



Lodes Cottage



The Three Horseshoes Pub



Rooks Grove Farm House

Wistow Parish Plan



Porch House



Kingston House



Manor Farm



Porch House



Wistow Bridge



The Village Hall



Church of St. John the Baptist

August 2005

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Shailesh Vara MP
North West Cambridgeshire



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

John Green, Esq., OBE
Chairman,
Wistow Parish Plan Committee,
Ashlea,
Chuch Street,
Wistow, Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE28 2QE

30th August, 2005

Dear Mr Green

I was pleased to attend the Wistow Plan open day on 11th June and having read through the draft plan, I would like to endorse this endeavour to enhance life in the village.

It is clear that much hard work has gone into producing the Plan, and it will provide a good basis for the Parish Council to work with the District and County Councils for the benefit of residents.

You and your Committee, along with all those who contributed to the Plan should be congratulated on your efforts and I look forward to following the Plan's progress.

I trust you will not hesitate to contact me if you feel that there is anything that I can do to assist you.

Yours sincerely

Shailesh Vara

WISTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Please reply to:
David Titmarsh (Clerk), Taycroft, Mill Road, Wistow, Huntingdon, PE28 2QQ
(01487 822517)

August 2005

Dear Fellow Wistow Resident,

Wistow Parish Plan

When the Parish Council initiated the process of producing a Parish Plan for Wistow some two years ago it was done with a high degree of hope and optimism. Well, now it has been finalised, and I'm sure that you will agree with me when I say that it is an excellent and high quality piece of work. On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank and congratulate all the people who contributed to its development.

It is also very pleasing that so many of you took the trouble to complete the questionnaire, and also turned out in force for the open day held in the village hall in June.

During the production of the plan the Parish Council deliberately took a back seat, in order to avoid influencing the views of the working party and to ensure that emerging themes were neither greeted with disproportionate enthusiasm nor smothered at birth. On 9th August a special meeting of the Parish Council received a presentation of the plan from members of the Parish Plan Action Group, and then on 25th August the Parish Council formally approved the plan and assumed the role of taking the actions forward.

So, here it is. This is now official, and it will be pursued in line with the timescales shown in the plan for each of the various issues.

It is clear that there is a lot of work to be done and that the Parish Council alone will not be able to handle it all. It is also clear that some of the issues are likely to prove difficult to resolve and will require hard work and dedication.

With this in mind, volunteers are now actively being sought who are keen to be involved in some way in taking the actions forward, and I would urge you to respond to the attached questionnaire and indicate which action (or actions) you would like to be involved in. Let's make this a true community effort to improve our village.

JOHN DRANSFIELD
Chairman, Wistow Parish Council

INTRODUCTION

The government is encouraging parishes to develop their own Parish Plan.

The aim is to give small rural communities a better opportunity to run their own affairs and to set out a vision to guide future decision-making and actions.

The plan is designed to cover everything of relevance including social, economic and environmental issues to all who live in the village. Great care has been taken to ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the plan and that it addressed the needs and wishes of the entire community.

Key elements of the participative process have been the circulation of a questionnaire to every household and holding an open day where villagers could discuss issues. Both of these initiatives were very well supported. Support was also forthcoming from politicians at local and national level.

The report and action plan have been fully endorsed by the Parish Council. The actions will require the full support and participation of the whole community if we are to deliver the benefits we all hope will flow from this initiative.

John Green (Chairman of Parish Plan Committee)

Committee Members:

John Green (Chairman)

Henry Franklin

Ted Benson

Carol MacInnes

Richard Coles

John Wadsworth

Jean Duke

John Wiltshire

Peter Wingad - Seconded for analysis of survey results and preparation of reports

Our thanks go to:

