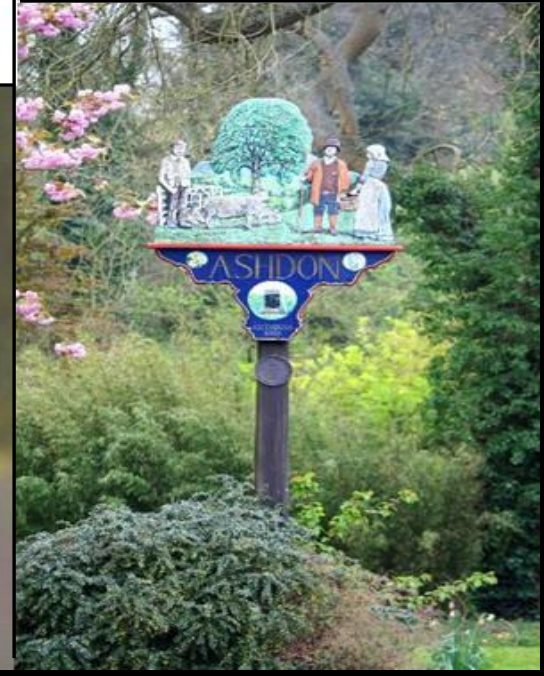


Ashdon Parish Plan 2007



Ashdon Parish Plan

April 2007

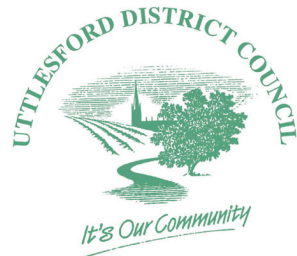


Table of Contents

1. What is a Parish Plan?	3	7.10.2 Refuse and Recycling	22
2. A Brief History of Ashdon	5	7.10.3 Noise Pollution	23
3. Who Lives in Ashdon?	7	7.10.4 What should be done to protect & enhance the environment?	23
4. Businesses and Services in Ashdon	8	8. Planning Guidance	24
5. Farming in Ashdon	8	9. So, what happens next?	25
6. Young People in Ashdon	9	10. Acknowledgements	29
7. Ashdon Matters	10	10.1 Who's been involved in this?	29
7.1 Information	10	10.2 Sources of Funding	29
7.2 Leisure and Recreation	11	11. Appendices	29
7.3 The Shop, the Pub and the Garage	13	12. Abbreviations	29
7.4 Education	14		
7.5 Utilities	15		
7.6 Community Support	16		
7.7 Development and Land Use	17		
7.8 Traffic, Transport and Roads	19		
7.8.1 Parking	19		
7.8.2 Heavy lorries, high volume of traffic and inadequate pavements	19		
7.8.3 Speeding	20		
7.9 Safety	21		
7.10 The Environment	22		
7.10.1 The Rural Landscape	22		

1. What is a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans were introduced in the 2000 “Rural White Paper” which set out the Government’s plans for the countryside. They are intended to build upon previous schemes such as village appraisals and village design statements and set a framework for communities to plan their own futures.



So what is a Parish Plan? A Parish Plan is a document that attempts to capture the views of the wider community, and set out ideas and plans for the future of the parish. During our time delivering and collecting questionnaires in early 2006 many contributors commented that people largely didn’t want change - we should protect what we have. Whilst this is probably a very laudable goal, the world continues to change around Ashdon, and it is not realistic to expect nothing to change. A glance at section 2 of this document (a brief history of Ashdon) shows how much change there has been in a relatively short period of time.

Many local villages have undertaken statements and Parish Plans. Radwinter, Wimbish and Helions Bumpstead have completed theirs, and others being prepared include Bartlow and Hadstock. When an entirely new Parish Council was elected in Ashdon in May 2003 it was agreed it would be helpful to gain a more detailed view of the parish. Whilst Parish Councillors might believe they have a good knowledge of the views of a wide proportion of the parish, no one really knew if this was the case. Given relatively few members of the public attend Parish Council meetings this was a good opportunity to develop an objective view of the community.

In October 2004 the Parish Council held an Open Morning in the Village Hall to determine whether people would generally be in favour of a Parish Plan. Over 150 people attended, and spent the morning writing over 400 comments covering a range of views about services, features, ‘wants’ and ‘don’t-wants’. All this suggested that a Parish Plan might be something the community was interested in, and would provide an opportunity to make comments and express views. A group of volunteers set about the process.

The project was formally set in motion in April 2005, involving a group of 10 volunteers. One member of the Parish Council was included as this project is to be managed by the Parish Council but, in order to retain an independent perspective, not entirely undertaken by councillors. The

process typically takes three years, and at its core is the production and analysis of questionnaires to identify views and opinions. Three questionnaires were produced:

- A youth questionnaire for 11-15 year olds.
- A business questionnaire for employers and individuals working from home.
- An adult questionnaire (incorporating a ‘household’ section) for individuals aged 16 and over, seeking to identify the main issues facing the village.

As part of the pack a map was produced, and people were asked to specify the area the response came from. This was not to trace specific individuals and their views, but to ensure that points related to one area (e.g. speeding or a particular problem) could be identified by location.

The questionnaires were hand delivered during February 2006, and hand collected by March 2006. A decision was taken to collect the documents personally to encourage people to complete the questionnaires, and to provide the residents with an opportunity to discuss their views with the team. It wasn’t unusual for people collecting the documents to spend up to an hour talking about them, and invaluable pieces of information were gained during these conversations. Although some of the group have lived in the village for over 50 years, many have lived here for less than 15 years and it was helpful to gain this further insight. Questionnaires typically have a return rate of approximately 20% - by personally delivering and collecting the documents a return rate of approximately 89% of households receiving the questionnaire and 80% of households in total was achieved, ensuring the responses collected were representative.



There is an important point to make regarding the response rate and the analysis in this document. 89% is of course an extremely good return, but we can’t hide from the fact that it isn’t 100% (on average most Parish Plans response rates are below 70%). Unless stated otherwise all percentages in this report refer to the number of households and people that responded. If this figure is misleading then a note will be made to that effect.

Once the documents had been collected the information needed to be analysed. With 64 questions in the adult document alone there were over 40,000 pieces of information to consider. A company was retained to undertake some data analysis for us, and this was funded by RCCE.



The data was finally available in August 2006, and the team set about reviewing the information, from environment to education, and services to speeding. Another open day was held in October 2006, and we took the opportunity to display all of the data received, including comments and opinions of what people liked or disliked in the parish. Finally the

analysis is complete, and you have in your hands the fruits of our labours.

Whilst this represents a 'snap-shot in time' of views in February 2006 (prior to the final development and occupation of All Saints Close for example), it should provide the current Parish Council, and Parish Councils to come, with a useful document expressing views and opinions of the community. We hope you find it interesting.

Parish Plan Steering Group – April 2007

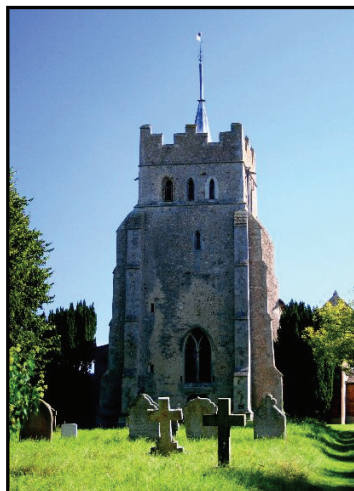
2. A Brief History of Ashdon

The Ashdon landscape was created during the last ice age, from materials deposited at the southern extremities of glaciers. The parish is bisected north to south by the valley of the River Bourne, a tributary of the River Granta, which it enters at Bartlow. The village of Ashdon lies partially within the valley formed by the Bourne whilst areas of newer development lie on a moraine above the valley.

At the time of the Roman occupation the land, a mixture of woodland and cleared arable land, was already settled by the Britons. The Romans established wealthy communities in the area in the 1st to 4th centuries with a large military camp at what is now "The Camps". A series of seven Romano-British burial mounds were constructed at Bartlow with four now remaining. (one on private land, the others being referred to as The Three Hills). An excavation in the 19th century found high-grade burial offerings and an altar in the largest of the mounds.

Ashdon probably remained a relatively untroubled place during the Dark Ages and Christianity came some time in the 7th or 8th century with the construction of a Saxon church. The area became subject to the control of the Danes in the 9th century and Ashdon is one of the possible sites of the final and decisive battle between the last Saxon chieftain and the victorious Danes.

The original village grew around what is now All Saints Church and was known as "Ascenduna", being the place of the Ash trees. The village had its own entry as a manor in the "Little Domesday Book" of 1085 and was the wealthiest of 3 manors, which were eventually to form the Parish of Ashdon. Under the Normans more of the land was deforested and drainage introduced to allow greater use of land in the lower parts of the Bourne valley. Ashdon grew to encompass not only the manor of Ashdon Hall but also the manors of Newnham (now Newnham Hall) and "Steventuna" (now Steventon End).



In the 13th century the parish suffered, as did the whole of Europe, from the Black Death with bubonic plague reducing the population by at least one third. In the case of Ashdon, the many dead were buried in communal pits

sited to the south of the church. This event caused the remaining population to migrate into the Bourne valley with Crown Hill becoming the new village centre. In the 14th century All Saints Church was built on the remains of the Saxon church and in the 15th century the Guildhall of St. Mary was erected to the south of the church.

During the Civil War the area was predominantly pro-Parliament supporting Cromwell. It is reputed that the then recently constructed inn, the Rose & Crown, was used to imprison some of the monks attached to the Abbey at Bury St. Edmunds; they are reputed to have painted the walls of their prison with simulated panelling and religious texts.

