

Willingham Parish Plan



Summary Report



October 2008

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Our thanks go to everyone who has helped with the production of this Plan. Everyone gave their time freely and did an amazing amount of work. This includes the 68 volunteers who distributed and collected the questionnaires, the 23 who wrote the various sections, the 16 who entered the data, the members of the committee past and present and Stephen Atkins who runs the website.

We would also like to thank Windmill Business Systems for hosting the website free of charge, Willingham Parish Council and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) for providing the funding to pay for the preparation and printing of this plan.

Should you wish to comment or seek further details concerning the Parish Plan, the chairman of the Willingham Parish Planning Committee, Mike Tidball, can be contacted on 01954 260647 and email m.tidball@btinternet.com

Introduction

What is a Parish Plan?

The concept of Parish Plans was first introduced in the Rural White Paper, *Our Countryside: The Future: a Fair Deal for Rural England*, published in November 2000. The White Paper recognised the importance of thriving rural communities to the social and environmental fabric of our nation and suggested that these communities could be strengthened by giving local people a bigger say in managing their own affairs.

The importance of the Willingham Parish Plan is that it brings together the views, needs and opinions of the community to guide future development. Existing services and facilities are mapped out and gaps identified. The resulting plan identifies what is valued, discusses the issues raised by residents, and sets out how they may be tackled in a list of actions.

Main Concerns

The main concerns raised by the residents of Willingham were that

- The high volume of through traffic, especially HGVs, threatens our safety and quality of life
- Parking is a problem throughout the village
- The risk of petty crime, vandalism and intimidation worries many residents
- The village is untidy with litter, dog mess and poor pavements.
- There is a lack of facilities, especially for young people
- Too many houses are being built, ruining the character of the village.
- The bus service is poor and cycling is unsafe
- Northstowe will increase through traffic, increase the flood risk and erode our green belt.

What Happens Next?

We should not think of the Plan as just a document; it is a process enabling the residents of Willingham to influence change.

More than half the parishes in South Cambridgeshire have completed a plan or are in the process of doing so. The information provided in the Parish Plan can be used by the various layers of local government to influence future development. Thus the Willingham Parish Plan will be presented to the Parish Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and also the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

It is the intention of the Parish Plan Committee to seek volunteers to form a small group to press for implementation of the recommended actions.

Letters of Support

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I was extremely pleased that Willingham Parish Council has initiated a process to produce a Parish Plan and that you are leading the committee to carry out the process.

I have been involved in a number of Parish Plan exercises in various villages in my constituency and I wholly endorse the objective. Firstly, it means that many more people are involved in decision making about how their community develops, but secondly, for the first time it lays out in documentary form the priorities that local people attach to their community and therefore produces guidance for higher tiers of local authorities to observe. Obviously, they only ultimately work if district and county councils actually heed the views of local people, but the exercise of drawing together local opinion and producing a full plan is an essential precursor to increased localisation of decision making.

I wish you well with your project and stand ready to assist if there is anything with which you feel I could help.

Yours sincerely

James Paice MP

SHIRE HALL

I am delighted to welcome this first Parish Plan for Willingham. It contains a wealth of information about what you think about your village and what improvements you would like to see. Not surprisingly traffic issues and the urgent need for a bypass feature strongly. Your views on your village will help the parish, district and county councils, as well as other agencies, plan the services that you think are important both now and in the years to come.

I would like to thank those who have worked hard to put the plan together, particularly the chairman. I hope that this will provide a sound basis as the community continues to develop in the future.

Shona Johnstone

County Councillor for Willingham

How We Went About Our Task

Following a notice in *Willingham News* seeking volunteers interested in developing a Parish Plan an inaugural meeting was held on 23 January 2007 and a Committee formed.

The Committee agreed the following Statement of Intent:

- To discover the hopes and aspirations of those who live or work in Willingham for the future of the village
- To publish a plan which expresses these findings and to present this to the appropriate authorities
- To press for its implementation

It was decided that to obtain the views of the residents a questionnaire would be circulated to each household in Willingham. A public meeting was then held at the school to publicise the Plan and establish the main issues to be reflected in the questionnaire. Its design was carefully considered to get as many responses as possible in order that the final Plan was a true representation of the views of the village. There were also many opportunities to write additional comments.

A Youth Section, to be filled in by 11-16 year olds, was included for up to two household members and a separate questionnaire was circulated to businesses.

Approximately 1600 questionnaires were delivered to households and 970 were completed satisfactorily. Thus about 60% were returned and analysed. This was considered an excellent response rate.

There was also a good response rate for the youth section, but a poorer response to the business questionnaire.

Generally, the response rate for individual questions was quite high and, as one might expect, the rate was at its highest where the question was deemed to be of more importance to the individuals responding.

Volunteers put the data onto spreadsheets ready for analysis.

It was clear that the original committee would not be able to write the Plan without help so an additional 25 volunteers were enlisted to form five writing groups. These helpers also provided input to the report from a wider cross-section of the community.

It has taken 20 months to produce the questionnaire, analyse the results and write the reports. During this time some of the suggestions made by the residents and contained in the plan have already been achieved.

1 Willingham: Historical Perspective

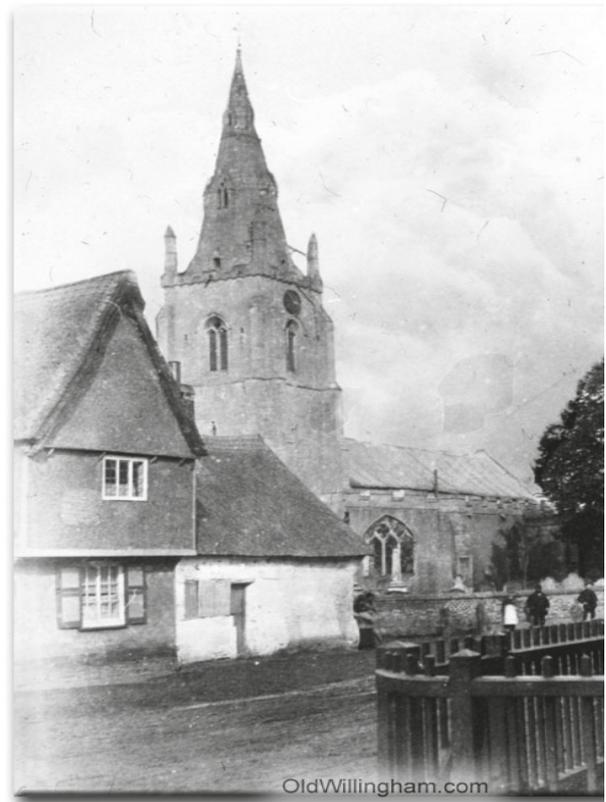
1.1 Introduction (Back to contents)

1.1.1 Links with the Ely Diocese

Willingham's early history is closely linked with the Bishops of Ely. From the time when the Diocese of Ely was founded, in 1109, strong links developed between the Bishops of Ely and the village (then known as Wivelingham, a spelling which persisted until the 18th Century).

A practical consideration which must have helped the link to last for so long was the fact that the Aldreth Causeway, which crosses the eastern area of Willingham, was the main route between Ely and Cambridge throughout the Middle Ages – and Willingham is at roughly the half way point. It was not until the late 17th Century that a bridge was built across the Ouse at Earith.

In fact the links between Ely and Willingham went back even further than the 12th Century. When Elsin was Abbot of Ely (981-1016) Uva, 'a good man', gave the village of Wivelingham 'to God and his dear Virgin Etheldreda' to be held in perpetuity.



Parish Church, about 1890 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

Etheldreda was the foundress of the monastery that later became Ely Cathedral. Appropriately, the oldest known painting of Etheldreda is to be found in St Mary & All Saints Church, Willingham – the oldest in its remarkable collection of medieval wallpaintings.

Hereward the Wake, the legendary hero of the resistance to the Norman invasion by William the Conqueror, also had Willingham connections. It is believed that the late 12th Century Norman siege of the Isle of Ely was based at Willingham.

1.2 Population and Housing

1.2.1 Population Size

Willingham has always been one of the most highly populated villages in the county. In the Middle Ages, the population grew from 23 in 1086 to 79 in 1251. By the beginning of the 19th century the number had risen to about 800 people.

By 1851 the population had risen to more than 1600 (in spite of some slowing down in the 1830s, a period of emigration to America). During the following century, although there were some fluctuations, the population did not change much, and in 1951 it was still about 1600.

From the 1960s, when a period of housing development began, the population increased rapidly. In 2006 the population was estimated by the South Cambridgeshire District Council as 3750. It may be the current population is about 4200.

1.2.2 Streets and Housing



Church Street, about 1900 (Cambridgeshire Collection)

The early village was based on Church Street. Towards the end of the 16th Century High Street was built, and there were houses around the pound (which lies to the south of the Recreation Ground), and others along what is now Fen End.

By the middle of the 19th Century, as the population grew, more houses were built, in-filling spaces in the main streets. Cottages were built along Over Road and Long Lane and in yards off Church Street.

In the past two decades more estates have appeared and in addition there has been a substantial amount of in-filling, as building continues.

1.3 The Village at Work

1.3.1 Farming

Throughout the Middle Ages, the main work in Willingham was arable farming and the keeping of animals – mainly sheep, pigs and cattle. By the middle of the 18th Century, dairying had become the main occupation of the parish of Willingham, and farmers were producing cheese (sold as 'Cottenham' cheese).

The growing of fruit, for which Willingham was noted throughout most of the 20th Century, did not begin in a big way until after 1875. The area devoted to orchards increased rapidly, reaching about 200 acres in 1905 and over 750 acres in 1935.

In 1862 large-scale horticulture was introduced (by I F Thoday). Flower growing and fruit growing continued to be a major Willingham industry until the 1980s. By that time a number of factors had arisen which changed that. Furthermore, when the Science Park was established by Trinity College in the early 1970s it heralded a major change in the economy of the whole Cambridge region. Hundreds of high-tech firms have blossomed, and turned the area into one of the most prosperous in the UK. Willingham, like other villages, has become the home of many commuters whose jobs are not in the village itself.

1.3.2 The Railway

In its horticultural heyday Willingham's growers were served by the railway from Cambridge to St Ives, which opened in 1847. The station at Longstanton was crucial in the export of flowers to London until well into the 20th Century. The station was closed in 1970.

To the north of Willingham there was a railway line from 1878, running from St Ives to Sutton, with a station at Earith Bridge.

1.3.3 Utilities

The Willingham Water Company was formed in 1911. Gas and electricity came to the village much later – in the mid-1930s. The main sewer was later still, and was not laid until the late 1960s.

The village did not get hard surface roads until quite late in its history.

1.4 Education in Willingham

In 1579 Laurence Milford was licensed to teach children, and in 1593 a school was endowed with more than £100, by public subscription. Control rested with the Rector. The existence of the school was responsible for a high literacy level among the local farmers during the 17th century.

In 1856 the first Baptist church established in Fen End a British school (that is one not under Church of England control.) For many years it

was what was known as an elementary school. That changed after the second world war, when a new education structure was introduced by the government, and from 1958 senior children were transferred to Swavesey Village College and then, in 1963, to Cottenham Village College.

The British school continued to serve as the Willingham primary school until 1975 when the new primary school opened on the present site in Thodays Close. The British School Trust, owners of the old school and the head teacher's house, sold them, and invested the proceeds to fund educational purposes serving the village, something the British School Trust continues most successfully to do.

