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# Parish Plan 2009

## BIRDINGBURY - OUR VILLAGE OUR FUTURE



What we believe is important

What we like and do not like

What we wish

- to keep
- to change
- to improve

in our community

## WHY A PARISH PLAN

As part of their strategy to increase local democracy, the Government has been encouraging Parish Councils to produce a Parish Plan. It is hoped that these plans will:

- encourage citizens to be more involved in the future development of their village;
- provide a framework for future planning decisions – within the national and local planning frameworks;
- help to identify priorities for the future of the village eg. In environmental, social, business, parochial and transport issues.

Birdingbury Parish Council decided in 2008 that it was an opportune time to embark on producing a Parish Plan, and this document is the outcome of the work done by a wide group of villagers over the last year. It gives readers some background information on the parish, analyses villagers' views about where they live, and identifies ways in which the village can develop in the future.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

I was delighted at the enthusiasm shown by so many villagers wishing to contribute their time, effort and skills to create this document – this reinforced the strength of community spirit we have in Birdingbury.

The preparation of such a detailed document with anonymity retained by residents has undoubtedly been challenging, and credit goes to not only all involved with the exercise of creating the document but also to the community input and willingness to participate for the good of the future.

Five key action points have emerged

- improving provision of community facilities
- communications
- road safety
- the Festival
- environmental issues

These points are diverse in content and need, but will all contribute to strengthening our community spirit and improving our safety.

Thank you for all your contributions.

**Chris Morton**  
Chairman, Birdingbury Parish Council

March 2009

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## BIRDINGBURY PAST AND PRESENT

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Birdingbury is a parish of a little over 1,000 acres. It is a long, thin parish, nearly three miles from north to south and just over a mile, east to west, at its widest point. The village itself is at the north end of the parish, in a loop of the River Leam. It lies about six miles south-west of Rugby, nine miles south-east of Coventry, seven miles east of Leamington Spa and four miles north of Southam. Its parish neighbours, from north clockwise, are Bourton and Draycote, Leamington Hastings, Stockton, Long Itchington, Marton and Frankton.

The parish mainly occupies a north-south ridge of hard, heavy clay layered with limestone which slopes steeply down to the west. On either side of the ridge there is a stream which flows north draining all of the parish land into the River Leam. These two streams and the river form eastern, northern and part of the western boundaries. The ridge reaches 345 feet (105m.) on the Stockton Road half a mile from the Boat Inn and the lowest point of the parish is at 220 feet (67m.) where the River Leam runs under the railway viaduct.

### The Past

Birdingbury has had a quiet life. As a small village in east Warwickshire some forty generations have lived here while great events largely passed them by. The villagers put up with the weather, tilled the land, paid their rents and got on with their lives. For a thousand years, until about 1800, conditions changed only very slowly. The coming of the canals and railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought new developments as well as new challenges and the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the total destruction of old village life, to be replaced by a modern community living in a wider world.

Nothing is known of its earliest history but the name suggests that it was a Saxon settlement – the place of Byrd's people. However, by the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 it was



already well cultivated with 400 acres under the plough and it may have had a population of as much as a hundred.

Somewhat over half the land was owned by the Benedictine Monastery in Coventry founded by Leofric (husband of the renowned Godiva) who had endowed that new foundation with property in 24 villages in 1043. The other, smaller part was owned by a Saxon, Thorkil, but farmed by Jocelyn, his tenant. Thorkil was one of the few great landowners to keep his property from before the Norman Conquest (1066).

Both parts of the village passed through further ownerships until in 1400 they were united under a John Olney. It continued to be sold and resold, passing through the Throckmortons and Shuckburghs (who built the Hall in about 1630) until in 1687 Sir Charles Wheler (of the family in Leamington Hastings) sold it to Simon Biddulph. He came from a Kentish family and his older brother had been created a Baronet in 1664, a title which Simon's grandson, Theophilus, inherited from his cousin in 1743, thus becoming the first of five Sir Theophilus Biddulphs of Birdingbury.

From medieval times until the beginning of the nineteenth century the parish was farmed in the old 'Open Field' system. Except for the area between Marton Road and the River Leam which had been divided into small enclosed fields at some earlier date, the rest of the parish was farmed in small strips of which there were several thousand and cultivated by individual farmers who, although they may have farmed a hundred or more, seldom had two side by side. Today we can see the remains of this system in the 'ridge and furrow'. These strips were grouped in three huge blocks. Middle Field stretched from the village along the Stockton Road nearly as far as the cross roads, Lower Field was the land below the scarp either side of the Long Itchington Road and Upper Field was the southern part of the village towards the Boat Inn and to the tip of the parish. The majority of the land was owned by the Biddulphs and much of rest was held by the Church or the Rector with a few freeholders owning smaller portions.

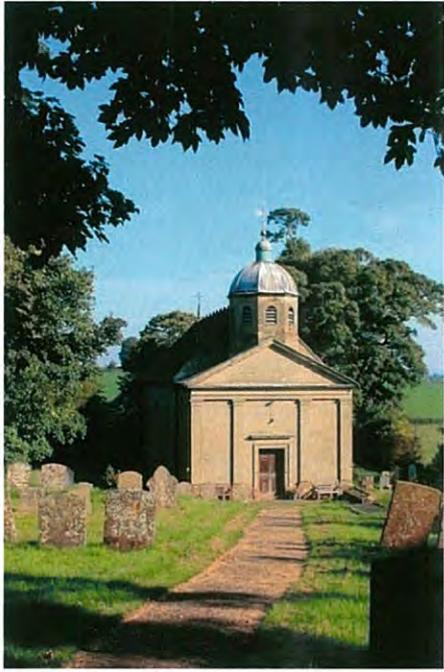
One person of particular note was connected with Birdingbury: Henry Homer, born about 1719, had met Sir Theophilus Biddulph when at Cambridge and was appointed by him as Rector of Birdingbury. He had 17 children (author Arthur Mee described this as 'thus ensuring his own congregation') of whom three became classical scholars. He himself wrote widely on issues of the day including rivers, canals and particularly on the development of the highways on which he was far ahead of his time. He had liberal views on many social matters: one of these pamphlets, for example, commenting on the effects of the Enclosure Acts, deprecated 'the taking away from the poor by the rich of privileges which the poor are too weak to retain.' He died in 1791.

Whether his attitude had an effect on his patron Sir Theophilus cannot be known but Birdingbury was one of the last parishes in this district to be subject to 'General Enclosure'. That did not come until 1804 when the three big medieval fields were surveyed and divided into blocks between the landowners in proportion to the number of ancient strips they had

held. These blocks were then fenced and hedged by the owners to produce the pattern of fields largely as it is today, divided between about six farms.

In 1800 the Warwick and Napton Canal was opened. This crosses the southern tip of the parish and led to the building of The Boat Inn– the only pub that Birdingbury has ever had.

The Rugby and Leamington Railway was approved by Parliament in 1846 though not completed until 1851. It crossed the River Leam on a handsome five-arched viaduct and then passed



through the north of the parish in a deep cutting. It was closed to passenger traffic in 1959 but for over 100 years it had greatly increased village access to the wider world.

Where the railway crosses the river there had been a watermill, possibly dating from as early as 1200, but this had gone out of use before the railway came. There was also a windmill in the village during the 19<sup>th</sup> century which may have replaced an earlier one: the mound on which it stood can be seen by Mill House off Stockton Road.

St. Leonard's Church is most unusual. It dates from 1775 and replaced a medieval building which had 'become ruinous and wholly decayed and dilapidated' so much that permission had been given to demolish it entirely. Nothing is known of the old building but it

would appear that the new classical-style church was built on the original foundations. In 1876 the church was 'gothicised' by raising the roof, remodelling the windows and adding an apse to the very plain Georgian building of the previous century. Inside, the box pews of the 18<sup>th</sup> century largely remain but the Victorians added a chancel screen and encaustic floor tiles which have recently been revealed.

Birdingbury Hall, built about 1630, originally consisted of a hall block with two projecting wings. It was enlarged in 1742 but retained its Jacobean appearance until a serious fire in 1859 destroyed one wing. The house was rebuilt with an entrance hall and gallery between the two wings. There is an extensive early 18<sup>th</sup> century brick stable block with a clock tower which



has been converted into dwellings. The Biddulphs continued to live in the Hall until about 1874; after that it was let to a succession of tenants. It was sold out of the family in 1914 but has continued as a private house except for a brief period as a management school.

The Rectory is an elegant stucco-faced building from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was sold by the Church in 1929 and is now in private ownership.



A school was founded in the mid-nineteenth century but closed in 1935 when pupil numbers had fallen to four. The old school building in the centre of the village has been adapted to become the Birdingbury Club. Alongside, a Village Room – The Birbury – was built in 1986, largely by voluntary labour. This has proved a great asset for meetings and small functions but

the village still lacks a larger public hall.

In the village there are four of the original farmhouses from the 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries which retain their timber frames although most if not all the wattle-and-daub infill has been replaced with brick panels (mostly painted white). In addition there are two large late-Georgian houses and about ten smaller houses and cottages of the same period.



Only about six houses were added in the next hundred years until just before the Second World War when five pairs were built in Back Lane. Since 1945 there have been about 90 new houses as well as a dozen conversions from the stables that belonged to the Hall and the old farmsteads.

In 1800 there were about 125 inhabitants, few more than in 1086. Almost all were working on the land or servicing the Hall but during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of occupations increased until in 1900 only about half were still in agriculture and there were 200 inhabitants living in 46 houses.

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Early administration of villages like Birdingbury was in the hands of the Parish Vestry and the Overseers of the Poor but in 1894, in line with new local government organisation, the village held its first 'Parish Meeting.' Seventeen villagers attended, electing a Chair and Secretary and appointing Thomas Bayes to represent them at the new Rugby Rural District Council. The village continued to have its official Annual Meeting which discussed many matters from housing and drainage, village fêtes and coronation parties to road safety and the war memorial until, in 1967, the population reached the point at which the parish was allowed to elect a full Parish Council with five members. In 1973, when Rural and Urban District Councils were amalgamated, Birdingbury became part of the new Rugby Borough Council.



Electricity came to the village in the early 1930s. It was not until 1942 that a mains water system was introduced; rubbish was collected for the first time in the same year. The first general drainage was through a septic tank at the bottom of Back Lane but in the 1960s this was replaced with a pumped system taking the waste to Frankton sewage works. Gas was supplied to the village in 1993.

Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century a range of services developed including shops, a petrol station and a post office. With wider car ownership these have all gone and villagers now rely on neighbouring towns or deliveries to meet their needs. The social loss in not having these amenities is hard to overcome.

### ***The Present***

There are around 280 adults and 60 children living in Birdingbury today. About half the village is between thirty and sixty. Although about a quarter have been in the village for less than five years nearly another quarter have lived here for more than thirty years and there are a few whose families have lived in Birdingbury for several generations. Many people have moved within the village, some of them several times.

There are 137 dwellings in the parish of which 113 lie within the village envelope (see appendix). There are 87 detached dwellings (including houses and bungalows, conversions, farms and Birdingbury Hall) and 38 semi-detached. As mentioned, nearly three-quarters of the houses in the parish were built in the last sixty years.

Very few people now work in agriculture although there is some other employment within the village, including road haulage and materials handling, services to business management, light engineering and work at the Boat Inn. Some work from home and Birdingbury is a good centre for those who need to travel out. The majority commute to local towns with a few going as far as London.

Farming in Birdingbury continues to be a mixture of arable and grassland. While some of the land is now owned and farmed from outside the parish much is still divided between the farms established at enclosure. Two of the older farmsteads remain, one is a dairy farm and the other has sheep and arable. One other traditional farmstead lies just outside the boundary although most of its land is within the parish. One new farmstead has been built on the north side of the village with its land extending into Frankton and Bourton parishes.



There are several public footpaths which link Birdingbury, cross-country, with nearby settlements; none is in regular use and some are poorly-maintained and marked. The Leamington-Rugby Sustrans Cycleway passes through the village, along Main Street, and joins the old railway line at Birdingbury Bridge; from there the cycleway gives access to Draycote Water Country Park and Rugby. Some villagers cycle frequently and many sports cyclists pass through the village, especially at week-ends.

Most journeys are made by motor vehicle. There is a bus service, Mondays to Saturdays, to and from Southam and Leamington (three a day), Rugby (six) and Coventry (five). Otherwise villagers are dependent upon private transport to meet their needs, with the nearest post office and shop being 2½ miles away from the centre of Birdingbury village, the nearest petrol station over three miles, the nearest supermarket and range of shops five miles, the nearest rail station seven miles. The local infant school is just over a mile away and the nearest primary just over four miles. Most other services are at similar distances from the village. Some shops and services travel to the village.

Birdingbury has a Parish Council with five Councillors. It is just inside the southern border of Rugby Borough Council's (RBC) area, so that is the body which provides most local government services. Birdingbury is linked with four other parishes to form the Leam Valley Borough Council ward. Other services are provided by Warwickshire County Council. The parish is part of the Dunchurch single-member electoral division for county council purposes. Birdingbury is currently (2008) in the Rugby and Kenilworth Parliamentary constituency but will, as a result of Boundary Committee changes, form part of the new Kenilworth and Southam constituency in the next and subsequent elections.