During the Tudor and Stuart periods the village grew and by the time of George I, when the Living of All Saints was in the gift of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, it was a prosperous place, evidenced by the size of the Rectory that was constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the 1841 Census Ashdon had a population of 948 and occupied 4,045 acres of land. The population was, to some extent, self-sufficient having two working windmills to grind locally-grown wheat. There were two butchers, a baker, three blacksmiths and farriers, a boot and shoemaker, four shopkeepers, two brick makers, a carpenter and a wheelwright as well as a saddler. All of these were listed in Pigot & Co.s Directory of September 1839. The wealth of the village was based entirely on agriculture. Between the early Victorian period and the end of the 19th century the village grew in population. The landowners benefited from the growth of the major cities during the Industrial Revolution and the increase in their populations. Whilst the landowners became wealthier, the lot of the farm labourer became worse with wages constantly being reduced and no tenure for either their jobs or their accommodation. By 1913 the situation had become so intolerable that the agricultural workers, for the first time in history, became organised in a Union. This led in 1914 to the first agricultural strike in Britain, which encompassed much of East Anglia. This placed Ashdon at the forefront of the struggle and eight striking labourers were jailed for a month in Cambridge Jail.

Transportation was entirely by road and track until 1866 when a railway branch line was built between Saffron Walden and Bartlow. It was, however, not until 1911 that a stop was constructed at Ashdon.

Very few of the pre-1900 buildings in the village remain in the form in which they were originally built. The majority have been substantially extended with increases in both the footprint of the buildings and their rooflines. Examples of properties that are substantially in their original styles include: The Guildhall, the only medieval building left in the village; Tudor Croft and Clayes, both built in the Tudor period; The Rose and Crown built in the 1630s and a few of what were the outlying farmhouses. Originally a

medieval hall house, Ashdon Hall is thought to be the oldest property in Ashdon.

The current stock of houses in Ashdon is a result of the changes in employment and the greater willingness of people to travel distances that would not have been dreamt of in the 19th century. In the 20th century the increasing mechanisation in farming saw an ever-accelerating reduction in available work on the land. This in turn led to much of the older stock of farm labourer housing becoming untenanted and falling into disrepair.

Some new development occurred, during the interwar years, primarily at Rogers End, whilst post WWII many of the surviving labourers' row-houses were converted into single occupancy properties. In the post-war era, there was pressure for more acceptable accommodation and "Social Housing" which led to the development of Guildhall Way.

In the post war period social housing was constructed in the village at Carters Croft to provide accommodation for primarily retired members of the community. By the late 1980s the price of a significant proportion of the housing stock had risen to an unaffordable level for younger people, who were therefore forced to move out of the village when leaving their family home. The first "Affordable Housing" project in the village was created on land provided by the Vestey family where 14 houses were built in a cul de sac named Tredgetts. In 2000 a further 13 houses were built at Church Fields at the southern end of the village. In 2006 an additional 19 homes were completed on an adjacent site now called All Saints Close.

The Parish of Ashdon contains a number of community based properties on which are centred the religious, secular and educational activities of Ashdon.

The religious needs of the parish are concentrated in three locations: All Saints Church has been the Parish Church for Ashdon since medieval times; Ashdon Baptist Church was built in 1835; Marpa House, originally built as a Boys Home in the interwar years, has been used since the late 1970s as a Buddhist retreat.



Free education was conducted, from 1836, in a flint built schoolhouse at the top of Church Hill, constructed under the provisions of the National School

Act of that year. In 1874 the newly formed National School Board purchased land in the centre of the village, from Mascell, the owner of the Rose and Crown. A new and larger brick built school was erected and opened in 1877 and has flourished ever since.

The main centre for secular activities is the Village Hall, a converted barn occupied from the beginning of the 20th century by the Conservative Club. The hall was transferred to the Parish Council in the 1970s to become a community asset. Local funding and grants enabled it to be extended, with the construction of a purpose built hall serving both the community and a pre school group.

The village boasts its own museum which moved from an old railway carriage into the Labour Hall in the early 1990s. The Labour Hall itself was built in 1927 with the support of the Countess of Warwick. Despite being a member of the aristocracy she was an early and active supporter of Keir Hardie and the young Labour Party.



The final building to be vested in the community is Haylock's Mill, built in 1757 as a post mill and used until the first decade of the 20th century as a flour mill. The mill, a listed building lying on land owned by the Vestey family, was gifted to a charity created in 2001 to take ownership of the mill and restore it. With local donations and regional, national and European grants the fabric of the mill is being restored and was made accessible for public viewing in 2006.

Ashdon Village today is spread primarily out and along its main roads. This linear development has resulted in three major and distinct areas of population; Steventon End, Church End and the lower village. Social cohesion and the viability of retail services, clubs and societies are all dependent upon safe, free movement between these communities. Many of the features described and issues tackled in this Parish Plan have important roles to play in keeping all areas of Ashdon together and accessible by all.

3. Who Lives in Ashdon?

The 2001 census states there are 317 properties in Ashdon Civil Parish, housing a total of 792 people. Since the census there has been further development and a total of 335 questionnaires were delivered in February 2006. This excludes All Saints Close, of course, which was not occupied at the time, 27 confirmed they would not be interested in participating in the Plan and several other homes were unoccupied. In March 2006, questionnaires from a total of 267 houses were returned (80% of the housing stock).

In order to identify information by area the parish was split into six, and the following shows the distribution of documents returned by area (see appendix 11.2 for map).

Broad description of an area	Houses	People
1. Knox End, New Cottages	20	51
2. Rogers End, Bartlow Road	55	128
3. Steventon End	24	70
4. Crown Hill & Radwinter Road	55	144
5. Church Fields & Guildhall Way	81	202
6. Water End, Midsummer Hill	32	76
Total	267	671

An impressive number of documents were returned and considering their length (64 questions in the Adult questionnaire alone), this demonstrates the importance people attached to expressing their views, and how seriously their opinions should be taken.

The other demographic element is age distribution, as this also helps guide local government in what types of services or support might be required by the community. The age distribution in Ashdon is not unusual. 25% of the population are under the age of 16, 58% in the 16-64 age bracket, and 17% aged 65 and over (22% of the population describe their status as 'retired').

Two important questions included in the survey asked what people liked most and least about their village. It is helpful to set the responses out here, as it sets the rest of this analysis into context. These were open questions, allowing people to write whatever they felt was good or poor. Approximately 50% of people answered each of these questions, and the responses can broadly be categorised as follows:

What is the best thing about Ashdon?		What is the worst thing about Ashdon?	
Community	203 (30%)	Traffic	124 (18%)
Environment/Leisure	67 (10%)	Availability of services	52 (8%)
Available services	22 (3%)	Quality of roads & paths	32 (5%)
Footpaths	11 (2%)	Aircraft noise	21 (3%)
Views	9 (1%)	Development	21 (3%)
Everything	7 (1%)	Nothing	21 (3%)
Safety	5 (1%)	Public transport	18 (3%)
		Parking	16 (2%)
All other comments	23 (3%)	All other comments	34 (6%)

The categories are necessarily quite broad, but this set of data captures the tone of what residents like and don't like about life in Ashdon. The sense of community comes through as a very strong benefit, as does the rural environment. Ashdon is very lucky to have a relatively unspoilt countryside, numerous footpaths, woods and streams. On the negative side it is clear that the biggest problems are those commonly mentioned in the rural community generally, such as traffic, dearth of local services, the problems with roads and paths (the number of paved footpaths, and the condition of roads) and 'pollution' such as noise. Perhaps worthy of note, when asked "what is the worst thing about Ashdon", 21 people went out of their way to say "nothing".

4. Businesses and Services in Ashdon

A business questionnaire was included to determine what types are in Ashdon, who is employed, where they travel from, and what could be done to promote further growth or improve the lot of companies in the parish. The businesses identified can be split into four types:

1. Those that serve the local community directly such as the garage, Post Office and shop, and the Rose & Crown public house (whilst acknowledging that these businesses are also used by through traffic).
2. Businesses that employ local people.
3. People who work from home.
4. Voluntary services.

The shop, garage and pub will be discussed in detail later in this document. Suffice it to say that they are used, and a number of people rely on them, but the facilities in Saffron Walden and other local towns undermine their viability.

A total of 38 other businesses were identified during the survey, 3 of which are less than 1 year old, 17 have been here for less than 10 years and 18 over 10 years. These companies employ a total of 112 people (81 part time) with 35 employees living in Ashdon (12 in adjoining parishes). A total of 21 companies operate from domestic premises, and 7 from a site exclusively for business purposes.

As will be a common theme throughout this document, Ashdon has a very strong community spirit, and so it is perhaps not surprising to find there are numerous services provided by volunteers. Perhaps the best known is the car service which is available to help take people to and from hospital and other medical services when they cannot do so themselves. There is a 'welcome to Ashdon leaflet' produced for newcomers to the village (personally delivered), which sets out the clubs and societies and useful phone numbers. This provides a personal welcome, and encourages people to become involved in our active Ashdon community. A prescription medicine collection service is offered at the garage and a doctor attends Ashdon twice a week. The village magazine is also produced by volunteers, and received numerous positive comments from our survey. All of these services prove that Ashdon has a community spirit envied by others, and one that it can be proud of.

5. Farming in Ashdon

Although strictly one of the businesses within Ashdon, farming is no longer a major employer in the parish, although it plays a particularly important role in respect to the visual environment.

Historically, Ashdon, like every other village in the country, was heavily dependent on agriculture for its employment. In the 1950s and 1960s providing food was paramount. During this time the countryside was changed, with governments encouraging removal of hedgerows and drainage of the land with generous grants. Consequently the fields were consolidated; many in the village today would have been three or four smaller units fifty years ago.



Over the years farming became almost too successful, and surpluses of corn were produced. Importation of cheaper food from abroad meant many farms could not compete on even terms, and the result is that there are now fewer working farms around the village. Livestock farming has also largely disappeared due to the changing economic nature of larger and more industrial forms of agriculture. The most recent focus for farmers is to become guardians of the environment and hence many farms now have grass margins edging their fields, protecting water courses and encouraging a diversity of wildlife. Trees and hedges have also been planted.