1.5 The Social Village

1.5.1 Clubs and Societies

Life, of course, was not all work. From the 19th Century, as the population grew and the variety of commercial activity increased, social life developed in the village. In the 1840s an agricultural society was founded, and in 1848 it started an annual ploughing match (which continues). Also, in the 1840s there were records of cricket matches. In 1854 a debating society was active, and in 1870 there was a book society. Thirteen years later a public reading room had been opened.

Move forward to the mid-20th century and you find that Scouts and Cubs came to Willingham in 1963; Scouting and Guiding continue to flourish. Sports clubs, too, have been thriving for many years, as has WAMADS, the drama society, founded over 30 years ago.

1.5.2 Pubs

The first alehouse to be recorded in Willingham was the George, in 1665, followed by the Five Bells in 1671. From then until 1828 up to ten had been licensed, and by the end of the 19th Century there were 16. As late as 1982 there were five pubs in the village.

1.5.3 Events and Premises

Over the years there have been many regular social events. One, which still continues, is the Feast – though on a far smaller scale than during the first half of the 20th Century.

Field days and fun runs attracted much interest and participation for many years. The pattern of community activities has, inevitably, changed as years have passed.

The Public Hall was built in 1896. In 1853, as part of the enclosures, the old recreation ground in Earith Road was provided. The current recreation ground was bought in 1898 and opened in 1901.

For many years there were two Baptist

churches, a Methodist church, and a Salvation Army hall, as well as the parish church.

1.6 Willingham Today

Over the centuries, inevitably, the pattern of life in Willingham has greatly changed. The growth in population, particularly in the final quarter of the 20th century, is a reflection of great changes in the Cambridge area as a whole. This has brought many people to the area; the villages, Willingham among them, have become to some extent 'commuter villages'. Those people who still work in Willingham are engaged in a much wider variety of occupations than those which were the hallmark of the village throughout the first half of the 20th Century.

The changes in the pattern of life in Willingham, particularly those which have occurred during the past half century, can be described without exaggeration as dramatic. Nevertheless the village has continued to be a vibrant community, with many facilities to offer to its residents.

At the Public Meeting, organised by the Parish Plan Committee as its first task, the question was asked 'What is good about Willingham?' and it was very clear that there is much that is good. In particular, it was agreed that it was still a 'real' village with a village atmosphere, with its own identity, and self-contained in terms of having shops, a library, an excellent small primary school and medical practice. In addition, it generally felt safe, had some pleasant green spaces and a good communication, with a high-quality village newsletter – *Willingham News*, which appears every month.

The following sections dealing with the findings of the questionnaire contain a summary of information from the full report on all aspects of life in Willingham today.

Sources: *The Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire*; Enid Porter, *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore*; *Willingham Looks Back 1952-1977* (published to mark the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II); *Willingham Milestones and Memories 1952-2002* (published to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee); Alan Fawcitt, *St Mary and All Saints, Willingham Historical Summary*; The Cambridgeshire Collection; the Old Willingham website, www.oldwillingham.com; *Willingham News*.

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2 Traffic, Parking and Road Safety

2.1 Introduction

A busy route, the B1050, runs through the heart of Willingham. It carries a high level of traffic from outside the village, as well as the traffic generated by the village itself, largely commuter. In addition there is a very significant

level of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic throughout the day in both directions. Two other roads connect with villages to the west (Over and Swavesey), and to the east (Rampton and Cottenham).

It will come as no surprise that road safety issues are a major concern for the residents.

2.2 Results of the Questionnaire

88.5% of the respondents were concerned about the speed of traffic through the village.

The greatest area of concern is the B1050 on the High Street. This is followed by Earith Road, especially northbound. Drivers speed up long before reaching the village boundary. Next comes Station Road, despite the presence of a speed camera.

Speeding on Rampton Road, Over Road and Church Street was also a major concern, and in Berrycroft, Newington, and George Street.

The fact that speeding was believed to be of major concern on two of the streets at the very centre of the village (High Street and Church Street) is particularly significant.

An overwhelming 90% of respondents were concerned about the volume of traffic in and around Willingham.

In the light of responses to the questionnaire two traffic surveys were carried out. One, during the morning rush hour, showed that the B1050 through Willingham is already at the Department for Transport's maximum capacity for such a road; because it has several cross-roads, junctions, pedestrian crossings and parking obstructions which reduce the theoretical capacity, it is effectively over capacity.

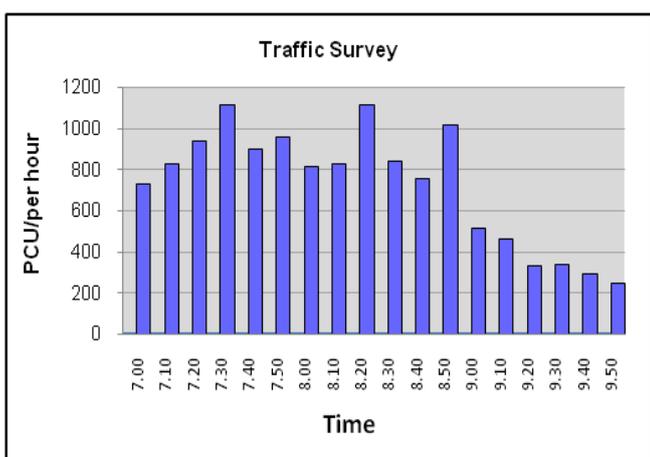


Figure 2.1

(PCU—passenger car units as used by the Department of Transport. One car is 1PCU and one lorry is 2.3PCU.)

A comparison with a similar survey by the County Council in 2006 showed an 11% increase in traffic over the last two years.

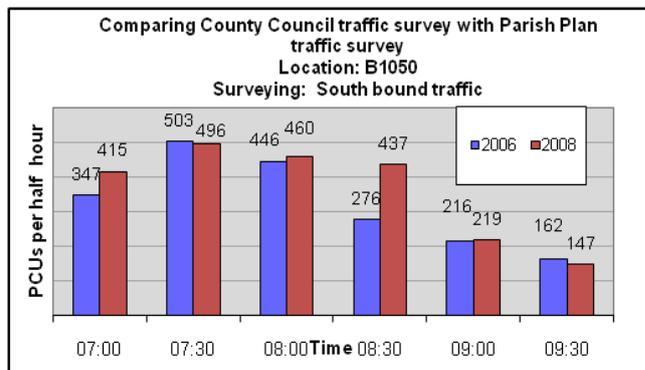


Figure 2.2

Our second survey showed that during a 12 hour period 394 HGVs passed through Willingham – one every two minutes on average.

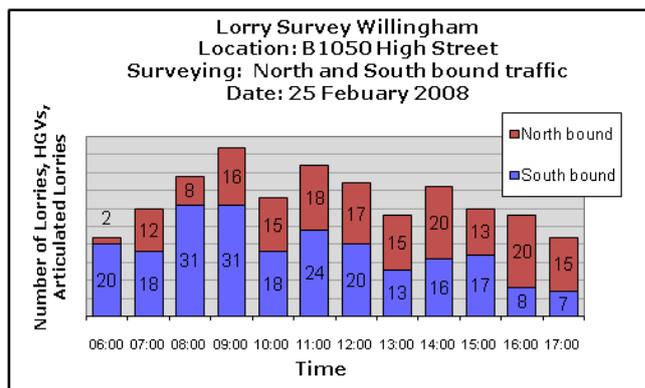


Figure 2.3

80% of the 918 respondents felt strongly that the problems created by the current high level of through traffic, especially HGVs, could only be solved by a bypass.



Traffic on High Street

'The village has been spoilt by the increasing amount of traffic...the house shakes...pictures move on the wall. I can only anticipate more traffic when the Guided Bus is in operation'

437 respondents expressed concern about the far greater potential increase in this HGV traffic caused by the construction of the 9500 dwellings and the associated schools, shops and business units at Northstowe. Requirement for sand, gravel and other aggregates for such a project will be vast, and the nearest source of supply is from the extraction pits immediately to the north of the village.

Concern was also raised about the potential future increase in traffic owing to commuters travelling to the Guided Bus park and ride. All commuters located northeast of the proposed Northstowe town will travel along the B1050 and hence through Willingham.

The safety aspect of parking was a concern to almost 80% of the 938 respondents. 48% were particularly anxious about parking black spots in the High Street. Parking was seen as a safety risk in front of the two shops and two pubs in Church Street, 20%, and in Over Road on the approach to the traffic lights, 16%. There was significant concern about parking problems in the vicinity of the Primary School in Long Lane and Thodays Close at drop-off and pick-up times.



Outside the school

The questionnaire asked which measures would do most to improve road safety in Willingham. 693 people gave their highest preference to the application of lorry weight restrictions on the B1050. This again relates to the large volume of HGVs passing through the village throughout the day.

Finally, many specific danger spots were highlighted by respondents, such as blind spots at junctions and dangerous corners.

There was a high response to the question asking whether people would like to see measures taken to improve cycle safety in the village. 926 responded and 50% said yes. Significant numbers of respondents said that they would use cycle paths to neighbouring villages if they were created.

2.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Our traffic survey provides ample evidence that the traffic flow through Willingham is already excessive. Its negative impact on the life of the village is testified to in the responses to our questionnaire.

Written comments in these questionnaires reveal a well-founded suspicion that the problem will be made much worse with the construction of

Northstowe. Willingham cannot take more traffic. It is therefore imperative that provision is made for a relief road.

'A lovely village but being gradually strangled by traffic'

Aside from these major requirements there are other less ambitious projects which could alleviate our problems and are desirable, such as cycleways to neighbouring villages, and measures to increase road safety by tackling speeding, parking and improving dangerous junctions.

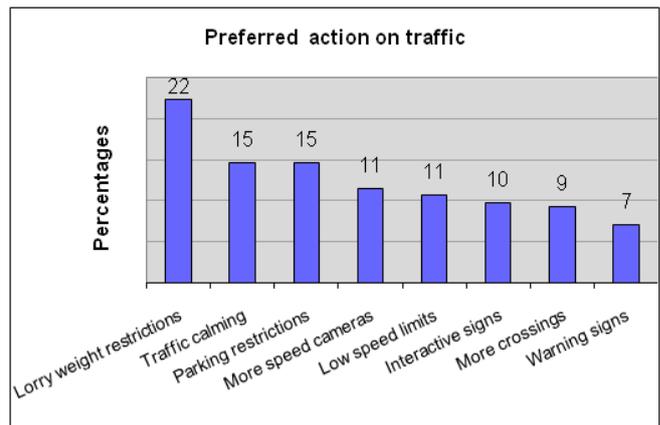


Figure 2.4

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3 Crime, Disorder And Disturbance

3.1 Introduction

Willingham is a quiet pleasant village in which the majority of residents feel safe. The number of serious crimes reported is low. However, it suffers a high number of less severe crimes.

Willingham is served by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary and has a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), who also supports the neighbouring village of Over. Willingham & Over is one of the 11 wards covered by the Cambourne Neighbourhood Policing Team, which is the largest neighbourhood area in South Cambridgeshire division.