In 1974 the Church in Birdingbury ceased to be associated with Marton and became linked with Leamington Hastings. This developed into the Leam Valley Group but since 2005 Birdingbury has been part of the Draycote Group of Parishes which, besides Birdingbury, comprises Stretton, Princethorpe, Frankton, Bourton and Draycote. The Group is administered by a 'Priest-in-Charge of the Draycote Group of Parishes.'

In some ways Birdingbury is an unusual place. Neither the Hall nor the Church, the Rectory nor many of the oldest buildings can easily be seen by a passer-by. There is no village green nor any particular feature to catch the attention. Most of the houses facing the through roads are modern but set well back so that the impression is one of space with wide green verges and trees. Perhaps this is why so many strangers comment 'what an attractive village you live in.'



## HOW WE CARRIED OUT THE SURVEY

After the first article in our village magazine 'Birdsong' had appeared, setting out the Parish Council's proposal to produce a Parish Plan, villagers were asked to volunteer to be part of the Steering Group. We also distributed to all homes a paper asking people to say which issues concerning the village should be included in the Plan.

It was very heartening that we got 30 returns identifying issues and a group of 15 people who were prepared to contribute to the Parish Plan. It has been our aim, right from the outset, to make the Parish Plan a village enterprise rather than one limited to the five parish Councillors. The group working on it has now included up to 20 people, working in a variety of ways – designing questions, consulting others, editing, delivering and collecting questionnaires etc. Over the summer this group met three times to formulate and then discuss the questions (on the selected issues) to go into the Parish Plan Questionnaire. These questions were then put into a common format by a small group – two Parish Councillors and a co-opted expert in presentation – and the final version was trialled by a number of volunteers who had had nothing to do with its production. This resulted in a number of further amendments. Finally, at the beginning of October the Steering Group members began to distribute the resulting Questionnaire.

Considerable effort was put into ensuring that every household in the parish received a questionnaire, delivered in person wherever possible and then collected. We adopted the method used in Census collection to ensure that we could monitor the collection while not allowing the forms themselves to be traced. The numbering of envelopes was solely to check when a return was received from an address. Once they were received by the co-ordinator (Parish Councillor Diana Turner) the envelopes were emptied and set aside, and the two sets of forms (a yellow form registering the basic data of the household and the questionnaires themselves) were then shuffled in their two piles, and the data on them entered on to the computer. From the moment the sealed envelopes were emptied there was **no** way the answers were in any way traceable to their authors – a very important safeguard of the anonymity which had been promised from the outset. We recruited the expert help of Liz Davies to handle the data, while the co-ordinator analysed and registered the comments which many respondents had made.

At least one questionnaire was delivered to each house, although more were offered where individuals wanted to register their views separately. When the data was entered, care was taken to note **how many** people's views were represented, including those of children over 11. This explains why responses registered in the Plan may exceed the total of either the number of households or the number of questionnaires we received.

During October and November the 14 'deliverers' distributed their allocation of questionnaires and revisited the same households later to pick up the completed documents. Respondents were also given the option of returning them directly, either to their deliverer or to the co-ordinator. The final returns were registered on 21<sup>st</sup> November - making a grand total of 110

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households and 128 questionnaires, representing over 81% of the households contacted. (Details are in Appendix 3 : Household Profiles data.) A small business questionnaire was circulated to 26 known local enterprises, but the return rate from this exercise was disappointing.

A meeting of the Steering Group was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, when analyses of all the data and comments were presented. Individuals in this group then volunteered to write up the various sections of the questionnaire and each writer had an editor whose task would be to act as an objective second opinion on the conclusions! Care was taken to ensure that writers and editors were not the same people who had put together the questions at the development stage – again an attempt to ensure objectivity.

The final format of this Plan was checked by the Steering Group and the Parish Council and then submitted to Rugby Borough Council for endorsement.

Each section has a summary of key findings and recommendations for action. The resulting action plan can be found on page 41.



# FINDINGS

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

General refuse is currently collected weekly, while green waste bins and tins/paper and glass bottle 'red boxes' are collected alternate fortnights. Rugby Borough Council has agreed a new system, which will start in April 2009. Wide publicity to inform people about the changes is being planned by the Borough Council.

At present there is no lighting in the village.

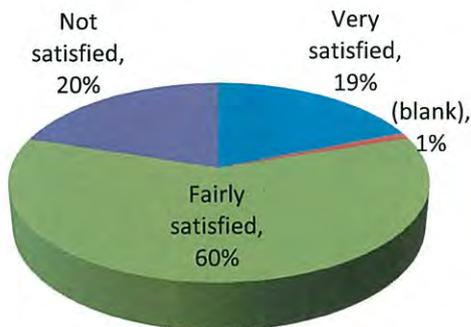
There are presently footpaths along some of the village streets and some of the verges are kerbed.

Currently there is a litter bin only next to the bus shelter.

## REFUSE AND RECYCLING

This subject raised many issues with 169 comments.

Only 19% of respondents declared they were very satisfied with the present arrangements, 60% were fairly satisfied and 20% were dissatisfied.



Ninety respondents requested a collection of plastics and 32 of tetrapaks and thick cardboard. There were six requests for more capacity for green rubbish and four for more capacity for paper. Five comments indicated dissatisfaction with the actual collection and six with the red boxes.

Several responses suggested more specific facilities: two concerned facilities for batteries and three for clothes or textiles. There were three requests for a village recycling point for clothes, shoes etc. There were six responses which mentioned the Stockton tip, four requesting it should be open for more days in the week and two mentioning the difficulty of taking large items because of vans not being allowed. Three comments welcomed the arrangements due in April 2009 and it is fair to say that the Borough Council proposals will go some way to satisfy many of those who raised the issues above.

## LIGHTING

At present there is no lighting in the village.

70% of the respondents did not support any lighting but 29% wanted at least some.

Of those that wanted lighting three quarters suggested 'key points' and about half mentioned sites in Main Street, Marton Road and Back Lane.

There were ten responses that specifically mentioned light pollution and two thought it increased urbanisation. Two people who did not want lighting thought that in critical places some could be useful. There was a suggestion of person-activated lights at some points and ground level lighting was mentioned. There were five responses asking that lights should be in keeping with the village e.g. Victorian style.

### **FOOTPATHS/PAVEMENTS/KERBS**

There are presently footpaths along some of the village streets and some of the verges are kerbed.

67% of respondents were satisfied with the situation and 28% were not.

There were 86 comments of which 34 were requesting more paths. Sixteen wanted a path to



the Church and six a path to the Stockton Road junction. There were 12 requests for more footpaths in Marton Road and Main Street.

Twenty-four responses noted the poor state of many paths and difficulties with pushchairs. Eight responses mentioned vegetation encroachment or overhanging growth and four mentioned inconsiderate parking. Seven comments supported more kerbs and dropped kerbs were also

mentioned. Gravel spilling from drives was noted.

Six comments mentioned footpaths outside the village: four would like to see more paths and one would like to see gates replacing stiles. There was one request for better signage.

### **DOG FOULING**

This was an issue for 21% of respondents but 71 % did not see it so.

Eleven respondents would like to see bins and bags around the village while another 11 just noted that dog owners should clear it. Ten wanted to see more notices and people challenging offenders; three supported more draconian action.

### **NOISE**

85% of respondents did not find noise an issue but 12% did.

Of the 30 specific comments 11 mentioned the Club, and four more car radios and noisy youths; others mentioned the Club as a source of disruption particularly in the summer. Eight mentioned dogs barking and there were two comments in connection with the Festival on Saturday night. There was one mention each of fireworks, HGVs, birdscarers and burglar alarms.

## LITTER BINS

At present there is a litter bin only next to the bus shelter.

65% of respondents did not want more litter bins and 23% did. There were six suggestions for a bin at the top of Main Street and others for a bin by the Club or by the old Post Office.

## VILLAGE APPEARANCE

77% were happy with the appearance of the village but 18% were not. The commonest concern was the Club and its surroundings, including the Birbury, which attracted 11 responses with some feeling there was scope for better landscaping. Six comments referred to untidy gardens and 'rotting cars' and one to rubbish at the skate park. Ten commented adversely on grass mowing or verges. Parking in Main Street attracted two comments, and in Marton Road one comment. One respondent was concerned with the state of the alleyway, and one with the new slip road from Marton Road. There were suggestions that flowers around the War Memorial would be helpful and that the entrances to the village could be improved.

## OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Respondents were invited to add their remarks to an open question about other issues and 58 did so. However 19 of these concerned matters mentioned elsewhere and their comments and numbers have been added to other sections.

- Ten respondents made comments on traffic in the village but these have been transferred to the traffic and road safety section.
- Flooding was mentioned on five responses of which two referred to Back Lane.
- Two responses referred to smell from drains and two were concerned with sewage leaking into the river.
- Seven responses raised issues concerned with climate change, particularly wind and solar power, composting, car share and use of e-mail to reduce paper consumption.
- Two respondents would like better access to the river and there was one comment on the trees affecting the view of the river.
- Four responses were concerned with Tree Preservation Orders and the issue of disease and viruses.

### **Summary of Main Findings**

1. *There is currently wide dissatisfaction about the level of kerbside collection of recyclable refuse. The proposed new arrangements should address some of these concerns.*
2. *There is strong majority support for **not** having street lighting, although a number of comments suggested limited lighting at 'key points'.*
3. *A number of comments were made about the state of paths and the need for more paths within the village: in Main Street, Leamington Hastings Road towards the Stockton Road*

corner and on the north side of Marton Road. The lack of a footpath up to the church was highlighted.

4. While noise is not considered to be a problem by the majority of villagers, a significant numbers of comments mentioned noise from the Club, especially on warm summer evenings.
5. A quarter of questionnaires had a comment about the appearance of the village; many of these reflected some concerns about individual untidiness which impinged on public areas of the village.

### Recommendations

- **The Parish Council should explore ways of addressing the concerns expressed in relation to:**
  - the state of paths, e.g. overhanging foliage, slope, obstructions and cut grass,
  - extending the existing paths in Main Street, Marton Road and Leamington Hastings Road,
  - the provision of a path to the church,
  - damage to verges,
  - the provision of an additional litter bin or bins,
  - noise from barking dogs,
  - lighting at 'key points', possibly person-activated,
  - floral displays at village entrances and around the war memorial.
- **The Club Committee should consider ways of**
  - limiting the impact of noise from customers especially on summer evenings,
  - improving the area around the Club.
- **Dog owners should take note of the concerns expressed about dog-fouling.**
- **The village should keep an open mind in respect of initiatives which would help to counter climate change.**

## HOUSING AND PLANNING

Two years ago the Parish Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey of the village, to which 50 households (37%) responded – a return rate of less than half the 81% achieved by the Parish Plan Steering Group. The report on this Survey spells out the restraints on further developments within villages such as Birdingbury which have been designated as ‘Local Needs Settlements’ under Policy S3 of the Rugby Borough Council’s Adopted Local Plan 2006. This policy states that only development to meet identified local needs will be permitted within Birdingbury, and that preference will be given to the use of previously developed land. In exceptional circumstances (described in Policy H7) development of affordable housing may be permitted adjacent to the village. (See RBC website for further details.)

A small group of six Starter Homes were built in 1992 with restrictions on resale terms.

The housing needs (derived from the Survey) identified in December 2006 were for:

- 3 x 2-bed houses for rent
- 1 x 2-bed houses for shared ownership

Since the Parish Plan questionnaire was designed new regulations came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 which, in some circumstances, permit home extensions up to 50% **without** planning permission. If planning permission has to be sought, then Rugby Planning Policy H22, which limits extensions to 25%, still applies, although this situation is currently under review by the borough council.

**If householders are in doubt, advice should be sought from a planning officer.**

*The findings in this section will provide a reference point for future planning decisions affecting the village, and will supplement the findings of the Housing Needs Survey. The local planning authority, Rugby Borough Council (RBC), was consulted in the preparation of the Parish Plan questionnaire, and will take note of the recommendations coming out of the responses received.*

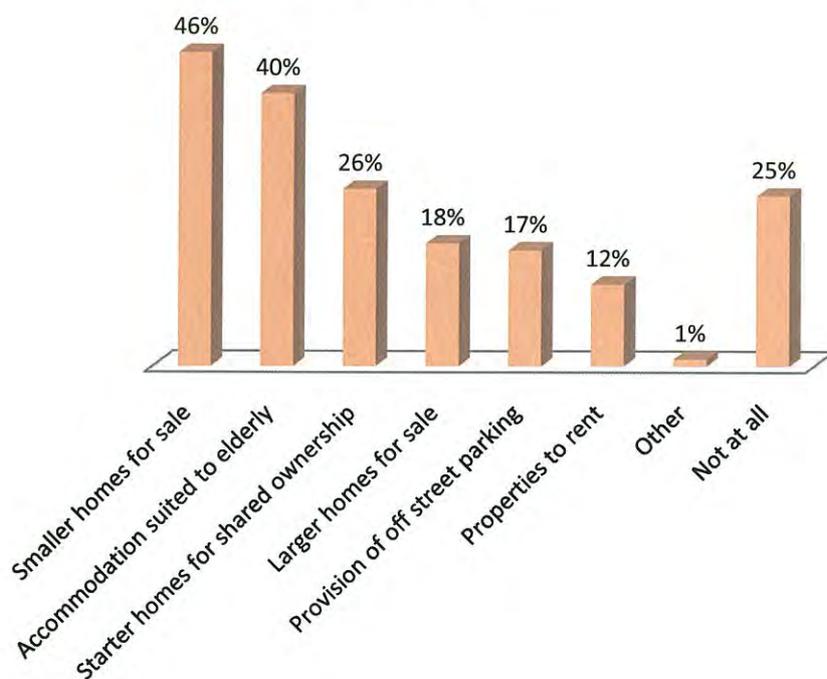


Of the 18 respondents who said they were planning to move within the village in the next five years, 11 want a smaller house and seven a larger one.

