

LACH DENNIS



PARISH PLAN 2014

LACH DENNIS LOGO

Contents

Page No

Welcome to your Parish Plan

The Team

Parish Council Chairman's Message

What is a Parish Plan?

Benefits of a Parish Plan

Description of the Parish

History of the Parish

History of the Village Hall

Milestones along the Way

Survey Results

1. Community Spirit

2. Environment

3. Facilities and Services

4. Housing and Development

5. Business

Acknowledgements and Glossary

Action Plan

What Happens Next?

Useful Emergency Telephone Numbers

Maps of the Parish

Welcome to your Parish Plan

Dear friends and residents,

I am pleased to be able to introduce your Lach Dennis Parish Plan. The parish plan includes an action plan which highlights suggested improvements for the future of the parish. The plan is a result of a careful analysis of your input and incorporates the views of 62% of residents and a number of local businesses.

From the experience we gained by doing the first questionnaire we decided it was probably inadequate, but a good starting point for the second questionnaire.

Whilst the steering group is pleased with the final result, the past 18 months or so have presented a number of challenges. The members of the group have worked tirelessly and given up a lot of personal time to put together this plan and the co-operation of those who contributed has proven invaluable.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents for completing the questionnaires. I would also like to thank the members of the steering group and the volunteers who came forward for their efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Penny

Penny Suckling
Chair of Lach Dennis Parish Plan Steering Group



Phone box - village library where locals exchange their own books, DVDs and CDs.

The Team

Lach Dennis Parish Plan Steering Group

Penny Suckling

Rodney Suckling

Bryan Morrall

Keith Bower

Bob Knott

Steve Baker



TEAM PHOTO

How the Group Was Formed

Janet Bott, Chairman of Lach Dennis Parish Council at the time, thought a parish plan would be helpful for the village and issued the first questionnaire. She then invited a number of residents to attend a meeting to discuss the possibility of producing a plan.

There were just enough of us at the meeting to form the steering group, with Janet as secretary. As everyone was busy with other commitments, Penny Suckling agreed to be chairman. At the next meeting, Janet informed the group she had sold her house and was leaving the area. The group then appointed Bryan Morrall as Vice-Chairman and Rod Suckling as Secretary. Rita Winstanley and Steve Baker joined the group as Lach Dennis Parish Council representatives. When Rita resigned, Bob Knott joined the group.

Since being first formed in June 2012, we have held monthly meetings to progress activities. We have been advised along the way by Sarah Baron and Claire Jones of Cheshire Community Action, who have helped over 70 communities across Cheshire to produce parish plans.

Particular thanks should go to Keith for his analysis of the first questionnaire, Bryan for securing the funding and Bob for his expertise in producing the technical data. Without their total commitment the plan would not have been possible. We do hope that all the hard work of the group will benefit the village in the long term.

Parish Council Chairman's Message

When I arrived in Lach Dennis it was a very different village to the one we have today. I was born in the old black and white farm house, known as Fir Tree Farm, where cricket was played on Sunday afternoon. The village consisted of a few scattered farms, a pub, the church, a newly completed village hall, a filling station, some farm cottages and a smithy in Hulse Lane.

Our post office was in 'Grandad' Wright's living room at Common Lane Cottage where he also had the Reel Wright Workshop. Repairs were done to farm carts and 'Lach Dennis Wheel Barrows' were made. As far as I know only one still exists and can be seen being used in Fraser Sutton's garden.

In the early days, the A556 Chester Road only came as far as King Street from Chester, and Penny's Lane went straight up to Broken Cross. Most people would cycle or walk into Northwich.

Edgerton Terrace was named after Peter Edgerton, who used to represent the area of Northwich Rural District Council. During the late 1950's, Common Lane was developed on the right hand side. The left hand side of Common Lane and Holmes Chapel Road were developed with a mix of houses and bungalows in the 1960's and Greenfield Close also filled up at this time. In the 1980's, the land opposite Edgerton Terrace was also developed along with the barn conversions opposite the pub. Since then we have only had a few infills, but it does show how quickly the village has grown to where we are today.

Lach Dennis is a pleasant place to live. In spite of speeding traffic, gas plants and the threat of HS2, we retain a good community spirit and I would like to congratulate the Parish Plan Steering Group for its efforts collecting the views of the villagers and producing the document on your behalf. Many thanks and all the best for the future of Lach Dennis.