Increasing concern regarding fossil fuels means that there is a new market for farmers, with the emergence of the bio-fuel industry. This is where fuels are derived from wheat, barley and oilseed rape. An expanding rural population and a decline in agricultural land worldwide, is all adding to the important role that farming will play in the future.

6. Young People in Ashdon

The youth questionnaire was distributed to all 11-15 year olds in the village, and a total of 54 people responded. Clearly the children under 11 are also very important, and their views were captured through the household questionnaire (e.g. number of children of all age groups attending the local schools). Although these are quite small numbers of people, this is an important part of our community (and hopefully the future community) that merits careful consideration.

Ashdon is fortunate in having its own primary school, and there are a number of local schools, colleges and play groups used by young people from the village (see the section on Education for details). Half of 11-15 year olds are taken to school by car, and half by school/public bus (the significant majority within 5 miles, to schools in Saffron Walden).

Approximately half of children socialise and spend their time in and around the village, with the other half visiting friends outside. This has important ramifications for transport (be that public transport, or parents) and 30 children stated they would use public transport more often if there were a more frequent service. 19 said they would not use public transport regardless of any changes. 8 young people said they used the bus up to three times per week.

Socialising is an important part of personal development, and many clubs and societies are supported, not all in Ashdon, whilst some people would like to see additional clubs. The following table shows numbers of people expressing a view (Clubs Used was specifically answered by 11-15 year olds, whilst Clubs you'd like to see also includes some adult respondents).

Clubs used	Clubs you'd like to see
Youth club (12), Guides & Scouts (9), Ashdon School sports clubs (6), Football (2), Cricket (9), Netball (2), Rugby (10), Tennis (9), Swimming (5), Horse riding (7)	Youth club (22), Music (15), Drop-in den (8), Book library (14), Software Library (19), Football (9), Tennis (38), table Tennis (11), Keep fit (33), Snooker (14), Drama (14), Arts & Crafts (21), Rugby (5)

Whilst some of these clubs would no doubt involve some significant expenditure and additional facilities (e.g. snooker and tennis), others might be more readily available, such as a youth football club (Ashdon has a successful football club for adults – could this be expanded to develop a youth section?)

8 of the 11-15 year olds would like to see a 'drop in den'. Whilst this may not be a large number of children it could be that children under 11 might also find this useful (other villages have found these helpful in reducing incidents of 'youth nuisance', although this is not at the moment an issue for Ashdon). UDC has confirmed that 'teen shelters' (which are similar to bus shelters in size) have been used in other villages, and these typically cost between £5,000-£10,000, and some funding for this may be available through the Safer Communities initiative or UDC Youth workers.

Much is made of the fact that the village has a shop; interestingly this age group frequently uses this local service. Given the current opening times it is clear this group of customers is important to the village shop, and indeed 40 of them regularly use it. The Village Hall (16 young people use this regularly), Museum (17) and local churches (21) are also well supported.

A recurring theme throughout the survey was the way in which people find out about events in the parish, and with the burgeoning use of new technologies, it is perhaps not a surprise to see that half of this age group in particular would like to find out about events through text messaging or e-mail, and 35% like to use web sites. However, 40% are also happy to get information from notice boards/posters or school.

In keeping with most Parish Plans, there was not a specific questionnaire for the children under the age of 11, so to capture some thoughts, and to involve the entire community, the children at Ashdon school were asked to produce a picture capturing their likes and dislikes about Ashdon (a copy of this picture can be found in Appendix 11.1). However, their preferences can be summarised as follows:

- Most of all, the children like the open spaces, with lots of areas to run and play. Their particular favourites were in the trees behind the Rec, where they can hide and build dens, and in the Wilderness.
- The walk to the windmill is very popular, but there were comments that there isn't much for them to do once they are there.
- Wildlife is shown in a number of places on the map. Protection and maintenance of the environment, which will result in the encouragement of wildlife, is a recurring theme in this document.
- The children liked the Post Office and Shop, although would like a larger one that sold more everyday things, and they also included the pub and village sign on their map.

7. Ashdon Matters

7.1 Information

There are many important issues facing the community, but Information is one that arises in respect of many topics. 36% commented that the amount of information available regarding events in Ashdon is 'Good', yet in a number of areas (e.g. youth and business responses) people state that a lack of information is a problem. Young people in the village confirmed that lack of information was a reason for not knowing about clubs and societies

The quarterly village magazine is by far the preferred method for receiving information in the village, (429 people confirmed they were happy to get information in this way), although notice boards (232), the shop window (201), the free paper (176) and new technologies such as text, e-mail and web sites (153) were all popular.



There are six notice boards around the village; at All Saints Close/Church Fields, Fallowden Lane Car Park, Crown Hill (for Council notices only), Village Hall, Steventon End and top of Spriggs Lane/Radwinter Road. These are seen as a useful way to get information, although maybe they could be used more extensively. One suggestion

is to put a village map on some of the boards, with a directory of businesses in the village (businesses commented that such a directory might be helpful). Such an idea might mean replacing a small number of the current notice boards with larger ones, but it might be one of a number of ideas for providing greater information to residents and people passing through.

Websites are being created by a number of communities (rural and urban), and the UDC website provides links to those already in place. Ashdon residents confirmed they would be interested in seeing information on such a web site. 67% households have access to the Internet, and 300 people confirmed it would be useful to get information such as a diary of events, clubs and societies and archived village magazines through an on-line site. Additionally, people would like to see other information available such as a directory of local businesses (opening hours and so on), information about

school, museum and churches, local travel information (such as bus timetables and so on) and a 'for sale' list.

Whilst a web site seems to be well supported, it requires on-going attention and needs to be updated regularly to ensure the information is accurate and current. In addition, it cannot be the only source of information; for example, one person commented that a website might not be useful as "it excludes all those who do not have computers, or who are not interested in forever being told that 'you should have known, it's on the website'". This is an important point. If a website is developed it cannot be relied upon as the only way to communicate with the parish.

The 'Welcome to Ashdon' leaflet provided to new people moving into the village is very helpful in setting out what clubs, societies and contact numbers are pertinent to people in the village. It might be valuable to take this and enhance it by adding further information about the village.

The business questionnaire confirmed that they would like to see additional information on their companies available. 26 businesses (68%) felt a village website would be a good place to advertise their services (20 would use the UDC site) but other advertising sites were also helpful such as noticeboards, brochures and the village magazine. It was also felt that more information should be available to visitors, and with some services heavily reliant on through traffic (e.g. Beeches Nursery) it would be helpful to show where all these businesses can be found.

Proposed actions

1. Use notice boards to display additional village information, in particular a parish map and a local directory of businesses and information.
2. Continue to promote and support the village magazine.
3. Promote and support the creation of a village website.
4. Consider a local directory of businesses, information about school, museum and churches.
5. Identify new ways in which to improve communication in the village to ensure wider knowledge of all initiatives, ideas and concerns.

7.2 Leisure and Recreation

'Leisure' encompasses a broad range of sports and activities, and a glance in the Village Magazine shows that there are a number of clubs and societies within the community, including a range of traditional sports (e.g. football and cricket clubs) as well as other groups (WI, Rustic Players, All Saints Youth Club). Despite this broad range of facilities, a number of people felt that additional clubs would be of interest:

Area of Interest	Youth Survey	Adult Survey
Keep fit clubs	28	33
Youth club	22	8
Arts and crafts	22	13
Software library	19	3
Music	15	3
Drama	15	n/a

Youth club – There is already an active youth club within Ashdon run by All Saints Church (there are at least 12 children in this group) which meets once a month. This youth club is aimed at those children who attend church (or whose parents attend church). The responses received suggests there would be a good level of interest in providing a club available to all.

Keep fit – 61 is a large number of people to suggest a Keep Fit club, but this covers a number of areas such as Yoga (there is a yoga class in the village on Tuesday afternoons), martial arts, gym and Pilates.

Arts and crafts, music, drama – Although each of these pastimes has specific needs and interest groups, there is sufficient over-lapping interest to warrant further consideration. 'Arts' included both Pottery and Woodworking. There are drama groups in Ashdon (Rustic Players and the Pantomime) and during the questionnaire it was mentioned that it might be positive to have this type of activity in the Village Hall. In this context it was suggested that a number of options might be considered for the Village Hall (such as a small stage, storage rooms used for changing rooms, and even a serving hatch from the kitchen to the main hall area).

Software library – A reasonable number of young people suggested a software library would be useful (40% of total youth population). Allied to this, suggestions were made that the Village Hall might consider broadband or WiFi access, or a telephone line. The software library might form part of the youth club.

The village has a number of locations for outdoor recreation and leisure. Current facilities include the cricket ground on the Vestey estate (with a tennis court adjacent, although it is no longer viable for a village tennis club to have part time use of it). There is the football pitch on the edge of the village past Knox End used by the Ashdon Football Club. Lastly, there is the recreation ground (the Rec) in Rectory Lane. The Rec was refurbished in 1998, via a project run by a group of residents in the village (and latterly supported by the Parish Council of the time). Intended for people up to 14 years old, it is used by children in 80 households in the village. The main reasons cited for not using this facility were related to the distant location (relative to home), concerns about road safety, and access for pushchairs (specifically from the Church Fields area of the village). For the older children the lack of facilities for their age was also a factor. (There are currently no organised facilities specifically for children over the age of 14).

Access to the Rec has been an on-going issue, and a ramp has been considered on a number of occasions. Advice provided to the APC to date suggest this is not practical (related to regulations governing the width of such a ramp), but it remains a problem for a number of people, although this may be alleviated if alternative facilities are created in the village.

Since the Rec was refurbished there has been expansion at the Guildhall Way area of the village, with a significant proportion of the new housing being occupied by young people and consequently bringing more children into the community. There are often children seen playing on the green in front of Guildhall Way, and, with the issues regarding speeding traffic, this cannot be seen as a long term solution to play areas in that part of the village. A question was therefore added asking what specific playground facilities the Parish Council should be considering.