In the Cambourne Neighbourhood Policing Team Neighbourhood Profile, May 2007, Willingham ranks sixth out of the 11 wards for the number of reported crimes per 1000 population. That report also states that a large proportion of the crime in Willingham and Over, in the period April 2006 to March 2007, concerned anti-social behaviour (232 incidents), criminal damage/vandalism (107) theft/burglary (64), and vehicle theft/damage (45).

Police records for anti-social behaviour between January 2007 and December 2007 show that Church Street (22), Bourneys Manor Close (17), High Street (16), Haden Way (12) and Long

Lane (11) have experienced more than ten anti-social incidents.

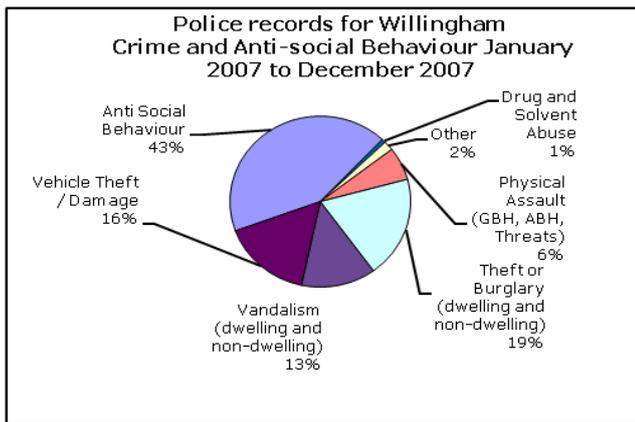


Figure 3.1

Corresponding records for crimes and theft show that High Street (25), Church Street (20), Long Lane (19), West Fen Road (19), Fen End (15), Rockmill End (14), Station Road (14), Wilford Furlong (12) all experienced more than ten such incidents.

3.2 Results of the Questionnaire

The foremost fear of Willingham residents was vandalism, about which one in three villagers who completed this question expressed anxiety. One person in four voiced worries about theft, roughly the same proportion as for intimidation and for vehicle theft/damage. Fewer than one in ten people had concerns about assault. This is in line with the Cambourne Neighbourhood Policing Team Profile, May 2007.

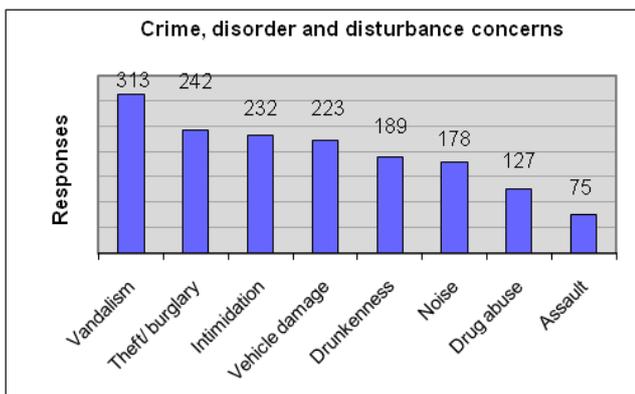


Figure 3.2

The questionnaire requested details of personal experience of crime (rather than simply being worried about it), though did not specify a time frame. It was very evident from the 636 written responses that concerns occur throughout the village, many at night when police presence is almost non-existent.

More police presence needed especially evenings and weekends.'

The following incidents are of the greatest concern: vandalism to cars; inconsiderate, rowdy,

drunken behaviour; incidents of fighting; vandalism to property and speeding cars.

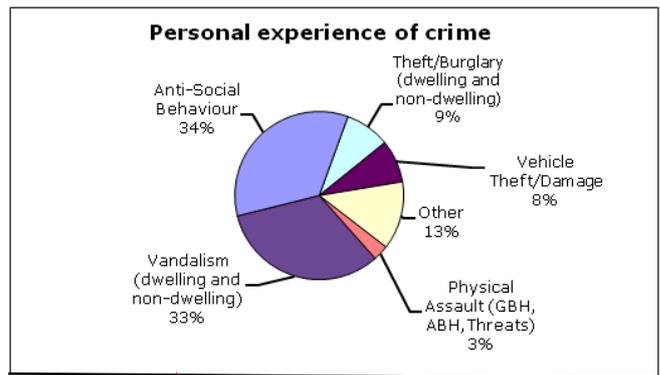


Figure 3.3

Regarding measures to reduce crime, an overwhelming majority of respondents suggest that a greater police/community support police presence is required. The installation of CCTV cameras was the next most popular measure and this has certainly been very effective at the Medical Practice. Improved street lighting and neighbourhood watch schemes received less support.

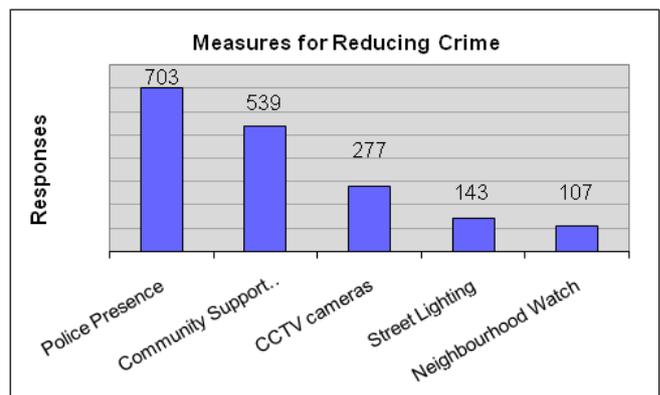


Figure 3.4

Of the 873 responses, the majority (56%) answered that they felt safe in Willingham; however roughly a third (31%) felt unsafe at times and indicated certain areas in their responses.

There were recurrent concerns expressed about the numbers of young people hanging around after dark in the area of the recreation ground, around the village shops and at the Surgery.

In some instances people felt intimidated by the behaviour of individuals and groups in these areas. It should be noted here that there are also occasions when youths themselves have felt intimidated by their peers (see section 14).

'Certain children stealing and damaging and getting away with it.'

Poor street lighting also contributed to people feeling unsafe after dark.

The results revealed that of the 397 respondents

who have reported a crime, half were satisfied with the police response, whilst the other half were not, citing slow or no response.



Graffiti at Long Lane

3.3 Key Issues and Proposals

It is evident that a significant proportion of the respondents are concerned about the amount of crime and anti-social behaviour experienced in the village. The data obtained from the questionnaires indicate that criminal damage (vandalism) and anti-social behaviour are common incidents occurring throughout Willingham with a focus on particular locations (High Street, Church Street). On the other hand, violent crime, such as assault, is of little concern.

There was considerable reference in the questionnaire to the ineffectiveness of the current policing situation. People want to see a greater police presence throughout the village. Currently, PCSOs and police officers are deployed according to demand. The Cambourne Neighbourhood Policing Team hold regular public consultation/panel meetings, where members of the public are given the opportunity to discuss and agree on local priorities. Willingham residents should be encouraged to attend these meetings to highlight problem areas. This would help enable suitable levels of PCSO and policing presence around the village.

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4 Housing

4.1 Introduction

Housing is an important issue in rural communities. With the house price inflation seen in recent years, local people may be priced out of the housing market in the village in which they grew up. Development also influences services, both positively and negatively. A larger population may be able to sustain more shops and businesses, a school, a Medical Practice. Yet over-development can put a strain on these very services. As well as this balance, the needs of the village must be seen against the background of those of the wider region.

Willingham is in a region that has been earmarked for substantial housing development, although the District Council's policy is to concentrate this in areas such as Northstowe and near to Cambridge city centre. The District Council's Core Strategy views Willingham as suitable for relatively small-scale further development (i.e. a maximum of about 30 dwellings) within the village envelope. Thus new development should be 'infill housing'. However, development outside that envelope may be allowed, subject to different planning criteria, one of which relates to affordable housing.



New houses on High Street

4.2 Results of the Questionnaire

131 of the 970 respondents (13.5%) said that someone in the household was seeking somewhere to live in Willingham in the not-too-distant future. The questionnaire did not ask the reason for the move, however. The whole household could be moving, perhaps to a larger property, which would not affect the necessary size of the housing stock, or the household could be dividing, which has an impact on house numbers.

51% of the 131 respondents were looking for a small house, 36% medium and 13% large. 54% wanted to buy, whereas 14 respondents (11%) were looking for a property with shared equity, which is higher than the number of shared ownership properties currently in Willingham.

The questionnaire showed that the majority of residents have objections to new housing development in Willingham, citing the following objections:

- the effect of increasing village size on services, especially the Primary School
- decrease in the amount of open space in the village
- a loss of character and village identity
- increased traffic
- pressure on drainage and risk of flooding

The overwhelming majority said new housing should be for local people and the young, especially first-time buyers. There were also references to affordable housing, such as shared equity schemes. The emphasis on young people and first-time buyers ties in with the requirement for more small houses.

There was also an overwhelming majority in favour of a green belt surrounding the village.

'Change is inevitable and we have to keep pace with all developments, but I am concerned about the rapid increase in housing developments in the village which is becoming a commuter area and losing its rural identity.'

4.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Housing is a vexed question in Willingham. The majority of residents do not want to see further development. They have seen a large number of new houses built in recent years and are concerned about the effect of further development on village infrastructure, services and identity. Issues that already cause concern to residents, for example the level of traffic in the village, would be exacerbated.

At the same time there is a housing need in Willingham, particularly for smaller houses; only half of those intending to move are hoping to buy.

Preservation of village identity and a green belt are overwhelmingly supported, but there is the possibility that the 40% affordable housing now required for all new developments could be allowed to be built outside the envelope if it is impractical to provide it within.

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5 Employment

5.1 Introduction

Willingham is a village with high employment levels. In the 2001 census 75.4% of the 16-74 population was recorded as economically active, with only 1.7% unemployed. This reflects the position in South Cambridgeshire generally (74.72% economically active, 1.62% unemployed, compared with 69.25% and 2.6% respectively in the East of England region and 66.87% and 3.35% in England).

Thus the topic of employment, in the context of the Parish Plan, is not just one of looking to solve an unemployment problem; it is one of looking at factors affecting business development in Willingham and the influence of employment patterns on other issues, particularly traffic and transport.

5.2 Results of the Questionnaire

45% of the working population worked in Cambridge. Clearly this has implications for traffic within Willingham, as the majority of these travel to work by car, and so should be considered in the context of transport planning. 14% work in Willingham.

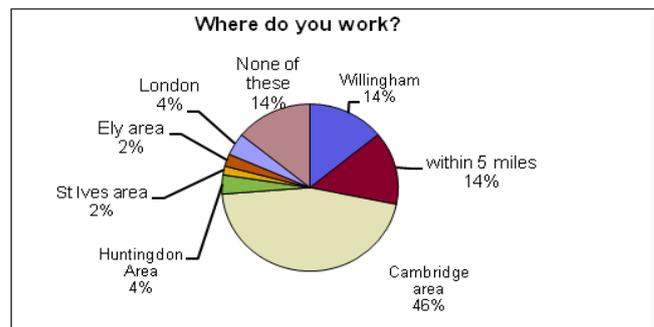


Figure 5.1

In the 2001 census, 12% reported working at or mainly from home, which might suggest that a significant proportion of the residents who report working in Willingham are working from home. A further 14.2% work within five miles of the village, although with current public transport links it is quite possible that even those working locally are dependent upon cars to reach their place of work.

Only 34 respondents were seeking work, and the sectors in which they were looking covered a broad spectrum.

