



MILCOMBE PARISH ACTION PLAN





FOREWORD

The concept of producing a Parish Action Plan for Milcombe was born over 4 years ago, following my attendance at a Parish Plan Workshop at Kidlington in May 2004, and, at long last, the Plan has finally been produced.

It is the product of much hard work and commitment by a small band of dedicated parishioners and I hope the village as a whole is pleased with the result. It is, of course, only the beginning; the work will now commence on the implementation of those actions which you have deemed important and the Parish Council will be striving to achieve as many positive outcomes as possible. All the Parish Councillors are totally committed to build on the community cohesion and preservation of the environment of our village.

Our grateful thanks are due in a number of areas: first and foremost to Ivor Howse and his small band of dedicated supporters on the Steering Group, for all their sterling work in making this Plan possible; secondly to Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Cherwell District Council and Milcombe Parish Council for making available grants totalling £2,000; thirdly to ORCC, CDC and Oxfordshire County Council for their encouragement, advice and support, and last, but by no means, least to all those households, a magnificent 74%, who completed the Questionnaire, upon which this Plan is based.

This is a plan for Milcombe for the next 10 years or so – *please read it!*

Cliff Potter – Chairman of the Parish Council
March 2009



INTRODUCTION

As much emphasis was being placed on the importance of Parish Action Plans in planning aspects and future development of small rural communities, the Parish Council decided in 2005 to encourage the formation of a Steering Group, with the aim of ultimately producing an Action Plan for Milcombe. Ivor Howse volunteered to progress this formation and, following an Open Meeting in the Village Hall in October 2005, a Steering Group Committee was formed. This initially comprised:

Ivor Howse	Chairman
Jenni Ferguson	Secretary
Susan Grant	Treasurer
June Humphrey	
Maggie Gibson	
Phil Miles	
Sylvia Warren	
Cliff Potter	Advisor

Regrettably Jenni Ferguson and June Humphrey moved away from the area and they were replaced by Susan and Paul Richardson.

Grants were made available from ORCC (£1,375), CDC (£500) and the Parish Council (£125), making a total of £2,000.

Various events were held to collect information on issues of interest and concern to the community, both young and old. These included “post boxes” in various locations, an Open Day in the Village Hall, a village walk and a village history quiz in the Horse & Groom.

The collected information formed the basis of the questionnaire which was delivered, with The Dove, to 247 households at the beginning of April 2007, and 183 were collected a fortnight later, giving a very creditable return of 74%.

The results were analysed to form the basis of the Action Plan.



THE VILLAGE OF MILCOMBE

A community has existed in Milcombe since Anglo Saxon times and possibly before, as there is evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlements within a short distance from the village. The name itself is derived from the Anglo Saxon, **Midelcube**, meaning “middle valley”. Milcombe appears in the Domesday Book, at one time had two manor houses and was, for a time, part of the Bishop of Winchester’s estate.

Up until 1860 it was a chapelry of Bloxham, then, with the rebuilding of the church and the construction of the rectory (now Milcombe House), it became a parish in its own right and has remained so ever since.

For hundreds of years, Milcombe was basically a farming community with most of the population, around 200, being employed on the land. After the 2nd World War there were around seven farms within the village envelope. In the mid 1950s major housing development started, first in Bloxham Road, then Portland Road, New Road and Newcombe Close. When completed this virtually doubled the population. To cater for this large increase in the resident population, mains water came to the village in 1955, followed by a sewerage system in 1959.

Further development has been carried out in the last 30 years i.e. Church Lane/Barlow Close, The Green, Heath Close and Dovecote Close, and today the population stands at around 650.

With this significant increase in population came a change in the socio-economic structure. By the late 1960s all the farms within the village had disappeared and most people worked outside the immediate area, or were retired. Nevertheless a significant part of the present population was born in Milcombe and some had 2nd and 3rd generation ancestors living in the village.

Today the village, albeit a mix of old and new, is well integrated socially and there is a good community spirit. It also has retained a number of services, the Church, an Inn, a village hall and a shop, although regrettably the Post Office closed some 18 months ago.



QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaire was delivered to 247 households in the village and 183 were completed, giving a response of 74% based on households, which is equivalent to 69% based on population.

The percentages quoted are based on the total number of questionnaires returned i.e. households, not population.

The statistical questions yielded the following:

Total adults (18 or over) in responding households	346
Total youths (under 18) in responding households	87

Residency in Milcombe	0-5 years	22.5%
	5-10 years	14.5%
	10-15 years	10.5%
	15-20 years	7.5%
	Over 20 years	45.0%

Data on the responses regarding the use of amenities will be reported directly to the organisations concerned.