Development idea	People Supporting
Games field in the village	260 (39%)
Playground at Church Fields	239 (35%)
Playground at Steventon End	72 (11%)

Further to this there was an additional question asking people what sort of development they would support in their area of the village, and the following is a summary of the findings:

Development idea	People Supporting
Games area for older children	230 (34%)
Childrens playground	189 (28%)
Adult recreation area	125 (19%)

The APC is pursuing the possibility of building another playground at Church Fields; however, with additional space owned by UDC near to the All Saints Close development (which APC is hoping to buy or lease), there is the

opportunity to build further recreation facilities (e.g. a football pitch, or maybe even tennis courts, both of which would be heavily supported by the community). There is reasonable access and parking in the area meaning that this may be an ideal place for a further recreational area (in addition to the childrens playground). As part of this the comments on the Environment should be considered, as people have referred to a need to improve public spaces, and the use of this vacant piece of land for the residents' benefit appears a sensible and popular way forward.

Proposed actions

1. Continue to pursue an additional games and recreational area in the Church Fields area of the village.
2. Facilitate establishment of a youth club open to all.
3. Promote current and new local clubs and societies, in particular football, tennis and keep fit.
4. Consider a teen shelter as part of future recreation ground developments.
5. Run an annual Open Morning to promote clubs and societies, and identify individuals willing to manage them.
6. Work in liaison with UDC Youth workers on projects that would benefit Ashdon.
7. Revisit the options to provide access to the Rec in Rectory Lane for people with pushchairs.

7.3 The Shop, the Pub and the Garage

With the increasing growth of supermarkets in the last 20 years, and greater mobility of the rural population, rural businesses throughout the country are particularly threatened, and in the context of Ashdon this is only being exacerbated by the recent review of Post Offices. Ashdon has three businesses operating in this sector: The Post Office/Shop, the Garage and the Rose & Crown public house. (Beeches Nursery could be argued to fulfil more of a niche service being widely known in the gardening press.)



Although the garage is also used by through traffic, the arrival of cheap fuel at supermarket forecourts has probably contributed to a shift in business away from rural suppliers.



As well as providing an important income to the people involved, these services provide a focus for the community, a place to meet and talk with other people, and find out what is happening locally. It has been commented that such facilities also add to the value of properties within a village.

Given Ashdon now has a population of over 800 people this should be sufficient to support these businesses. However, market forces, individual preferences, the range of goods available for purchase and shopping patterns mean that this is not necessarily the case, as summarised below:



	Daily Use	Weekly use	Monthly use	Never used
Post Office	26	141	114	73
Shop	23	87	92	97
Rose & Crown	7	78	105	71
Garage	3	55	82	163

This translates to approximately 20-30% using the facilities at least monthly, with 10-15% never using them (25% in the case of the garage which probably suffers particularly badly from supermarket competition). In addition to this 40 people in the 11-15 age group also use the shop (and these numbers do not include the under 11s who run into the shop after leaving Ashdon school on weekday afternoons).

The survey also sought to find out if people would buy other goods if they were available locally, and it was worthy of note that many people said they would be interested in doing this, as demonstrated in the following data:

	Local Fruit	Deli	Dairy	Fresh	National
	256	381	237	257	304

Whether these would be regular purchases, and whether initial enthusiasm would quickly be overcome by cheaper prices in Saffron Walden is difficult to determine, but it does tend to suggest that there is an appetite to buy products locally.

During conversations with these businesses it was apparent that there was limited requirement for further actions from the Parish Council. Given there is a large open space at the back of the pub it could be argued that village events could be held there (such as those already held from time to time including Bonfire Night, the Dog Show and the Pumpkin Competition), providing community activities and supporting a village business.

If all the people who said they wanted to use the facilities in the village actually did use them on a regular basis, the threat to their future would be much reduced. The well-worn phrase "use it or lose it" has been used by various rural campaigns, and this applies increasingly to Ashdon. Each of these services is under threat from a number of directions, and if they are allowed to decline or disappear, the community will be much the worse for it.

- Proposed Actions**
1. Continue to support local businesses, and encourage assistance from other rural bodies such as RCCE. Seek input from the local businesses on how they feel APC can assist them.
 2. Support the Rose and Crown garden and field as a possible venue for village events.

7.4 Education

Ashdon school is a very positive feature in the village. The full complement of educational facilities used in the region can be summarised as follows:

Under 16yrs old		16yrs and over	
Primary School	53	SW County High	24
Secondary School	51	Linton College	10
Play Group	17	Other	8
Nursery	13	Newport Grammar	0
Special Needs	1		
Other Schools	1		

However, in addition to formal education such as listed above, there are also the requirements of those not currently in full-time education, and the survey identified which areas would be of particular interest:

Talks and classes	Numbers of people
First aid	133
History and Culture Talks	132
Computing and IT skills	119
Languages	95
Workers Educational Association	42
University of the Third Age	36

The Village Hall is the ideal location for most of these courses given it has space, a loop for the hard of hearing, seating and tables and so on.



In most of these areas there are individuals already in the community who are qualified in providing such talks and information, and perhaps with co-ordination (either through the Village Hall Committee or the APC for example) it is possible First Aid, History and IT talks could be set in motion. However, the latter might involve making broadband or WiFi

available in the Village Hall or any other suitable meeting place.

The requirement for a First Aid course is interesting, and there are qualified people who live in the village who might be approached and asked whether they would be interested in running such a course in a venue such as the

Village Hall. The identification of 'first responder' individuals would also be of value to the community.

History and Culture talks are occasionally undertaken in the Village Hall (or certainly talks about the local wildlife and environment that have been arranged by local residents). In addition, Ashdon has its own museum which is very popular, and it is possible that people from the Ashdon Museum would be interested in providing talks on local history. Additionally, the staff from the museum in Saffron Walden have said that they would also be able to come and talk at the Village Hall if such an arrangement was put in place.

Whilst it may be impractical for Ashdon to have its own language courses (classes are available in Linton and Saffron Walden), it is also fair to say that a need has been identified in the parish, and this may be of interest to entrepreneurial individuals.

Proposed Actions

1. Promote talks and classes to be held in the village, provided by bodies such as The Village Museum, Saffron Walden Museum, St Johns Ambulance brigade.
2. Prepare and advertise an information pack on 'how to start a club'. Consider a section on Educational interests that could be included during an annual Open Morning in the Village Hall (proposed under 'Leisure and Recreation').

7.5 Utilities

A range of services are captured in the term 'utilities', we have only identified here those where individuals responded to say services were 'good' or 'poor'.

Service	Good	Poor
Mobile phones	19%	61%
TV reception	34%	40%
Radio reception	33%	40%
Gritting/snow clearing	43%	31%
Street cleaning	46%	25%
Mains electricity	44%	14%
Mains water	21%	5%
Refuse collection	27%	3%
Postal service	21%	3%

Businesses were also asked to comment on the same utilities, and most felt all of these services were 'good' or 'satisfactory' with the exception of mobile phones, which 42% felt offered a poor service. This is not a surprise as the only mast in the area is on Hall Farm. Traditionally the view of the Parish Council has been to reject additional mobile phone masts on the basis that those who attended the meetings were largely concerned with alleged health issues and the visual effect on the landscape. By definition, they were largely from the Church Hill end of the village and so do not have the same reception problems as other parts of the village. Although it is true to say that a large number of people commenting on poor service doesn't necessarily mean a large number of people support a new mast, it is suggested that a wider consideration of this issue needs to be undertaken when a mast is next submitted for planning.

Whilst mains water is not generally an issue (there are occasions when problems arise), there have been some questions raised regarding the impact on the sewage system in the village as further development takes place, and a problem has been noted 'downstream' at Crown Hill since the most recent redevelopment at All Saints Close. APC should investigate what plans are in place with UDC and others to maintain quality of utilities in Ashdon in the light of recent (and future) development.

TV and radio reception is poor in a number of areas, reported by 40% of households (particularly those in Crown Hill and Rogers End, although TV reception is also apparently a problem at Church Fields). Some households installed a digital aerial, despite the fact that digital television is officially not available in the area. It would be useful for the Parish Council to confirm

what the situation is regarding current reception, and what plans exist to provide a digital signal to Ashdon.

Electricity supply is largely acceptable, although there are times when the village suffers from power cuts, mostly in the Church Fields-Crown Hill-Rogers End area. In addition, 50% of the village said they would be interested in having access to gas main supply in the village, and whilst this might be impractical, it is worth finding out the cost involved.

Proposed Actions for the Parish Council

1. Consult more widely on a mobile phone mast, should one be submitted for planning.
2. Lobby for improvements to the current electricity supply, which can be unreliable in wet or windy conditions.
3. Investigate sewage problems arising in Crown Hill and speak with local water companies regarding general infrastructure issues.
4. Investigate television and radio reception problems in the village, and identify availability of alternatives such as digital services.
5. Confirm cost and practicality of receiving mains gas.

7.6 Community Support

Community Support addresses the strength of the community, and the willingness of people to help others with both transport and 'good neighbour' schemes. The response to the questionnaires demonstrates that people are willing to offer support to other people in the parish.

A number of people have said that they require help getting to and from the shops (25 said they would appreciate some help) and carrying goods (20).

Medical facilities	Number needing help
The doctor	32
Addenbrookes hospital	30
The dentist	30
SW Community Hospital (Radwinter Road hospital)	19
Other medical facilities	14

It is interesting to note that whilst the majority of people requiring assistance are in the age group 65+, there is a band of 25-44 year olds who require help, and it could be that these are individuals at home with children or families with one car which is used during the day, although the data does not allow us to confirm this.