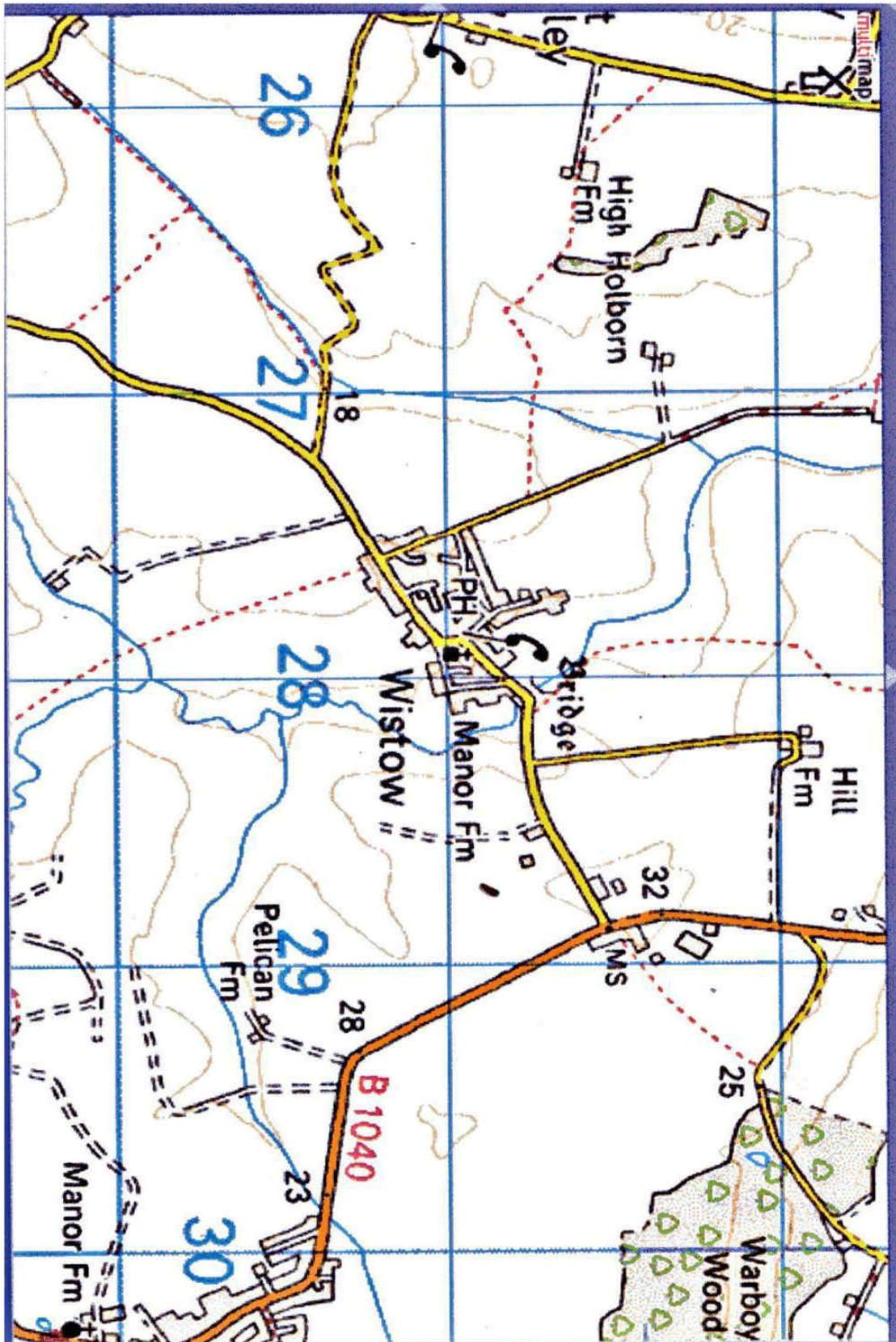
The Countryside Agency

Cambridgeshire ACRE

Huntingdon District Council

Wistow Parish Council

Parishioners of Wistow for their help and co-operation



HISTORIC WISTOW



View of the main village of Wistow from Wistow Toll

The parish of Wistow consists of a strip of land of approximately 2,400 acres and some four miles long running northeast and southwest and varying in breadth. Approximately 1,800 acres are arable land, including fen and some 400 acres are pasture.

It is bisected by the main road between Ramsey and Warboys, with slightly more than half of the parish, including the church and the main village, nestling in a shallow valley on the west side of this road. A brook, which rises in Abbots Ripton, crosses Kings Ripton and empties into the fen drainage system in Ramsey, skirts the village. A stone arched bridge dating from the 16th/17th century crosses the brook on the east side of the village.

The parish is traditionally a farming community and still has six working farms within the parish boundary, three of which are within a few hundred yards of the church in the centre of the main village area. Although the major part of the parish population resides in the village, there are two other small settlements, one at Wistow Toll, and the other at Wistow Fen.

Brief History

At the time of the Domesday survey (1086) it was recorded that Wistow had a wood measuring approximately 3 miles long by 1.5 miles broad. This wood was leased for “pannage” (pasturage for pigs for payment). It is likely that “Rolts Wood” at the western end and “Wistow Wood” at the eastern end are the remaining extremities of the original wood. For many centuries, the villagers used timber from the wood for building, fencing and firewood.

The Domesday survey also records that Wistow, assessed at “nine hides” (1,350 acres) with a value of £8, had a church, a priest and a mill. This indicates that it was a place of some importance at that time.

The earliest reference to the existence of Wistow pre-dates the founding of Ramsey Abbey about 969AD. At that time Wistow (then known as Kingestune) belonged to King Edgar and was included with the manors of Bury and Little Raveley.

According to the Ramsey Chronicler, Oswald, the Archbishop of York and friend of Aylwin (the founder of Ramsey Abbey), bought Kingestune from King Edgar, and gifted it to Ramsey Abbey. However, it would seem that the distance of Wistow from the Abbey and its propensity for flooding became an inconvenience to the monks. In the early part of the 12th century a church was built on the high ground at Bury and Bury then assumed the role of most importance in the area of Kingestune. Wistow became a chapelry of Bury – a church subordinate to the parish church. Revenues from Wistow manor went to support the “cellarer” (provisions officer) at Ramsey Abbey. The Abbot of Ramsey retained a degree of control over the behaviour of the villagers in Wistow including the use of the gallows when deemed necessary!

Wistow manor remained in the possession of the Abbey until the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539 when, along with Ramsey and other manors, it was granted to Richard Williams alias “Cromwell”.



Wistow had strong links with Oliver Cromwell in that his sister, Anna, and her husband John Sewster, lived in Wistow and had six children baptised between 1631 - 1644.

Industry

Wistow retains its tradition as a farming community even though only a very small percentage of parishioners actually work on the land.

A windmill, used by tenants of Wistow, Upwood and the two Raveleys, is mentioned in a survey of 1252. The mill was situated approximately a mile from the church on the south side of the road leading from Wistow to Kings Ripton. A replacement mill was built in about 1850 on the same site as the original, but some time later the sails were removed, and it was driven by a portable steam engine and later, a crude-oil engine. It is believed that the millstones are presently located at Mill House and Rooks Grove Farm. Milling was an important activity within the village for many centuries until the early 1900's. The bulk of the windmill was dismantled during the 1939 - 45 war so as not to impede the take-off and landing of aircraft using Warboys airfield.

There were formerly two brickworks in the parish, one of which, near the village, has been disused since the middle of the nineteenth century. The other, at Shillow, was closed at the end of the 19th century.

Although agriculture is effectively the only industry within the parish, most of the working parishioners are employed in the surrounding towns or commute to London.

Local Facilities

Wistow Parish facilities are restricted to the Church, a Village Hall, a playing field and the local pub.

A Village School, built in 1845 to accommodate 55 children was reported to have supported as many as 72 children in 1910. This school however closed in about 1950, and was converted into a dwelling now known as "Shottes".



Wistow Post Office

Similarly the village Post Office/Shop was converted to a dwelling as recently as 2001



The Village Hall was originally built in the Victorian era as a Congregational Chapel and was designed to seat 90 persons. The building and its facilities have now been significantly upgraded for its use as a Village Hall. However, present day legislation relating to the safe use of public buildings somewhat limits the usage.

Despite the limitations, the Village Hall is still used to accommodate a “Parents and Toddlers” group, a “Friendship Group”, a thriving WI Group and several other informal functions.



“The Three Horseshoes” is the one surviving pub in the village, although it is reported that at one time there were as many as seven!

Other buildings that were pubs have now been converted to dwellings:

“**Fleur de Lis**” on Church Street was serving drinks until the 1950’s. The building originally

had stabling and was used to store the village hearse.

