage young people to join them and the young people themselves would like to see them better advertised. Clubs would welcome the establishment of a permanent well run Youth Club.

Of the 42 responses to the young peoples' survey 52% do attend at least one club or activity, the most popular being cricket and football (mainly male activities).

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b. Provision for Social and Recreational interests
In the household survey 87% of respondents felt these needs are catered for. Of the remainder most expressed the need for a Youth Club while a variety of other activities such as swimming, dancing and bridge are suggested.

42 young people responded (20 girls, 22 boys) to their survey and their main conclusion is that there are insufficient clubs and activities available to them. 76% rated the sports facilities as good to satisfactory but more use of the Multi Use Games Area is requested. There is great dissatisfaction about the lack of provision of a Youth Club (64%). 46% are unhappy that there are no safe formal meeting places within the village.

c. What is valued about West Bergholt
202 of the household respondents put the highest value on being close to the countryside, followed by being close to the town. The love of village life and transport links were the next most highly rated attributes of the village.

In the young people survey 85% rated West Bergholt as a very good to satisfactory place to live.

In the discussions with Heathlands' School Council, pupils commented on the peaceful setting, the areas of open space, the community feel and being close to friends and relatives and the variety of places to walk and play.

For 23% of respondents the Primary School was a factor influencing their decision to move to the village but for 41% it was not an applicable question.

d. Sources of Information
196 of the household respondents cited the Bulletin as their prime source of village information. This was followed by the local paper, word of mouth, leaflets and notice boards.

In their survey 51% of young people were dissatisfied with the availability of advice on well-being.

e. Living in the Village
The most popular comments were access to the shops and facilities, a good bus service and a pleasant, safe and sociable village environment with a sense of community. "The character of the village should be preserved".

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4. Issues emerging from the surveys

a. Household Survey

i) The provision of a Youth Club and a meeting place for young people.
ii) A further increase in the range of clubs including some that meets in the daytime.
iii) Improvements in raising awareness of the facilities, clubs and groups that exist in the village including the village website and notice boards.
iv) The conservation of the existing character of the village.

b. Survey of Clubs and Organisations

i) More daytime clubs, e.g. a daytime WI or Flower Club.
ii) More use of the tennis courts with coaching provided.
iii) A permanent well run Youth Club.

c. Survey of Young People

i) The lack of a Youth Club and a safe place to meet within the village.
ii) Insufficient clubs and activities available to young people locally.
iii) An increased use of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

5. Establishing Priorities

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- The preservation of the character of the village
- The provision of a safe place for young people to meet
- The provision of a Youth Club
- The promotion of the village website and better use of notice boards to provide information
- Improved use of the MUGA and the provision of coaching in tennis
- Better advertising and access to existing clubs for young people
- The development of more daytime clubs

First Issue

Action Plan for Social and Community

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
The provision of a Youth Club	Improve Facilities for Younger People	• Determine possible options • Consult younger people to determine specific requirements	Parish Council	• Schools • Essex Youth Service	3
The provision of a safe place for young people to meet	Improve Facilities for Younger People	• Examine possible locations • Consult younger people to determine specific requirements	Parish Council	• Funding bodies	2
The development of more daytime clubs	Extend Appeal of Clubs and Facilities	• Look at the range of facilities to examine gaps • Consult existing clubs to look at options for extended operation	Parish Council	• Clubs and organisations	7
Improved use of the MUGA and the provision of coaching in tennis	Extend Appeal of Clubs and Facilities	• Discuss operation with MUGA committee • Examine how existing facilities can be extended to include more sports particularly for girls	MUGA Committee	• Parish Council	5
Better advertising and access to existing clubs for young people	Improve Facilities for Younger People	• Improve links to web site • Consult young people to determine other needs	Clubs and Societies	• Parish Council	6
The promotion of the village website and better use of notice boards to provide information	Provide better levels of Community Information	• Examine provision of sites for notice boards • Examine opportunities within the Village Bulletin • Promote clubs, societies and the school on the website • Reinvigorate the Village Welcome Pack for new residents • Reinvigorate “Welcome Pack” for new residents	Parish Council	• Village organisations	4
The conservation of the character of the village	Conserve and enhance the appeal of the Village and its Surroundings	• Extend links with natural history, historical and other conservation groups • Update the village character assessments through a Village Appraisal • Seek stronger links with local authorities	Parish Council	• Societies • Local authorities	1

First Issue

SECTION TWO:
ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

The attractive setting of the village gives rise to numerous opportunities to enjoy both local environments and those close at hand.