People were asked whether they would be willing to help with these requirements on an occasional basis, and a good number were able to offer help, with 83 offering to help with shopping, and 81 with social or leisure requirements (30-40 also offered to share cars for school, work or Audley End journeys). Additionally, 42 people said they would be able to take part in a good neighbour scheme once a week, and 41 once a month.

The current volunteer car service is designed to assist with attendance at medical appointments (not limited to those who are disabled or elderly), and was started in the 1980s. The group welcomes new drivers and has at least 10 at any one time, so individuals are usually not required more than once or twice a month. This is part of a network of voluntary services that are offered in and around 12 nearby villages, operating under a group insurance policy. UDC provides a similar service, although targeted at the 60+ age group and not limited to medical facilities. Individuals and groups can join the 'book a ride' scheme, which is provided to any destination. The APC should identify what other services are available and determine how these might be provided to residents.

Proposed Actions

1. Identify whether any further assistance (financial or logistical) is required to run the volunteer car service.
2. Investigate 'good neighbour' schemes and car sharing.

7.7 Development and Land Use

In recent years there has been much discussion in Ashdon regarding development generally, and housing specifically. In addition to individual private building and development, and the council houses available across the village, there have been three groups of affordable housing introduced at Tredgetts, Church Fields and All Saints Close. The principle behind affordable housing is to ensure that house price inflation (driven by both the general market and population migration from urban to rural locations), does not outstrip the 'ability to buy' in the indigenous population. 70% of the current housing stock is owner-occupied, and 15% falls under the category 'affordable housing' or 'shared equity'. In the last two years approximately 36 people have moved or are planning to move away from Ashdon, with half of these due to the price of housing.



An analysis of the age and building styles used in the current stock of housing broadly shows the following:

Period of Build		Building Styles	
Before 1900	127 (35%)	Timber Frame	137 (37%)
1900-1945	47 (13%)	Other	229 (63%)
1946-1996	155 (42%)	Tiled roof	251 (69%)
1997-2007	37 (10%)	Slate/composite	84 (23%)
		Thatched	31 (8%)

One of many interesting observations that can be made about Ashdon is that although it is an old village, there is a wide range of building ages and modes of construction, which makes it difficult to identify a community 'style' with any precision. A glance at the table above, for example, shows that over 50% of the houses have been built since the Second World War. However, there were observations that the planning applications and planning processes are not easily accessible to residents, and it would be helpful to improve publicity on this subject.

Whilst many might like the style and character of the village to remain the same, there is constant change, and some acceptance of this is noted in the responses received. A question was asked whether there should be further development, and if there was how would people like to see land used?

What housing development would be acceptable in Ashdon?

Conversion of redundant agricultural buildings	237 (35%)
No further development	189 (28%)
Small groups of mixed style housing	159 (24%)
Single dwellings in individual plots	137 (20%)
Small groups of similar style housing	70 (10%)

Nearly a third commented that there should be no further development within Ashdon. This is in keeping with the response from some other villages in the area (e.g. Arkesden 30%, Hadstock 24%). However, if there were to be further development then converting current buildings is favoured over new build, and if there had to be new building then it should be small groups of mixed style housing or individual plots.

The next question focussed on what would be supported in the respondents' particular area of the village, and here the favoured option was once again

related to recreation, and this is particularly pertinent given the land that appears to be presently vacant near the All Saints Close development:

What use of land would you support in your area of the village?

Games area for older children	230 (34%)
Childrens play ground	189 (28%)
Housing with a local connection qualification	184 (27%)
Adult recreation area	125 (19%)
Housing without a local connection qualification	37 (5%)

In this question once again people were invited to vote for more than one option, but it still shows that the games and/or play areas are the most popular. Housing without a local connection receives very little support indeed. Analysis of the data by area provided little further insight, although it suggests that the adult recreation and games areas are strongly supported in the Church Fields area.

There was also a discussion around non-residential development, and here it was found that 213 would support craft workshops in the village, although 176 believed there should be no non-residential development at all.

With housing comes lighting, which is another topic that raises much debate (and did so during the discussion around the proposed traffic calming measures on Church Hill). However, in this instance it would appear the current level of lighting was appropriate (338 responses), although 125 felt it was inadequate and only 12 thought there was too much.

The opportunity was taken to ask people what three views, buildings or landmarks they would most like to see protected, and the results demonstrated that people very much like what they have currently:

Protected views, buildings or landmarks

Various Views	152 (23%)
All Saints Church	139 (21%)
Windmill	132 (20%)
Rose & Crown	76 (11%)
PO and Shop	50 (7%)
Various Buildings	47 (7%)
Village museum	40 (6%)
School	35 (5%)

The attractive countryside and buildings around Ashdon are reflected in the views that people wished to protect, which included the view from the Windmill, the Parish Church, the Glebe, across the allotments, Bourne valley, from Rectory Lane, cricket and football pitches, the 'donkey field', Ashdon Hall and Ashdon Halt (which some felt should be renovated) and so on.

The combination of the positive comments regarding the Ashdon landscape (which doubtless contributed to the "Best Village in Essex" award won in 2006), the desire for more open spaces for recreation, and the negative views on any future housing development give a very clear message to local planners.



Proposed Actions

1. Support the development of recreation areas in space that becomes available throughout the village.
2. Identify how to improve communication in respect of forthcoming planning applications.
3. Investigate lighting. 125 people cite problems with lighting that APC may wish to explore further.

7.8 Traffic, Transport and Roads

Being a rural community there are many demands placed on the local transport infrastructure. The main reasons for travel include children going to school and socialising, individuals using facilities and services in the main local towns (principally Saffron Walden, but also Haverhill and Cambridge), individuals travelling to work generally, and people commuting from Audley End (although perhaps surprisingly there are only 24 people who commute daily from that station).

The increasing importance of cars is demonstrated by the data on public transport. Only 6 people use the Audley End bus on a daily basis (possibly the number is limited by the fact that the service runs too late in the day for people wanting to use the train to London for business), and no one uses the Haverhill bus daily. 24 people use the train services from Audley End daily. 66% of people never or rarely use the bus services. Whilst a significant 40% had no view on how services might be improved, 30% felt that an improved timetable would make them more likely to use the local buses (currently there are 2 services per day between Haverhill and Saffron Walden, and 1 to Audley End). With the demise or reduction in bus (and many years ago rail) services, individuals increasingly resort to cars.

In the opening section of this document, traffic was established as the 'worst thing about living in Ashdon' (124 people out of 339 responding on that particular question), and this is emphasised by the high response to this subject in our survey (and all associated subjects such as parking, speeding, HGVs and so on). Road safety is also an important factor in young people using the Rec (12 households mentioned road safety as a restriction on children using the Rec).

The meeting in the Church Rooms in June 2006, concerning a road-calming scheme for Church Hill, demonstrated what a complex topic this is; preserving the rural character of the environment, whilst at the same time managing traffic. In the survey it was clear which factors were felt to have contributed to our current situation:

Factor	People Raising this Issue
Excess speed	391 (58%)
Volume of through traffic	330 (49%)
Heavy lorries	329 (49%)
Inadequate pavements	254 (38%)

In addition poor parking was highlighted as a problem with 68% of households making this comment.

7.8.1 Parking

With a minimum of 400 vehicle trips by Ashdon residents each week (i.e. this excludes non-residents passing through the village), then it is perhaps not surprising that parking is a problem. The most common problem areas were Church Fields, Rogers End (incorporating Colliers Row) and Crown Hill where 75-80% of properties reported difficulties. In Rogers End 66% of the problems related to cars blocking the entrance, whereas in Crown Hill and Church Fields 60% were related to simply having nowhere to park. Future development plans should consider parking carefully, and other possible sites for parking (for example the Village Hall car park on days when the Hall is not being used) should be borne in mind.

Multiple car owning households are the norm in Ashdon as in other rural communities and it is not unreasonable for residents to expect to be able to park their vehicles close to their homes. Action to establish and enforce parking restrictions in such areas as around Beeches Nursery and the Filling Station, Crown Hill, Radwinter Road or Colliers Row would inconvenience residents in these areas and could have undesirable effects. Reducing the number of vehicles regularly parked in the roadway might also encourage higher traffic speeds, increase volume of traffic and HGVs. All these are already serious causes of concern to many respondents. With parking being a current issue it is sensible that any new buildings should include parking space within the boundary of their property.

7.8.2 Heavy lorries, high volume of traffic and inadequate pavements

49% of residents pointed to the volume of traffic, and in particular heavy lorries, as a specific issue to address. The classification of the road from Saffron Walden to Linton through Hadstock as unsuitable for heavy vehicles has forced local companies to send their lorries through Ashdon. This, combined with comments on inadequate pavements and concerns about road safety generally (largely in the Church Hill area, but also in other areas of the village such as Clayes, the school, Steventon End and Crown Hill), suggests there is a dangerous mixture of fast vehicles and poor pedestrian provision (39% commented that there were specific problems for pushchairs and wheel chairs).



7.8.3 Speeding

Speeding is a particularly contentious issue. The Parish Council has been successful in securing money for variable speed signs, has started to implement new speed limit signs on vulnerable areas such as Church Hill, and initiated a debate on a speed platform on Church Hill. Spurious arguments have been used in the past to suggest there is no problem as the 'average' speed is 35-40 mph. However, the important point here is that if this is the average it means many vehicles are speeding, and any vehicle exceeding 30mph is an issue. Indeed, in areas where pedestrians are not properly segregated from traffic by a pedestrian pathway, 30mph may not be an appropriate speed limit, and the Parish Council is currently providing for 20 mph signs in the Church Hill area. A lower speed limit could be applied in high risk areas generally, until proper pedestrian provision can be made.

The survey demonstrated this is still an area where people would like to see further action, with 42% generally seeking road calming, 46% requiring vehicle weight restrictions, and 41% feeling that 20mph speed limits would be helpful in the main pedestrian areas. Other ideas such as speed bumps, road priority changes and pedestrian controlled lights also attracted support.