“**The Cottage**” on Church Street was originally “The Chequers” owned by the Falcon Brewery of Huntingdon. This pub closed in 1933.

“**The Old Plough**” on Church Street ceased to be a public house in 1954. In this pub, beer was served from the cellar. Depressions made by dart players’ feet are still visible in the living room floor. In an outside “hovel”, an unusual game of skittles was played and the skittle board is still let into the floor. The game involved knocking over four three foot high skittles with a large wooden block.

“**The Cottage**” on Bridge Street, next to where the Post Office used to be, was a pub called “The Oddfellows”.

“**Toll Farm**” at Wistow Toll was a pub called “The Exhibition”.

“**Ross House**” on Church Street was a pub called “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and was trading as such in the 1890’s. However, in the early 1900’s a butcher’s business was conducted from these premises and the cellars were used for the “fleshing” of animals. During roadwork excavations a pipe running from the cellars of Ross House to the brook was found. This is thought to be a waste pipe for the blood and debris produced during the “fleshing” process.

The Church of St. John the Baptist is built of rubble with dressings of Barnack flint stone. The roofs are covered with lead and slates. It consists of a chancel, nave, north aisle, south aisle and west tower.



Wistow Church

A church has stood on this same site in Wistow for about 1,000 years. Mention of the church is made in the Domesday survey of 1086, but nothing now remains of the 11th century building. Probably it fell into ruins and was largely rebuilt during the Abbacy of Robert Triaynel, (abbot of Ramsey 1180-1200). Records show that the church was again rebuilt during the first half of the 14th century. Some fragments, now built into the walls, probably belonged to the original church.

A popular tradition has recently developed that the church organises a “Heritage Weekend” incorporating a flower festival and a programme of open gardens for the public to visit.

Several functions are organised by various groups each year to encourage community spirit within the village.

Always popular events in Wistow are the “Music Night” and “Sports Day” events.



Music night in Wistow



Sports Day in Wistow

Wistow Parish Plan Questionnaire

In order to assist in the development of the Wistow Parish Plan, the committee circulated a questionnaire covering issues of relevance to those living in the parish. One section of the questionnaire was to be completed by young people in the age group of 11 to 17 years.

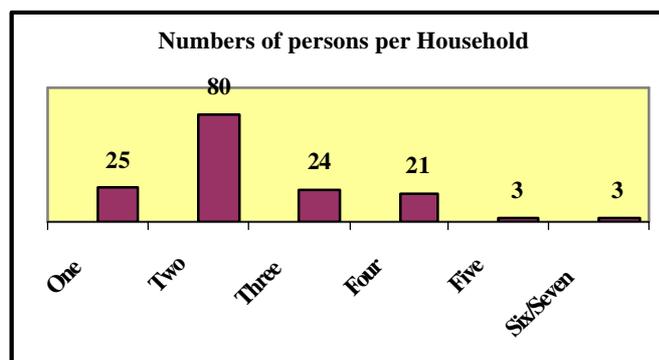
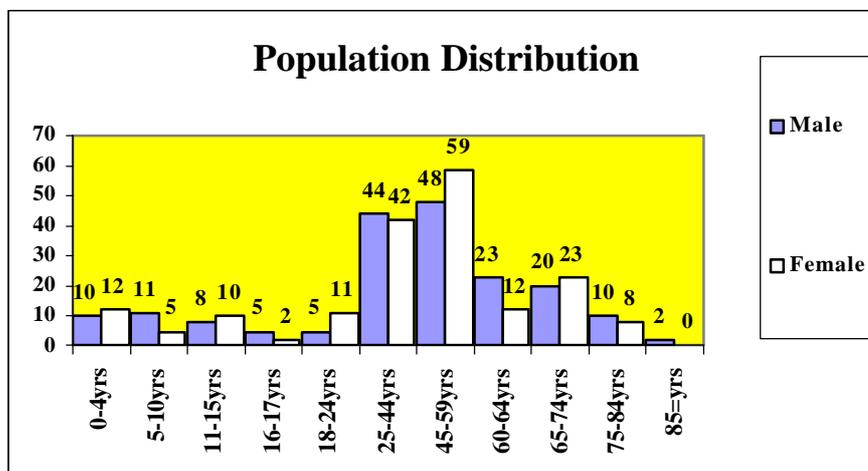
The ultimate aim is to give parishioners an opportunity to express their own desires and views, so that these can be considered and integrated as far as possible into the services and functions provided.

The parish plan committee would like to thank all of those who participated in this initiative.

It is gratifying to note that over 70% of completed questionnaires were returned. It was also pleasing that the “open day”, which was held in the village hall to display the results and give parishioners a further opportunity for comment, was very well supported.

The following pages give a summary of the results of the questionnaire and associated comments. The full results of the questionnaire are available as an appendix to this report.

- A total of **156** completed questionnaires were returned (72% of 2001 census)
- 5 blank questionnaires were also returned
- Completed questionnaires were received from **21** persons in the eleven to seventeen age groups.



Living in Wistow

The environment (69%), access to the countryside (61%) and the community (54%) ranked highest in the list of important reasons for living in Wistow.