The questions in the survey related to three main factors, the quality and accessibility of the open spaces, the quality and accessibility of the PROW, and other factors that could be summarised as 'nuisances'

The rural landscape provides some accessible green space such as Hillhouse Woods and many public rights of way (PROW), including long distance paths such as the Essex Way. Also within the village envelope are the large playing fields by the Orpen Hall and the open space at Poor's Field, as well as the Village Green (The Heath), pockets of smaller green space generally within housing areas (amenity greens), the Churchyards, allotments (which do not have open access) and three ponds. The village does not have a formal public park or garden as such within its boundaries.

There are some older properties that have significant trees or hedgerows that contribute to the rural character and biodiversity value of parts of the village. Many newer developments do not. A few trees are protected with Tree Preservation Orders. Hedgerows within villages are generally not protected.

2. Survey Questions

The main surveys that related to the environment were those for the household and those for clubs and organisations.

3. Main findings from the surveys

a. Open Spaces

An overwhelming percentage of respondents (87%) felt that the open spaces in and around West Bergholt were very important to them with nobody thinking that they weren't important at all. 90% thought it was an important factor in their decision to move to the village and 80% used these spaces frequently or fairly frequently

Organisations felt that access to open space was good in the village although dog fouling, litter and glass were issues requiring attention.

First Issue

b. Public Rights of Way and Footpaths

The value of the footpath network is generally significant to large numbers of the village community with 95% rating them as quite or very important. Nearly 75% use them frequently or fairly frequently. Only 11% however felt the network was very well-maintained. This is an issue which clearly requires further discussion to establish peoples' expectations.

c. Other major environmental issues

Of the seven categories of 'nuisance' people were most concerned about litter and dog-fouling, 58% and 54% thinking these were significant issues to be addressed. Villagers were also concerned about traffic noise (37%), light pollution (22%) or noisy environments (25%). When it came to commenting in detail about environmental issues traffic speed and parking matters featured strongly, as did antisocial behaviour and maintenance of hedges and footpaths. Village organisations raised concerns about the lack of bridleways, the presence of litter and broken glass, dog fouling and poor levels of street lighting.

4. Issues emerging from the survey

a. <u>Household Survey</u>
   i. The importance of the open spaces and the usage of the local rights of way
   ii. Poor levels of maintenance
   iii. Dog fouling

b. <u>Survey of Clubs and Organisations</u>
   i. Litter
   ii. Street lighting

5. Establishing Priorities

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- Litter
- Dog-fouling
- Maintenance issues of Public Rights Of Way (PROW network)
- Conservation and enhancement of PROW network
- Conservation maintenance, promotion and enhancement of Open Spaces and PROW

First Issue

Action Plan for Environment

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Conserve and enhance existing Open Space	To identify and improve the quality and accessibility of each major open space in the village	Identify resources to audit each major Open Space in the village and create management objectives for the next 5 years to secure enhancements for quality, shared-use and accessibility	Parish Council	User groups (school, football club etc.), CBC	4
		Identify resources to carry out an access audit of each major Open Space	Parish Council	User groups, CBC	
	To promote more multi-functional use of the existing open space	Explore enhanced shared use of green space for sustainable living, celebration, nature study, play and relaxation e.g. Green Fairs, Allotment Open Days, Composting, Bike trails, village nature trail, community garden etc.	Parish Council	MUGA Committee	
Conserve and enhance the PROW network	To promote the network to residents and visitors	Work with Local Access Forum, Ramblers etc to enhance promotional opportunities for West Bergholt PROW network	Parish Council	Local Access Forum, User groups	5
		Promote existing network, trails and guides on the website and in village pack			
	Identify responsibilities and options for specific maintenance issues	produce condition survey of local footpath network identify issues relating to care and maintenance	Parish Council	ECC PROW officer, Ramblers, Landowners	3
Nuisances	To reduce dog-fouling	Produce survey of main locations of concern	Parish Council	User groups/ramblers	2
		Promote poop-a-scoop awareness to dog-owners through web, village pack, bulletin, school newsletter	Parish Council	User groups/ramblers and landowners	
		Investigate options for notices in areas of worst problem	Parish Council	User groups/ramblers and landowners	
	To reduce littering	Produce survey of main locations of concern	Parish Council	User groups and landowners	1
		Work with Co-Op to reduce packaging on own brand products	Parish Council	Co-op	
		Run a 'litter-free' campaign in partnership with village groups	Parish Council	Village Groups	