While **25% wanted no further expansion of the housing stock**, much larger percentages accepted the idea of **smaller homes** for sale (46%), or **accommodation for the elderly** (40%). The housing needs identified two years ago (for shared ownership and rented homes) had some support (26% and 12%).

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### Respondents' support for ways in which the village might be expanded



These approaches to future development were reflected in the **comments** made in this section. The needs of young families, and those of older people who might want to 'downsize' were highlighted, while four explicitly critical comments were made about the fact that the most recent developments had increased the proportion of larger, expensive, houses.

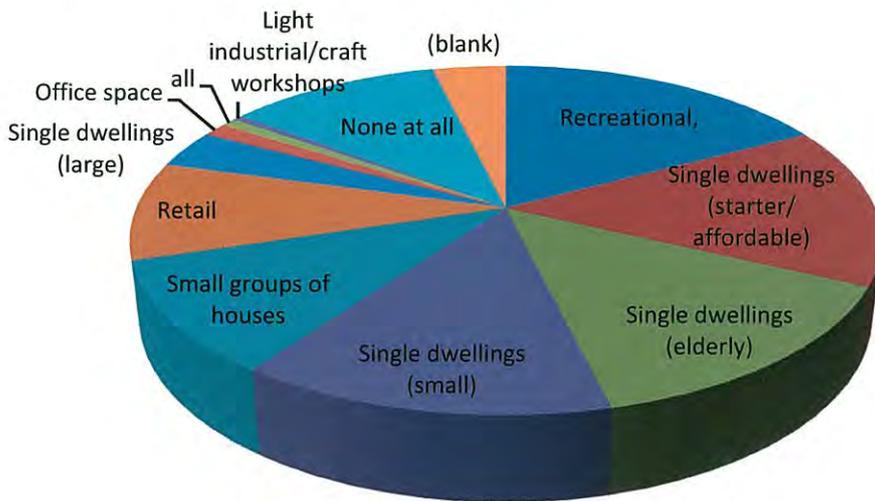
The slow resale of starter homes was pointed out by one respondent as an indicator that there is no real local need for this type of housing, and while this is an individual view, (offset by two respondents claiming that there is **no** affordable housing), the point being made here does need further investigation.

Rugby Borough Council planning regulation H22 currently restricts home extensions to no more than 25%. Villagers were asked whether they thought the policy was beneficial to the village. Villagers' views were almost equally divided on this issue. There was some confusion over the interpretation of this question: 'No' can mean "I don't think it is being enforced" or "It means families have to move out of the village". This latter point was made by many respondents, who also pointed out that the large new properties in the village were out of the price range of those who wanted to extend their current homes to accommodate growing families, and who would be refused permission.

Of those who support the policy, some believed it had 'come too late', with the radical extensions to some smaller properties making them 'out of keeping with the character of the village'. Others regretted that the number and size of earlier home extensions (completed before the introduction of Policy H22) had 'put too many houses beyond the means of many people'. The tone of the majority of comments in this section was in favour of extensions – controlled but not limited so strictly as the current policy permits. Significantly, even amongst

the views of those supporting the policy, were pleas for there to be some **flexibility** in its application.

Villagers were asked their views on possible future general development **within** the current village envelope (in which there is very little vacant space), and a map showing its extent was included in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1 : Birdingbury Village Envelope). Fewer than 18% wanted **no development**, and the majority (72%) would support single dwellings. Within this category 25% support starter/affordable homes, 24% homes for the elderly and 23% small single dwellings. These findings reflect the general views about potential expansion of the village housing stock described above.



There were some differences in the responses made by the different age groups. Accommodation for the elderly was most supported by the very young (41%) and the over 60s (49%), while smaller homes for sale were most strongly supported by the over 60s (55% compared with an average response of 46%).

There was very little support for offices, workshops or larger homes (10% for all these put together, but the lack of a village shop and village hall is reflected in the strong support for 'community building' (29%) and 'retail' (15%). Such views are to be found in other sections of the Parish Plan survey (see Community Facilities section). Some commented that '**community and retail**' would be the **only** development they would support.

Responses to the question seeking views about development **outside** the village envelope elicited similar views. Here, however, over a third of respondents (34%) rejected any sort of development (compared with 18% within the envelope). There was **reduced** support (compared with that for development within the envelope) for a range of single dwellings (42% compared with 72%), for a community building (15% against 29%) and retail (10% against 15%).

Again, the **comments** emphasise these views: any further development would increase the need for a community building/village hall and a shop. One respondent would **only** support expansion **if** a shop resulted. There was support for maintaining the village envelope, with several pointing out the fact that some gardens already extended beyond it.

The **environmental impact** of village expansion was also mentioned in this and other parts of the Housing and Planning section of the questionnaire. Several wanted to 'prevent urban sprawl' and pointed out the importance of keeping the rural aspects of the village. Others suggested further expansion would increase traffic and pollution.

While there is a clear view that any further development should be closely controlled, there emerged an acceptance of some modest expansion of the housing stock and the provision of a community building and shop.



Overall, there emerged an implicit view that people like living in Birdingbury in its current form, and would like to stay here in a home that meets their future needs. Almost two thirds of residents have already lived in the village for more than 10 years, and one fifth for more than 30 years. Given the relatively high proportion of older people (38% retired, 35% over 60) in the village, the future housing needs for

this group could be an area for further exploration.

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *Few residents are planning to move within the village in the next five years, with most of these looking for a smaller home.*
2. *There is significant support for a new community building and for a shop.*
3. *While a sizeable minority reject any expansion of the village- either within the village envelope (18%) or beyond (34%) most accept modest new development of small single homes for the elderly and young families.*
4. *Villagers are divided almost equally in their views on the RBC policy of restricting home extensions. Overwhelmingly people were in favour of extensions to accommodate growing families, i.e. a more flexible approach. The main worry expressed was that it could lead to growing families having to leave the village.*
5. *There is little support for development for commercial purposes, with the possible exception of a shop.*

## Recommendations

- The development of a community building is a priority for the village and its development should be explored by the Parish Council, the Club Committee and the Birbury Management Committee
- Explore how to reflect the support for limited small developments within the village that meet identified local needs ie. for smaller houses for the young and older people.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### THE BIRBURY AND BIRDINGBURY CLUB

#### The Birbury

The Birbury is the village community meeting room. It is part of the Birdingbury Club building and is leased from Birdingbury Club for a current nominal rent of £20.27 per annum for a term of 99 years from 1987. Funds for the development of the Birbury were raised by villagers' efforts and it was opened early in 1987. The Birbury Management Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the facility and arrangement of bookings. As at November 2008 the booking fee for the Birbury is £5 per session (being a morning, afternoon or evening).

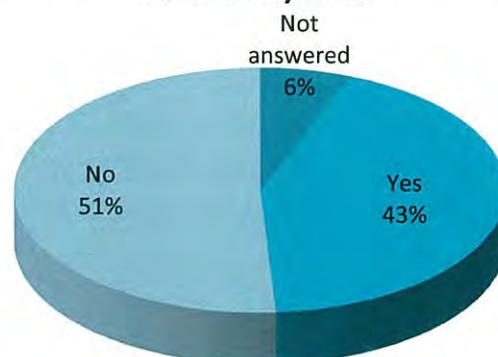
As a community room the Birbury meets the needs of 43% of villagers; 51% felt it did not .

Over half (58%) had hired the Birbury for parties, with 49% of hiring being for meetings (although many of these will have been for repeating events which are likely to account for a significantly higher number of individual bookings per year). 32% of villagers have hired the room for a private or community function at some stage and of those all considered it to be good value for money. Most (86%) would use it again. Of those villagers who had hired the Birbury

54% felt that their requirements had been met by the facilities available and 42% were not entirely satisfied. Main reasons for not hiring the Birbury were dissatisfaction with the equipment, lack of toilet facility, limitations of the kitchen, quality of décor and, for a minority, the location.

General comments indicated that an improved facility would be welcomed to expand the use of a meeting room and enable it to satisfy a broader range of requirements from villagers. The absence of toilet facilities (even with the use of those at the Club), limitations of the kitchen for food preparation/serving, and limited capacity for larger events require addressing. A brighter, easier to clean facility with more flexible furniture and a more attractive exterior,

Whether the Birbury meets the needs as a community room



combined with a more flexible internal area to satisfy various configurations, should be targeted. Some comments suggested that the current arrangement of combining the Birbury with the main bar area of the Club is a complicated exercise and does not provide an attractive or adequate facility for many larger events.



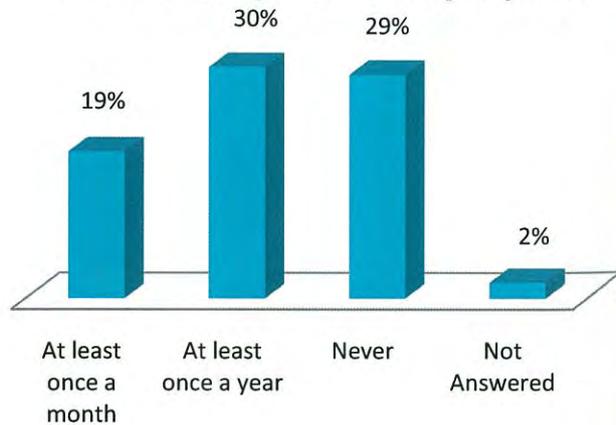
**Birdingbury Club**

Birdingbury Club occupies the building of the old village school. The Club’s membership is made up of both villagers and non-villagers (at a ratio of 50/50) and is run by a voluntary committee. The committee is receptive to the potential use of the Club as an amenity for the village as a whole.

The most significant reason that villagers say they are attracted to the Club is because it provides a place to meet other villagers. It is also valued for the activities it offers: for example, skittles, pool, darts, quizzes, bands and broadcast sports. Villagers have a local amenity in which to socialise without the need for driving; particular comment was made that the facility is much better now that there is no smoking.

When asked what **would** attract villagers to use the Club, a significant number commented that the area needed to be refurbished to make it more appealing, useable and comfortable. Other comment was that the configuration of the space was limiting its use – indicating that perhaps there is a need on occasions for a single larger area. The outside area was highlighted as being in need of brightening up, and several villagers felt that a “child-free” area would be welcomed, whilst others would welcome the provision of food and food preparation facilities.

**How often villagers use Birdingbury Club**



## How could the Club and Birbury provide a better community facility?

This was an open question which evoked a significant response with many ideas regarding both configuration and use.

Only three people were recorded as expressing the opinion that the facilities were appropriate and suitable for use as they currently stand. Over 100 opinions and suggestions were received as to how the village community facilities could be developed to satisfy the villagers' needs. Suggestions were made as follows:

Either

(i) based on taking the current building and reconfiguring and refurbishing it and combining the Club and Birbury to satisfy the shortcomings previously identified,

or

(ii) based on demolishing and redeveloping on the site with a new facility.

Specific requests were that any new facility should provide:-

- Modern flexible facilities
- Bright, up-to-date, and welcoming building and surrounding environment
- Child-friendly area with garden - also defined adult/child areas
- Available day-time use in small or larger configuration
- Catering facilities

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. **The Birbury** is considered by many respondents to be too small, lacking facilities and rather old-fashioned
2. **The Club** meets the needs of the range of people who use its facilities, who enjoy the friendly welcome and good beer.
3. For many others, however, it is not attractive: the environment is considered to be dark, out-dated and in need of drastic refurbishment.
4. Many respondents suggested a radical approach to the redevelopment of the Birbury and the Club to provide an integrated, multi-purpose new community facility.
5. There is certainly a mandate here for a significant change in the facilities provided between the Birbury and the Club. In the short-term, both could benefit from implementing some improvements to the general décor and availability, but, long-term, there is an identified need to consider a more fundamental change in the configuration of both, either independently or jointly.

### **Recommendations**

- **The Parish Council, the Club Committee and the Birbury Management Committee should explore, as a matter of urgency, the possibility of providing a new multi-purpose community facility.**

- Such a facility should incorporate the sort of facilities outlined above, as well as those identified in other sections of the Parish Plan.

### GENERAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

The questionnaire sought to discover how various facilities available were being used by villagers. It was hoped that this information would help to identify ways of improving them. Birdingbury had a small village shop and Post Office until 2006, and its closure was widely mourned by villagers, as it had provided a community facility for social interaction as well as retail services.