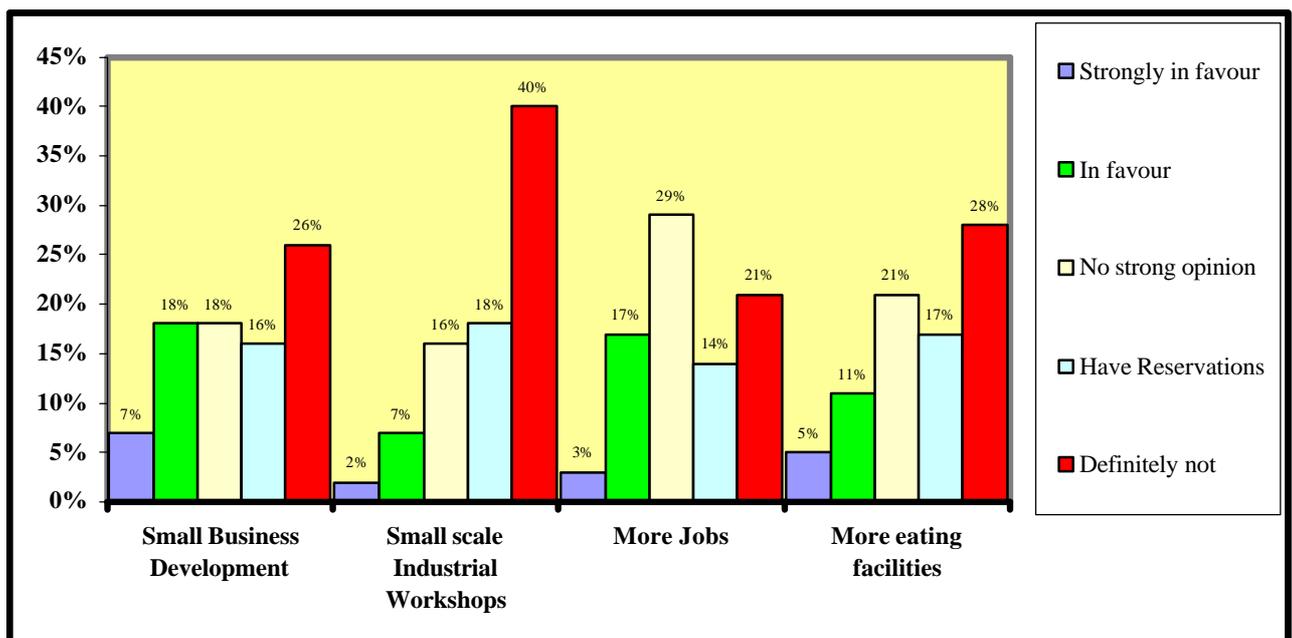
These sentiments were reinforced by a very strong response to the need to preserve and protect the environmental features in and around the village.

Over a third of people considered the pub important to the village and 20% rated the Village Hall as important.

Proximity to Ramsey and access to commuter routes were considered important to a minority.

Job Creation

A minority indicated a need for the creation of more jobs in Wistow but there is very little support for business development of any kind. The majority chose to select the “definitely not” category in this section.



Cars and Public Transport

A total of 262 cars were recorded from the adults taking part in the survey. On this basis 85% are car owners.

Nineteen of the cars were parked on the road. The rest were either garaged or parked off the road. Five people said that they had nowhere to park.

Forty-nine people said that cars caused an obstruction.

Relatively few people commented on the bus service, but of those that did the majority considered the service to be reasonable or good.

People were equally divided as to whether or not some form of parking control was necessary in Wistow but several commented that cars parked on pavements caused an obstruction.

Pedestrians

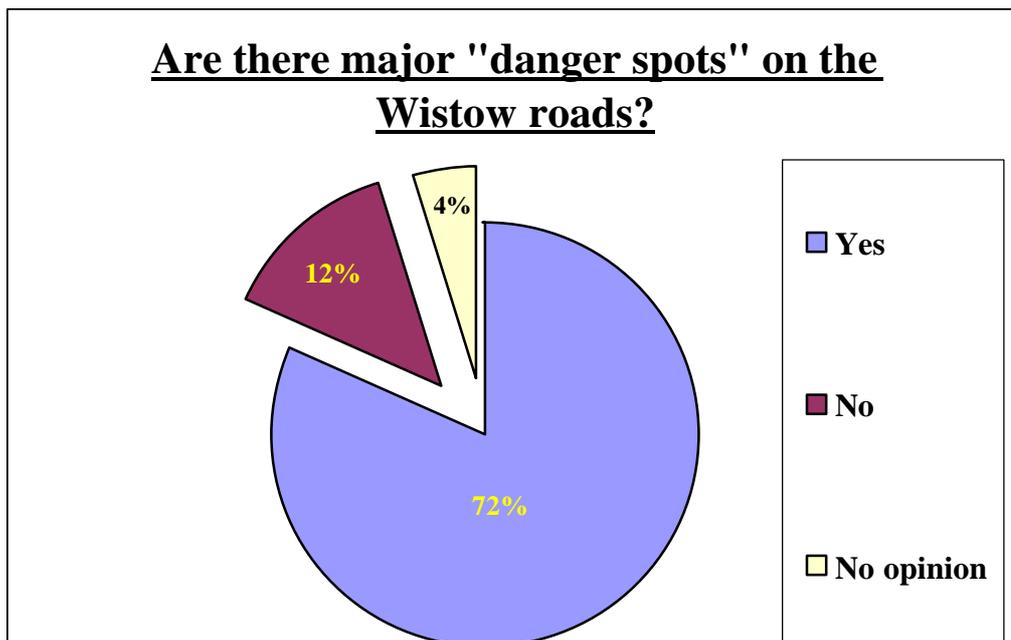
Over 75% considered that facilities for pedestrians were either good or reasonable but 25% said that the pavements were poor for people with disabilities, pushchairs or wheelchairs. Several commented on encroaching vegetation and cars parked on pavements causing obstructions.

37% would like more streetlights and 21% would like more pavements.

13% suggested that there should be a pedestrian crossing between the pub and the bus shelter.

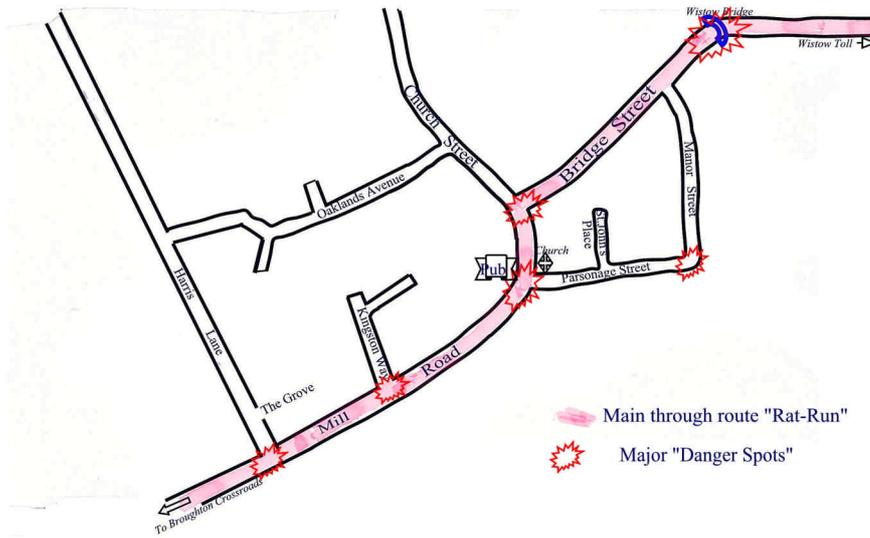
Danger Spots

Seventy-two percent considered that there were major danger spots on the roads in Wistow