The Parish Council looks forward to working with the community to implement the action plan.

John

John Hardman
Chair, Lach Dennis Parish Council

Photo of John

What is a Parish Plan?

The concept of parish planning was introduced in the 2000 Rural White Paper to enable local communities to create a vision of how their locality and services should be developed.

A parish plan is developed by the community for the community, and is intended to provide the residents of a parish with an opportunity to influence the future of their local area. Although parish plans have no legal or formal status in the Town and Country Planning System, they should contain the potential to influence a wide range of organisations and therefore the future of the parish.

The plan is about the needs of the residents and their concerns, which include future developments of homes and businesses or issues such as traffic volume, speed and local community spirit.

Parish plans should:

- Contain relevant information about the community;
- Reflect the views of all sections of the community;
- Identify any local problems and opportunities;
- Be an agenda for community action with clear attainable objectives;
- Focus on the objective of building community spirit and improving the environment and local economy;
- Involve local authorities and other stakeholders in the process; and
- Influence bids for funding for community projects.

Benefits of a Parish Plan

A parish plan brings together the opinions of the community. This is beneficial as issues of the village are identified and action can be taken to deal with them. As well as solving these issues and delivering tangible results (such as new play areas, footpaths, shops, new social activities), it can also have a number of other benefits including:

- Helps to strengthen community spirit;
- Unleashes hidden talents in the community;
- Gives the Parish Council a fresh focus and encourages new councillors to come forward;
- Enhances public recognition of the value of parish councils;
- Produces a valuable source of information and an evidence base to make a stronger case for grant funding and local authority investment;
- Forms new partnerships and links; and
- Opens up new funding streams.

Description of the Parish

Where is Lach Dennis?

Lach Dennis is a small, rural village located in the Borough of Cheshire West and Chester, within a triangle formed by Holmes Chapel, Northwich and Knutsford, all of which are within less than five miles from the village. The village is well located for the M6 motorway with options at junctions 18 and 19 to go either north or south. Both junctions are within about four miles or fifteen minutes of the village. Lach Dennis is around 25 miles from Manchester, 35 miles from Liverpool and 20 miles from Chester.

How big is the village?

The total population of the village is approximately 230. 70 people (30%) are aged over 65 which is much greater than the national average and there are 25 children under 16 - much lower than the national average (2011 Census). There are 105 households and the majority of residents live in or near the centre of the village. The total area of land is approximately 210 acres, most of which is farmland.

What is it like to live here?

Lach Dennis is a safe and friendly place to live where the villagers get on well together as a community. However, more essential services would be welcomed, particularly by the older residents.

The parish is a farming community, the name 'Lach Dennis' means 'wet and marshy land'. There are eleven farms in and around the village, a few are privately owned and the rest are owned by Ineos. One can expect to encounter tractors on the roads and lanes on a daily basis in and around the village.

Village amenities

There is one restaurant/pub, 'The Duke of Portland', previously called 'The Farmer's Arms', which is a convenient meeting place for locals and visitors. It is said that the pub changed its name in honour of King Edward VII as he commonly used the ducal title as a pseudonym when he travelled north to ride with the Cheshire Hunt.

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There is a pleasant and comfortable village hall which has just been refurbished using funds from the Village Hall Committee and others. The hall is used by residents, non-residents and several societies for a variety of functions.

There is a small Anglican church that holds regular services on a Sunday morning. It is well cared for by local parishioners and is warm and welcoming. Special services are held for the Harvest Festival and at Christmas.



There are notice boards at the garage and the village hall informing villagers of forthcoming events. An excellent new village website has also recently been launched at www.lachdennis.com

In terms of public transport, Dial-a-Ride offers a twice weekly bus service from Lach Dennis to Northwich. This is currently available on Wednesdays and Fridays. There is also a mobile library service on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

The village has an element of commerce and industry with several salt mines and a large gas storage plant (Storengy) as well as a small garage and filling station.

Salt Mining in Lach Dennis

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The village has a history of salt mining using a technique known as 'solution mining'. This involves injecting hot water and air into rock salt which then dissolves into a brine solution. A number of well heads can be seen around the village.

This process creates pear-shaped cavities in the rock salt layer which when exhausted are left full of brine to prevent collapse. For those people living over the cavities that is a comforting thought. The salt layer is approximately 200m (around 650ft) deep.