TABLE 1

	Used the service	
Newspaper delivery	113	48%
Neighbourhood watch	98	42%
Dairy delivery	65	28%
Local produce sales/exchanges	51	22%
Library	23	10%
Fruit and vegetable delivery	14	6%
Other (unspecified)	8	3%

Table 1 shows, of the 240 responses received, how many people use existing services. Table 2 indicates how many people might use other services if they were provided.

TABLE 2

	Said they might use such a service	
Post Office/Shop	217	93%
Coffee Shop	76	32%
Youth Club	49	21%
Toddler Group	11	5%

Comments included regret at the closure of the shop and Post Office (while accepting the fact that this provision would probably be unviable) and the view that community events were important in bringing people together.

### VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

All the activities listed overleaf have taken place in the last year, some regularly, while others are annual events.



Of 41 comments describing why they did not attend these functions, the majority, 28, said they either did not have the time or were not interested and five thought the activities were unfriendly or 'cliquey'. Four replied they could not attend through age or disablement.

	Villagers who had attended		Villagers who might attend	
<b>Church</b>	145	62%	24	10%
<b>Festival</b>	217	93%	3	1%
<b>Youth Club</b>	50	21%	16	7%
<b>Progressive Supper</b>	96	41%	31	13%
<b>Birbury lunches</b>	70	30%	55	24%
<b>Egg roll</b>	76	32%	32	14%
<b>Open gardens</b>	87	37%	68	29%
<b>Rounders day</b>	59	25%	55	24%
<b>Bonfire night</b>	162	69%	27	12%
<b>Club events</b>	108	46%	42	18%
<b>Fishing Club</b>	27	12%	17	7%
<b>Ladies Circle</b>	78	33%	39	17%

The 44 replies suggesting further activities are difficult to categorise and many were general e.g. 'more for children' or 'more sports activities'. However the following were specifically mentioned:

- Petanque
- Card evenings
- Coffee mornings
- Quizzes
- Cubs/Scouts
- Golf society
- Painting classes
- Nature Classes
- Photography classes
- 1 day classes
- Book club
- Amateur drama
- Tennis courts
- Keep fit / yoga
- Male activities
- Evening classes
- Day trips / lunches
- Folk dance
- Music groups
- Women's walking group
- Art group



### FUND RAISING

The main fund raising event in the village is the Country Festival and distribution from that is covered in the section to follow. Other fund raising is conducted by specific bodies, particularly the Church, for their own use and there are a number of other events e.g. coffee mornings run by individuals for charities and other causes.

87% of respondents thought that fund raising was important and 6% did not. Four of the listed categories were fairly evenly supported – church, village distribution fund, new community facilities and local

charities. Non local charities and the school each received less than half of the support of any of the other four. There were few comments but two noted that money should only be raised for specific purposes and one was concerned about lack of accountability.

### **Summary of Main Points**

- 1. It is difficult to identify any strong points from the findings of this section. There was some evidence that not all villagers were fully aware of what is currently available, suggesting a need for better communication.*
- 2. The suggestions for further activities were imaginative but would be difficult to implement without new volunteers or a larger community building.*
- 3. There was praise from some respondents for the work of those who work to provide some of the current activities.*
- 4. Given the difficulties in finding volunteers to run it, the restarting of a Youth Club is entirely dependant on enough parents and others being willing to help.*

### **Recommendations**

- **The suggestions made in this section should be circulated to those bodies which currently help provide community facilities i.e. the Club, Birbury and Recreation Committees, and the Parish Council.**
- **Find volunteers to restart the Youth Club.**
- **Realistically, there is no possibility of a commercial shop or coffee shop being established. The Saturday morning 'Swap Shop' initiative at the Birbury could possibly be developed. Again this requires volunteers to ensure its long-term future.**
- **Attention needs paying to those who cannot participate through age or disability.**
- **Explore ways of improving communications about events/activities in neighbouring villages.**
- **The preferences expressed in answer to the questions on Fund Raising should be respected.**

## BIRDINGBURY COUNTRY FESTIVAL

This is a weekend event held each July and has been running for 18 years. The village voted for it to take the place of the more traditional Church Fete. Its basis is a steam fair with steamrollers, fairground organ, stationary engines and increasingly collections of vintage cars, motor bikes, agricultural and military vehicles. The 'collections' are sited on two fields but parade through the village several times during the weekend. There are commercial 'fun fair' rides and food stalls, as well as village teas and lunches. Some rural activities including falconry, beagles and dog trials are featured. Village and charity stalls line Main Street and include cakes, preserves, white elephant, tombola, children's corner, coconut shy etc. On the Sunday a church service is held, usually outside the Birbury, and children from Leamington Hastings School (many from the village) perform a maypole dance.

The event attracts up to 4000 visitors each year and has raised well over £70,000 over the years. Villagers vote each year at the Village Meeting on the distribution of funds which always includes St Leonard's Church, the Village Development Fund and outside charities.

There has been some dissension over the festival and in the questionnaire villagers were asked whether they supported it. All respondents answered the question and 85% were happy for the Festival, in its present form, to be held in the village. The remaining 15% were not.

### Supporters' Comments

About 40 of those in favour had suggestions for improvements and 59 respondents would like a smaller, less expensive, more 'villagey' and less commercial occasion with more village participation. They asked for a much greater variety of activities and stalls with rural demonstrations and competitions, more activities for children (and women); local food (not burger vans) and fewer 'junk stalls'.

- Several thought there were too many vehicles, and too 'samey', with particular criticism of the military vehicles, and the implication in many of the other comments calling for more variety was that the preponderance of the 'vehicle collections' and parades was out of proportion and detracted from the festival being a village activity.
- Car parking management needed to be improved (nine comments) and 14 had suggestions for improving the Saturday evening entertainment – a barn dance, a barbecue – or a meeting to see what people want.
- One person mentioned vulnerability to crime – especially camping/night activities. (NB police records do not support this perception.)
- One person wished objectors would not verbally abuse organisers during the festival – or to behave dangerously.
- One person suggested more seating for the elderly.

- Many of the suggestions were accompanied by the comment that they really enjoyed the festival – and that it made more money in one weekend than in a year’s fundraising.

### **Objectors’ Comments**

Many reasons given by non-supporters for not supporting the festival were similar to suggestions given by supporters for changes to be made.

- Sixteen respondents said the event was too big, too commercial, too noisy and disruptive and did not encourage the input of villagers. The event had lost its village feel. Several mentioned car parking as a problem. Those objecting to tanks and other vehicles outnumbered those supporting them, with eight respondents very opposed. Health and safety was an issue with four respondents, particularly with the parades of vehicles in Main Street.
- Twelve respondents were concerned with the dissension within the village that they felt had been caused by the festival and its organisation and 12 people were also concerned with the perceived disruption to villagers’ lives and the intrusion imposed by a few enthusiasts on the many, with access to private properties restricted and roads closed.
- Five people commented that funds raised did not match the work put in and similar or more money was raised in other villages with less elaborate events. There was also concern that the festival brought ‘undesirable elements’ into the village and ‘promoted theft from properties’.

When asked for alternatives, 28 respondents preferred a village fete and six a fete/festival in alternate years. There was an assortment of other suggestions for fund raising, but none would take the place of a major event.

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *85% of the village supports the festival and many of those commented how much they enjoyed it.*
2. *However, the ‘feel’ from the comments suggests that there is a shared view amongst supporters and non-supporters that it has become too big and too commercial, lacks variety and has too much emphasis on vehicles, particularly military. Those for and against want an event that is more for the village, run by the village.*
3. *There are many positive and concrete suggestions from respondents which would be worth looking at.*

### **Recommendation**

1. **The Festival Committee should consider the range of comments in their planning for 2009 and beyond**

## COMMUNICATION

It was decided to include a section, within the survey, on communication to ascertain:

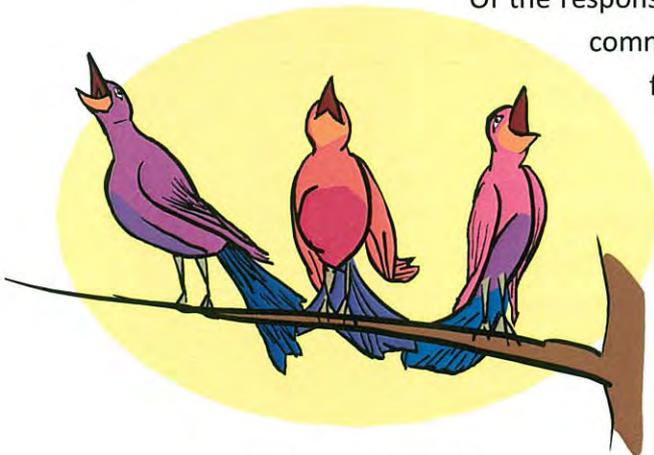
- Opinions on existing methods of communication including Birdsong, Village Meetings and notice boards
- The effectiveness of those existing methods, for newcomers and existing villagers
- Suggestions for other methods of communication
- Views on the desirability of a village web site

Birdsong is a village magazine, produced bi-monthly and distributed, free of charge, to all village households.

The Village Meetings are run by the Parish Council, and chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council. They are held twice a year, April and September, and are opportunities:

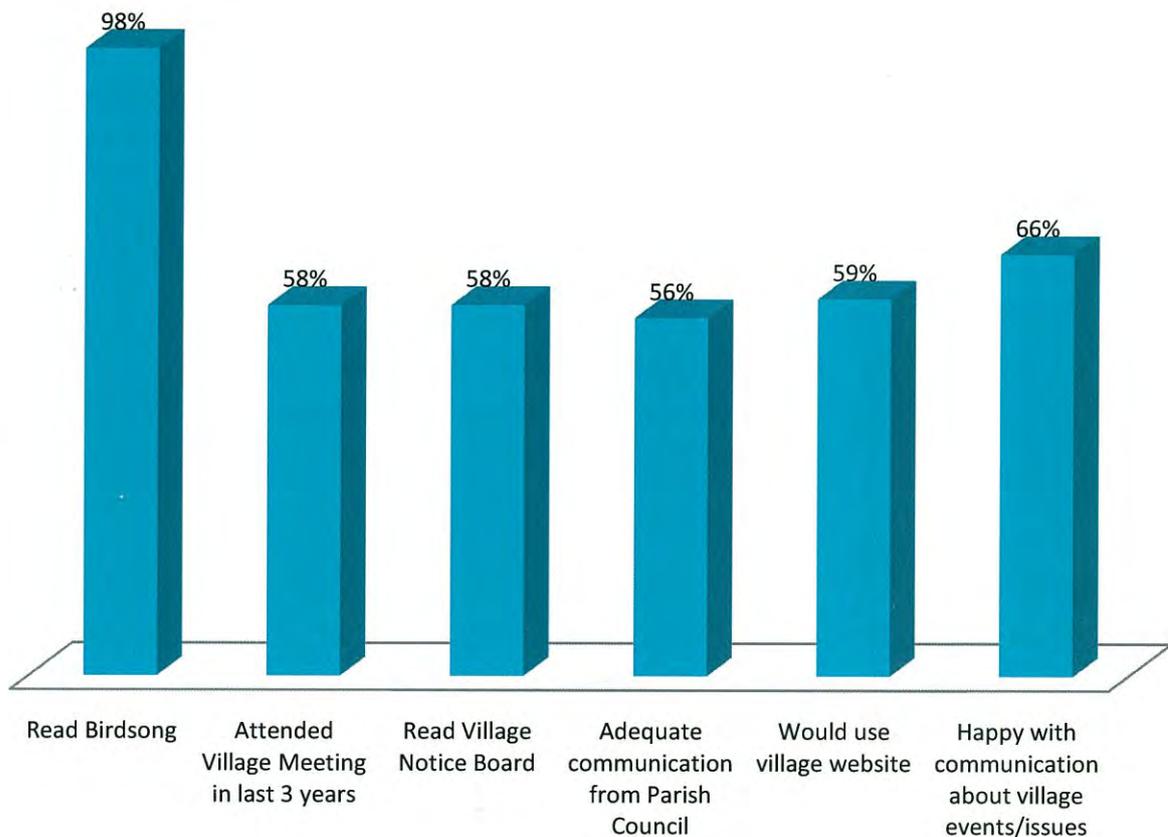
- To update villagers on topical issues involving the Parish Council and for villagers to raise issues of concern
- For village groups to report annually on their activities
- For the Festival Committee to seek ratification of future Festivals by way of a vote
- For the village to vote on the charities to receive proceeds from the Festival

## BIRDSONG



Of the responses received, 98% of people read Birdsong. Positive comments included that it is informative and written in a friendly manner which is easy to read. There were several constructive suggestions for improvement which included:

- Changing production to monthly and including more stories, features and articles from, by, and about, villagers
- Listing recommended service providers and introducing advertising to increase revenue
- Publishing minutes from village meetings and more details of forthcoming events
- Some people felt there should be more to appeal to younger villagers, and others felt that older villagers would appreciate details of people who might help with shopping or collecting prescriptions. Some people felt it would be more appealing in A4 size. There were mixed views about the inclusion of 'Church News' with some people wishing it to be removed completely and others wishing it to be more fully integrated.