First Issue

SECTION THREE:
PUBLIC AMENITIES

1. Introduction

This section investigated issues relating to services in the village as well as the ease of access to various health care providers. Questions were asked about attitudes to street cleaning, refuse collection and maintenance of hedges, trees and verges. The village is provided with some street lighting, public phone boxes, play areas for young children as well as sports facilities including tennis courts. There is a large Village Hall with good facilities and with a Social Club attached. West Bergholt recently received a Merit Award in the Essex Best Kept Village Competition. We have our own GP surgery and a pharmacy. The local hospital is approximately 3-4 miles distant.

The questionnaires and surveys sought to ask people and organisations about the quality of the provision of public services and amenities

2. Survey questions

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey and the survey issued to clubs and organisations. All had questions relating to these areas of interest and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance

3. Main Findings from the Surveys

a. Street cleaning

75% of respondents considered street cleaning to be good or very good. 18% felt it was poor or very poor.

Comments included: - Effects of dog fouling and residue from hedge flailing

b. Maintenance of hedges, trees and verges

59% felt this maintenance to be good or very good. Nearly 30% thought it was poor or very poor.

Comments included:- grass verges poorly maintained, trees and hedges overhanging footpaths (pavements), footpaths (pavements) could be tidied up, paths and verges in Church Close need attention, maintenance of area at conjunction of allotments and Albany Close, householders should cut back overhanging shrubs from gardens, native hedgerows disappearing with overgrowth of ivy, residue from hedge flailing never cleared.

First Issue

c. Refuse Collection

93% of respondents thought refuse collection was good or very good.
Comments: - one person commented on refuse left behind on roads by refuse collectors, there was also a suggestion that more recycling was needed, in particular plastics.

d. Public Phone boxes

68% of respondents had no view on this subject, 15% considered this amenity poor or very poor. No specific comments were made. It could be argued that with widespread use of mobile phones and email, public phone boxes are not a priority. However for the 30% who felt that the availability of phone boxes was good or very good, it would seem that phone boxes are still an important communication amenity

e. Broadband coverage

47% had no view or did not answer this section. 30% considered broadband coverage good or very good. 23% felt it was poor or very poor.

Comments: - 3 comments made stated that broadband was too slow and intermittent.

f. Street lighting

This subject has often brought controversy and the results of this survey are no different. 40% considered street lighting in the village to be good or very good. 38% felt it was poor or very poor. 18% of respondents had no view or did not answer. It would be useful to correlate these positive and negative responses with their different locations in the village.

In terms of detailed comments, twice as many comments related to no increase in street lighting as those who felt more was needed.

g. Sports facilities

73% rated the sports facilities, including tennis courts, as good or very good. 8% felt they were poor or very poor. 23% had no view or did not respond.

Detailed comments highlighted nothing for children 9-16 years.

The MUGA should be more available for other activities such as Basketball. Other clubs mentioned as desirable included table tennis, skate park, and hockey. Finally the problem of trespassing and vandalism at the tennis courts was also mentioned

First Issue

h. Children's play areas and Young People's Activities

Most respondents were positive about the three formal play areas. With 80% considering that they were good or very good. and only 8% thinking that they were poor or very poor.

Detailed comments revealed that the play area on the Lorkin Daniel field needs fencing, the play area in Pirie Road is run down, equipment is rusty/dangerous and the area should be better cleaned and maintained.

The play area on the Lorkin Danield field attracts older youths and it was felt that they should keep out of play area particularly at night. This play area often needs cleaning. Young people were critical about the lack of a Youth Centre and that there were insufficient clubs available to them locally. It was suggested that the Orpen Hall could be used as a venue for occasional music events. There is a need for an informal meeting area or shelter.

i. Healthcare

In general access to healthcare providers was relatively easy for the majority of respondents. There are specific variations.

93% said that access to a doctor was easy or quite easy and for the chemist the figure rose to 96%.

Only 27% of respondents said that access to chiropodist was easy or very easy, 9% said it was not very easy or difficult. Nearly 64% did not know about access or did not answer the question, which suggests that no one in the household had the need to access a chiropodist.