Despite low unemployment levels the majority of respondents supported some development for employment opportunities. There was more support for business than light industry, with roughly equal support for the establishment of a small business area, individual business establishments and development of opportunities for young people.

The business questionnaire responses (section 15) show that there is currently a wide range of businesses operating in Willingham. These do employ Willingham residents, and just under half are looking to employ new people. Only 25% said that they had problems recruiting in Willingham, and some commented that there was no local demand for the type of work offered.

5.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Section 6 (Transport) describes a very high car usage and dissatisfaction with public transport, and section 2 (Traffic, Parking and Road Safety) a widespread concern about traffic levels in the village. Only 14% of working residents work within Willingham and so most others will need to take transport of one kind or another to their place of employment. Therefore, the need for efficient commuting options must be kept in mind when recommendations regarding trans-

port are made. 72% of working Willingham residents travel more than 5 miles from the village to their place of employment.

The main commuting destination is Cambridge. A reasonable public transport route to Cambridge has the potential to remove a large number of cars from the roads in Willingham at the beginning and end of the commute. This is discussed further in section 6.

There is support for business development in the village, even though there are not many residents actively seeking employment. This may suggest a desire to work closer to home. It is interesting considering the significant opposition to housing development.

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6. Transport

6.1 Introduction

Despite major concerns about traffic congestion in Willingham (see section 2) most residents rely on the car to get them around. Many families are multiple car owners. The bus is not considered a viable alternative.

Willingham is served by route 15 between St Ives and Cambridge. It runs hourly and since August 2008 the route to Cambridge is via Longstanton and Bar Hill and to St Ives is via Over and Swavesey. There is no Sunday service.

Many residents drive into Cambridge daily. The Guided Busway, now under construction, promises a faster public transport transit into Cambridge.

6.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Because different members of a household are likely to have different transport requirements, all of the questions in this section of the questionnaire allowed a response by two people.

With 1184 residents responding that they used the car on a daily basis, and only 65 reporting a car share it would appear that the majority of households own more than one car.

Over 80% of daily journeys are made by single use private car, with the bus, car share and bicycle each having about a 5% share. Only 40 respondents answered that they never travelled by car.

Only 53 respondents reported using the bus daily. However, 432 use the bus occasionally. The bicycle is also a popular occasional mode of transport, with 448 respondents reporting occasional use, and 81 cycle daily.

The questionnaire showed that the most frequent reasons for not using buses were long journey times (although this is now improved since the questionnaire was circulated,) poor

service frequency and unsuitable routes. However, judging by the multiplicity of responses it

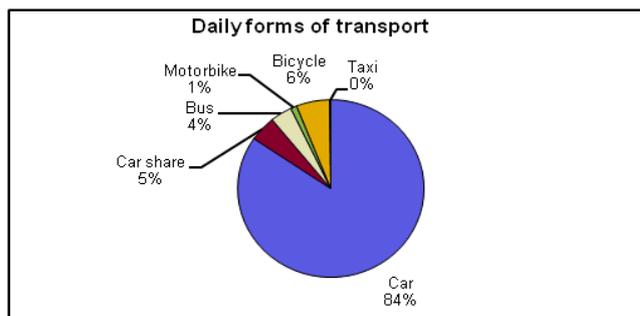


Figure 6.1

is a combination of factors rather than one single inadequacy which gives rise to the dissatisfaction.

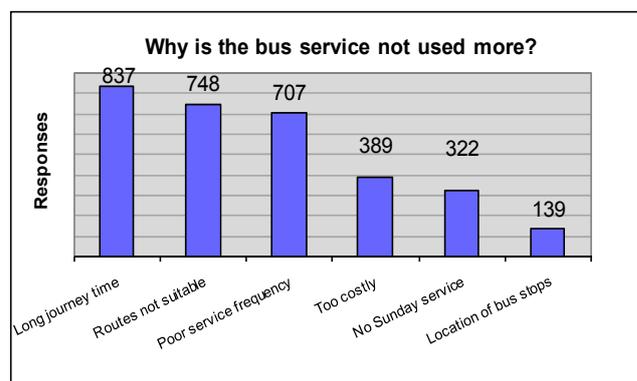


Figure 6.2

When asked what improvements would encourage greater use, the results correspond to the most common reasons why residents do not use the bus services. A large number of responses also suggested that the destinations were not suitable.

Not surprisingly Cambridge was cited as the most popular destination followed by St Ives and Bar Hill, which are destinations currently served by bus routes.



Figure 6.3

However, a significant number indicated a preference for Cottenham, as expected, as it is where the Village College is based. Ely and surrounding villages also featured.

17% said they planned to use the Guided Bus on a regular basis while 39% said they would not use it at all. Interestingly, 44% are not sure at

the present time.

On the bright side, in answer to the question on which mode of transport the Guided Bus would replace, most said the car.

The Guided Busway does not go through the village. The nearest stop will be on the edge of Longstanton some 1.5 miles from the centre of Willingham. It is important to know how this link will be made.

The majority of respondents, 551, report that they intend to drive. This raises questions about parking provision and traffic.

Nearly 300 people say they will go to the Busway by bus. At the moment only one bus an hour goes down Station Road. A larger number of people, 337, intend to cycle.

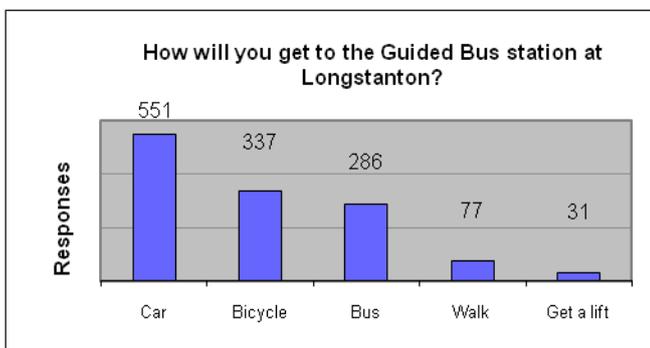


Figure 6.4

6.3 Key Issues and Proposals

An efficient transport system is important for the well being of any community but especially rural communities. Public transport is essential for the vitality of a village. Not everyone can drive; in particular, the elderly and the young can become trapped and isolated. And for those who do not wish to drive on the increasingly clogged roads, perhaps for environmental reasons, there should be a viable alternative.

About a quarter of Willingham residents now leave the village by car every morning. Assuming that daily journeys are associated with work we can conclude that the majority of the working population of Willingham rely on the car for continued employment.

'Cottenham Village College is the college assigned to Willingham but if you miss the bus, have a doctor's appointment before school or want to go to after school activities there is not any transport.'

Willingham's public transport is of poor quality and poorly used, and serves only a small number of destinations. Residents blame the poor service for the low level of use; the bus com-

pany, Stagecoach, states that the poor service is a consequence of low passenger numbers.

It is ironic that only 5% of our journeys are made by bus but the village is concerned about the volume of traffic using the B1050. Yet some 1100 cars leave and return to the village each working day and nearly 50% of them journey to Cambridge, a destination served by public transport. This 'Catch 22' situation is a classic expression of Britain's transport dilemma.

In the spring of 2009 the Cambridge Guided Busway is due to come into service. Whatever one's views on the project, it will represent a very substantial increase in the public transport provision in this part of Cambridgeshire, though it by no means covers the range of destinations required by all Willingham's inhabitants.

However the scheme has to overcome the ambivalence of many. Clearly it has not captured the public imagination of Willingham, and it remains to be seen whether it can lure people out of their cars. There is also the problem of travelling the 1.5 miles to reach it. A shuttle bus would appear essential if car use is to decrease.

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7. Social Amenities

7.1 Introduction

Willingham has a wide range of amenities used by an expanding range of organisations, including social groups, clubs for various sports, and groups for children's and young people's activities.

'Nice village to live in.'

The following facilities are currently available in Willingham: The Public Hall, the Octagon, the Baptist Church Hall, the Social Club and the Ploughman Hall. There is also a large Recreation Ground with a newly refurbished pavilion. Sports facilities include football, cricket and bowls. Grass tennis courts fell into disuse and were removed in the 1990s. There is also a busy small public library, open every day except Wednesday and Sunday.

The many thriving social groups include the Gardening Club, the WI, WAMADS (amateur dramatics), painting and keep fit.

The questionnaire focused on non-commercial facilities but social events are also organised by the three village pubs, including quiz nights, petanque and garden parties. Willingham House provides a Chinese restaurant and bed & breakfast, and there is a Chinese takeaway/fish and chip shop in Berrycroft and a café at Highgate Farm.



The audience gathers for the WAMADS performance at Willingham House

'On the whole, Willingham is a developing village for the better. The fact that people care about the place we live in and want to improve the facilities and look of our village even more.'

Willingham is served by the Community Association established at Cottenham Village College, which covers the 'Fen Edge Patch' (Cottenham, Willingham, Rampton, Waterbeach, Landbeach and Chittering). It organises many social activities and classes, both at the College and the other villages in the group.



The annual vintage vehicle rally

7.2 Results of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire showed that between 30% and 55% of the 970 respondents use at least one of the library, Ploughman Hall, Social Club, Recreation Ground and the Octagon. Smaller proportions use the playground (16%) the Baptist church hall (15%) the Salvation Army hall (10%) and the Sports pavilion (8%).

When specifically asked about improvements to the Ploughman Hall – the newest and largest facility - there was a strong feeling that it should function more as a Community Centre, with a bar. Vandalism was also seen as a problem.

'Willingham has lost community feeling. People blame youth or travellers, with nothing to do they will find own amusement unfortunately is often unlawful or anti social.'

There was an obvious desire for more community events, such as markets and beer or music festivals, to take place in the village.

A large number of respondents had suggestions for new facilities. The highest preferences were for more restaurants, cafés and takeaways. There were also requests for a variety of sporting facilities, clubs and children's activities.

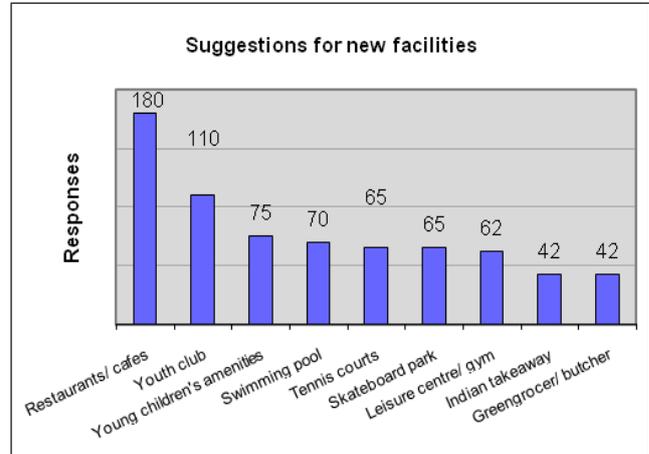


Figure 7.1

Although many respondents felt that events were well advertised, it is clear from the answers to other questions, where there were requests for activities and facilities that already existed, that more could be done.

7.3 Key Issues and Proposals

There is a clear desire for more community events to be held, though few volunteers have come forward to help organise them. The many new sports and clubs suggested also require enthusiastic volunteers to get them off the ground.