### VILLAGE MEETINGS

Of the responses received 58% of people had attended a village meeting in the last 3 years, and 41% had not. Reasons given for not attending included:

- Too busy
- Lack of babysitters
- Recent arrivals to the village
- A feeling that people do not feel able to express their true opinion or vote freely

When asked how meetings could be improved, suggestions included:

- Using a larger, more prominent venue, and providing earlier notification of dates, times and agenda items
- Not taking a lot of time reading previous year's minutes; circulate with the agenda or publish beforehand
- Utilising an anonymous and confidential voting system
- Having a social activity afterwards in the Club
- Encouraging people to speak freely, and welcoming contributions from all attendees

### VILLAGE NOTICE BOARDS

58% of respondents read the village notice boards, 41% do not. Reasons given for not reading them included not actually knowing or visiting it's location (on the bus shelter), and the information being better covered in Birdsong or at meetings.

Suggestions for improvements to village notice boards included making them more interesting in appearance, keeping the information up to date and ensuring notices are not obscured. The lack of a notice board in Marton Road was regretted by some.

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

56% of people felt that communication received from the Parish Council was adequate. 33% did not agree. Many respondents felt e-mail to be a more efficient communication tool, and that a village website would be useful for Parish Council communication. Most people felt that the reports in Birdsong were useful but many felt that more detailed information on topical issues should be published.

### MAKING NEW VILLAGERS WELCOME

There were many comments as to how we can make new villagers feel welcome in Birdingbury. These included:

- A welcome pack containing all pertinent information, delivered in person, perhaps with flowers and a card. This could include a 'welcome' issue of Birdsong detailing all village activities and key contacts
- Issuing automatic membership to Birdingbury Club – and perhaps offering a free drink
- Hold more social gatherings issuing personal invites to new villagers

Some people commented that they had not felt welcomed on their arrival, although others felt quite differently and had received visits, cards and flowers.



### VILLAGE WEBSITE

When asked if use would be made of a village website, 59% of respondents confirmed it would be used and 32% felt it unlikely.

### Other comments regarding village communication

The final comments reiterated the need for a review of notice board information and position, better organising of social events to prevent dates clashing and a greater use of existing communication methods to promote social activity.

### Summary of Main Points

1. *Birdsong is widely read and highly valued by most villagers.*
2. *Village Meetings might attract a wider section of villagers if they were held in a larger venue, were publicised more comprehensively (Agenda etc.) and allowed secrecy of voting on controversial issues.*
3. *The notice board is not up-dated regularly enough, and may not be in the right position.*
4. *While many newcomers to the village reported being warmly welcomed by their neighbours, there were suggestions for ensuring that the community does this by issuing a village 'welcome pack'. Offering membership of the Club was also suggested.*

5. Many respondents felt there should be better communication by the Parish Council e.g by e-mailing Minutes to villagers who request this, posting Minutes and next Agenda regularly on the notice board, on a website and by email.

### Recommendations

- **Birdsong should continue to be financially supported as it covers many aspects of village life.**
- **The Parish Council should commission the setting up of a village website, on which PC Minutes are posted as well as other issues raised by the Parish Plan.**
- **The PC should investigate other ways of improving communications with villagers, in the light of the suggestions made by respondents to the questionnaire.**

## TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY

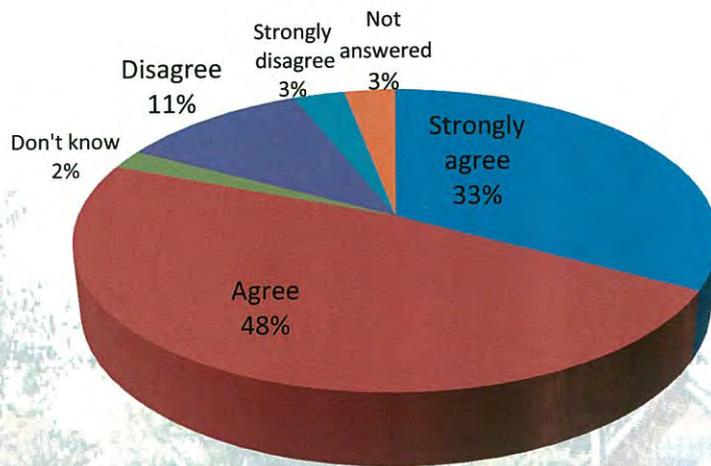
The village is served by buses to Coventry, Leamington, Rugby and Southam. A few years ago, a 30mph restriction was imposed. All the roads within the parish are minor roads. There has been a haulage business on the edge of village for many years, on a site which also has other small businesses.

The vast majority (c. 80%) of villagers **never** use public transport at all. Of those who do, the most highly regarded is the service to Rugby. Comments on this issue highlighted problems with using them for going to work or college - times unsuitable or journeys too long. Young people pointed out the lack of 'early or late buses', and regretted the expense.

A high proportion of villagers are concerned about **speeding** in the village:

81% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there is a problem with speeding. When asked what type of traffic measures they would support, half chose 'speed aware' signs. Fewer than one in ten wanted speed cameras, while chicanes (22%), road humps (18%) and rumble strips (14%) were not particularly popular options. 11% wanted **no** additional measures.





"There is a problem with Speeding"

Many comments on the issue of speeding identified Leamington Hastings/Marton Road as the worst area, especially at commuting times. While some blamed 'non-villagers', 'all age groups' or 'boy racers', more said 'villagers are the main culprits'!

Comments on road safety included pleas for ensuring that any signage be in keeping with the rural feel of the village: e.g. "should not be too enormous", "they make the environment ugly", while others pointed out that with so many young families in the village "any measures would be welcome". Chicanes and road humps came in for the greatest criticism.

While the majority of respondents are **not** concerned about HGVs passing through the village (58%), a sizeable minority (34%) are. Comments included requests for HGV restrictions on all but the 'gritted' roads through the village (Marton/Leamington Hasting Roads), or on **all** roads unless for access. Some comments referred specifically to the impact of the local haulage firm, while others suggested large buses, farm traffic and Sat Nav directed lorries were the problem. There are obviously strong feelings generated by this issue:

- "...hate them. They are eroding our lovely lanes...why do we have to have HGVs in a village like this?"
- "Speeding cars are more dangerous."
- "Get rid of (the haulage firm) yard – sorry, that's the only answer."
- "I'm not aware there is a problem."
- "Don't purchase anything that needs a lorry – and die!"

Suggestions for improving road safety in relation to heavy vehicles included the need for a height warning at the Bourton/straight mile turning; better positioned warning signs for lorries on the roads leading to the village; restricting buses down Back Lane.

#### **Summary of Main Points**

1. Greater use of public transport is unlikely unless timetables are more convenient to those wanting to get to work or college and return.
2. Speeding is an issue for many villagers, especially those with young children.

3. *Speed Aware signs are most strongly supported, although there are concerns about their appearance.*
4. *Leamington Hastings/Marton Roads are the worst for speeding, especially at commuting times.*
5. *While most villagers are not concerned about HGVs passing through the village, a significant minority are, and have strong feelings about this issue.*
6. *There is some support for HGV restrictions on most or all roads.*

#### Recommendations

- **The views of the villagers about bus timetables should be shared with the licensing authority (Warwickshire County Council) and the service providers.**
- **The Parish Council should investigate how best to address the concerns about**
  - speeding through the village
  - HGV and bus traffic.



### BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

For such a small rural, dormitory community (where most inhabitants commute elsewhere for employment and education) there is a significant amount of business activity in Birdingbury. Within the parish, farming is of course no longer the very dominant source of employment which it once was but the farms continue to provide a livelihood for the dozen or so people who live and/or work on the land. Most other parishioners fall into one of two groups as far as source of income is concerned: there are those who are employed out of the parish and there are those who are retired and derive their income from pensions and other non-employment sources. There are some, however, who work in enterprises within the parish and others who run businesses from an address in Birdingbury but who serve that business mainly elsewhere.

This section of the Parish Plan is difficult to write because, although the general Questionnaire included a 'Business and Employment' section and it was supplemented by a further Business Questionnaire offered to 28 people known or believed to run an enterprise within the parish) the return-rate on the latter was low : nine or 33% - which compares with the 80%+ return-rate for the general Questionnaire). Oddly, the Business Questionnaire was sometimes not returned even by people who had requested it because they wanted the voice of business to be heard!

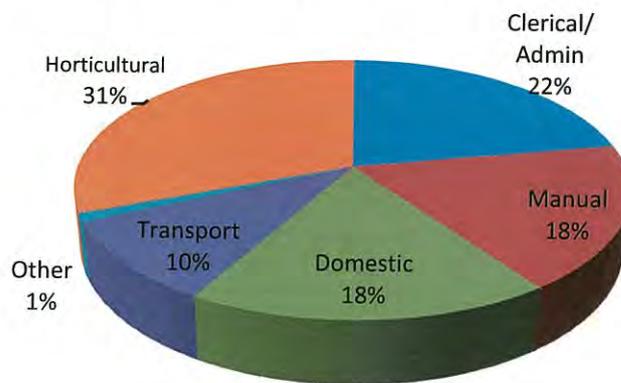
Twenty three people said that they worked within the village; 28 people reported that they ran a business from the village. Probably the largest source of employment (it is difficult to know because not every business responded to requests for information) is a mixed enterprise concerned with haulage, fence-manufacture and property-management: there are five employees. Other employers are a Recruitment Agency, the Club, a newspaper delivery service and, of course, the five farms. There are several self-employed people who operate from village premises. Some others, though employed by organisations beyond the parish, carry out a proportion of their work at home. Apart from the few who completed a Business Questionnaire, little or nothing is known about the other companies or businesses which, it is believed, are registered at addresses within the village,

A surprising number of villagers (30%) thought that there should be better local employment opportunities, but far more (52%) took the opposing view.

Of the former, 49 suggested that there should be opportunity for employment in horticulture and significant numbers favoured clerical/admin., manual, or domestic work, and jobs in transport.

Well over 50% of the village support the suggestion that there should be a directory of local businesses. A number of voices wondered whether anyone would want to organise such a publication and there were worries about certain dangers inherent in producing it. It was pointed out that there already existed several local publications which acted as directories.

**Employment opportunities favoured**



Asked about the desirability of shared office facilities to allow local working, nearly half of the villagers supported the idea although those opposed to the idea had concerns about the impact such provision could have upon the nature of the village as a predominantly residential community. A similar number supported the other suggestion, i.e. the use of the Club or other community premises for local business; half of those respondents thought that they personally would consider making use of such a facility but, again, fears were expressed about what might follow from it.

**Business Questionnaire** responses reveal that four enterprises would like to have expanded, purpose-built premises within the parish area, five regarded mobile phone coverage and six

broadband access as important. The question of village attitudes towards the presence of local business activity was mentioned. The need for a lock-up facility if a shop were to be provided within the Club, street lighting for delivery services and seasonal on-site accommodation for agricultural workers were also issues brought up by particular enterprises. One respondent was looking for local people who might be prepared to take on various jobs on a part-time or casual basis.

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *In addition to the farms within the Parish, there is one main employer in the village, currently employing five people.*
2. *A number of other people are either self-employed or run businesses from the village.*
3. *While many people do not wish to see any business expansion locally, a minority would welcome some additional employment opportunities – in horticulture, admin./clerical or manual jobs.*
4. *Responses to the idea of a local directory were mixed: some felt this need was already being met while others would welcome more information about local providers.*
5. *While there was some support for shared office facilities, others were concerned that such developments could change the nature of the village.*
6. *There was some wish to see improved broadband and mobile phone coverage in the village.*

### **Recommendations**

- **The Parish Council should study the suggestions to improve or extend the commercial life of the village which are revealed in the responses to the two Questionnaires, although they will have to be sensitive to the concerns expressed by many about the impact which *any* business activity – let alone *enhanced* activity – might bring to the community.**
- **In particular, in the light of there being a surprisingly large number of people who would welcome more employment opportunities in the locality, coupled with the wishes of two enterprises to find more workers, it would be useful for the Parish Council to explore this matter further.**
- **Thought should be given to the sufficiency or otherwise of existing publications offering a business directory service of one kind or another. This might best be approached by attempting, first, to discover if everyone is actually aware of the three or more publications which are already delivered in the area – and their contents.**
- **In any discussion about developing a new community building (either within or beyond the village envelope), consideration should be given to the support which seems to exist for the provision of premises and facilities suitable for shared business use.**

## LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER

Currently there is no official or formal, organised neighbour scheme in the village. The church however continues to provide pastoral care and some villagers also support neighbours as and when the need arises either through visits or the occasional social event.

The Questionnaire sought to identify whether a more formal organisation was required and how it would be received and who would benefit most.

As could be expected the vast majority of respondents were happy with the level of the contact they had in the village (80%) and had no problems with visiting the doctor, making appointments or shopping (91%). However, we always expected that 'looking after each other' would be a minority need but a very important one for those that require it.

The number of people who feel they 'do not have enough contact with others' in the village totaled 32 (14%) of which nine stated they had definite problems with getting out and about. Those that stated they actually welcomed more support (as opposed to just contact) highlighted medical visits and shopping as the help they needed. Of the 32 who felt they didn't have enough contact 17 were over 60 years of age with the rest spread across all the age groups.