The figures for ease of access to a dentist are that 62% thought access was very easy or quite easy and over 14% finding access not very easy or difficult. 12% did not know or did not answer

78% had very or quite easy access to an optician with just over 11% finding access not very easy or difficult.

Hospital access was deemed to be very or quite easy by 84% of respondents and 14% finding it difficult or not very easy.

4. Issues emerging from the Survey

a) Household

- Condition of street scene, vegetation, dog fouling, street lighting
- Recycling
- Broadband
- Facilities for younger people
- Specialist healthcare services and transport provision to hospitals

First Issue

b) Organisations

- Promote local healthcare services eg Dentist
- Street scene and maintenance of streets
- Hospital access

c) Young People

- Lack of clubs, places of entertainment and sports facilities
- Lack of meeting area and youth clubs

5. Establishing Priorities

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- . High standard of refuse collection, but more could be done on recycling
- Broadband is sometimes slow and intermittent
- Verges poorly maintained, trees, hedges overhanging pavements
- Concern over the provision of sport and leisure activities for children and young people Eg Increase use of available facilities e.g on Poors Land and MUGA

- Concern over cleanliness and safety of play areas

- .Street lighting
- Chiropodist and specialist healthcare and hospital access

First Issue

Action Plan for Public Amenities

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Verges poorly maintained, trees, hedges overhanging pavements	Encourage a high standard of maintenance of hedges, trees and verges	Send letters to residents where garden shrubs/trees overhang pavements. Grass verges to be kept in good order	Parish Council	Essex County Council	**3**
High standard of refuse collection, but more could be done on recycling	Improved Refuse collection service and recycling facilities	Inform Borough Council of residents' opinion and encourage more plastics to be recycled via the doorstep service	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council	**1**
Broadband is sometimes slow and intermittent	Promote a high speed Broadband service	Lobby for improved Broadband in village	Parish Council	Essex County Council	**2**
Concern over the provision of sport and leisure activities for children and young people.	Improve range and access to sports and leisure facilities	Form an interest group of councillors and others, including representatives for the young people, to explore ideas for implementing more sport and leisure facilities for everyone. Increase use of available facilities e.g. on Poors Land and MUGA	Young Persons Interest Group.	Parish Council	**4**
Concern over cleanliness and safety of play areas.	Create and maintain a high standard and care for Children's Play areas	See above	Parish Council		**5**
Street lighting	Create an appropriate level of street lighting for a larger village of mixed land uses and character	Examine the case in more detail for increased lighting to be installed on distributor roads	Parish Council	Essex County Council	6
Chiropodist	Improve awareness of specialist heath care services	Use web site to link to specialist services	Parish Council	Primary Health Trust	8
Hospital Access	Improve access to hospital transport services	Promote community transport services and hospital taxi service via the web site	Parish Council	Careline	7

First Issue

SECTION FOUR:
SHOPS AND FACILITIES

1. Introduction

This section was designed to ascertain how well local shops and facilities met local needs.

Within the village we have two general stores, including a post office in the Coop. There is also a hairdresser, three public houses and the mobile library visits once a fortnight and stops at several key positions round the village. 52 businesses were identified as operating from the village as part of our "Business questionnaire" and we wanted to find out how well these local trades were being used.

2. The Surveys

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey, the survey issued to clubs and organisations and the survey distributed to businesses. All had questions relating to shops and facilities and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance

3. Results from the Surveys

a. Local Shops

Local shops appeared to be well used for food, other retail shopping and postal services with the majority of households using these at least on a regular basis (over 80% of households fell into this category). Banking, hairdressing, pubs and the mobile library are used less frequently.

In terms of meeting people's needs the areas where households have to go elsewhere appear to be non-food retail banking and hairdressing facilities (nearly 50% of households fell into this category).

According to the Organisation Survey residents are fortunate to have the Coop, Post Office, Chemist, Cash machine and cash back facility at the Coop.

Businesses felt that there were insufficient numbers of shops to enable local commercial activities to thrive.

Many suggestions were made for other shops and facilities which included DIY supplies, fish and chip shop van, bakery, shopping delivery service.

First Issue

b. Local Trades

Local trades people were fairly well used by respondents, with the most popular services used being the taxi service, local plumbers and builders. Several suggestions were made for other trades to be available including washing machine repair and pest control.