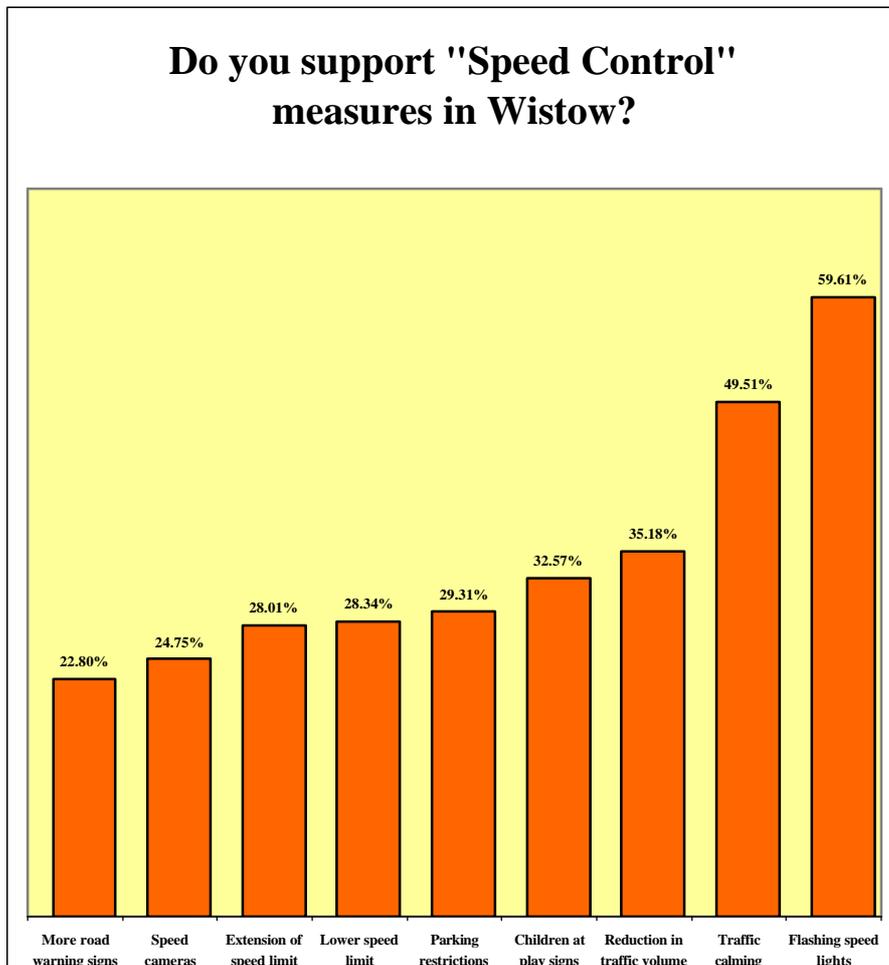
The issue of danger spots on the roads stimulated a very high level of response throughout various areas of the survey.

The volume and speed of traffic using the village as a “rat-run” was considered to be a major problem.



Traffic Control

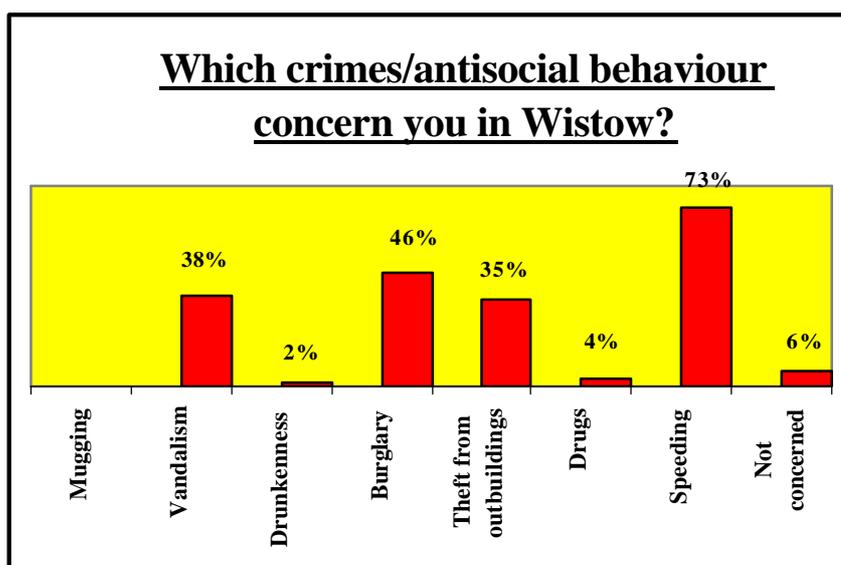
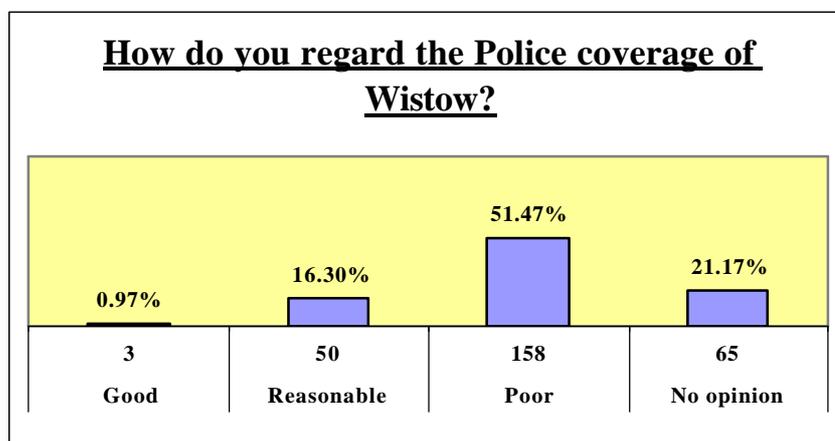
The need for some form of traffic control was supported by all but four percent of those taking part in the survey.