Odd jobs were cited as the main support needed although responses from the over 60s reinforce the notion that they valued *contact* more than physical help.

A total of 60% of people said they would be prepared to support a good neighbour scheme. Some commented 'time available' as being the key issue why they couldn't support one. The total numbers, across all ages, happy to receive such a service went up to 37% of respondents suggesting many would welcome organised help with jobs.

Regarding 'payment for help' only 4% said they would not pay.

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *An organised 'Good Neighbour Scheme' would be welcomed in the village.*
2. *The over 60's consider personal contact as their highest priority. Other age groups, although small in numbers, also valued more personal contact.*
3. *People would be prepared to pay for services provided.*

### **Recommendation**

- **The Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council should together explore the possibility of helping to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme, which would co-ordinate ways in which villagers could help each other.**

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## SPORT AND RECREATION

The village is fortunate in having a recreation field – a levelled area of church land with a reduced-size soccer pitch, playground equipment, skateboard/cycle ramps and a multi-purpose all-weather hard area. Grass is mowed regularly by a contractor and the whole area is administered by a small Recreation Committee. The area has been used by most village children and visitors over the past thirty years.

There is some scope for indoor recreational activities in the Club (darts, skittles and pool) and in The Birbury, although neither has the capacity to provide those kinds of activities which would usually be found in a medium-sized village hall or community centre.

because villagers' knowledge and experience will almost always depend upon their being parents or grandparents of children whose ages make them likely users of those facilities. Others may well have little reason to comment. This would explain why there are many 'Don't Know' responses to questions concerning provision for children.

Nearly half of villagers judge that there are sufficient village facilities for children and young persons. Bearing in mind that, in regard to the question about sufficiency, 82 (36%) were either 'Don't Knows' or had left the question blank, the firm impression is that only a small minority of respondents were unhappy with provision. Even so, there were some requests for better facilities for 10-15 year-olds. Suggestions for new facilities included a BMX track, a tennis court, a full-size soccer pitch – and a hall big enough to house indoor games and activities.

When asked about their families' use of the children's facilities, the response appears to deny the notion that the recreation field is a "white elephant"; 94 (40%) claimed that their families made use of the play equipment, 77 (33%) reported use of the multi-purpose hard area, 64 (27%) had used the soccer pitch and 55 (24%) the skateboard/cycle ramps. Several write-in comments referred to the use made of these facilities by visitors' children, too.

A third of respondents suggested that the play equipment needed no improvement but others pointed to the need to replace some items. Three thought that there should be more equipment for young children and four thought there was not enough for older ones. A similar proportion was happy with the existing soccer pitch although several villagers urged a more frequent grass-mowing and the regular renewal of goal nets and posts and of pitch line-markings. The skateboard ramps and the all-weather area were judged to require no

More than a half of adults in the village did not report any involvement in recreational groups within the community. When asked if they supported such named groups or activities, 40 (17%) villagers reported that they supported the Ladies Circle, 31 (13%) mentioned angling, 11 (5%) cricket and 10 (4%) the allotments.

As far as children's facilities are concerned, responses to issues raised in the Questionnaire must be interpreted carefully

improvement by an overwhelming proportion (95%) of those people who responded to those questions.

When invited to suggest additional sports facilities, bowling, tennis and BMX were mentioned three or four times. Other mentions included a pétanque rink and walking and cycling clubs. It was suggested by four respondents that it would be useful to have a weather-shelter on the recreation field.

As for interest in more sports teams, nearly one hundred villagers were in favour *in general* and a few named specific things: 'youth sports' was mentioned by 13 respondents and soccer in particular by eleven. More information on the team sports available in neighbouring villages was requested and, once more, the need for a community centre was urged by several people.



### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *There seems to be general satisfaction with the sporting facilities available to children. In fact, many villagers give the impression that they regard them as more than one might expect in a village the size of Birdingbury. Comparison with similarly-sized villages supports that judgement.*
2. *Nevertheless, villagers offer several useful suggestions for improvement or enhancement which bear examination by the Parish Council and the Recreation Field Committee. In giving them consideration, these bodies will need to bear in mind how difficult it has been to find villagers who are willing to give time and effort to the running of youth activities or the maintenance of their facilities. It may be that the village has reached the limit of what it can properly manage.*
3. *Suggestions for more indoor activities (badminton, yoga, coffee mornings, card games, Pilates, table tennis etc.) were made by a number of respondents, but some of these would be difficult without a larger community building.*

### **Recommendations**

- **Above all, consideration should be given to the interest expressed in a community building larger and more flexible than The Birbury and Club.**
- **The community should examine further the ways in which it ensures that facilities in the Recreation Field are well maintained on a regular, short-term basis (including pitch-marking, goals-maintenance, cleaning etc.). This would be over and beyond the existing statutory health and safety requirements which must, of course, be sustained.**

- In respect of suggestions for more or different facilities, demand seems to be quite low. Even so, the Parish Council or Recreation Field Committee might think it worthwhile to invite villagers, perhaps through Birdsong, to submit any suggestions so that the depth of interest might be gauged.
- Although specifically mentioned by only four Questionnaire respondents, there is some other evidence to suggest that many more parents and children would welcome the provision of some kind of shelter on the Recreation Field. This is worth investigating further.
- Given the strength of support for 'more sports teams', a review could be carried out of the range of current provision as well as what is available in neighbouring villages, and the results published – in Birdsong, on the notice board and on a future village website.

### THE CHURCH

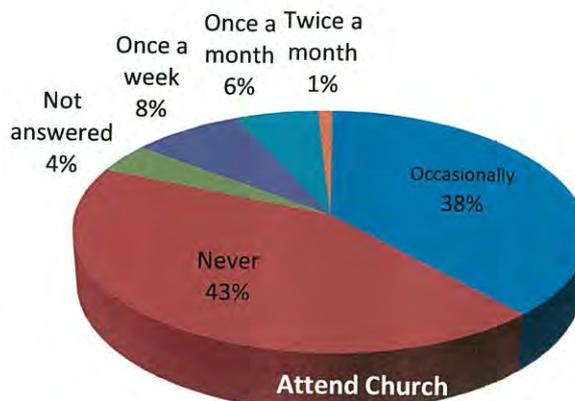
St Leonard's Church stands at the northern end of the village, in a churchyard entered through an attractive lych-gate. (The church & its history is described in the Introduction). Its activities are overseen by the Parochial Church Council, made up of ten members elected by the congregation. Church funds benefit each year from a donation from the funds raised by the Birdingbury Country Festival.

More than half of all respondents (53%) said they attend St Leonard's Church, and 43% said they do not attend (the remainder did not answer this question).

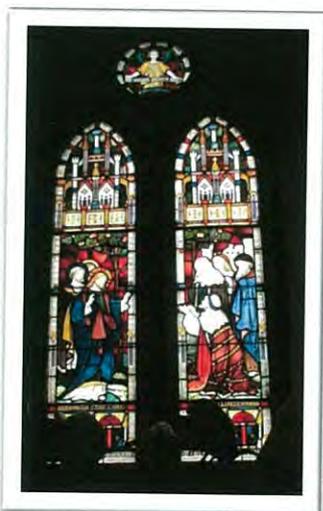
Weddings, baptisms, funerals and festivals attracted the highest attendance e.g. 44% of all respondents (84% of those who ever attended) said they went to church for festivals.

Only 15% of all respondents attended St Leonard's once a month or more frequently (27% of attendees). 19 people said that they attended weekly.

Asked what discouraged church attendance, several respondents mentioned 'difficulty in getting there', with a request for gate access to the churchyard on the level from Main Street. *(There is currently no pathway for pedestrian access from the village, and the road is moderately steep here. The grass verges are quite rough and it is not easy to avoid walking on the road.)*



Those of another faith or denomination made pleas for inclusivity and ecumenical services. A small number pointed out that their atheism inhibited attendance.



The importance of the **building itself** was underlined by a large number of comments: its architecture and historical importance was specifically mentioned by over 56 villagers, while another large minority drew attention to its role as 'the centre of the village' and an important social facility (weddings, funerals etc.). Some valued it as a place for quiet contemplation.

Overall 83% of respondents said they valued the building, while 75% said they support St Leonard's in a number of ways:

- Regular giving – 19% (26% of all who support the Church)
- Collections – 27% (36% of all who support the Church)
- Fundraising activities – 44% (59% of all who support the Church)
- Other financial support – 11% (14% of all who support the Church)
- but the largest group helped in practical ways such as cleaning, mowing - 38% (51% of all who support the Church).

The question seeking general comments on the church in the community elicited a similar range of comments: its importance to the life of the village e.g "We would indeed be a lost village without it...", "an anchor in the community"..

There were a very small number of critical comments, mentioning 'aloof' attitudes, or being 'too posh and not inviting simple souls who might want to pray in working clothes'. Others felt



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the church had 'lost touch with the village', or mentioned their annoyance that the church 'is a perpetual taker' and 'expects' a share of the Festival profits, while not revealing where the money goes.

Suggestions for increasing the role of the church in the community included greater usage for concerts, and the need 'to ensure continued focus in attracting young families'.

### **Summary of Main Points**

1. *Improved pedestrian access to the church is an issue for some wishing to attend.*
2. *The church is valued by the majority of villagers, either for its role in the religious and social life of the community or for its historical and architectural importance.*
3. *While a small minority of villagers attend regularly, over half do so occasionally, many for church festivals and sacraments.*
4. *For some who do not want to be part of church life it has much less significance.*
5. *There is some evidence that a small minority of villagers either feel excluded or are concerned about how monies received from the village are spent.*

### **Recommendations**

- **The Parish Council should explore with the Parochial Church Council the possibility of improved pedestrian access to the church, either by a path along the road or from the Hall drive.**
- **The Parochial Church Council should take note of the comments made by a small minority of respondents and investigate ways of improving communications with all villagers, to ensure further integration into village life.**

## **THE CHILDREN**

The views of the young people living in the parish were sought by asking the Youth Club to come up with their ideas of how the village should be developed. We also held an 'Ideas Session' for youngsters on a Saturday morning in the Birbury. They were asked to say what they liked and disliked about Birdingbury, and to make suggestions for future development.

Birdingbury is unusual in having so many children, despite the absence of a village school.

Children said they liked the peace and quiet of the countryside and being able to see animals, such as chickens, ponies and sheep. They were critical of cars speeding through the village, especially near the entrance to the recreation area.

General untidiness and litter

were also mentioned, and some suggested improving the environment by having more flowers in public areas. Since most children catch a bus to school, it was not surprising that they asked for a cleaner shelter as well as another one in Marton Road.

Many children specifically mentioned how much they liked having friends to play with locally. The older ones realised that, in this relatively safe environment, they were allowed much more freedom than their peers in town.



The Youth Club is important to many of them, although the shortage of volunteers to run it is a continuing cause for concern. The lack of a dedicated community hall was regretted; some would like to see more clubs and activities which need this facility.

Not surprisingly, the most animated responses emerged from their discussions about recreational facilities. Most liked the skateboard ramps, while others did not. Village events such as the Bonfire Party, the Festival and Christmas parties in the Club were specifically mentioned as 'good things' and they would like more of these! Keeping the football pitch in good condition (regular mowing and repair of the goal mouth) is important to many.

Improvements desired included:

- a BMX track,
- tennis court instead of multi-sports area,
- new play equipment such as a roundabout, tree house, zip wire, climbing frame and a big hill for rolling down,
- more seating around recreation area.