'Travellers (I am a member of that group) deserve a voice in this village. I am concerned about drug use and under-age drinking. Crime such as graffiti and vandalism is in my view due to boredom of youth and drink/drugs. We did not bring these things to the village they were already here on our arrival. I have watched my sons change into people I do not know.'

There is a wish for a community centre, which none of the existing public buildings currently meets. There also needs to be better use of the existing facilities and more attention devoted to the youth of the village.

The continued existence of the library should be supported

It is also clear that the amenities already existing and events being held need to be better advertised.

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8 Medical Services

8.1 Introduction

The Willingham Medical Practice provides an excellent and valued service to the people of Willingham and its neighbouring villages. It aims to retain the best aspects of the traditional Family Doctor, while keeping up with modern medicine regarding both patient care and prevention of disease. It also carries out some minor surgical procedures.

The Practice is in a centrally located, well-designed modern building with an adequate, immediately adjacent car park. There is a pharmacy within the building. Staff include four partners and four practice nurses.

Around 6500 patients are registered at the Practice, on average 1625 patients per GP. This compares favourably with the UK national figure of 1800. The population served by the Practice is rising rapidly.

There is also a 'Community First Responder' group organised by MAGPAS (the Mid-Anglia General Practitioner Accident Service) and made up of local volunteers trained and equipped to attend medical emergencies in the village. The group is struggling to provide the service because of lack of volunteers.

There are some private practitioners in the village, including a physiotherapist, an osteopath and complementary medicine therapists.

8.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Most responses rated Willingham Medical Practice highly.

	Agree / strongly agree
I am treated with respect and understanding by practice staff	97%
I can usually get an appointment within 48 hours	85%
In an emergency I can get seen more quickly	83%
I have confidence in the ability of the staff at the practice	92%
I will be dealt with quickly and well in an out-of-hours emergency	52%
I am kept waiting too long for my appointment	24%

Table 8.1

If taken ill outside Practice hours almost 64% of respondents would use CAMDOC.

Another 19% would phone NHS Direct, and almost 18% would go straight to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at either Addenbrooke's or Hinchingbrooke Hospitals.

There were some requests for more out-of-hours opening for both Practice and Pharmacy, and for a practice doctor to be available for out-of-hours visits and/or phone consultations.

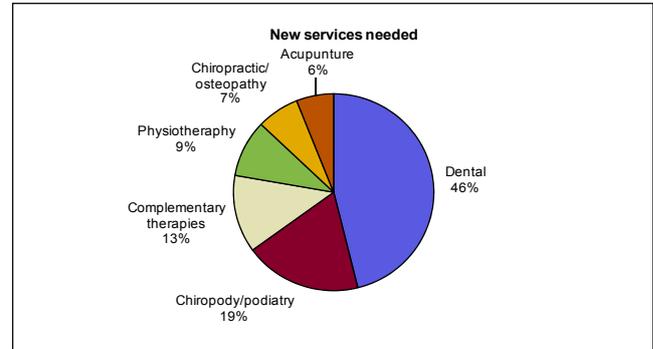


Figure 8.1

163 people listed medical services not currently provided by the Willingham Medical Practice, which they might use if they were introduced. Counselling services were also requested. The requests, with numbers, were dental (54), chiroprody/podiatry (22), complementary therapies (15), physiotherapy (11), chiropractic/osteopathy (8) and acupuncture (7). (The National Health Service funds one hour of physiotherapy for every 1000 patients per week. The practical implication of this is that a patient may have to wait 19 weeks to see a physiotherapist.)

62% of those requesting extra services indicated that they would be prepared to pay for them.

8.3 Key Issues and Proposals

There is little room for improvement in the current Medical Practice. Many of the additional services suggested would be privately rather than NHS funded.

The figures regarding use of A&E were discussed with the practice manager who expressed concern. Whilst recognising that this may be necessary, she pointed out that the Practice is charged a heavy fee each time this happens. There was however potential for renting space in the surgery for private medical services.

There was some anxiety that the extra demands caused by the building of Northstowe might result in a decline from the present high standard of service. Additional medical provision is written into the Northstowe Planning Application, but full delivery of this is not envisaged until year six of the development. It is therefore likely that the existing neighbouring practices, including the Willingham Medical Practice, will find their time

and facilities under strain in coping with the expanding population.

'The village has changed a lot...but is still a nice place to live... with good schooling and medical facilities.'

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9. Education

9.1 Introduction

Recent years have seen growth in the number of school-aged children in Willingham. The demand by Willingham families for places at pre-school facilities and the Primary School is beginning to outstrip the number of places and physical space available.

Pre-school education in Willingham is provided by the Honeypot Pre-school, adjacent to the Primary School, which is charity-based and committee-run, and the Old Buttery Nursery (part of the Koala Kids Group) in the High Street, a private nursery. The Honeypot will occupy a new larger purpose-built building from September 2008.



The new Honeypot building



Willingham Primary School

Primary education is provided by Willingham Primary School, which has approximately 320 pupils. The 2007 OFSTED report states: 'This is a school where learning is made fun and achievement in a wide variety of fields is celebrated'. The school provides the opportunity for care from 07.45 until 18.00 each day with many eve-

ning clubs for children and adults. The school continues to experience growth in the number of children wanting to join it and will require funding for additional space in the near future.

'Willingham has one of the best primary schools in the area. The Headteacher, Mrs Brearley, is a very remarkable lady. The school has done its best to support the travelling children as well as trying to reach parents to help them with reading writing and offer IT so they can get involved with the children's education. We must give praise where it is due.'

From the age of 11, children in Willingham attend secondary schools in adjacent villages, or private schools within the vicinity, including Cambridge. Most travel to Cottenham Village College.

Adult education is also offered in the area, some in Willingham, but more in neighbouring village colleges, primarily the Fen Edge Patch Community Association based at Cottenham.

9.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Among respondents to the questionnaire who had children, there was substantial satisfaction with the local pre-school provision. The main concerns of those who were dissatisfied were lack of places, short hours and lack of structure.

An overwhelming majority of respondents also expressed satisfaction with the local primary school provision. The only major concern was class size.

Approximately 17% of respondents have been attending adult education classes in and around Cambridge. The classes included computing, Pilates, painting, salsa and woodwork.

'With Willingham children using CVC (mostly) it is ludicrous that there is no bus service for any after school/ friendship activities. I spend a whole lot of time travelling to and from Cottenham for such trips, sometimes more than once a day.'

A range of adult education courses is also available in Willingham. Responses showed that people were attending classes in belly dancing, computer basics, keep-fit, Spanish and classes organised by the Worker's Education Association (WEA). The facilities used for the classes included Willingham Primary School, the Ploughman Hall, the Baptist Church and the Octagon.

321 questionnaire respondents would attend classes if they were offered in Willingham.

There was a wide variety of responses about the subjects or topics which people would choose.

The results were broken down into three categories: hobbies, educational and well-being.

Within the educational category, the desire to learn a language was most popular - French, sign language, Spanish, Italian and Greek, in particular - followed by IT/computing.

Under hobbies, crafts were popular, including pottery, upholstery, flower arranging and woodwork, followed by art and photography.

Within the well-being category heading a large proportion wanted to get fit with easy access to facilities. Several mentioned the need for a gym and other organised sports.

Respondents also noted that they would want the classes available at weekends and late enough in the evening for people who work outside of the village.

9.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Willingham has highly regarded pre- and primary school education, and the main concern is lack of space as pupil numbers grow.

There is a clear desire for more adult education classes in Willingham on a wide variety of subjects and at different times during the day and evening. Better sports facilities, such as a gym, would also be popular.

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10 Environmental Issues

10.1 Introduction

This section of the questionnaire covered a variety of environmental issues ranging from litter, recycling, pavements and public rights of way to open spaces in the village.

Willingham has more litter and dog waste bins than any other parish in South Cambridgeshire. Willingham Parish Council (WPC) employs a litter picker to remove litter from the centre of the village.

Willingham Co-op has recycling facilities in the car park for plastic bottles, plastic bags, paper, glass, clothes, shoes and, recently, cans. There is a recycling bin for clothes outside the Salvation Army Hall. The nearest recycling facility is Bluntisham Household Waste Recycling Centre, about seven miles away.

There are footpaths from Willingham to Over and running along the top of the Old West River flood bank towards Cottenham.

Willingham is linked to Aldreth Causeway, to the east of Willingham, via Schole Road and Meadow Road Causeway. There is also a bridleway from Earith Road to the Old West River and one linking West Fen Road with tracks in Over and the Earith Road.

Willingham has two allotment sites, located off Westmeadow Close and on the corner of Meadow Road and Rockmill End.

Lords Ground, on the footpath towards Over, is one of the areas of open access provided under the Environmental Stewardship Schemes.

Other open spaces include the Green in the centre of the village and the Recreation Ground, off West Fen Road. Children's play facilities are provided opposite the recreation ground in Jubilee Field.



The new pavilion on the recreation ground

10.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Litter and dog mess were of particular concern, with areas near to shops, Long Lane and the recreation ground being highlighted. Fly tipping was of less concern, problem areas being away from the village centre such as lay-bys, droves, ditches, footpaths, fields and lodes. Graffiti was of minor concern, the recreation ground area being mentioned.

373 questionnaire respondents said they would be willing to fund solutions to these problems through a small increase in the local precept or tax and 344 would not; 253 did not express an opinion.

There was a perception that the village looked un-cared for and messy. Positive suggestions included a Spring clean-up weekend.

'People should care for their village and make it a nice place to live clean tidy and pretty. Plant many trees keep front garden clean, every little helps clean up after their dogs and do not drop litter. Hide bins if possible good things but very ugly.'

Willingham residents would recycle more if there were more frequent collections and more recycling sites. Suggestions for additional items for collection included Tetrapaks, batteries, print cartridges, a paint bank and electrical/household goods. Community composting was also suggested.

Household recycling sites, such as Bluntisham, are well used with 75% of respondents using

them. 35.6% said they would be prepared to pay for a collection of items that they were unable to take themselves.

Regarding the state of pavements, 95% of respondents thought they were inadequate, particularly in the oldest streets in the village, such as Long Lane and Silver Street, where they are too narrow with poor camber.



Long Lane

No pavement at all exists in some areas, such as the Over Road from Haden Way to Highgate Farm.

A similar number considered that parking on pavements is a problem, in areas such as near the school, Over Road near the traffic lights, High Street near the Post Office, Church Street near the corner of Long Lane, George Street and the housing estates (See also section 2)

46.8% of respondents thought more footpaths/ cycleways/ bridleways were needed for leisure, such as to Over, Earith, Longstanton and Ramp-ton and to the south of the village generally. Better surfaces, signing and upgrading to make them suitable for cycles were requested. Cycle-ways received a higher response than footpaths (see also sections 2 and 14). Some longer distance cycle routes were suggested, through to Cambridge and to St Ives.

On the topic of open spaces, more trees and improvements to the Green were most popular, closely followed by a nature reserve and more play areas; there was some support for more allotments. The most popular site for a new play area was the Green; other areas included Covent Garden, Over Road, Haden Way and existing and new housing developments.

Improvements were suggested for the Green to make it more of a focal point, such as more trees, grass and ornamental flowerbeds, reinstating the pond, providing seating and a shelter, improved lighting, including the seasonal Christmas lights, and features such as a sculpture or fountain and holding markets.