Leisure, Youth Activities and Play Area

QUESTION *How important is the provision of a recreation area for games such as football?*

RESULT 75% of adults and 100% of the youth sector considered this important.

ACTION Actively investigate suitable areas for recreation e.g. football, including the feasibility of provision of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) either within the existing Play Area or at another location.

QUESTION *Should the Play Area and other recreation facilities be situated in a more central position in the village?*

RESULT 48% of adults and 54% of the youth sector considered the location should be more central.

ACTION Investigate the possibility of situating an extended Play Area in a more central location e.g. the South end of Low Field.

QUESTION *What additional play facilities should be provided, in addition to a Teen Shelter and combined goal/ basket ball unit already being considered?*

RESULT Out of the suggested facilities only a Seesaw (27%) and Climbing Wall/Tower (26%) gained any significant support from the Youth sector.

ACTION Proceed with implementation of provision of Teen Shelter and consider upgrading of combined unit to a full Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).



QUESTION *What clubs and facilities for young people would you support in the village?*

RESULT The largest support, 38% youth and 27% adults, was for a Youth Club, followed by Brownies and Basketball. Response to assist in the organisation was very low.

ACTION Request volunteers via The Dove, etc.

QUESTION *Apart from the annual Fete, what other village activity would you support?*

RESULT A village/parish walk attracted interest from 41% of the responses, and a sports/social activity 38%.

ACTION Develop the village walk, designed as part of the PAP publicity, and investigate the possibility of “designing” a parish boundary walk. Canvas interested parties e.g. Fete Committee, regarding an annual sports activity and social event.

QUESTION *Apart from the existing Gardening and Senior Citizens Clubs, what other adult activities would you support?*

RESULT Interest in a WI branch was 27%, a Cinema Club 26%, an History Club 22% and a Biking Club 14%.

ACTION Request volunteers via The Dove, etc.



Traffic, Public Highways and Footpaths

QUESTION *Do you consider speeding to be a problem on any of the village roads?*

RESULT Bloxham Road/Main Road: Yes 77%, No 11%.
New Road: Yes 51%, No 17%. Horton Lane: Yes 14%. No 28%.

ACTION Discuss remedial measures with OCC and Thames Valley Police and develop plan to actively discourage speeding in Bloxham, Main and New Roads.

QUESTION *Would you favour the installation of traffic calming measures?*

RESULT Opinion was equally divided with regard to chicanes and speed bumps, but 60% were in favour of solar powered warning signs.

ACTION Investigate the possibility of including warning signs in the plan to discourage speeding.

QUESTION *Would you wish to see a pedestrian crossing in Bloxham Road/Main Road?*

RESULT Yes 47%, No 53%.

ACTION Not a priority but possibly considered as part of a speed reduction and road safety initiative.



QUESTION *How do you feel about vehicles parking on pavements and grass verges within the village?*

RESULT 64% disapproved, 23% had no opinion and 4% approved.

ACTION Initiate discussions with CDC and OCC regarding relevant local legislation.

QUESTION *As there have been problems with parking associated with Church and Village Hall activities, do you consider the provision of a small car park within the village would be a useful amenity?*

RESULT Yes 79%, No 19%.

ACTION Investigate potential sites for a small car park adjacent to the Church/Village Hall.

QUESTION *What is your opinion of the general state of repair of the footpaths within the village?*

RESULT Bloxham Road/Main Road considered poor by 71%; New Road by 72%.

ACTION Continue to lobby OCC to bring these footpaths up to a reasonable standard.

QUESTION *In view of the serious problems for pedestrians and cyclists travelling between Milcombe and Bloxham, are you in favour of a footpath/cycle way between the two villages?*

RESULT 94% were in favour.



ACTION

Initiate a campaign to persuade OCC to accept the need for such a facility.



QUESTION *Do you consider the street lighting within the village should be improved?*

RESULT Yes 46%, No 48%.

ACTION Not a priority.

QUESTION *If additional bus services were provided early in the morning and late in the evening, would you use them?*

RESULT Adults: Yes 22%, No 64%.
Youth: Yes 36%, No 31%.

ACTION Interest is unlikely to be high enough to influence the Bus Company or OCC.



Services

QUESTION *Do you consider there should be a bus shelter at the bus stop by New Road Stores?*

RESULT Yes 62%, No 27%.

ACTION Discuss provision with CDC.

QUESTION *How often do you use the village shop?*

RESULT Adults: Daily 31%, Weekly 21%, Seldom 41%, Never 5%.

Youth: Daily 20%, Weekly 8%, Seldom 15%, Never 1%.

ACTION Results noted; no action to be taken.