### Summary of Main Points

1. *Children like living in the village, particularly having friends close by to play with and access to rural pursuits as well as the recreation area.*
2. *They would like 'a proper village hall', preferably with a shop for sweets, drinks and magazines.*
3. *The children's suggestions for improvement emphasised the importance of recreational and social facilities to them.*

### Recommendation

**Children should be consulted whenever changes or improvements to their facilities are planned.**

## ACTION PLAN : KEY POINTS

Recommendations for Action	By Whom	Time Scale	Cost
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>			
1. Investigate the provision of a Village Hall by setting up a small Steering Group with representation from interested bodies.	Birdingbury Parish Council (BPC)  Birbury Management Committee  Club Management Committee  Parochial Church Council (PCC)	Immediately  Report to Village Meetings in April & September 2009	Time  Grant Aid for feasibility study
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>			
2. a) Set up a Village Web Site with links to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish Council</li> <li>• The Church</li> <li>• The Birbury</li> <li>• The Club</li> <li>• Recreation Committee</li> <li>• Other Local Groups</li> <li>• Business</li> <li>• Forthcoming Events</li> </ul> b) Ensure there is funding to support regular update of all sections.	BPC with co-operation of other groups	In place by June 2009	Grant Aid and/or Village Distribution Fund  Small annual honorarium
<b>ROAD SAFETY</b>			
3. Take forward proposals to improve road safety within the village.	BPC	Immediately	£12K (Grant & BPC)
<b>BIRDINGBURY COUNTRY FESTIVAL</b>			
4. Review of the Birdingbury Country Festival in the light of questionnaire findings, with particular reference to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• size</li> <li>• rural nature</li> <li>• variety of attractions</li> </ul>	Festival Committee	Feedback to BPC at April Village Meetings	Time
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</b>			
5. To investigate improvements to kerbs, paths and verges (see recommendations under Environment and The Church)	RBC PCC	Report to September Village Meeting in first instance	Time Costs to be investigated

## ACTION PLAN : OTHER ISSUES

Recommendations for Action	By Whom	Time Scale	Cost
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Explore ways of addressing the concerns expressed in relation to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of an additional litter bin,</li> <li>• noise from barking dogs,</li> <li>• lighting at 'key points', possibly person-activated,</li> <li>• floral displays at village entrances and around the war memorial.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>The Club Committee should consider ways of</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limiting the impact of noise from customers especially on summer evenings,</li> <li>• improving the area around the Club.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>Dog owners</b> should take note of the concerns expressed about dog-fouling.</li> <li>4. The village should keep an open mind in respect of initiatives which would help to counter climate change.</li> </ol>	<p>Birdingbury Parish Council (BPC)</p> <p>Allotment holders?</p> <p>The Club Committee Dog Owners</p> <p>All Parishioners,</p>	<p>Summer 2009</p>	<p>£50 Time from volunteers</p>
<b>HOUSING AND PLANNING</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how to reflect the support for limited small developments within the village that meet identified local needs ie. for smaller houses for the young and older people.</li> </ul>	<p>BPC &amp; Rugby Borough Council (RBC)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Time</p>
<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>			
<p><b>THE BIRBURY</b> See Key Action Points also</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take account of comments made about The Birbury</li> </ol>	<p>Birbury Management Committee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Time</p>
<p><b>THE CLUB</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Take account of comments made about the Club</li> </ol>	<p>Club Committee</p>		
<p><b>GENERAL COMMUNITY SERVICES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The suggestions made in this section should be circulated to those bodies which currently help provide community facilities.</li> <li>4. Find volunteers to restart the Youth Club.</li> <li>5. Explore viable <b>alternatives to a Village Shop</b> – the Saturday morning 'Swap Shop' initiative at the Birbury could possibly be developed. Again this requires volunteers to ensure its long-term future.</li> <li>6. Attention needs paying to those who cannot participate through <b>age or disability</b>.</li> <li>7. Explore ways of <b>improving communications</b> about events/activities in neighbouring villages.</li> <li>8. The preferences expressed in answer to Q5 should be respected.</li> </ol>	<p>Ditto</p> <p>Parents/other volunteers</p> <p>Birbury Management Committee</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Time</p>
<p><b>BIRDINGBURY COUNTRY FESTIVAL</b> See Key Action Points</p>	<p>Festival</p>		

ACTION PLAN : OTHER ISSUES

<b>COMMUNICATION</b> <b>See Key Action Points</b> 9. Birdsong should continue to be financially supported as it covers many aspects of village life. 10. Explore ways of improving village communications by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up of a <b>village website</b>, on which PC Minutes are posted as well as other issues raised by the Parish Plan;</li> <li>• taking note of other suggestions made by respondents to the questionnaire.</li> </ul>		Committee  BPC & Village Distribution Fund  BPC	When need arises	
<b>TRANSPORT / ROAD SAFETY</b>				
<b>See Key Action Points</b> 1. The views of the villagers about <b>bus timetables</b> should be shared with the licensing authority (Warwickshire County Council) and the service providers. 2. The PC should investigate how best to address the concerns about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>HGV and bus traffic.</b></li> </ol>		BPC & WCC	May 2009  June 2009	
<b>BUSINESS / EMPLOYMENT</b>				
1. Explore ways to <b>improve or extend the commercial life</b> of the village which are revealed in the responses to the two Questionnaires 2. Explore ways of responding to the surprisingly large number of people who would welcome <b>more employment opportunities</b> in the locality, coupled with the wishes of two enterprises to find more workers. 3. Explore the sufficiency or otherwise of <b>existing publications offering a business directory service</b> of one kind or another. This might best be approached by attempting, first, to discover if everyone is actually aware of the three or more publications which are already delivered in the area – and their contents. – <b>See Key Actions – Website</b> 4. In any discussion about developing a <b>new community building</b> (either within or beyond the village envelope), consideration should be given to the support which seems to exist for the provision of premises and facilities suitable for <b>shared business use</b> .		BPC		Grant Aid
<b>LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER</b>				
1. Explore the possibility of helping to set up a <b>Good Neighbour Scheme</b> , which would co-ordinate ways in which villagers could help each other.		PCC & BPC Joint meeting	Before September meeting	Time
<b>SPORT AND RECREATION</b>				
<b>See Key Action Points</b> 1. Above all, consideration should be given to the interest expressed in a <b>community building</b> larger and more flexible than The Birbury and Club. 2. The community should examine further the ways in which it ensures that facilities in the Recreation Field are well maintained on a regular, short-term basis (including pitch-marking, goals-maintenance, cleaning etc.). Explore, perhaps through Birdsong, suggestions for <b>more or different facilities</b> , – supported by names of supporters so that the depth of interest might be gauged. 3. Investigate further the level of support for a <b>shelter on the Recreation Field</b> . 4. Given the strength of support for ‘more sports teams’, a <b>review</b> could be carried out of <b>the range of current provision</b> as well as what is available in neighbouring villages, and the results published – in Birdsong, on the notice board and on a future village website.		A Village Hall Steering Group  Recreation Committee & BPC  Volunteers with an interest in sporting facilities	Ongoing  Reports to Village Meetings September 2009	Time  ?

## THE CHURCH

1. Explore possibility of **improved pedestrian access to the church**, either by a path along the road or from the Hall drive. - **See Key Action Points**
2. Take note of the comments made by a small minority of respondents and investigate ways of **improving communications with all villagers**, to ensure further integration into village life

PCC & BPC

Immediately

Time

PCC

## THE CHILDREN

Children should be consulted whenever changes or improvements to their facilities are planned.

All local groups

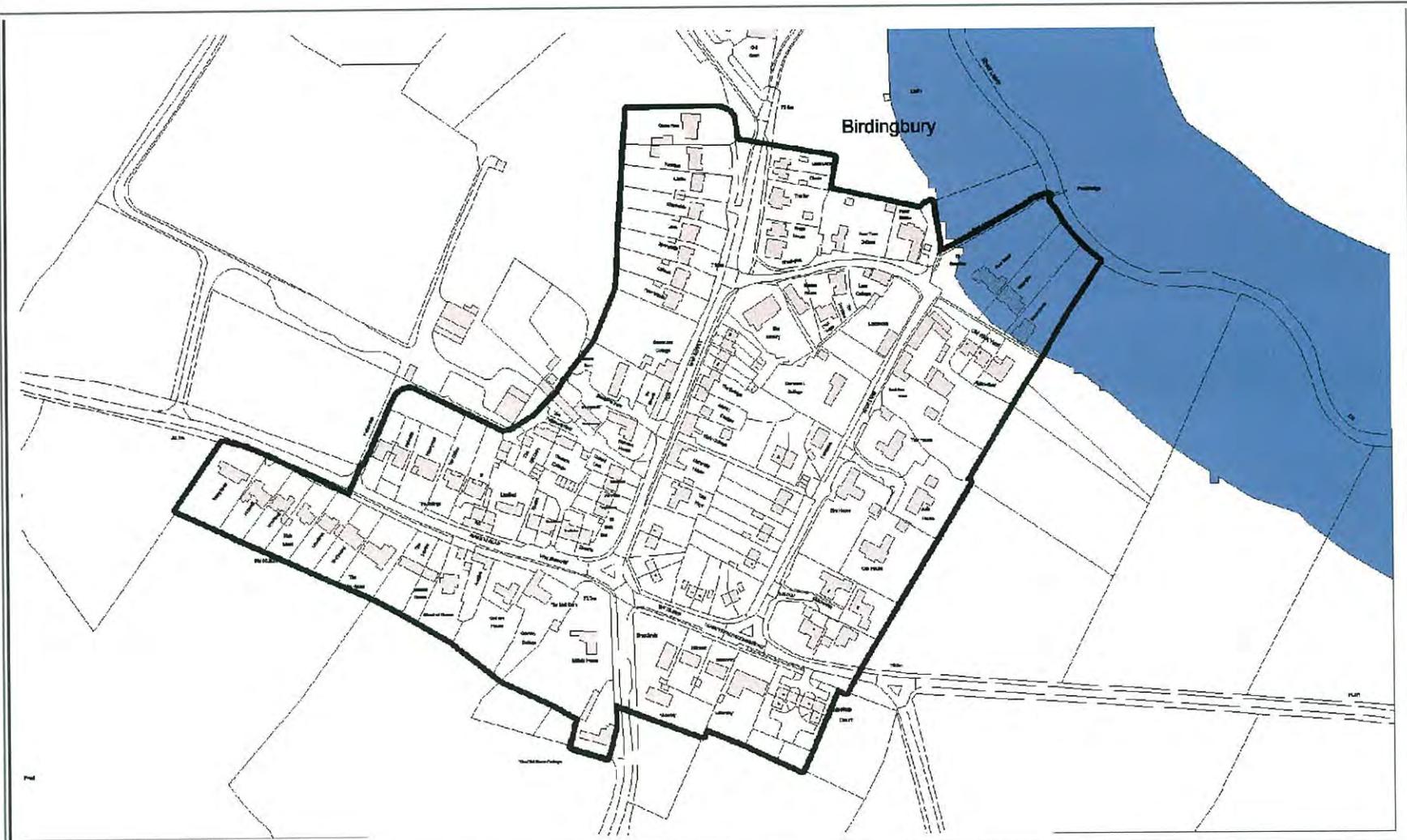
Ongoing

Time

### *next steps.....*

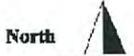
Having done all this work, we now need to ensure that the Parish Plan results in some actions. The **Action Plan** at the end of the main section spells out what we can all do to help Birdingbury become even more pleasant. While some of the proposed actions will require particular groups to assume responsibility for changes or developments, there are also opportunities for all of us to play our part.

**All of those involved in the Parish Plan project hope that you find this document interesting and useful. We look forward to getting feedback on its recommendations, especially from groups identified in the Action Plan.**



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**BIRDINGBURY - INSET MAP 4**



## BIRDINGBURY PARISH PLAN

Dear Parishioner,

You may have already heard that the Parish Council has decided to put together a **Parish Plan** which will provide a framework for future developments in the village. A group of volunteers (the Parish Plan Steering Group) has been working over the past few months to use your ideas about the major issues which this Plan should cover, and has now produced the attached **Questionnaire** which is designed to get your views on



We hope you will be prepared to complete this questionnaire and return it to us in the envelope provided. We aim to get the views of at least 80% of the Village so we should be really grateful if you could find the time to do this. You can either complete ONE questionnaire for your whole household or ask for additional copies so that individuals can register their views separately. The questionnaire(s) can either be returned in the envelope provided, or one of the Steering Group members will come and collect it/them. If you need any further explanation on the questions, please don't hesitate to ask him/her when the questionnaire is collected, or contact Di Turner (633755) Bart Bartmanis (633479) or Jackie Morton (633493).

Thank you for your co-operation

The Parish Plan could have a real impact on the future of the Village

## BIRDINGBURY PARISH PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE HOUSEHOLD SECTION

How many people are there in **your household**?

ADULTS		CHILDREN			
Male	Female	Male	Female		
18-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6-10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

What sort of house do you occupy?

Detached   
  Semi-detached   
  Terraced   
  Other  
Please specify.....

How many bedrooms?

One   
  Three   
  Five or more  
 Two   
  Four

How long have you lived in the village?

0-5 years   
  6-10 years   
  11-20  
 21-30 years   
  more than 30 years

What is your occupational status? (please enter an appropriate number in boxes)

Employed   
  Unemployed   
  Student  
 Self Employed   
  Own Business   
  Housewife/Husband  
 Retired   
  Carer   
  Other  
Please specify.....

**PLEASE NOTE** that your answers to these questions will be treated in the strictest **CONFIDENCE**, and those of the following questionnaire are completely anonymous.

Please tick the appropriate boxes. You do not have to add comments unless you wish to!

## Appendix 4 – Response Profile: ‘Household Questionnaires’

Response	
Number of households surveyed	153
Number of completed questionnaires	110
Response rate	81%

Composition of households		
Number of adults	223	81%
Number of children (under 18)	53	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>100%</b>

House type		
Detached	71	65%
Semi-detached	3	3%
Terraced	32	29%
Other	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Number of bedrooms for each house type						
	Five or more	Four	Three	Two	One	Total
<b>Detached</b>	16	29	16	8	2	71
<b>Semi-detached</b>	1	5	17	9		32
<b>Terraced</b>	1		1	2		4
<b>Other</b>			1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	18	34	35	20	3	110
	16%	31%	23%	18%	3%	100%

How long lived in village		
0-5 years	27	25%
6-10 years	10	9%
11-20 years	29	26%
21-30 years	20	18%
More than 30 years	23	21%
(blank)	1	1%
	110	100%

Employment status		
	People	Households
<b>Employed</b>	69	53
<b>Self employed</b>	30	25
<b>Own business</b>	12	10
<b>Retired</b>	48	42
<b>Other</b>	64	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>110</b>

Note: Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

**BIRDINGBURY PARISH PLAN  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please indicate (with appropriate number in boxes) on behalf of whom the questionnaire is being completed:-

ADULTS		CHILDREN	
Male	Female	Male	Female
18-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- Refuse and Recycling
  - How satisfied are you with the current refuse and recycling arrangements?  
 Very     Fairly     Not Satisfied
  - If you are not satisfied, in what way(s) would you like them improved?  
 .....  
 .....
- Village Lighting
  - Would you like to see any street lighting in the village?  
 Yes     No

- If "Yes" what would you like?  
 Some lighting at certain key places such as corners  Yes     No  
 Lighting along Marton Rd/Leamington Hastings Rd  Yes     No  
 Lighting along Main Street  Yes     No  
 Lighting along Back Lane  Yes     No  
 Other provision (please state) .....