4. Issues emerging from the Survey

a) Household

- Range of shops in the village is limited
- Need for specialist foods and DIY type supplies

b) Organisations

- Access to shops outside the village particularly larger supermarkets causes problems for some

c) Businesses

- Lack of a sufficient range of shops to create a thriving business environment
- Linkages between businesses and awareness of business offering in the village

5. Establishing Priorities

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- Suggestions regarding other shops
- Office and small business units
- Business Links

First Issue

Action Plan for Shops and Business Facilities

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Suggestions regarding other shops	Improve the range of shopping facilities in the village	Investigate the possibility of fish and chip van calling into the village. Liaise with local shops regarding stocking DIY materials and more specialist foods	Parish Council	Local shops	**2**
	Improve accessibility to specialist shops	Investigate the use of internet home shopping or mobile shops for those unable to access town and out of town shopping or to reduce the need to travel generally	Parish Council	Local and Colchester based shops	1
	Improve retail offering	Investigate the possibly of a farm shop style event at the Orpen Hall	Parish Council	Local producers	
Office and small business units	Improve facilities for small businesses	Investigate how local planning activities could promote business activity	Parish Council	Village businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Business Links for Essex, Colchester Borough Council	4
Business Links	Improve profile of Parish Businesses	Publish a Business Directory	Parish Council	Village businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Business Links for Essex, Colchester Borough Council	3

First Issue

SECTION FIVE:
HOUSING & PLANNING

1. Introduction

This section of the plan explores the housing type and level of development in the village and whether residents feel that further expansion is desirable. Although increased levels of housing are not proposed on a significant scale residents were able to express their concern about the nature and type of any housing which may be permitted in the future.

The village has a variety of housing types ranging from the traditional heartland of the village with its distinctive and individualistic housing stock to the newer estates of the 1960's and 1970's which significantly changed the scale of the settlement. The local housing association Colne Valley Housing has provided some housing for rent in recent times, but overall provision of social housing is a declining feature of dwelling provision in the village.

2. Survey Questions

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey and the survey issued to clubs and organisations. All had questions relating to these areas of interest and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance.

3. Main findings from the surveys

a. Future Village Expansion

Residents overwhelmingly rejected any prospect of increased level of housing with 91% of households not wishing to see increased levels of housing. Clubs and organisations also felt that larger scale development was not desirable.

b. Type of future housing provision

If new development is permitted in the future households favoured the provision of warden controlled homes for the elderly, small family homes and retirement homes. Organisations mirrored this response and added that there is also a shortage of affordable housing for younger people and families who are inevitably forced to move elsewhere for housing.

c. Other concerns

Concerns raised in the surveys were mainly centred on the degree of infilling which has occurred, the pressure that additional housing places on infrastructure such as the school and transport services. Other comments were received relating to the poor unsympathetic type of housing which infilling can result in and an overall lack of quality planning.

First Issue

4. Issues emerging from the surveys

a. <u>Household Survey</u>

i. Fears of significant housing for the village
ii. Some controls over infilling
iii. Poor quality planning in the village
iv. Need for small family housing

b. <u>Survey of Clubs and Organisations</u>

i. Affordable housing
ii. Housing for elderly residents
iii. No estate type development

5. Top Issues to take forward

The top five areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- No additional significant levels of new housing for the village, especially estate type development
- Some controls over infilling
- Poor quality planning in the village
- Need for small family housing
- Affordable housing
- Provide housing for older residents

First Issue

Action Plan for Housing and Planning

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
No additional significant levels of new housing for the village, especially estate type development	Maintain Village Envelope	Respond to Borough Plan changes to ensure village is not zoned for significant new development	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council	1
Some controls over infilling	Prevent unplanned intensification of housing density	Develop guidelines covering the type of intensification that would add to the village character and not lead to undue pressure on infrastructure	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council	2
Poor quality planning in the village	Improve the Village Character	Review Village Appraisal and reissue Produce village design statement	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council	3
Need for small family housing Affordable housing	Maintain good mix of ages in the village and Improve chances of younger people being able to live locally	Examine opportunities for limited numbers of new affordable homes as opportunities arise	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council	5
Provide housing for older residents	Maintain a mix of housing opportunities for older residents	Resist any plans to further redevelop areas of sheltered housing that may arse and examine opportunities to expand existing facilities	Parish Council	Colchester Borough Council	4

First Issue

SECTION SIX:
COMMUNITY, SAFETY AND CRIME.