QUESTION *Do you believe there should be additional retail facilities in the village?*

RESULT Yes 32%, No 59%. 22% considered a Post Office to be necessary.

ACTION Not a priority.

QUESTION *If the post box in Horton Lane is sealed or removed, where should it be re-located?*

RESULT Of those who responded, 60% were for Main Road/Church Lane area, 24% for The Green area and 16% for Horton Lane /Crossroads area.

**ACTION**

Post Office to be informed that junction of Main Street and Church Lane is the preferred location.

QUESTION *Do you consider that the post boxes should be capable of accepting larger envelopes?*

RESULT

Yes 71%, No 18%.

ACTION

The Post Office to be requested to provide the replacement post box with a wider and deeper opening.

Housing

QUESTION *Following the survey carried out in February 2006, do you still believe there is a need for affordable housing for young people or elderly people within the village?*

RESULT

For young people: Yes 63%, No 21%.

For elderly people: Yes 54%, No 24%.

ACTION

Initiate further discussions with ORCC.



Local Amenities

QUESTION *Which village facilities are important to you?*

RESULT All of these were considered important especially by adults: Shop 86%, Village Hall 76%, Pub 72%, and Church 67%.

ACTION Report findings to the various institutions.

QUESTION *With specific regard to St. Lawrence's Church, which facilities are important to you?*

RESULT Most people thought help for those in need (62%) and historic preservation (61%) were important with regard to the Church. Over half felt the opportunity for baptisms, weddings and funerals (58%) and for worship (51%) were important, but only 36% thought Christian teaching was important.

ACTION Report findings to Parochial Church Council.

QUESTION *What additional Village Hall facilities would you use?*

RESULT Out of the suggested facilities only an emergency telephone (25%) and a Youth Club (34%) gained any significant support

ACTION Report findings to Village Hall Committee.



Social Problems and Security

QUESTION *Which do you find a problem: Vandalism, Antisocial behaviour, Litter, or Dog fouling?*

RESULT The problems which worried most people were: Litter (44%) and Dog fouling (39%). 33% (38% of youth) were worried about vandalism, and 32% (youth 38%) by antisocial behaviour. 69% of adults thought there should be more litter bins, and 51% that there should be more dog bins.

ACTION Discuss concerns with Neighbourhood Action Group.
Consider additional locations for litter and dog bins.

QUESTION *What do you think is the best way of preventing vandalism and antisocial behaviour?*

RESULT Most people (65%) thought the best way to prevent vandalism and antisocial behaviour was to provide more activities for young people, plus possibly police patrols (60%).

ACTION Discuss the formation of a Youth Club and call for volunteers.



Environment and Conservation

QUESTION *Which areas in the parish do you think most important to be conserved?*

RESULT A large majority felt it was important to conserve all the areas mentioned i.e. Low Field 71%, Horton Lane 71%, The Close 68%, Fern Hill 63%.

ACTION Consider plans for a Conservation Area within the village.

QUESTION *Would you like to see more trees planted?*

RESULT 78% wanted to see more trees.

ACTION Develop a plan for additional tree planting.

QUESTION *Would you like to see the existing rights of way made more accessible?*

RESULT 77% would like to see all rights of way made more accessible.

ACTION Develop a plan to improve all aspects of accessibility of rights of way.



Enjoyment of the Village

QUESTION *Which ideas would you be interested in?*

RESULT 23% said they would be interested in a Recipe Book, 41% in a Village Calendar, 56% in a Walk Brochure, 36% in Openings of the Dovecote, 28% in a Village Website, and 45% in a Welcome Pack for new residents.

ACTION Report results and request volunteers to organize these projects.

QUESTION *Would you support a memorial to people who have made a major contribution to the village?*

RESULT 45% were in favour of such a memorial. 23% were in favour of a Book and 22% in favour of a Roll of Honour.

ACTION Report results and request volunteers to form a working group.

Health and Wellbeing – “Good Neighbour”

QUESTION *Would you be prepared to volunteer to help others in the village?*

RESULT 21% said they would volunteer Transport, and 48% that they would volunteer to do shopping. Very few expressed an interest in being on a



trade register, although Milcombe is particularly well endowed with very competent tradesmen.

ACTION

Report findings.

THE PARISH ACTION PLAN

This is the Action Plan that the Parish Council, in association with other “partners”, will endeavour to implement over the next few years.

Monitoring will be carried out by the Lead Partner and information will be disseminated through statutory committee meetings, the Dove and the village notice board.