Police and Crime

Over 50% of people considered that the Police coverage of Wistow is poor and 26% thought that there should be better consultation between police and local people.

Burglary, theft and vandalism are high on the list of concerns, but more than 70% considered that speeding in the village was a major problem.



Local facilities and Communication

76% of residents consider that Wistow needs a Shop/Post Office, and 28% are in favour of a new or larger Village Hall.

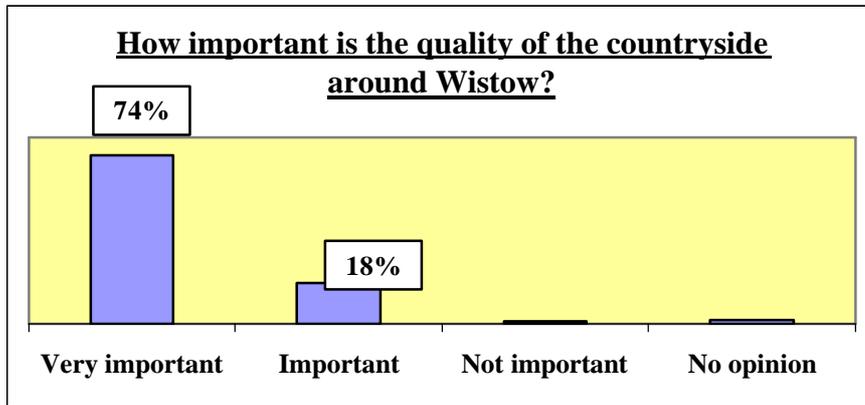
Almost 30% of people consider that the number and location of litterbins could be better.

87% think that the availability of information about events in Wistow is either good or reasonable, but 23% thought that the Parish Council performed badly in publicising its decisions and activities.

The countryside is almost unanimously important to residents of the parish. Approximately 25% would like to see the public footpath network extended and 35% would like to see existing footpaths better maintained.

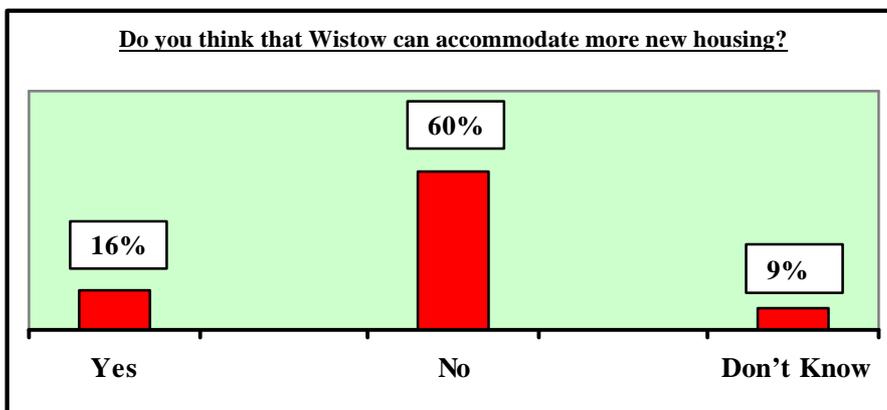
A few people volunteered to help with various new activities within the village, but the lack of the necessary qualifications would be a problem. It may however be possible for some of the proposed activities such as bridge, gardening club etc. to be organised locally on an informal basis.

Nearly half of the people answering the questionnaire thought that there was a need for a good neighbour scheme.

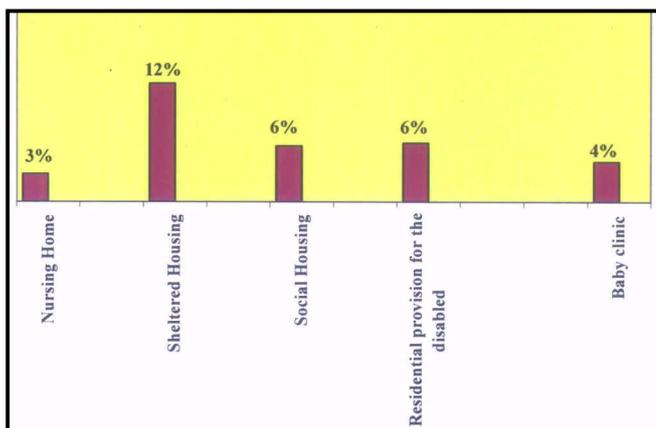


Housing Development

Further housing development was not considered to be appropriate by two thirds of those answering the questionnaire, but 38 people thought that there was a need for sheltered housing.