Whilst the efforts to introduce traffic calming in Church Hill brought about a robust debate, it is clear that this continues to be a major issue that many wish to see addressed. With the suggested road calming methods rejected, the APC is currently pursuing the provision of a footpath around the back of Guildhall Way. Additionally a point raised at that meeting, and at numerous other gatherings, includes the fact that probably a not insignificant proportion of those people who speed actually live in the village, and there is an argument to say that Ashdon first needs to ensure its residents are not offending.

There are no simple answers to this topic, as the community has a mixture of opinions, from those who would like to see traffic lights, to those who wish the rural nature of the village to be protected. The suggested way to move forward with this is for the APC to develop a working party to continue to work on the subject and develop a workable plan.

Proposed actions

1. Establish a working party within the Parish Council to consider the options for future traffic calming in consultation with the community.
2. Discuss with local companies the possibility of diverting heavy vehicles away from Ashdon.
3. Approach the local bus companies to determine what opportunity there is for improving the timetable between Audley End and Haverhill.
4. Determine what possible transport options might be available for Youth and Community requirements.
5. Look into the potential for alternative parking facilities in the village.
6. Explore how to best communicate to Ashdon residents the need to maintain correct speed in the village.
7. Continue participation in the North Area Panel and Public Transport Forum to ensure Ashdon is informed on new developments.

7.9 Safety

A single question on safety was included in the questionnaire, intended to draw out any problems that might exist in regard to crime. The positive news is that no views were expressed regarding problems with crime. Virtually all comments received (125 in total) referred to matters relating to traffic (speed, paving, lighting at night). The following showed the areas where people felt least safe, and the responses reflect the way the village has developed, where individuals rightly require safe movement throughout a linear development:

Area and Issues	Number feeling unsafe
Guildhall Way to Clayes	55
Roads and paving throughout	25
Lighting generally	7
Steventon End	6
Bartlow Road	5
Crown Hill and the School	7
Radwinter Road	4
Holden End	4

Whilst only 7 people referred to lighting specifically, a number of the comments on the Guildhall Way to Clayes area were focused on traffic, lighting and the bend around Church Hill (and some raised the lack of lighting on the footpath up Church Hill).

These are the areas where people stated they would support action to improve Road Safety:

Area	Respondents
Fallowden Lane to Parish Church	366
The School	271
Clayes (between Museum and Beeches)	254
Radwinter Road	194
Crown Hill	171
Steventon End	156

Other areas with limited paving were also cited as relatively 'unsafe' places in Ashdon. The problems in respect of traffic have been discussed in a number of places within this report, but they do need to be mentioned here given that approximately half of the people commenting that they felt unsafe stated this as the main problem. Additionally, the state of verges and hedges was considered 'poor' by 20% of respondents from most areas (with Steventon End being the most vocal at 35%). Over one third of residents

described pavements as 'poor, and the user-friendliness of pavements to those with a disability, or pushchair or wheelchair was considered 'poor' by 259 of the respondents.



There are relatively few paved areas in Ashdon, other than the village centre around Crown Hill and Radwinter Road, and Church Fields/Guildhall Way. Ashdon is a rural community, and people are keen to protect that element of our environment, and the comments received were in some cases related to the quality of current paving, rather than

suggesting that more was required. Of the paved areas currently provided, 48% of people suggested these were 'poor'. Although responses were from all areas in the parish, the areas worst affected appeared to be Church End, Crown Hill and the area around Tredgetts. 80 individuals responded to say they had issues with the lack of paving and footpaths in their area of the village.

The lack of crime has been identified as a positive element of the response to the Parish Plan questionnaire. However, as this document is being produced, there are discussions regarding a developing problem with crime, and this may suggest that this is a good time to promote the work of the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, working in conjunction with the Police.

Proposed Actions

1. Continue to pursue an additional footpath from Church Fields, safe from traffic.
2. Pursue traffic calming measures on the area from Guildhall Way to Crown Hill (possibly through the proposed traffic working party).
3. Ensure maintenance and repair of current paved areas.
4. Consider whether further pavement lighting might be required in certain areas (low level lighting along the footpath down Church Hill, for example).
5. Promote neighbourhood watch programme/volunteer.

7.10 The Environment

'The Environment', its protection and preservation is a hot topic debated in the national and international news, schools and colleges, and in the work place. The survey tried to capture what action the community felt should be pursued, and where we should do more to preserve or improve what we have. When asked which activities people would like to see to preserve the environment, a number identified the following:-

Subject	Respondents
Reduction of traffic	263 (39%)
More recycling	232 (34%)
Improved public transport	190 (28%)
Improved maintenance of rights of way	153 (23%)
Energy saving	141 (21%)
Community composting	124 (18%)
More local employment	87 (13%)
Advice on healthier lifestyles	40 (6%)

7.10.1 The Rural Landscape

There is a general feeling that more should be done to preserve the countryside, and in particular footpaths:

Subject	Respondents
Maintain footpaths	303 (45%)
Clear ponds and streams	254 (38%)
Protect wildlife habitats	213 (32%)
Survey and protect trees	177 (26%)
Improve public spaces	107 (16%)

Ashdon has a large network of footpaths (there are more rights of way than any other district in Essex), which many in the parish enjoy. A number of people (10%) felt footpaths were not well sign posted, and some couldn't find them at all. Local residents have produced guides, and it would be a good idea to build upon these, as 43% of people felt they would like more maps of local paths (and 34% specifically



said they would be interested in buying leaflets of local walks).

Whilst 18% of people had no problems with footpaths, 20% had problems with mud/water (which is possibly linked to horses using the footpaths and churning up the mud) and 23% had problems with brambles and nettles.

The River Bourne is both an interesting feature and a threat when heavy rainfall combines with larger obstacles to cause flooding. Already the Parish Council arranges a river walk from Crown Hill to Knox End each year, in preparation for the winter. However, there are also problems in the Wilderness, where dams build up in the river (possibly a result of children enjoying themselves in the river), then in the winter significant material develops behind these. These dams then burst, the rush of water and debris occasionally causing damage to the footbridges. It would be valuable for the annual river walk to also clear this part of the stream.

Relatively few properties have actually experienced flooding (19 in total) but when houses are flooded the damage (both physically and emotionally for those living in the affected areas) is devastating. The affected properties are clustered, and it might be helpful for the Environment Agency to review which properties these are and advise on possible action.

7.10.2 Refuse and Recycling

Our survey took place prior to the introduction of wheelie bins in November 2006 and although this issue provoked some debate, it is not therefore reviewed in this document. .

Litter is an important issue, and in reaction to the comments received in the plan a group of volunteers undertook a village walk to see how pressing this was. There is quite a lot of litter in the hedgerows and ditches near to the roads, and it is likely that this is the result of people throwing rubbish out of the window whilst driving through the village, or also being blown into these catchment areas. The Parish Council might like to consider what initiatives can be introduced to deal with this.



There was mention of animal and dog fouling on a number of replies, but it does not appear to be a significant point (raised less than 5 times).

Another point raised was whether a collection could be arranged for glass recycling, and a small number asked if a more central point within the village might be made available for recycling (although there will need to be consideration of noise nuisance for the immediate neighbours).

7.10.3 Noise Pollution

A number of subjects were mentioned in respect of noise pollution, although it would be fair to say that none of them generated a large response. For example those with the largest number of comments included fireworks (7 people), aircraft (6), barking dogs (4), and late parties in the Village Hall (3).

7.10.4 What should be done to protect & enhance the environment?

When individuals are given free rein to express their views it is often difficult to categorise the responses, and perhaps this is a subject that could be considered and researched further by the Parish Council. Comments included reference to speeding, HGVs, litter, dog control and dog mess, horses using footpaths, preservation of the Parish Church and churchyard, support for the local businesses, reduced noise from lorries and aircraft, and reduction of signage whilst controlling strongly the conservation zone. However, it would be difficult to say that from the Parish Plan data there are strong arguments for these initiatives.

Proposed actions

1. Continue the current River Walk between Crown Hill and Knox End, extend it through the Wilderness and remove dams as appropriate.
2. Appoint an 'Environment Champion' or working party in the Parish Council to focus specifically on this area.
3. Continue dialogue with the Environment Agency on whether any further action might be appropriate to prevent flooding in Ashdon.
4. Encourage development of village walk information, and provide guides and talks on what is available.
5. Identify whether there are opportunities to improve public transport facilities to and from the village (see also Roads and Transport).
6. Speak with Ridgeons and other local companies about re-routing heavy vehicles. Confirm the road classification system with Highways.
7. Consider whether further kerb stones are warranted at Steventon End and other places where verge damage is occurring.
8. Confirm whether recycling bins for glass products can be located in a central area.
9. Provide animal waste bins.

8. Planning Guidance

The Parish Plan is a document that attempts to capture the views and wishes of the community. With this information we are in the position of being able to provide guidance to UDC and other bodies on the preferences of Ashdon residents in respect of future development. However, these views will only be taken into account if we align them with the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005), and hence we need to use UDC terminology.

The following represents an interpretation of the respondents' views in accordance with the Local Plan, taking into account the Conservation Zone and Development Envelope (see map in Appendix 11.3). The categories, terminology and abbreviations used are those used in the Uttlesford Local Plan (Adopted 2005) which are as follows:

General Planning Policies	GEN
Environment, Built and Natural	ENV
Housing	
Retailing and Services	RS

Housing – 28% of the community stated that there should be no further housing development. For future land use, the most strongly supported initiatives were recreational. If new housing is to be provided, however, then the most popular form supported is the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings. New dwellings should be in small groups of mixed styles, or individual plots (suggesting in-fill rather than continuing sprawl of the urban landscape). Affordable housing should have a local connection (27%).