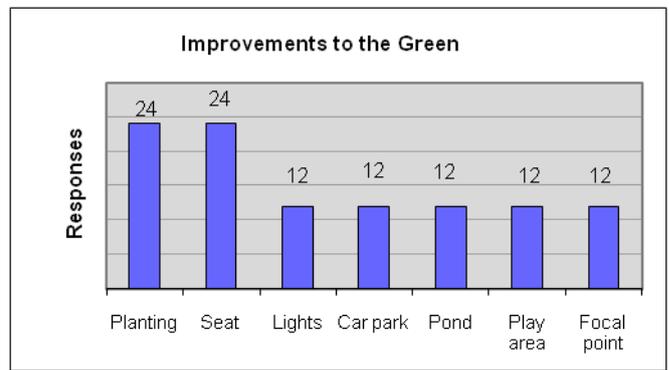


Figure 10.1

10.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Though the effectiveness of the litter picker is recognised, there was a perception that the village generally appeared 'messy, uncared for, unkempt', which is of concern. Given the large number of bins, the problem is the people who create the mess and better reporting, effective detection and policing are needed. The same is true of fly tipping, given the proximity of disposal sites and collection services.



Fly tipping in Willingham

There is a willingness to recycle more where the opportunity is provided. The issue therefore centres on the collection of a wider range of items.

One third of respondents were willing to pay for the collection of unwanted items that they were unable to take to a tip themselves.

Minor roads desperately in need of repair e.g. potholes and cracks, Meadow Rd and Spong Drove in particular.'

Insufficient resources have been put into maintaining many pavements, particularly on the older central streets where they are narrow and uneven. There is also a problem of parking on pavements obstructing pedestrians, which is illegal and should be better policed.

As with public transport, Willingham is not well connected to the neighbouring villages by footpaths, cycleways and bridleways. The condition of some existing paths is poor, making access difficult for many.

Although more allotments were suggested not all are currently in use. Allotments should be promoted.

Many would like to see more open spaces created for public use in and around Willingham including a nature reserve and safe areas for children to play closer to the village centre, such as the Green. Although improvements to the Green are planned the additional attractions suggested will help to create the wanted focal point as well as an area to relax.

No complete data exist on the trees in Willingham, or on existing preservation orders.

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11 Local Government and Information Services

11.1 Introduction

This section deals with communications between local government and local people. It examines how well the County, District and Parish councils listen to the needs of residents and how well the residents are informed of council activities.

There is a Parish Council Office, open on three mornings each week; an answerphone service is available that also provides the additional option of an emergency telephone number. Contact may also be made by email and post. There is a Parish Council noticeboard on the Public Hall in the High Street. A website has recently been established.

'It is encouraging that the Parish Council after many years of being negative and unimaginative has in recent years been far more positive.'

SCDC has a customer service strategy for the Council's elected members, staff, partner organisations and its residents and customers. Its purpose is 'to set out the Council's determination to deliver high quality, responsive, accessible, value for money services'. SCDC circulates a quarterly magazine to all households in the district, which contains information and news.

It claims to put the customer at the heart of everything it does and understands that the best way to improve services is to listen to its customers. Cambridgeshire County Council has a Customer Service Charter, which sets out the standards that can be expected from the Council and its commitment to improving the services it offers.

The main vehicle of communication within the village is *Willingham News*. It has developed from the *Willingham Newsletter* originated in 1967, which was amalgamated in January 2004 with the *Willingham and Rampton Churches*

Magazine to form the *Willingham Parish Magazine*, The name was changed to *Willingham News* in January 2007.

11.2 Results of the Questionnaire

On whether the different councils actually heed the views of residents over 40% expressed no view. Of those expressing a view, the Parish Council has more respondents agreeing that it heeds the views of residents than the County and District Councils who both scored less than 10%.

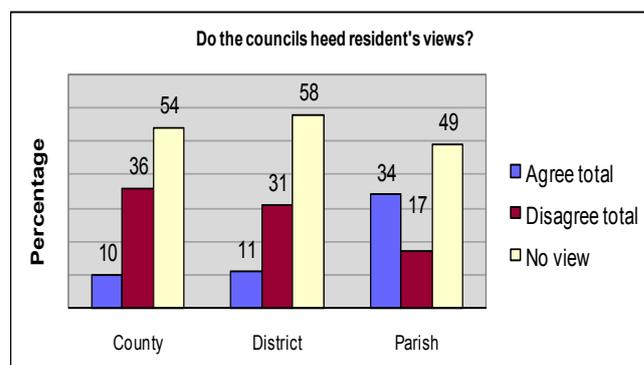


Figure 11.1

Overall more agreed that Parish Council communication was effective than disagreed, but almost as many had no view.

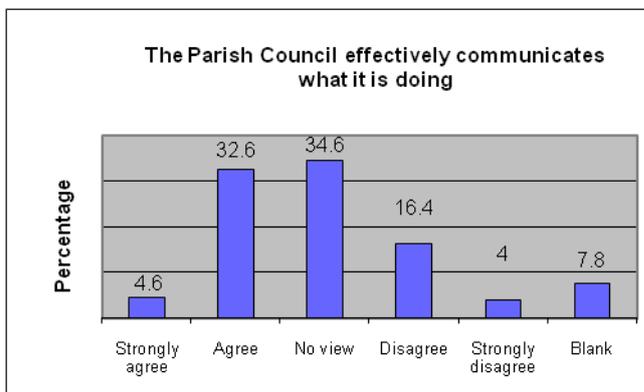


Figure 11.2

The majority do not look at the Parish Council notice board because they do not know where it is.

A large majority find *Willingham News* useful, but there were some suggestions of how it could be further improved, such as more items for young people, small ads and sports results.

10.3 Key Issues and Proposals

The County and District Councils, and to a lesser extent the Parish Council, are perceived as not listening to the views of residents.

It is clear that the Parish Council noticeboard should have a higher profile, perhaps re-siting should be investigated or additional boards. On the other hand *Willingham News* is very effective, though could be improved. The Parish

Council website could also be broadened to provide up to date village information.

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12 Northstowe

12.1 Introduction

The proposed new town at Northstowe, still in the planning stage, will be a contained development of about 9500 new homes for approximately 24,000 people. It will be only a few miles from Willingham (sited between Willingham and Cambridge) in between Oakington and Longstanton. Nearly 700 submissions regarding the planning application were received by SCDC, including one from this committee.

12.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Near the end of the questionnaire respondents were given the opportunity to write comments on the impact of Northstowe on Willingham. 489 questionnaires contained comments, reflecting the amount of concern regarding this development. The main worries are shown below.

'Do we really need all these 'new towns' in a lovely rural area? We moved from Milton Keynes so don't wish to see Willingham sucked in to be a Northstowe suburb.'

Traffic was the main concern with 369 comments related to the issues raised in Section 2 of this Plan. Respondents consider that traffic generated along the B1050 during construction would be disruptive and hazardous, particularly as it would involve a significant proportion of HGVs with a real risk to the safety of residents and quality of life.

'There will be increased traffic to building work with heavy vehicles causing movement to house foundations, an increase in accidents and more people using Willingham as a rat-run to escape problems on the A14.'

Also, as the population of Northstowe increases and its influence on both working and social patterns grows, traffic on the B1050, which is already overloaded and the major route for movement of traffic between Northstowe and the towns and villages to the north, would cause further deterioration in the quality of life for Willingham residents with more traffic jams at peak times.

'Traffic through the village will increase further as not everybody in Northstowe will commute to Cambridge to work or work in Northstowe. More people who live to the north of Willingham will commute through here. The village may become gridlocked unless a bypass is built.'

The loss of community identity was the second most noted concern, mentioned 148 times. The residents of Willingham enjoy the real village atmosphere but are worried that the development of Northstowe would destroy Willingham as a distinct community.

'Willingham should be kept separate from Northstowe, but if facilities are good then will create a positive effect and could reduce travelling to Cambridge.'

They see that it may eventually form part of an area of housing which would extend from Cambridge to Willingham.

'The green belt must be preserved between Willingham and Northstowe.'

Comments indicate the residents of Willingham are generally happy to live here and are content with the level of services provided, in particular the school and medical practice. It is not surprising that the questionnaire generated concerns that during development Northstowe would create a strain on local infrastructure.

Concerns were raised that the risk of flooding could be increased by the expansion in impermeable area and inadequate means of storing the extra flow created by the development at Northstowe. The B1050 for a large part of its length is also the flood bank alongside the Old West River, which was not designed to carry today's heavy traffic. As a consequence the flood risk may be increased.

12.3 Proposals

The planning authority should encourage the developer, in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council, to undertake a study of traffic on the B1050 to better understand the current situation and the impact of Northstowe both during and post development. Then it will be possible to consider how to address the current and future concerns of residents, which the planning application fails to do.

The current statements in the planning document regarding construction traffic are too weak. Already the B1050 is overloaded with HGVs, with nearly 400 movements a day of which 85 are bulk transports. There is a need for a contract to ensure construction traffic for Northstowe does not add to the already overused B1050, unless or until a bypass can be built.

It is important to ensure that the provision of schools, medical and other services and infrastructure for Northstowe should lead rather than lag behind the development.

The planning documents accept the importance of preserving the local environment and reducing the impacts on adjacent communities. The re-

sponse from the residents of Willingham suggests that the developer, encouraged by the planning authority, should give this matter much more attention. We need a fuller assurance that the open land between the new development and Willingham will be preserved.

It is important in the context of government policy and the real threat of climate change that the developer is seen adequately to address the problem of flooding.

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13 General Comments

The final question of the questionnaire asked for 'any other comments?' There were comments entered on 274 questionnaires covering 336 different topics.

'Where are the questions regarding travellers' sites? It's been a big issue for many years.'

The comments reflected the strength of feeling about the issues covered elsewhere with traffic volume and the associated danger being the main concern.

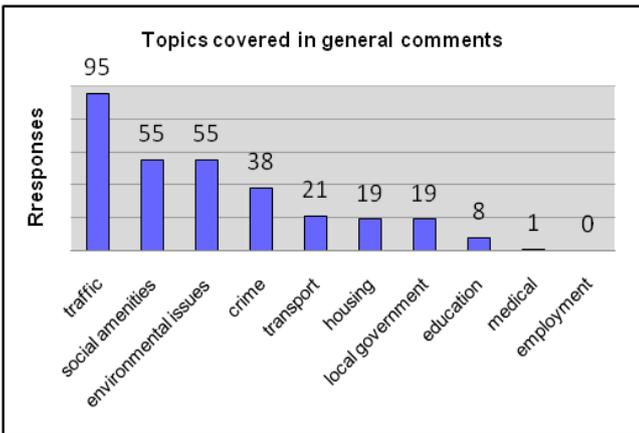


Figure 13.1

More detail on all the responses can be found in section 12 of the full report and all the comments are listed in an annex.

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14 Youth

14.1 Introduction

Of the 970 households which returned a completed questionnaire, 174, almost 20%, house at least one 11-18 year old (a 'youth'). Of these 174 households, 128 returned at least one of the two youth questionnaires included in each main questionnaire and many both; in total there were 158 responses.

In terms of the lives of youths in the village perhaps the most significant influencing factor, considering the size of Willingham, is that there is no village college. Thus, Willingham's social and

educational support for young people has come primarily from outside its boundaries, and its own internal network of services has not had the advantages of a base or concerted support. They have to rely on transport east and west to one or other of the village colleges and within the village they lack the support of sporting or social facilities that a village college affords.