This brine is then used for various industrial applications in the chemical industry. For example, soda ash and sodium bicarbonate are both produced in Northwich from our salt and chlorine and caustic soda are produced in Runcorn.

Road salt used in the winter to clear ice and snow comes from Winsford rather than from our mines but it's still ironic that Common Lane rarely gets gritted in winter when there is so much salt below ground.

The presence of salt in the village is the cause of our other local industry, gas storage. Gas is stored in cavities excavated by brine washing in the rock salt. Storengy UK is currently developing the Stublach Gas Storage project, a salt cavern storage facility within the boundary of the village. Once completed, the scheme will be one of the main storage facilities in the UK. 20 caverns will be created in total, the first 2 of which will be online in 2014. The remaining cavities are expected to be fully developed by 2018.



History of the Parish

Lach Dennis (formerly known as Lece) was referred to in the Domesday Book. This was commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086AD to find out the extent of the country's wealth and what it amounted to so that he could impose further taxes to pay for the wars. The Domesday Book was written in Latin, an English translation of what was said about the visit to Lach Dennis is:-

"Moran holds of the earl Lach Dennis. Kolben held it as a free man. There is half a hide paying geld. There is land for 1 plough. There is one plough in demesne and two oxmen, and one border. There is half an acre of meadow. It is worth eight shillings. It was wasteland."

The landowner named Kolben could possibly be a descendant of some of the Viking settlers, who came to Cheshire in the 9th and 10th Centuries.

The parish has a strong history of farming, some of which still exists today. When Captain Francis-Hayhurst's family owned the land, rent collecting day was the 4th September. The tenants would journey to Bostock Hall to pay their rent and they were given a good meal. Captain France-Hayhurst was very well liked by his tenants and his family were very popular in the village.

All Saint's Church was built in 1885. The foundation stone was laid by Captain France-Hayhurst. Other foundation stones were laid by important people who were each given a silver trowel as a souvenir. One of these can be seen in the church on special occasions. In 1995, parishioners held a flower festival to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church. Refreshments were served in the village hall all day, raising much needed funds.

There are two very old cottages on Common Lane that were called Common Lane Cottages. The first one was the village post office. The post master was also the village wheelwright and the undertaker. Later in the Nineteenth Century, the post office moved to a new shop on Holmes Chapel Road. With the advent of the motor car, the gentleman who was the post master built a garage, selling petrol and repairing bicycles. This has been extended by the present owner and is a very busy establishment. The last post office in the village closed in 2010. The nearest post office is now in Lower Peover (2 miles away).



Holmes Chapel Road Post Office
Opposite Common Lane was a small cottage/shop which provided refreshments, cigarettes and sweets to the Cyclists' Touring Club and also the Army truck drivers who used to test-drive the tanks made by Foden's of Sandbach during the Second World War. Although bombs were dropped on the village, no great damage was done.

There used to be two smithy's in the village; one on Hulse Lane and the other on Smithy Lane. Legend has it that Dick Turpin rode through Lach Dennis and stopped at Smithy Lane Forge for his horse to be shod. Smithy Lane is now a public footpath into Hulse Lane. Hulse Lane Smithy was still operated by local blacksmith, Jeff Jackson, in the 1990's. Dick Turpin probably wouldn't recognise Hulse Lane Smithy, as it has now been converted into a smart home.