A Conservation Area protects part of the village (see map in Appendix 11.3). Additionally, it is clear from the questionnaires that a range of buildings (for example All Saints Church, the Windmill, Ashdon Halt, the Shop and Pub) and views (for example the views from the Windmill, from All Saints church, from the Old Rectory and , from Rectory Lane to Newnham and All Saints) are particularly important to residents, and these should be protected. There is a wide range of building styles in Ashdon, and it is therefore not possible to recommend that a single building material must be used. However, taking the overall themes of "protect current aspects of the village" and "protection of views and the environment", all new buildings should be in the style of other buildings in the immediate vicinity, and should not negatively impact views and the environment.

Linked to development is the issue of traffic. The three main concerns expressed by the community were that there is too much traffic coming through the village, certain stretches of road are unsafe to pedestrians, and there is a real problem with parking.

Housing development also places further strain on utilities (water, sewage and infrastructure congestion were referenced in particular), and the impact on these facilities needs to be carefully considered.

Given the problems that have resulted from occasional flooding of the river Bourne, future development should take into account the flood plain and more generally those areas that have flooded in the recent past.

Specific UDC Policies - GEN1, GEN2, GEN3, GEN5, GEN6, GEN8, ENV1, H3, H6, H10,

The Natural Environment – Ashdon has a number of areas which should be protected, and this was supported by opinions that more should be done to protect the wildlife and its habitats. Specific comments have been made supporting the protection and maintenance of footpaths, streams, ponds, views, woods (Shadwell Wood, Hales Wood) and trees generally and open spaces.

Respondents commented that they are interested in further recycling and energy saving, although given the proportion of Listed Buildings (estimated to be 27% of the total housing stock) there will presumably be some limit on the introduction of certain energy conservation devices such as solar panels.

Specific UDC Policies - ENV3, ENV7, ENV8, ENV15,

Economic Activity – Although 176 people stated that there should be no further economic development at all, 213 supported economic development in the form of craft workshops. Considering the preference for housing to use redundant agricultural property, this form of building should also be considered were building of a craft workshop a possibility.

Specific UDC Policies - E5

Leisure and Recreation – There is a requirement for playing facilities in the village for both the very young (35% supporting a Playground in Church Fields), but also for those aged 11 and over (39% support a games field in the village, with 34% specifically a games area for older children) accessible to all in the village.

Retailing and Services – A large number of people responded to say that they would like to be able to buy various items locally (meat and vegetables, dairy products, fresh bread, national papers) and there are numerous comments regarding the protection of our current services.

Specific UDC Policies – RS3

9. So, what happens next?

As you will have read in this document, in addition to being an interesting review of the views and opinions of the residents of Ashdon, there are also a number of actions that can be considered by many parties. Given this project has been sponsored by the APC, many of the actions will be within their remit. Moreover, the APC will be important in facilitating many of these projects, but not necessarily involved in carrying them out. For example, it may be agreed that an Open Morning would be of use in the Village Hall once a year to advertise local clubs and societies. Whilst the APC might identify someone to do this, it will then be the responsibility of the community to take it forward and determine whether this is of value.

The following table sets out a summary of all the actions found throughout the document, explaining what is to be done to take the projects forward. One final point, although the APC commissioned this Parish Plan the timing for the various actions below has not been included, as a new Parish Council will be elected in May 2007, and that group of individuals will need to determine project scheduling.

Category	Topic	Proposed action	Notes
7.1 Information	a) Village Web Site	- Identify appropriate individuals or company, costs, and content	- Not an answer for all, but for many. - Individuals in the village have expertise in this area and may be willing to help set this up initially.
	b) Local Directory	- Create a directory of local businesses and activities (including museum, clubs and societies, school churches and so on).	- May be a separate document, or posted on the website or if it excludes phone numbers possibly on Notice boards.
	c) Notice boards	- Increase use of notice boards to incorporate maps and other business information	- Maps and other information might be included on a small number (e.g. 3) of the notice boards. It is possible that slightly larger notice boards might be useful.
	d) Village Magazine	- Continue to support and promote the Village Magazine	- The preferred way to get information in the village, this should continue to be supported and/or further promoted.
	e) Information Generally	- Parish Council working party	- A working party might consider other ideas to improve communication throughout the community, given this is a recurring theme throughout the document
7.2 Leisure and Recreation	a) Youth club	- Review the practicality of a youth club available to all	- All Saints Youth Club is successful, but it would be useful to have a club available to all young people in the village.
	b) New clubs & societies	- Promote current and new local clubs	- A football club for under 16 year olds, the tennis club and keep fit clubs are of particular interest.
	c) Activities for aged 14+	- Work with UDC Youth section - Investigate teen shelters	- Identify ideas for older children in conjunction with UDC. - With limited activities for children aged 14 years and over, Teen Shelters is a UDC initiative worth considering further.
	d) Clubs open morning	- Annual open morning	- To promote clubs and communication hold an annual (or bi-ennial) open morning for all clubs and societies to recruit additional members.
	e) Rec in Rectory Lane	- Consider access options further	- Continue to consider access to the Rec in Rectory Lane for people with Push Chairs.

Category	Topic	Proposed action	Notes
7.3 The Shop, the Pub and the Garage	a) Local businesses	- Continue to support businesses	- Continue to support local businesses, and encourage assistance from other rural bodies such as RCCE. - Seek input from local businesses on how/if they feel APC can assist them further.
	b) Rose & Crown field	- Consider village events	- Consider the Rose & Crown field as a possible venue for future village-wide events.
7.4 Education	a) Village talks & classes	- Promote talks and classes	- Promote talks and classes to be held in the village, provided by bodies such as the Village Museum, Saffron Walden Museum, St Johns Ambulance brigade.
		- Packs on how to start a club	- Consider an information pack on 'how to start a club' for people setting up a club in Ashdon. - Section on educational interests could be included during the Open Morning in the Village Hall proposed under 'Leisure and Recreation'.
7.5 Utilities	a) Mobile phones	- Consult more widely on mobile phone masts	- If a mast seeks planning permission in the future, consult more widely on whether the community would support this.
	b) Electricity & Gas	- Lobby local companies regarding supply	- Lobby for improvements to the current electricity supply, which can be unreliable in wet or windy conditions. - Confirm cost and practicality of receiving mains gas in the village.
	c) Sewage	- Investigate sewage problems in Crown Hill	- Investigate problem at Crown Hill, which may be due to pressure of additional development on the infrastructure.
	d) TV and Radio	- Investigate TV and Radio reception issues	- Investigate television and radio reception problems in the village, and establish the timing and availability of alternatives such as digital services.
7.6 Community Support	a) Volunteer car service	- Discuss whether the service requires further support	- The current volunteer car service is very helpful. APC should ask whether further assistance (financial or logistical) is required in future.
	b) Good neighbour	- Consider Good Neighbour schemes	- People suggested they would be willing to take part in Good Neighbour schemes, APC to investigate whether one could be set up in Ashdon.

Category	Topic	Proposed action	Notes
7.7 Development & Land Use	a) Recreation	- Continue work on recreation ground at Church Fields	- APC to continue to press for recreational ground at Church Fields.
	b) Planning applications	- Improve access to plans	- Consider how to improve communication in respect of forthcoming Planning Applications.
	c) Lighting	- Investigate further	- Consider lighting. 125 people cite problems with lighting that APC may wish to investigate further.
7.8 Traffic, Roads & transport	a) Public transport	- Identify if improvement is possible	- Approach local bus companies to determine what opportunity there is for improving the timetable between Audley End and Haverhill
	b) Parking	- Investigate parking options	- Investigate whether alternative parking facilities might be used in the village.
	c) Traffic calming	- Continue to investigate traffic calming options	- Establish a working party within APC to consider future traffic calming in consultation with the community. - Consider how best to communicate to Ashdon residents the need to maintain correct speed in the village.
	d) Public meetings	- Continue to attend North Area Panel meetings and Public Transport Forum	- Continue to attend the North Area Panel meetings and Public Transport Forum to keep informed on traffic initiatives being considered across Uttlesford and Essex.
	e) HGVs	- Discuss the options with local companies	- Discuss with local businesses, ECC, and Highways whether HGVs can be re-routed through other areas.
7.9 Safety	a) Paved areas	- Continue maintenance	- Continue to maintain and repair current paved areas.
	b) Traffic calming	- Pursue measures on the area from Guildhall Way to Crown Hill	- As in 6.8c, continue to pursue traffic calming measures on the area from Guildhall way to Crown Hill, possibly through the working party.
	c) Pavement lighting	- Further low level pavement lighting to be considered	- Consider whether further pavement lighting might be required in certain areas (low level lighting along the footpath down Church Hill for example), mindful of the alternative arguments regarding light pollution.
	d) Neighbourhood Watch	- Promote activities further	- Promote neighbourhood watch programme/volunteer.
	e) Church Fields footpath	- Develop alternative footpath from Church Fields	- Continue the discussion with local land owners and UDC regarding possibility of a footpath from Church Fields away from the main road.

Category	Topic	Proposed action	Notes
7.10 Environment	a) River walk	- Continue and expand current river walk	- Continue the current River Walk between Crown Hill and Knox End, extend it through the Wilderness and remove dams as appropriate.
	b) Glass recycling	- Collection of glass products	- Confirm whether recycling bins for glass products can be located in a more central area, or whether local refuse collectors could collect glass products.
	c) Village walks	- Additional information on village walks	- Encourage development of village walk information, and provide guides and talks on what is available.
	d) Environment champion	- Identify a single point to gather information on Environmental issues and solutions	- Identify a single person or working party in the Parish Council to focus specifically on this area.
	e) Flooding	- Continue dialogue with the Environment Agency	- Continue dialogue with the Environment Agency on whether any further action might be appropriate to prevent flooding in Ashdon.
	f) Kerb stones	- Consider whether these are required more widely	- Consider whether further kerb stones are warranted at Steventon End and other places where verge damage is occurring.
	g) Litter	- Provide animal waste bins	- Consider whether/where to place animal waste bins on the pavements in Ashdon.