1. Introduction

In general, West Bergholt is considered a desirable place to live. We have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme organised in the village. A police van is parked in New Church Road periodically where residents can seek advice or make their concerns known.

Sometimes there are concerns about security and safety in small villages and we wanted to find out how people perceive these aspects in our village.

2. The Surveys

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey, the survey issued to clubs and organisations and the survey distributed to businesses. All had questions relating to these areas of interest and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance

3. Main findings

a. Safety Levels

Approximately 95% of respondents felt very or quite safe living in the village and 96% in their own homes. 68% felt the village was very or quite safe for children but 28% of respondents had not answered this part of the question. Just over half of respondents belong to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Although the question of road safety is addressed in the transport section it is worth noting that this is an area of great concern in the village.

b. Crime

Nearly 29% consider themselves to have been a victim of crime or nuisance. Damage to property, theft/burglary and car theft/damage was reported by 22% respondents and 17% had been victims of antisocial behaviour or vandalism. A smaller number of respondents had suffered from noise nuisance and pet nuisance.

Nearly a quarter of respondents have reported incidents to the police with the majority being satisfied with the police response.

c. Additional Security Needs

Over 72% believed that increased police presence in the village is necessary but just less than 60% are opposed to further CCTV in the village.

First Issue

There was a strong request stemming from the various different questionnaires for more visible police presence. The mobile van is not seen as effective as foot patrols

4. Issues emerging from the Survey

a) Household

- Lack of organised and regular police presence
- Anti-social behaviour

b) Organisations

- A complete lack of regular police presence
- A growing problem with vandalism

5. Establishing Priorities

6.

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- More visible Police presence in the village
- Anti-social behaviour
- Concern about crime levels
- Road safety and traffic speed
- Safety awareness issues

First Issue

Action plan for Community Safety and Crime

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Levels of crime	Reduce fear of crime	Promote police activities and increase awareness of community policing contact Inform residents about nature of crime and incidence of crime	Neighbourhood Watch	Parish Council, Essex County Council. Neighbourhood Watch Groups, Essex Police	**4**
	Promoting a safe environment	Produce safety information and advice for households	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police, Heathlands school	5
More visible Police presence in the village	Introduce more effective police presence	Investigate possibility of introducing community police officer dedicated to the Village	Neighbourhood Watch and Parish Council	Essex Police	1
Anti-social behaviour	Reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour	Promote better reporting mechanisms Provide better facilities for young people	Parish Council	Essex Youth Services	2
Road safety	Improving safety on the roads	Investigate current accident trends to locate problem areas Determine any locations for safety treatments	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police	3
Speeding Traffic	Enforce Speed limits on main distributor roads	• Investigate use of cameras, police enforcement and SIDS on Lexden, Colchester and Chapel Roads	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police	3
	Reduce Speeds in areas of high pedestrian activity	• Investigate 20 mph zones	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police	
	Introduce education, training and publicity to promote awareness	• Encourage levels of speed awareness amongst residents and businesses in the village	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Police and Village Organisations	

First Issue

SECTION SEVEN
TRANSPORT

1. Introduction

Transport in the context of the Parish Plan covers access to day to day household needs such as food shopping, employment and healthcare and mobility in terms of travel choices available. It also covers the general environment for people travelling. Finally it encompasses the impact transport has on householders and the built and natural environment.

The village has generally good main (B1508) and minor road connections to the A12, Colchester town centre, the rail station, Tollgate retail area and towards Sudbury and the rural Essex-Suffolk border area. Bus services are provided by two companies, Chambers, an hourly service to Colchester and Sudbury, and First Bus that operates a 30 minute frequency peak and daytime service to the town centre. School buses serve the main secondary schools whilst the Care Network and Community bus services offer a bookable service for those unable to use conventional public transport easily. Footways are generally provided adjacent to the majority of roads and the area is covered by 30mph speed restrictions

2. Survey Questions

All the surveys conducted sought to understand travel habits in terms of the modes of travel used and also asked about specific areas of concern relating to the mode of travel used or the local traffic environment.