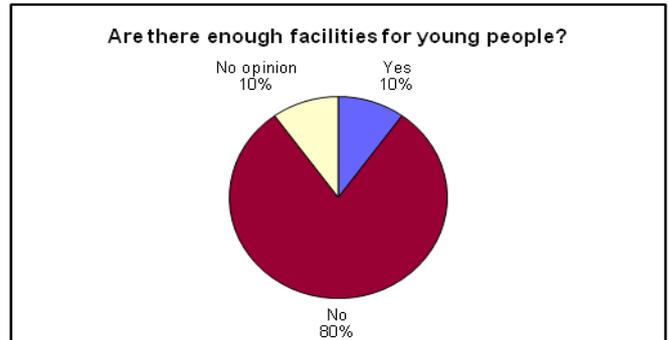


Figure 14.1

Other dedicated youth activity provision in the village is currently limited to weekly Scouts and Guides meetings plus Willingham Wolves football club training sessions and matches. Other sports are available to adults and youth.

A couple of initiatives to set up a youth club in the village have failed, and a weekly visiting 'Connexions Bus' now provides a club facility but for limited hours.

'Young people have nowhere and nothing to do - this is a huge problem that contributes to most of the problems.'

14.2 Results of the Questionnaire

Four in every five responding to the questionnaire requested more facilities, saying that current provision is insufficient to meet the needs of the young people of the village.

The responses to the questionnaire showed overwhelming support for a youth club or centre and a café. There were also 11 requests for an alternative gathering place for young people, described as a shelter or something similar.

There were many requests for specific clubs, societies or facilities.

The interest shown in sport is significant and ranges widely from chess and pool, to the more adventurous and demanding BMX biking and physical and energetic squash. There was a convincing number of requests for a larger sports centre focus.

The requests for a skate park totalled a further 34 and this could be linked with the four BMX suggestions, bringing the total to 38.

Numerous other facilities were requested, such as bus shelters, a shelter on the recreation ground, walk routes and signposts.

'The attitude towards young people, particularly from the Parish Council, needs to be less confrontational.'

When leaving Willingham for leisure, to socialise or play sports, Cambridge is the most favoured destination.

The mode of transport used to get out of the village varied, but by far the most important was being given a lift by car, at 75%. A further 13% use independent transport, of which 8% is by bicycle. Thus private transport is used for the majority of journeys, leaving the use of buses at only 12%.

The present bus system is dismissed emphatically as falling a long way short of requirements. The service is described as inconvenient, infrequent, indirect, expensive and too slow, as well as unsafe (especially after dark), dirty and irregular.

Notwithstanding the general negativity, two key omissions from the existing service were given as no route to Rampton, Cottenham, Impington and Histon and no Sunday timetable.

There were requests by the majority of those responding to the questionnaire for better cycle path facilities and some suggestions for more useable footpaths within the village itself.

Separation from traffic is seen as a priority both in and around the village to improve safety.

40% of the youth respondents expressed worries about intimidation by other youths. The main places cited were One Stop and the Co-op, together with the Recreation Ground. However, it is important to note that over half the youth population reported that they do not feel threatened. A small proportion had no real opinion one way or the other.

Around 60% said they would be prepared to help fundraise for new youth facilities in Willingham. One person commented that they had already been involved in fundraising to no good end result, which was very disappointing and frustrating.

14.3 Key Issues and Proposals

Given that younger people might find questionnaires challenging, threatening or simply boring and place them in a similar category to, say, examinations, homework, etc. the level of response to the questionnaire was encouraging. Indeed, there were responses from a larger percentage of a population than usually elects a government!

The clear message is there are very few activities for young people to get involved in and few facilities to support them.

'Would like to see more involvement in youth activities. The Parish Council is out of touch with residents and should spend time and money on village activities and youth projects.'

A telling request in the facilities section is for 'a place to go and not be moved on'!

The situation is perhaps partly responsible for the level of youth on youth intimidation currently being experienced in all parts of the village.

There is a clear case for more extensive integrated sporting facilities than currently exist within the village.

It is also clear from the responses that the village youth would like to be able to visit or attend a designated place for peer group socialising. These young people are between the ages of child and adult and there is little available in Willingham outside their homes for their age group.

The low usage of buses reflects and highlights the condemnatory comments made about the service. There is considerable support for cycle paths to neighbouring villages. For many this is the most practical form of transport.

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15 Business

15.1 Introduction

The business questionnaire was circulated to 72 businesses that were identified as operating either from or in Willingham. Recipients were asked to return them in an SAE. 26 were returned, representing a response rate of 37%.

15.2 Results of the Questionnaire

90% of the respondents were running businesses in Willingham rather than just using it as a base for the business.

The businesses covered a wide spectrum of activities (see main report).

88% of the respondents employ fewer than ten people, most using a variable mix of part time, full time and self-employed contracting staff.

Almost half of the companies surveyed were considering recruiting new staff in all three roles but with 53% looking for full-time employees and 40% looking for part time. 70% of the respondents reported that they had no problems in recruiting locally.

55% of employees live in Willingham; 45%, therefore, travel into Willingham to work. Of those who live and work in Willingham the roles were fairly evenly split between full and part time.

Type	Number contacted	Number responded
Building firms	9	2
Computing	5	2
Farming	7	0
Financial	6	4
Garage	4	1
Health and Beauty	6	2
Pubs and Restaurants	6	5
Shops	16	5
Taxi	2	0
Misc	11	5

Table 15.1

Provided with the categories of 'Good', 'Okay' and 'Poor', 77% of respondents thought that access by road was okay; 89% said it was okay or good, indicating a high level of satisfaction. Linked to that, 65% also thought that signposting in the village was okay. 23% perceived it as poor.

Conversely 54% thought that access by public transport was poor with no responses saying it was good, indicating a high level of dissatisfaction with those services.

Of the services available to businesses in the village the Post Office was very highly thought of, with 65% rating it as good and 84% as okay or better. There was a similar level of satisfaction with the provision of pubs and restaurants, with 73% rating them as okay and 88% as okay or better; 81% of shops were rated as okay or better.

A large majority of businesses rated waste disposal okay or better, with only 19% rating it of poor quality.

Regarding possible improvements, responses were wide ranging and included calls for better banking facilities and better public transport. There were some requests for more rented accommodation and more affordable housing.

Many cited as a positive benefit of trading in Willingham the location of the village - near to Cambridge but far enough away to avoid the problems of the city. A number commented on the community spirit that exists within the village and pointed to the friendliness of the villagers as being an important element.

83% of respondents thought Willingham a good place to do business with only 4% saying it was not; 9% were undecided and 4% did not answer the question.

The excellent service provided by the Post Office was noted by a number of respondents as was the proximity of a number of populous villages and the good flow of traffic through the village (implying a good flow of potential customers).

Traffic congestion in the village at rush hours was cited as a common problem.

77% of respondents supported the creation of a business park.

15.3 Key Issues and Proposals

The Post Office is an important facility for local businesses and its long-term survival is crucial.

Traffic is an important issue though mixed – through traffic is good for local services but congestion bad for employees and deliveries.

Ways of recruiting local employees could be improved.

A local business park would have support.

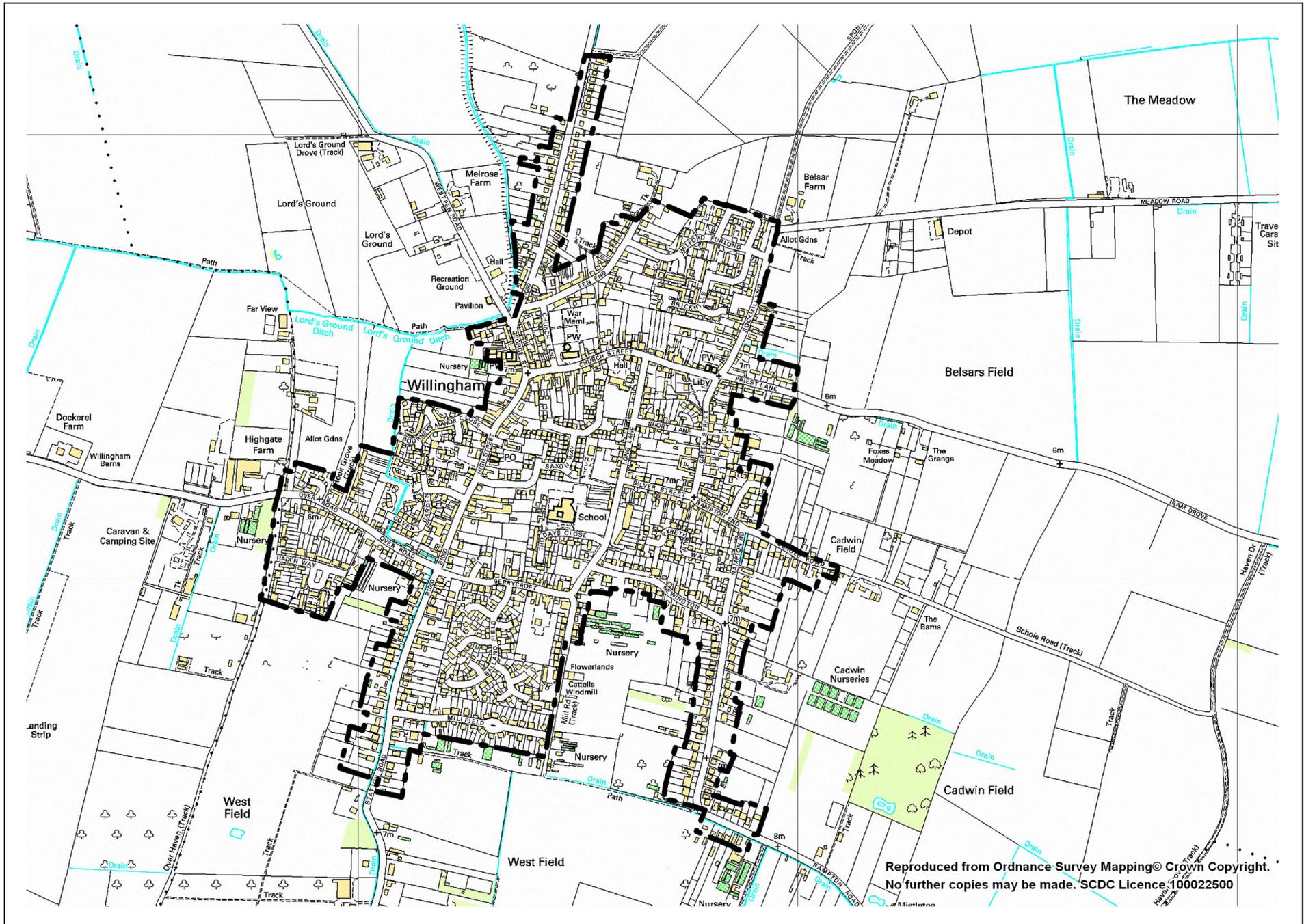
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16 Table of Actions