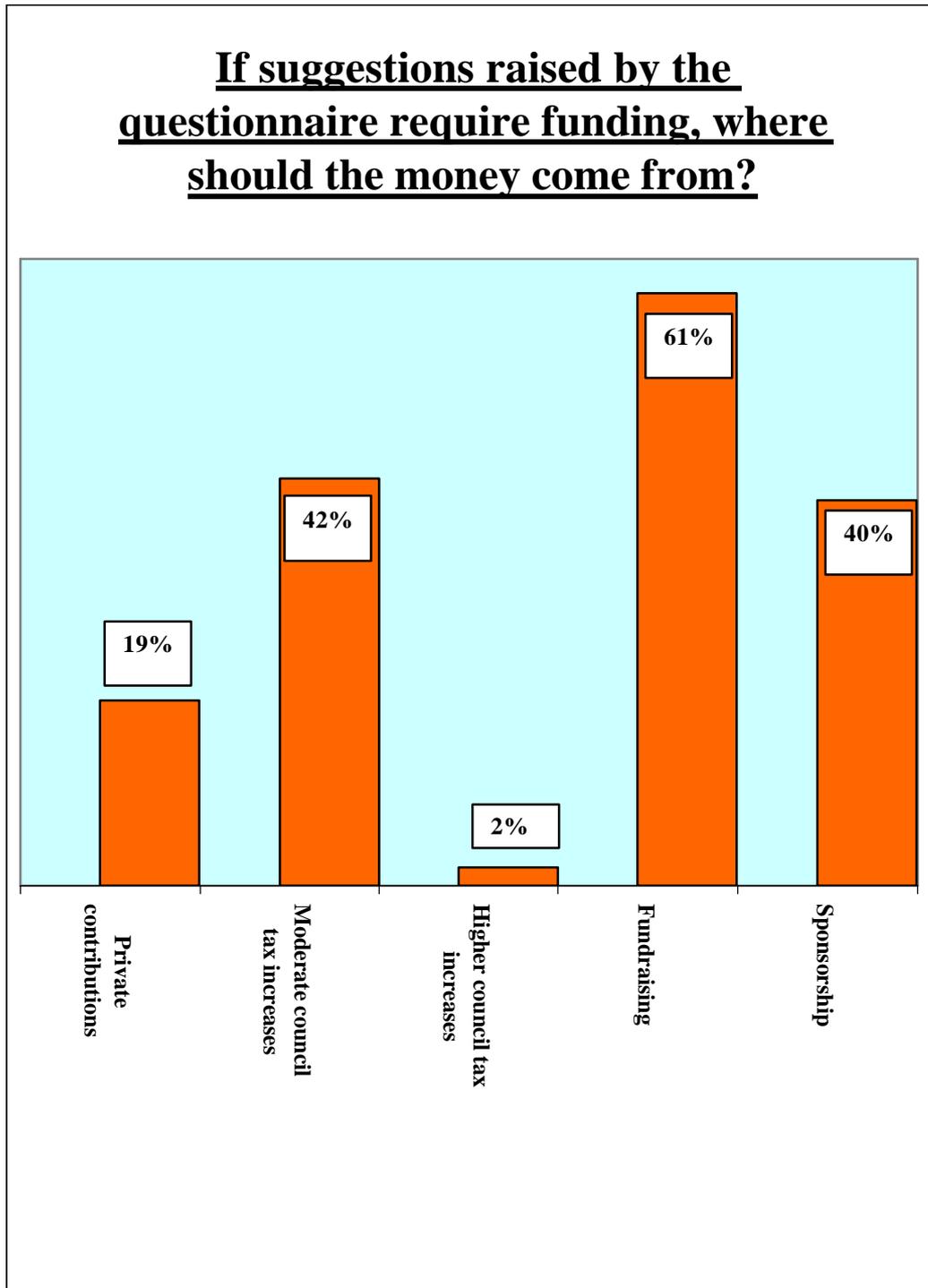


Is there a need for the following in Wistow?



Finance

When asked how money should be raised to finance improvements to the village, 42% favoured “modest” council tax increases and 40% suggested sponsorship as the preferred method.



Wistow Parish Plan Survey

Questionnaire results: 11 – 17 Age Group

The main survey covered a declared 25 persons in the eleven to seventeen age group.

Completed questionnaires were received from twenty-one of these:

NINE were Male

TWELVE were Female

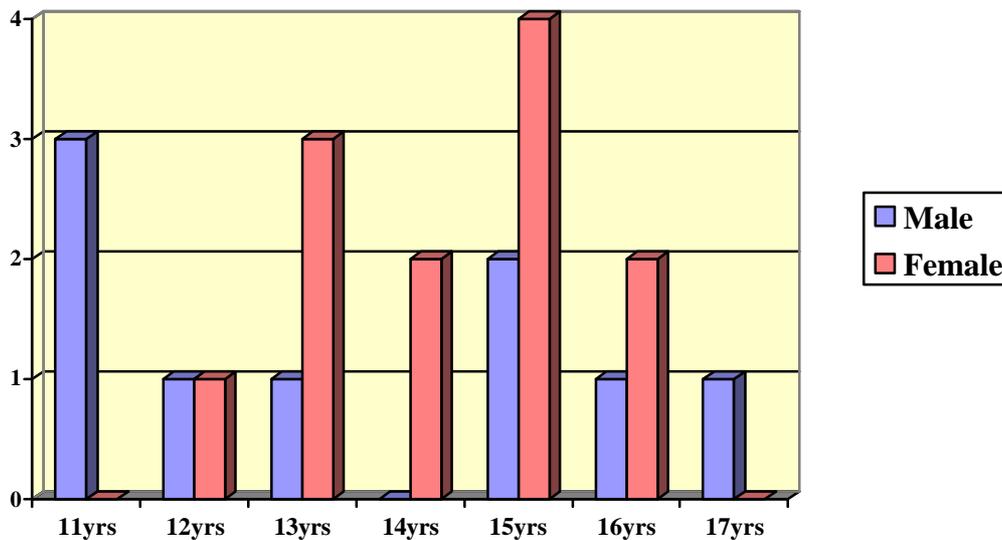


Figure 1 HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Which clubs/activities do you attend in or out of the village?

Fitness	5
Cricket	4
Football	8
Basketball	4
Bowls Club	0
Tennis Club	3
Other Sporting activity	14
Karate	3
Scouts/guides/Rangers	5
Gardening Club	0
Church	3
Amateur Dramatics	1
Youth Club	4
Fishing	1
Golf	2
Sailing	4
Other	3

Which Clubs/Activities would you support?

This question was answered on ten of the fifteen completed questionnaires. The responses are recorded as entered:

	In which of these would you help?	
Youth Club	Not at present	Male 16yrs
Football on playing field	Referee youngster's football	Male 11yrs
Tennis, cricket, golf	All	Male 15yrs
Guitar & Piano lessons		Female 16yrs
Disco dance lessons		Female 16yrs
Youth club		Female 13yrs
Karate		Female 13yrs
Amateur dramatics	Amateur dramatics	Female 16yrs
Skate board/Roller blading	All	Female 14yrs
Basketball	Basketball	Male 13yrs
Netball, cricket, drama, basketball	Netball, Hockey	Female 15yrs
Football, Netball	Netball	Female 12yrs
Pottery, sculpting, village sports team	All	Female 15yrs
Sports/Rangers	All	Male 15yrs
Sports/Scouts	All	Male 11yrs
Sports/Guides	All	Female 11yrs
Sport		Female 13yrs