3. Household Transport Usage and Areas of Concern

a. Transport Usage

Parallel surveys established the following:

- General accessibility to a car: 92% have driving licences and 81% have access to a car

- Typical usage of different modes of transport

Car	Bus	Train	Cycle	walk
86%	28%	23%	25%	64%

More detailed questions from the household questionnaire established the following usage on a weekly basis or better. Buses proved to be well used with 50% of households using

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certain services at least weekly. As might be expected, buses are overwhelmingly used to travel towards Colchester rather than towards Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds. Rail is used on a weekly or more frequent basis by just 13% of households while 75% of households walked and just below 30% cycled (again on at least a weekly basis).

b. Transport Concerns

Householders expressed most concern (40%) about bus services towards the town and were relatively unconcerned (70%) about bus services towards other parts of the county. It should be noted that this survey was undertaken before the reduction in the 66 service to the town from three per hour to just two per hour.

In terms of the traffic environment households declared themselves to be concerned or very concerned about road safety (70%), traffic speed (85%), traffic volumes (71%), parking (58%) and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists (48% and 53% respectively).

4. Transport Issues emerging from all surveys

Transport issues were raised in all the surveys undertaken and the general findings are presented below:

a. Household survey

45% of households put forward specific concerns regarding transport and altogether 100 comments were registered regarding transport. Most popular comments covered Speeding (27%), Parking (24%), road safety (13%), traffic calming (10%) bus operation (15%), pedestrian and cycle routes (11%).

Many very specific issues and suggestions emerged of which the ideas below are a reasonable snapshot:

- 20 mph zones outside Coop and along New Church Road along with better parking arrangements and village gateway signing
- Speed cameras, speed indicator devices and more speed checks on Colchester Road, Lexden Road and Chapel Road
- Improved evening and weekend bus services
- Real time information at bus stops and cheaper bus fares
- Some cycle paths

b. Business survey

Whilst West Bergholt is well placed to take advantage of strategic road access to the A12 and rail access to London, Cambridge and Norwich, the following issues were raised: frequency of bus service and fare levels, parking at the Co-op,

First Issue

improved road connections for lorries accessing the A12 and improvements to remove bottleneck at north Station bridge.

c. Young People's survey

All transport comments were levelled at the provision of public transport. 84% of young people felt that the bus service was either good or satisfactory but the following improvements are needed: reliability, costs, timetable information, and better information about service changes.

d. Organisational survey

The general consensus was that the bus service is excellent but over-priced, walking is well provided for but cycling facilities are poor. Parking around the Co-op is problematic and there are safety concerns around the school.

5. Establishing Priorities

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

Top issues are in generic/specific terms:

- Bus routes and services
- Cycling environments
- Pedestrian environments
- Traffic Management and Traffic Calming
- Parking
- Other areas which emerged less frequently: Maintenance issues, environmental aspects, school run

First Issue

Action Plan for Transport

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Parking	Manage parking around popular destinations	• Investigate revised regulations and layouts and opportunities for off road parking around, school, Co-op and Scout Hut	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police plus School, Co-op Scout Group	5
Traffic Management and Traffic Calming	Manage traffic conditions	• Investigate use of village gateways • emphasize junctions on main routes • Investigate one way systems • Improve signing	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police	4
	Create a pleasanter traffic environment	• Introduce traffic calming on certain roads	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC and Police	
Bus routes and services	Improve information about bus services	• Investigate real time information • Place links about Public Transport and information on website	Public Transport Representative	ECC, CBC,Bus Companies, CT	1
	Reduce bus fares	• Investigate fare levels for young people with bus companies	PT user group	ECC, CBC,Bus Companies, CT	
	Market bus services	• Produce PT guide for village	PT user group	ECC, CBC,Bus Companies, CT	
	Promote new routes and introduce better facilities	• Investigate demand responsive community bus and community transport services • Improve bus stop environments	PT user group	ECC, CBC,Bus Companies, CT	
Cycling environment	Introduce cycle tracks and facilities	• Examine opportunities	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Cycle Groups	2
	Promote cycling for leisure and health	• Produce guides for cycling around the village and to the countryside • Investigate off-road routes	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Cycle Groups	
	Introduce improved cycle parking	• Examine current provision and suggest improvements	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Cycle Groups, School	
	Cycle Promotion	• Examine cycle proficiency at Heathlands School and Adult cycling generally	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Cycle Groups, Schools	
Pedestrian Environment	Introduce improved facilities	• Examine issues such as lighting, crossing facilities and footways • Produce list of improvements	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Police and Village Organisations	3
General Issues	Develop sustainable travel awareness and opportunities	• Promote a low carbon and sustainable travel environment • Encourage schools to have a travel plan	Parish Council traffic sub committee	ECC, Police and Village Organisations	6

First Issue

SECTION EIGHT:
DEMOCARACY AND COUNCIL SERVICES

1. Introduction

This section of the plan is concerned with the way in which people in the village can access services provided by the Parish Council and other public providers such as the County and Borough Councils. It is also concerned with what might be termed “the village voice” and how local issues and concerns can be voiced.