10. Acknowledgements

10.1 Who's been involved in this?

Parish Plan Steering Group

Michael O'Malley (Chairman)
 Hugh Feldman (Treasurer)
 Andrew Noakes (Secretary)
 Rob Finn
 Jo Padfield
 Roger Pembroke
 Richard Shobbrook
 Lisa Swan
 Andy Winwood
 Roger Woodward
 Trish Wymer

In addition other people kindly gave their time to take part in delivering and collecting questionnaires, and these included

Cindy O'Malley
 John Padfield
 Justin Patrick
 Gail Skillings
 Michael Wymer

10.2 Sources of Funding

Ashdon Parish Council (APC)
 Countryside Agency (CA)
 Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
 Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE)
 Uttlesford District Council (UDC)

11. Appendices

11.1 Ashdon School map of the village.

11.2 Map of Ashdon parish showing how the questionnaire delivery and collection areas were defined.

11.3 UDC Map of Ashdon Village showing conservation area and the development envelope.

Useful information, books, websites

Books

- "Annals of Ashdon" by Robert Gibson
- "Ashdon", by Angela Green
- "Reuben's Corner", by Spike Mays
- "Five Miles from Bunkum", by Spike Mays and Chris Ketteridge

Websites

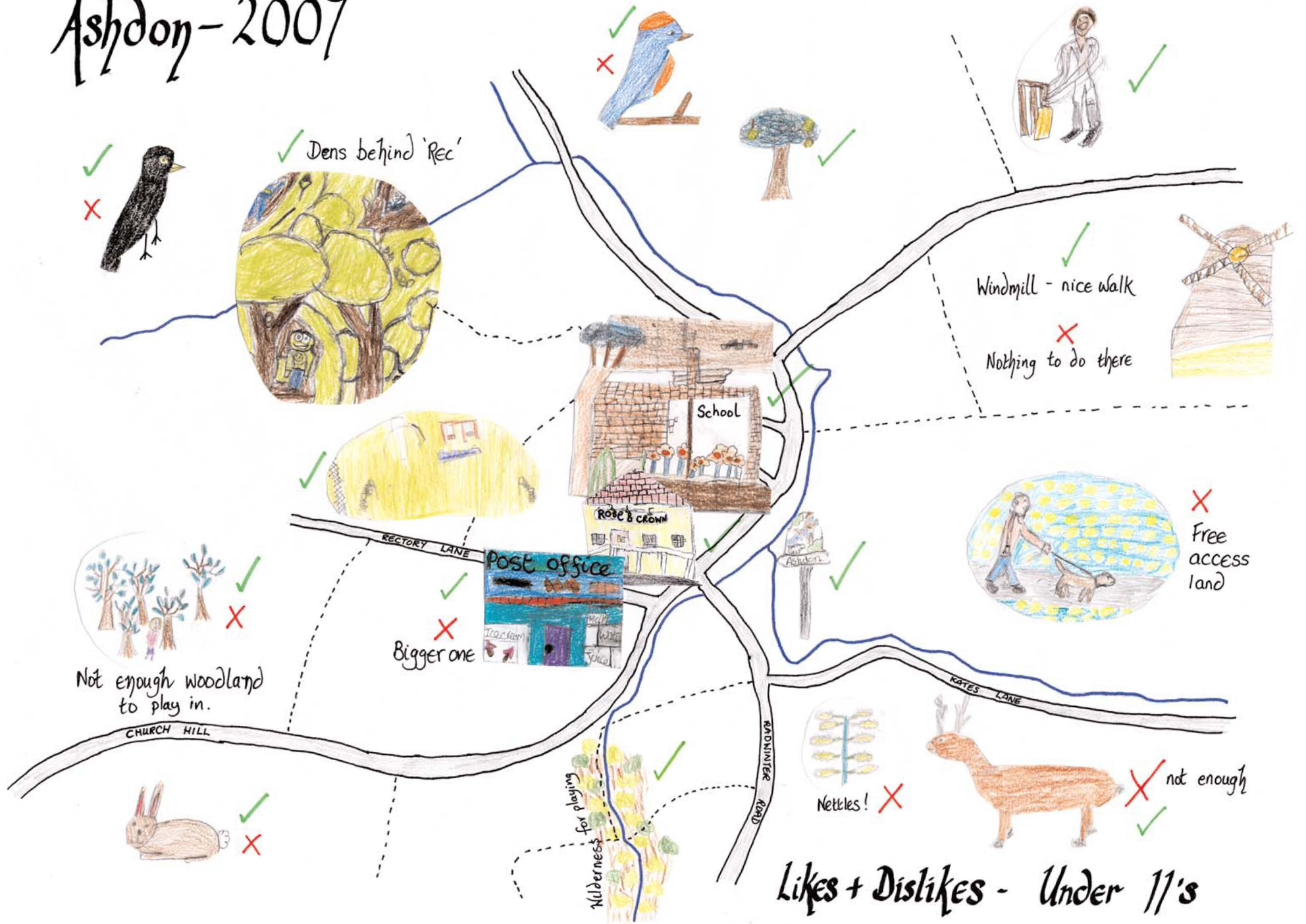
- The Ashdon Windmill Trust - www.ashdonwindmilltrust.co.uk
- Ashdon – No Ordinary Village - www.beechesnursery.co.uk/ashdon.htm
- White's Directory of Essex www.historyhouse.co.uk/essex09a.html
- Uttlesford District Council Pages (Ashdon) – www.uttlesford.gov.uk/community+info/ashdon.htm

12. Abbreviations

There are a number of abbreviations used throughout the document, which can be summarised as follows:

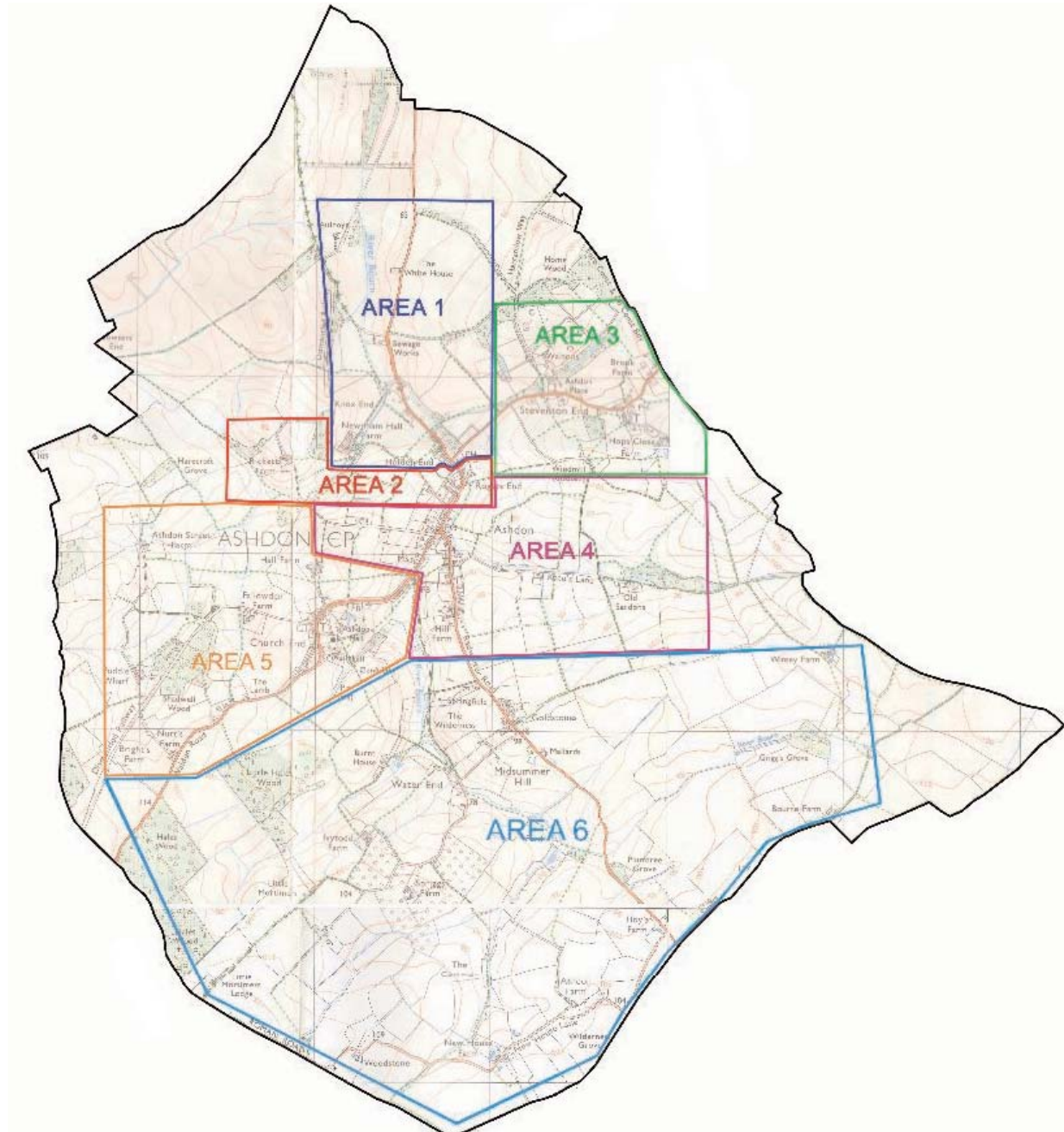
APC	Ashdon Parish Council
RCCE	Rural Community Council of Essex
UDC	Uttlesford District Council
WI	Womens Institute

Ashdon - 2007



Likes + Dislikes - Under 11's

Questionnaire Delivery and Collection Areas



Ashdon Conservation Area

Uttlesford District Council

MAP REFERENCE: TL5841 SCALE: 1:6000

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Marked shaded area:
Ashdon Conservation Area

Marked un-shaded area:
Ashdon Development Envelope