- Footpaths/Pavements/Kerbs
  - Are you happy with the provision and state of village footpaths/pavements?  
 Yes     No
  - If "No" what improvements would you like?  
 .....  
 .....
- Dog Fouling
  - Do you think dog fouling is a problem in our village?  
 Yes     No
  - If "Yes", how would you like the problem to be tackled?  
 .....
- Noise
  - Are you concerned about the level of noise in the village?  
 Yes     No
  - If "Yes", how, where and when does noise trouble you?  
 .....  
 .....
- Litter
  - Should there be more litter bins?  
 Yes     No
  - If "Yes", where? .....
- Are you happy with the appearance of the village?  
 Yes     No
  - If "No", in which ways do you feel that this could be improved?  
 .....  
 .....
- Are there any other environmental issues which you think the Village Plan should consider?.....  
 .....

### HOUSING & PLANNING

The results of this part of the survey can have an influence on future planning.

1. Are you thinking of moving within the village in the next 5 years?

- Yes                       No

If "Yes" please indicate by tick and/or comment what type of property you would be looking to move to:

- a) To a smaller property  
 1 bed     2 bed     3 bed    other .....
- b) To a larger property  
 1 bed     2 bed     3 bed    other .....

Comment .....

2. If the village were to be expanded with further residential properties, please tick up to three of the suggestions below to indicate how you think this should be done:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Larger homes for sale               | <input type="checkbox"/> Smaller homes for sale                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Properties to rent                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Starter homes for shared ownership or in other schemes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation suited to the elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of off-street parking                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify                                 |

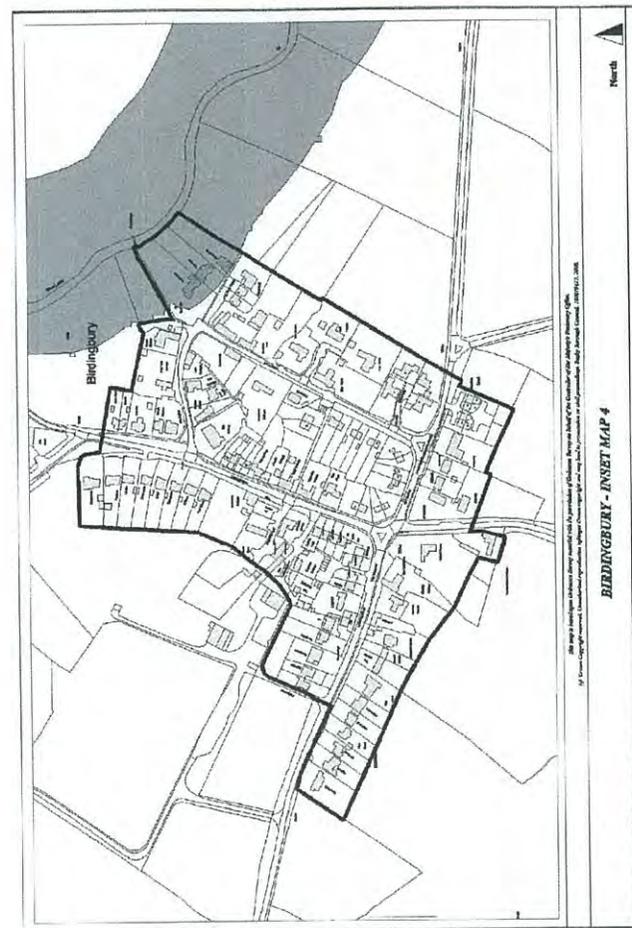
Comment .....

3. Do you think the village benefits from the present Rugby Borough Council policy of limited extensions (intended to prevent smaller houses developing into larger ones)?

- Yes                       No

Comment .....

4. There is little vacant space within the present 'village envelope' (see plan overleaf where the envelope, as defined by the Borough Council, is shown as a heavy line).



a) What types of development would you support **within** the existing envelope?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light industrial/craft workshops                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Dwellings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Space                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Large              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small groups of houses                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Small              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational (eg. meeting, hall, social, storage) | <input type="checkbox"/> Starter/affordable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail  | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly            |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> None at all        |

Comment .....

b) What types of development would you support **outside** the existing village envelope?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light industrial/craft workshops                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Dwellings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office space                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Large              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small groups of houses                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Small              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational (eg. meeting, hall, social, storage) | <input type="checkbox"/> Starter/affordable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail  | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly            |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Large estates      |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> None at all        |

Comment .....

5. Do you have any comment on the style of building in any NEW development?

.....

6. Do you have any particular concerns about housing and planning which are not covered by these questions?

.....

.....

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. THE BIRBURY (Village Meeting Room)

a) Does the Birbury meet your needs as a community room for the Village?

- Yes  No

If "No" why not? .....

.....

b) Have you hired the Birbury community room for a private or community function?

- Yes  No

If "Yes",

Did you consider it good value for money?

- Yes  No

Would you use it again?

- Yes  No

What type of function have you used it for?

- Party  Meeting  Charity/fund raising

Other .....

Were all your requirements met by the facilities available?

- Yes  No

If not, please specify .....

c) If you have ever decided not to hire the Birbury on any occasion what influenced your decision not to?

- Size  Cost  Location  
 Equipment  Other .....

Comment: .....

.....



6. **BIRDINGBURY COUNTRY FESTIVAL**

Are you happy for the Festival, in its present form, to be held in the Village?

Yes  No

If "Yes" have you suggestions for improving it?.....

.....

If "No"

a) Why not? .....

.....

b) Which of the following alternatives would you support?

- A traditional Village Fete
- Fete/Festival in alternate years
- Other, please specify .....

c) Have you any ideas for alternative or additional fund raising? .....

.....

7. **COMMUNICATION:**

a) Do you read *Birdsong*?

Yes  No

How could it be improved? .....

.....

b) Have you in the last 3 years attended a **Village Meeting**?

Yes  No

If "Yes", are there ways in which it could be improved? .....

.....

If "No", why not? .....

.....

c) Do you read the **Village Noticeboard**?

Yes  No

If "Yes", how could it be improved? .....

.....

If "No", why not?.....

.....

d) Do you feel that there is adequate communication of issues dealt with by the **Parish Council**?

Yes  No

If "No", how could it be improved? .....

.....

e) What can we do to make new villagers welcome? .....

.....

f) Would you use a village **Website**?

Yes  No

g) Are you happy with current communications about village events/issues?

Yes  No

If "No", how can communication be improved? .....

.....

**TRANSPORT / ROAD SAFETY**

1. Please indicate how often you use **public transport to/from**

	daily	weekly	monthly	sometimes	never
a) Leamington	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Rugby	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) Coventry	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) Southam	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. Please indicate **how good** you feel **public transport to/from Birdingbury** is to:

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't know
a) Leamington	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Rugby	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) Coventry	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) Southam	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Comment .....

3. There is a problem with speeding in/around Birdingbury:

Please tick one  Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Comment .....

4. Which of the following type of additional traffic measures would you support

- Road Humps
- Chicanes
- Rumble Strips
- Speed Aware Signs
- Speed Cameras
- None Required

Comments .....

5. Are you concerned about the volume of HGVs (Heavy Goods Vehicles) passing through the village?

Yes  No

If "Yes", have you suggestions on how the situation could be improved?

.....

### BUSINESS / EMPLOYMENT

1. a) Do you work in the village?

Yes  No

b) Do you run a business from the village?

Yes  No

Comment .....

2. Should there be better local employment opportunities within the village?

Yes  No

If "Yes", what type of employment opportunity would you favour?

- Manual
- Clerical/Admin
- Domestic
- Horticultural
- Transport
- Other .....

Comment .....

3. Would you support a directory of local businesses?

Yes  No

Comment .....

4. Would you support the idea of shared office facilities to allow/encourage working locally?

Yes  No

Comment .....

If "Yes", would you consider using such a facility?

Yes  No

Comment .....

5. Would you support the use of the Club/Community premises for local business?

Yes  No

If "Yes", would you consider using such a facility?

Yes  No

Comment .....

### LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER

- Do you have enough contact with other villagers?  
 Yes       No  
 If "No" why not?.....
- Do you have transport problems for visiting the doctor or dentist or other appointments or shopping?  
 Yes       No  
 If "Yes", please tick as appropriate  
 Medical  
 Shopping  
 Pension/allowance collection  
 Social/Other.....
- Would you be prepared to participate as:  
 A lift/service provider       Yes       No  
 A recipient       Yes       No
- Do you have other needs that could be provided for?  
 Odd jobs       Dog Walking  
 Collecting goods       Receiving delivered goods  
 Other (please specify).....  
 Would you be prepared to pay a nominal sum for any of these services?  
 Yes       No  
 Please specify .....
- If a good neighbour scheme were organised would you  
 a) be prepared to give your time       Yes       No  
 b) feel you could benefit from it       Yes       No

### SPORT & RECREATION

- Which of the following recreational groups in the village do you support?  
 Angling       Skittles  
 Cricket       Darts  
 Ladies Circle       Allotment  
 Other (please specify) .....
- Birdingbury has sufficient sport facilities for children/youth  
 (tick one only)  
 Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree       Don't Know  
 Comment: .....
- Do members of your family use the following recreational facilities?  
 Children's play equipment       Yes       No       Not applicable  
 Football Pitch       Yes       No       Not applicable  
 Skateboard       Yes       No       Not applicable  
 Multi-surface       Yes       No       Not applicable  
 Comment: .....
- Do you think improvement of the following recreational areas is needed:  
 Children's play equipment       Yes       No       Don't Know  
 Football Pitch       Yes       No       Don't Know  
 Skateboard       Yes       No       Don't Know  
 Multi-surface       Yes       No       Don't Know  
 For those ticked "Yes", which is/are most important?  
 .....

5. Are there other sporting/recreational facilities in the village you would like to see?  
 .....  
 .....

6. Do you think the village would benefit from a wider range of sports teams based in the village or in association with other villages?  
 Yes  No

If "Yes" please specify .....

Please comment if you have any other sports / recreational issues you might like to raise.  
 .....  
 .....

### CHURCH

1. Do you attend St Leonard's Church?  
 Yes  No

a) If "Yes" how often:  
 once a week  once a month  
 occasionally

What type of services do you attend:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Worship with Communion | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular worship without Communion (ie. Family services)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Festivals / special services (eg. Christmas, Easter....) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weddings                       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptisms                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Funerals   |

b) If "No" what would encourage you to attend?  
 .....  
 .....

3. Do you see St Leonard's Church (the building) as an important feature of the village?  
 Yes  No

If "Yes", in what way?  
 .....  
 .....

4. Do you support St Leonard's Church  
 Yes  No

If "Yes" through  
 Regular Giving  Financial support for the building  
 Collections  Other (eg. Mowing, flowers, cleaning)  
 Church fund raising events please specify.....

5. Please comment freely on your thoughts about our church in the community and any other relevant issues .....

Any other comments on issues not covered in this questionnaire.....  
 .....  
 .....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



### **Villagers who contributed to the Plan in a variety of ways**

Karen Armbrister, Chris Barney, Rhondda Barney, Ojars Bartmanis, Alison Chappell, Liz Davies, Jenny Hawes, John Kendall, Jackie Morton, Barbara Munro, Xenia Munro, Chris Sedgfield, Dallal Stevens, Ian Tipton, Raymond Truslove, Cheryl Turner, Diana Turner, Leslie Turner, Patrick Unwin, Jackie Westcott, Paula Whitfield, Simon Whitfield.

Photographs contributed by Michael Coles, Anna French, David Hawkes, Jackie Morton, John Owen, Ian Tipton, and David Westcott

Typesetting and design by Jackie Morton.

Cover photograph courtesy of:

Sky Library Central (SLC), 189a Long Street, Atherstone CV9 1AH Tel: 0870 321 3291



#### **we like....**

- ✓ **the village atmosphere**
- ✓ **community activities**
- ✓ **rural environment**
- ✓ **peace**

#### **we don't like....**

- ✗ **urbanisation**
- ✗ **traffic hazards – especially speeding**
- ✗ **destruction of our environment**
- ✗ **big housing developments**

#### **so, we plan to....**

- 👍 **develop our community facilities**
- 👍 **improve village communications**
- 👍 **tackle road safety**
- 👍 **where we can, improve our environment**