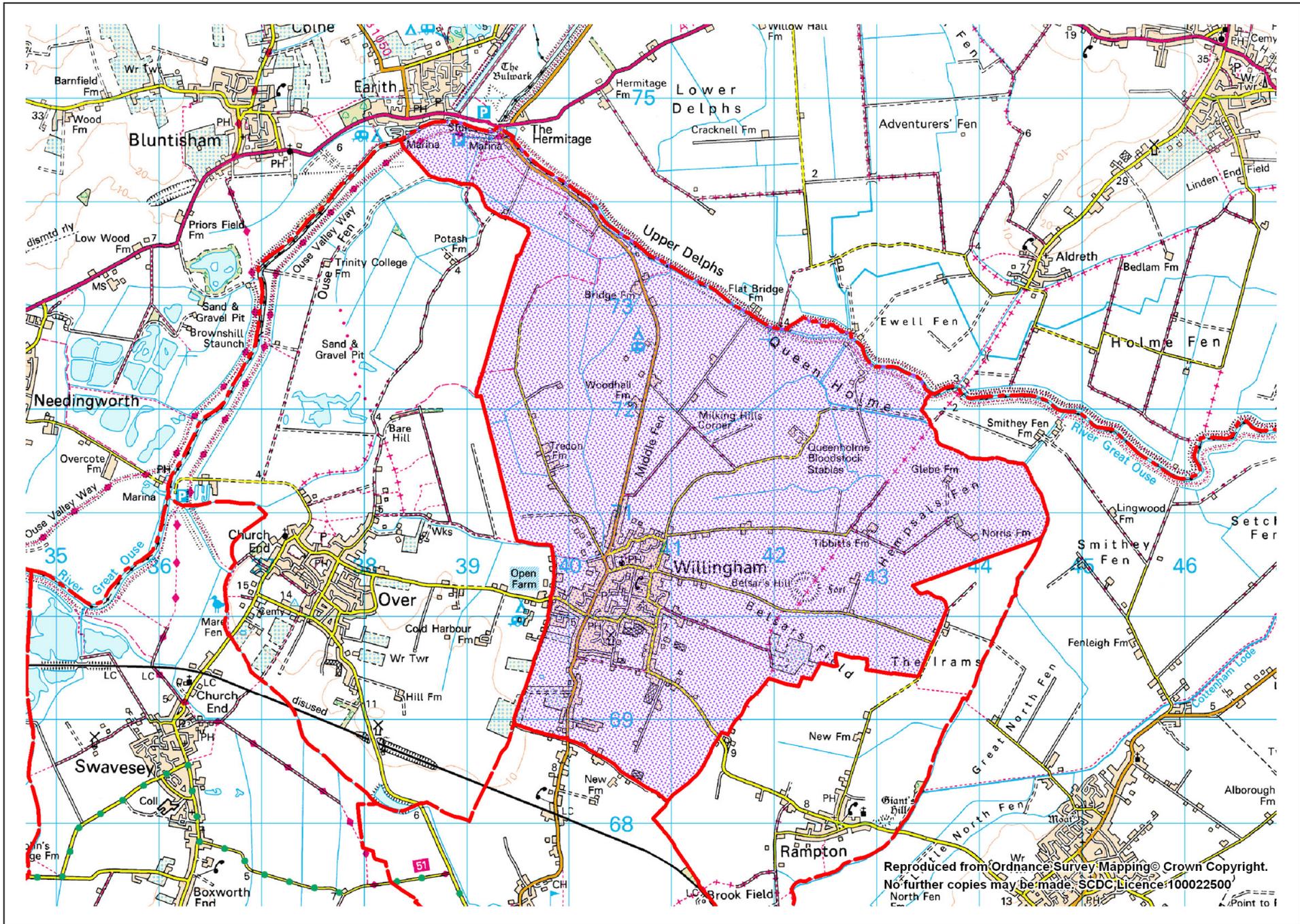
Issue	Action
Traffic	
Speeding vehicles are seen as a major hazard with a risk of injury especially on the B1050; but it is a problem elsewhere in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Measures urgently required to reduce traffic speeds, including the provision of traffic calming' especially along the B1050 b) Police to take action to ensure drivers keep to speed limits
Parked cars are perceived to increase the risk of accidents at a number of sites within the village including Over Road, High Street and Thodays Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider parking restrictions at high risk sites b) Ask businesses with car parks to encourage patrons to use them c) Look at new parking areas in High Street d) Primary School to take action to encourage parents not to deliver/collect children by car
B1050 traffic volume (mainly HGVs) exceeds DoT recommendations, and so reduces the quality of life of residents, creates danger, causes delay and increases flood risk by damage to the embankment of the Old West River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Carry out an in-depth traffic survey to assess the impact of high traffic volumes, including the potential additional impact of the development of Northstowe, and hence the need for a Willingham bypass b) In the meantime consider how to reduce the volume of traffic, especially HGVs, by for instance the imposition of weight restrictions and traffic calming
There are various traffic dangers spots owing to poor road surface, and layout and visibility at junctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Alter camber and drainage at George Street/Earith Road junction to eliminate surface water near bend b) Review provision for turning traffic at High street/Over Road crossroads c) Improve visibility at: Haden Way/Over Road; Newington/Rampton Road; Millfield/Station Road; Covent Garden/ High Street; Co-op car park; Newington/Long Lane
Access on foot to the shops at Highgate Farm is unsafe owing to lack of pavement	Consider extending pavement on Over Road to Highgate Farm
There is inadequate provision for safe cycling both within the village and to neighbouring ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider how cycling could be made more safe within the village b) Make new cycle lanes from Willingham to both Rampton and Over and Guided Busway to centre of Longstanton c) Encourage continued cycling proficiency training at school
Crime	
Residents consider the level of crime, and particularly anti-social behaviour, unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) More frequent police presence, especially at night and in areas with higher rates of crime and anti-social behaviour b) Improve communication between residents and police, e.g. encourage them to attend the Police Forum meetings c) Encourage improved crime reporting so that there is a better understanding of the incidence of crime d) Consider provision of a venue for young people that gives them something to do and a place to meet with friends – warm, friendly and light and open throughout the week e) Consider increased lighting in poorly lit areas such as Long Lane, the Recreation Ground and Ploughman Hall area, alleyway between Haden Way and Over Road
Rowdy behaviour outside pubs creates a noise nuisance for residents	All pub landlords should take effective steps to ensure patrons are considerate to nearby residents when leaving

Housing	
Residents are concerned that further housing development within Willingham will put an unacceptable pressure on existing infrastructure and create urban sprawl. However, a need for more affordable housing for local people was accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All planning applications should continue to address impact on traffic flow and local services such as the school b) Uphold the rule that 40% of new houses are affordable c) Develop affordable housing within the village envelope d) Guidelines for housing mix in new developments should include a higher proportion of one and two bedroom houses than in the Development Control Policy e) Consider creating a Green Belt
Employment	
Willingham is a commuter village for Cambridge but many residents would like to work more locally	The support of residents for a small business area within the village should be taken into account when planning applications are considered
Transport	
Provision of public transport for Willingham is seen as inadequate. It should improve for some journeys when the Guided Busway becomes operational but not all. It is important the Busway is a success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider new services to villages not served by the Guided Bus, particularly Cottenham and Rampton b) Provision of more public transport such as a shuttle bus between the village and the Longstanton Park and Ride c) Improved communication with residents on the service to be provided by the Guided Busway
Social Amenities	
There is a wide range of amenities but no proper community centre	Investigate ways in which the Ploughman Hall could be improved to possibly provide a community centre
There is a perception that there should be more community events, more sports facilities, and they should be better advertised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Set up a residents' committee to promote a wider range of village activities e.g. markets, sports events and a carnival b) The Sports Council or a similar body should consider the requirements and feasibility for new sports facilities c) Encourage information on all events and facilities to be put on a village website and in <i>Willingham News</i>
Medical	
The Medical Practice provides excellent services, but some services could be more widely available	Explore the possibility of more clinic provision, e.g. obesity, family planning, and patient-purchased services where there are long waits, such as physiotherapy
There is room for even better communication between the Practice and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Publicise further services already available such as well-woman/man clinics. b) Publicise e.g. cost of using A&E c) Encourage more first responders
Education	
Pre- and primary school education is highly regarded. The few concerns involve class size or lack of space, which are being addressed	The education authority is asked to ensure that sufficient places exist for children of the village to attend the village schools.
There is a desire for more adult education provision in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore the opportunity to provide more adult education courses in Willingham and assess requirements b) Raise awareness of the courses taking place in Willingham
Environmental Issues	
While much has been done to reduce litter and dog mess, more is needed to improve the general appearance and ambience of the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain the duties of the litter-picker b) Advertise how to report fly tipping and encourage residents to act c) Mount anti-litter campaigns and encourage responsible dog ownership
Residents would be willing to recycle more if facilities were available in Willingham	<p>Investigate the possibility of providing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilities for recycling print cartridges, batteries, paint, etc. b) Collections of items for the household recycling centre

Many pavements are in a poor condition or blocked by parked cars	a) Perform an audit of pavements as a basis for improvements b) Parking illegally on pavements should be better policed
Provision of footpaths for leisure and cycleways along the routes out of the village could be improved	Investigate specific measures for improvements
There is a lack of open spaces (including a nature reserve), play areas and trees	a) Investigate sites suitable for play areas or open spaces and determine what types of play areas are needed in which locations b) Appoint a tree warden, and seek volunteers to carry out a tree survey and assess possible sites for planting trees c) Explore feasibility of and likely sites for a nature reserve
There is a resurgence of interest in allotments	a) Better advertising for the renting of allotments b) Contribute article to <i>Willingham News</i> 'Allotments past and present'
Local Government and Information Services	
Many residents were not satisfied with the quality of communications with the Parish, District or County Councils	a) WPC, SCDC and CCC should investigate ways of showing that they listen to the views of residents b) WPC should investigate other means of communication c) WPC should investigate re-siting the noticeboard or having additional ones
Northstowe	
Many residents expressed concern about the impact that Northstowe and its construction would have on Willingham	Planning authority should a) Undertake a traffic survey regarding the impact on traffic on the B1050 both during and post development b) Ensure provision of infrastructure keeps pace with development c) Provide an assurance that open land between Northstowe and Willingham will be preserved d) Adequately address the problem of flooding
Youth	
The youth of Willingham are keen to have more facilities to express and enjoy themselves within the village	The provision of the following should be explored: a youth club/drop-in centre/café, dedicated building on Ploughman Hall site, an all-weather sports pitch, tennis courts, a skate park, a swimming pool, an integrated indoor sports facility to cover multiple sports, a shelter and seating on the Recreation Ground
Some young people fear intimidation by others	a) The police are asked to provide enhanced support and liaison particularly in key areas and in the evening b) Provide better street lighting in key areas and walking routes that are currently poorly lit
The poor provision of public transport in the village is a particular concern of the youth of the village who have limited personal transport	a) Improve frequency and timetabling of service, including evening and Sunday provision b) Provide service to Cottenham c) Provide bus shelters at all stops
Younger people would like to see provision of improved road safety	a) Cycle paths to Rampton, Over and Longstanton b) Crossing by school bus stop on Station Road
Business	
Willingham is seen as a good place to do business. Those businesses surveyed wish to remain here and expand.	a) Ensure long term survival of the Willingham Post Office b) Address the feasibility of a dedicated business park c) Ensure that businesses are kept informed and have input into the debate and campaign for a village bypass d) Establish a 'situations vacant' section in <i>Willingham News</i>



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