TOPIC	ACTION	PRIORITY	PARTNERS	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Provision of Recreation Area	Determine suitability of Multi Use Games Area sited in Play Area. Select suitable agencies and apply for grant funding.	High	Milcombe PC Oxon CC Cherwell DC	12 – 18 months	MUGA can be sited in Play Area. Cost will be approx £35,000.
Central Location for Play/Recreation Area	Ascertain suitable area for relocation. Discuss feasibility of lease or purchase with landowner. Select suitable agencies and apply for grant funding.	Medium	Milcombe PC Cherwell DC Landowner	Long Term	
Provision of Clubs and other activities for young people	Advertise for volunteers to run Youth Club, etc.	Medium to Low	Milcombe PC Village Hall Committee	6-9 months	
Development of Village and/or Parish Boundary Walk	Select suitable routes. Discuss with landowners. Discuss production of leaflet with District Council	Medium	Milcombe PC Landowner Cherwell DC	12 months	A village walk already detailed as part of advertising the PAP.
Reduction of Speeding in Main, Bloxham and New Roads	Discuss the problem with the police and the County Council. Determine a plan of action.	High	Milcombe PC Thames Valley Police (NAG) Oxon CC	6 months	Discussions taken place in the Neighbourhood Action Group. Police to carry out speed enforcement with “speed gun”.
Provision of traffic calming measures	Ascertain suitability and costs of illuminated warning signs and chicanes	High to Medium	Milcombe PC Oxon CC	1-2 years	
Car Parking	Discuss the problem of parking on pavements and grass verges with the District and County Councils and formulate a plan of action. Investigate potential sites for a small car park adjacent to the Church/Village Hall. Discuss feasibility of lease or purchase with landowner.	High	Milcombe PC Cherwell DC Oxon CC	6-12 months	
		High	Milcombe PC Cherwell DC Oxon CC Landowner	1-2 years	



TOPIC	ACTION	PRIORITY	PARTNERS	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Footpaths	Discuss with Oxfordshire Highways a plan of action to improve the condition of the footways along Main, Bloxham and New Roads.	High	Milcombe PC Oxon CC	1-2 years	Relaying of the footways in Bloxham Road, New Road up to Portland Road and The Green took place in Q1 2009.
	Discuss with Oxfordshire Highways the feasibility of providing a combined footway and cycle track from Milcombe to Bloxham along the Bloxham Road and the A361.	High	Milcombe PC Oxon CC	Long Term	
Social/Affordable Housing for young and old within the Parish	Engage with the Rural Housing Enabler and the District Council to prepare a plan to promote provision of social housing.	High	Milcombe PC ORCC Cherwell DC	Long Term	
Bus shelter in New Road	Discuss provision with the District Council and County Council. Investigate likely areas of funding.	High to Medium	Milcombe PC Cherwell DC Oxon CC	12 months	
Relocation of Post Box in Horton Lane	Inform Royal Mail of preferred site Request that relocated box has capacity to accept A4 envelopes and small packages	High High	Milcombe PC Royal Mail	3 months	This action has been completed. A larger capacity post box has been installed at the junction of Church Lane and Main Road.
Vandalism and Antisocial Behaviour	Discuss within the Neighbourhood Action Group, ways of preventing this type of behaviour, particularly police patrols in the evening. Promote interest in the formation of a Youth Club.	Medium	Milcombe PC Police (NAG)	6-12 months	
		Medium	Milcombe PC Village Hall Committee	6-12 months	



TOPIC	ACTION	PRIORITY	PARTNERS	TIMESCALE	PROGRESS
Litter and Dog Fouling	Determine additional locations for litter bins and type of bin required.	High	Milcombe PC	6-9 months	An informal litter pick is already held in March every year. An additional dog bin has been installed at the end of the footpath alongside The Green.
	Promote regular collection of litter and formation of a formal "Litter Pick" group.	Medium	Milcombe PC	6-12 months	
	Determine location(s) for additional dog bin(s)	Medium to High	Milcombe PC	6-9 months	
Conservation and Environment	Set up a working group to develop a plan for a conservation area, particularly in the Eastern end of the village.	High	Milcombe PC Cherwell DC	Long Term	
	Select suitable area and develop a tree planting plan.	High	Milcombe PC	1-2 years	
	Develop a plan of action with OCC Rights of Way to improve access, stiles/gates and way marking of local footpaths and bridleways.	High	Milcombe PC Oxon CC	Long Term	
	Apply to OCC for reinstatement of any "lost" rights of way.	Medium	Milcombe PC Oxon CC	Long Term	
Information to provide interest and enjoyment of the village	Arrange for individuals/groups to produce: Village calendar Walk brochure Welcome Pack	Medium	Milcombe PC	12 months	An embryonic website for the village has been set up.
Village "Memorial"	Set up a working group to determine nature and content	Medium to Low	Milcombe PC	12 months	