The village has a Parish Council (PC) which conducts itself in a traditional manner with monthly meetings (open to the public) with a series of sub committees which deal with day to day matters. The Parish area is represented by eleven Parish Councillors, two Borough Councillors and one County Councillor.

2. Survey Questions

The most relevant surveys to this area of the plan are the household survey and that distributed to village organisations. Both of these had specific questions relating to these areas of interest.

3. Main findings

a. Knowledge about PC

Knowledge of the Parish Council and its functions is generally good with over 70% of villagers know what the PC does although 75% have never attended a meeting. 60% of respondents in the survey knew where the dates of meetings are published.

b. How PC Communicate

The Bulletin and newsletters are the most appropriate forms of communication cited by respondents as their preferred source of information.

c. PC Top Priorities

When asked what the priorities of the PC should be, respondents made numerous suggestions, the top five of which are listed below (figures in brackets are the number of times a suggestion was made).

1. Traffic issues (50)
2. Environmental enhancements (23)
3. Community Safety issues (16)
4. Planning and Development (13)

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5. Children and Teenagers (11)

d. Ease of obtaining information

The questionnaire asked people to consider how easy access to information about council services was, and the following summary appears below:

- **Planning**: Over 50% think quite easy or easy
- **Education**: 35% think quite easy or easy, but over 50% don't know
- **Social services**: over 30% think quite easy or easy, but over 50% don't know
- **Highways**: 35% think quite easy or easy, but over 40% don't know

4. Issues emerging from the surveys

a. Households

Households appear well informed about the role of the Parish Council and have definite ideas about traffic and environmental matters.

b. Village Organisations

Organisations consulted felt that the village enjoyed a good website with an excellent Bulletin and Parish magazine and that there was good contact with the Parish Council. By contract organisations felt that the Borough and County Councils seemed more remote. Young people should be encouraged onto the Parish Council in some way.

5. Top Issues to take further

The top areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

Top 5 issues are in generic/specific terms:

- Parish Council to develop policies and priorities for
  - Traffic issues
  - Environmental enhancements
  - Community Safety issues
  - Planning and Development
  - Children and Teenagers
- Improve PC communication
- Improved village participation in PC activities

First Issue

Action Plan for Democracy

Issue	Objective	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Priority
Parish Council Involvement with households, organisations, businesses and other service providers	Improve village participation in PC and related planning matters services	▪ Parish Council to produce communication strategy examining o agendas o topic areas for debates o questions from public o the publishing of a forward plan o Improving participation in Annual PC meeting o How to promote its work and role through Bulletin, notice boards, village website and village events	▪ Parish Council	▪ Village organisations as appropriate	3
	Improve formal and informal linkages with other Councils and service providers	▪ Engage with Borough, County Council and MP/MEP representatives	▪ Parish Council	▪ County Council, Borough Council, MPs, Health Authorities, Utility providers and transport operators	
Parish Council to develop policies and priorities for the Village	Develop priorities for Parish Council leadership	▪ Develop Plans for: o Traffic issues o Environmental enhancements o Community Safety issues o Planning and Development o Children and Teenagers	▪ Parish Council	▪ Households, organisations, service providers and businesses	1
Communication in the Village	Improve information exchange channels	• Develop web as a community resource and improve links with other village organisations and service providers • Develop Bulletin as a medium of information exchange	▪ Parish Council	▪ Village organisations and service providers	2

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6. Taking the Plan Forward

It is often said that a strategy is not a strategy without a delivery plan! In order to effectively take forward the views expressed in this plan the following initiatives are proposed:

- Take the plan to the Parish Council and get it formally adopted as the forward plan for the community
- Contact the Borough Council to establish the plan as supplemental planning guidance (SPG) in the new suite of Local Development Documents
- Establish links with other service providers to enable meaningful discussions to be taken forward to improve aspects of service delivery including health, transport and social care
- Establish working parties either at Parish Council or Village organisational level to implement activities

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