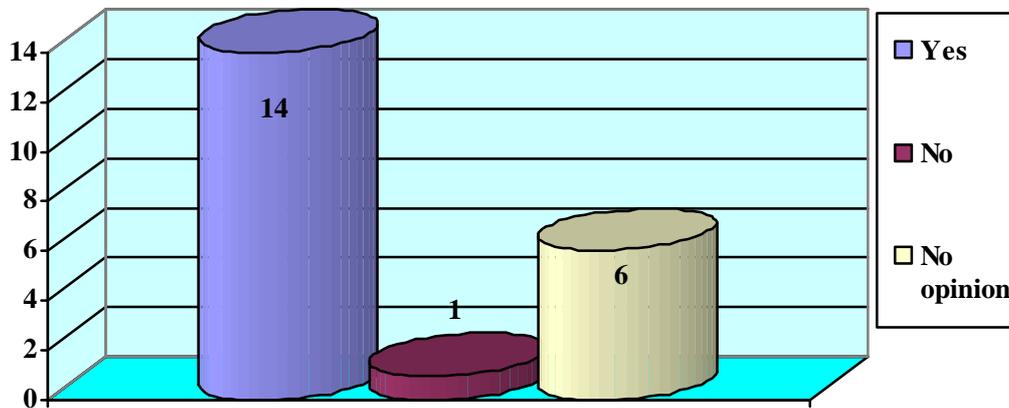
What do you like about Wistow?

Quiet, peaceful, unspoilt	Male 17yrs
Nothing	Male 13yrs
Safe	Female 15yrs
Wistow is a small quiet village that is not very developed.	Female 14yrs
Conker tree & stream	Male 11yrs
Quiet	Male 15yrs
Rural, quiet and friends live nearby	Female 16yrs
The park	Female 13yrs
The pub	Female 16yrs
The atmosphere, people and park	Female 14yrs
Space	Female 13yrs
The park, Nature	Female 12yrs
The park, know most people, friendly, quiet	Female 15yrs
It's quiet	Female 13yrs
It's safe	Female 15yrs

What do you dislike about Wistow?

Nothing	Male 17yrs
Nowhere to go, nothing to do, no friends.	Male 13yrs
Nothing to do	Female 15yrs
All the new houses being built	Female 14yrs
No shops, no footpath from Wistow Toll	Male 16yrs
No shops	Female 12yrs
No shops	Female 16yrs
It's boring & everyone is too nose	Female 16yrs
Nothing to do	Female 14yrs
Nothing	Male 15yrs
Not many young people	Male 13yrs
Not much to do	Female 12yrs
Speeding through the village/ graffiti in the bus shelter	Female 15yrs
Nothing to do/no shop	Male 11yrs
Nothing to do/no shop	Male 15yrs
Nothing to do/no shop	Female 11yrs
It doesn't have a shop	Female 13yrs
There isn't a shop	Female 15yrs

Do you think that there should be a Youth Parish Council or Youth Forum in Wistow?



What improved transport facilities would you like to see?

More buses	Male 13yrs
More buses	Female 15yrs
More frequent buses	Female 14yrs
Footpath – Wistow to Wistow Toll	Male 16yrs
Footpath	Male 11yrs
Buses more often	Female 16yrs
Bus to Buckden & Cambridge	Female 14yrs
None	Male 13yrs
None, its OK	Female 15yrs
Taxi service in Wistow	Female 12yrs
Buses direct to towns	Female 15yrs

FINAL COMMENTS:

Things you would like to see changed in the village.

Some traffic control as in Kings Ripton.

A place that could be decorated by us – (mural) - such as the bus shelter

Some more flowers along the paths etc.

Make the place more interesting

More entertainment.

Youth club

More activities for the elderly.

Skate-park or other form of amusement.

Change everything.

Newsagent with sweets & stationery.

It would be nice if there was a little post office/shop like the old one used to be.

WISTOW PARISH PLAN

GROUP ACTION PLAN

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMESCALE Short/med/long
1. Traffic:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control traffic volume • Control speed through village • Identify black spots and press for improvements • Address problems arising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Traffic Action Group (TAG) to enter into dialogue with County and District Council and Police. • TAG to comprise four people, one at least from Parish Council. • Campaign actively • Consult with bus company 	Medium
2. Pedestrians:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access for disabled/pushchairs etc • Better maintenance, e.g. Potholes, overgrowing vegetation • Extend pavements to link with public footpath network and Blackhurst Lane 	Parish Council to pursue	Medium
3. Lighting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify lighting solution which meets conflicting requirements from the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council responsibility. • Needs proper study and designed scheme. 	Medium
4. Litter		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More bins in better locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council to identify problem areas and pursue with District Council. 	Short

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMESCALE Short/med/long
5. Countryside		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend footpath network. • Better maintenance of footpaths. • More hedgerows, trees etc. • Improve extended village environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council currently has a footpath officer. • Set up a village environment group. • Ask for proposals to be drawn up and submitted to DEFRA as part of new C.A.P arrangements. • Encourage farmers to participate in farmers' forum as focal point for Parish Council to address issues. 	Medium
6. Police and Crime		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better coverage • More consultation • Neighbourhood watch. • Cars on pavements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council to identify councillor with specific responsibility to liaise with police 	Medium
7. Shop/Post Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council to enter into dialogue to see if Shop/Post Office can be incorporated into existing facilities. • Identify possible funding opportunities (rate relief, subsidy etc.) 	Medium
8. Newspaper deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into dialogue with local newsagent or identify individual who would take it on. If necessary subsidise. 	Short
9. Good-Neighbourhood scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask Women's Institute or similar group to take on responsibility for setting up a scheme. 	Short

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMESCALE Short/med/long
10. Activities, Sports, Clubs Societies etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek volunteers to promote. 	Short
11. Village Hall		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore scope for improving existing or promoting new Village Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council to liaise with the Village Hall Committee. 	Long
12. Post Box		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Post Box at the west end of the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council to discuss with the Post Office 	Short
13. Communication		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communications on village issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council to pursue 	Short
14. Flooding		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address concerns over flooding from brook in Bridge Street and Parsonage Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council to Liaise with E.A and drainage authority to discuss possible solutions 	Medium
15. Village Signs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the possibility of providing distinctive village signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish Council to pursue 	Medium
16. Youth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up Youth Forum to address youth issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify enthusiastic youth forum leader/supporter. 	Medium