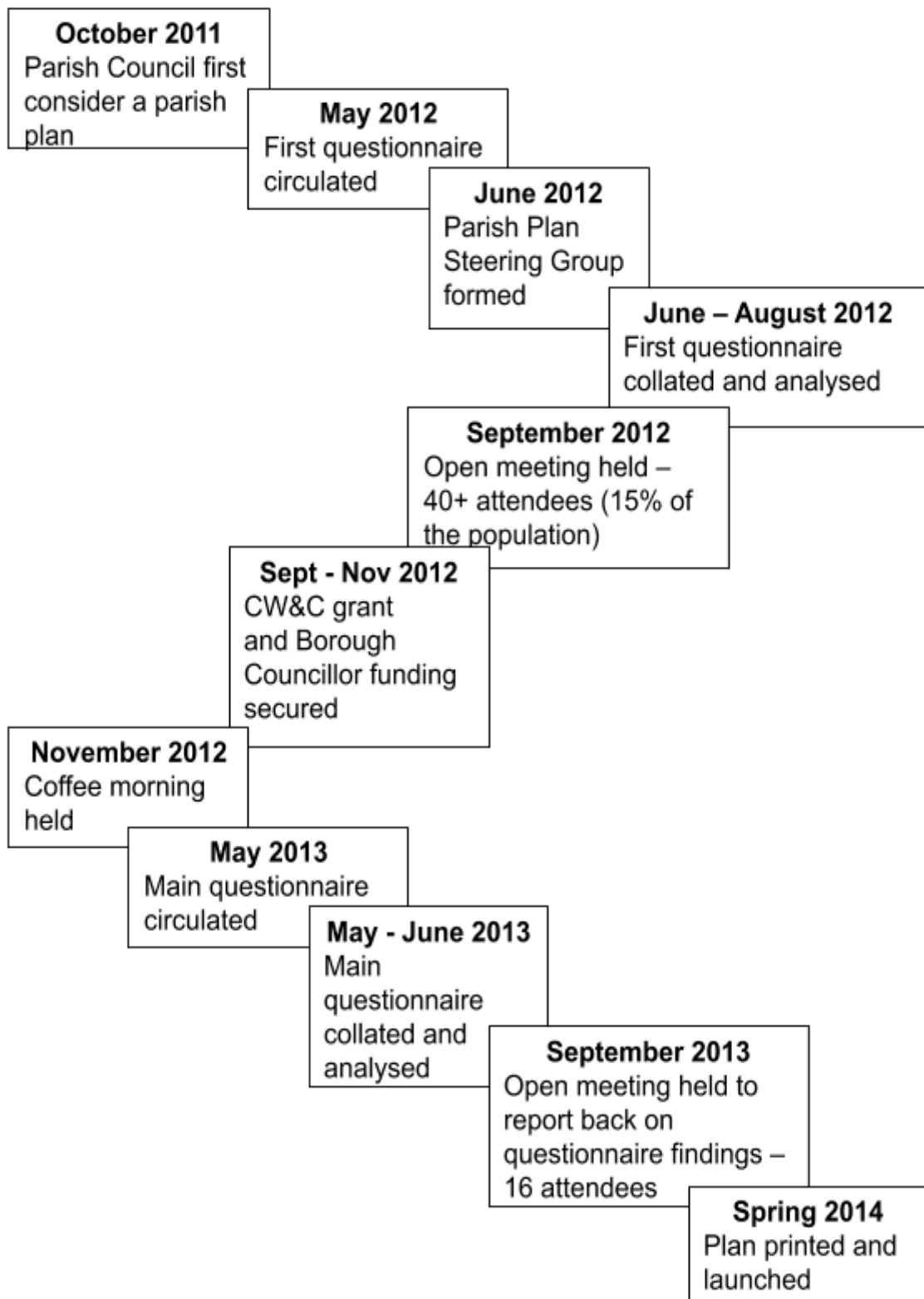
History of the Village Hall

Lach Dennis' bid for a hall dates from 1945 when a meeting was called to revive the original village hall fund, which was closed in 1939. Whist drives and similar events were held at Fir Tree Farm which became the temporary village centre. In 1947, a hut was bought from Wincham Hall for £435 and erected on land, bought from the late Captain France-Hayhurst for the nominal fee of £10. The foundations for the hall cost £115.

Help came from Norman Cottan, secretary of the Cheshire Rural Community Council, who in 1948 procured a grant under the temporary letting scheme, organised by the Council of Social Service. This meant that the hall was finished several years earlier than anticipated. The National Council of Social Services provided around £1200 towards the cost of the hall, which was their property and it was rented to the people of Lach Dennis at an annual rent of £13. The village hall was finally opened in 1949 by Mrs Sydney Broadhurst.

It was hoped that in addition to recreational activities, the cultural aspects of the village hall work referred to by Mrs Broadhurst in her opening speech would not be overlooked. Over the years the hall has been refurbished and has been used for a playgroup, village meetings, dog training, bowls, village dances and now has a license to sell alcohol. It is also available to rent.

Milestones along the way



Survey Results

Review of the First Questionnaire

Once the principle of preparing a parish plan had been agreed, an initial questionnaire was circulated on behalf of the Parish Council to every household in the village. 120 questionnaires were sent out in May 2012 and 38 were returned (a return rate of 32%).

The main conclusions from this survey were as follows:

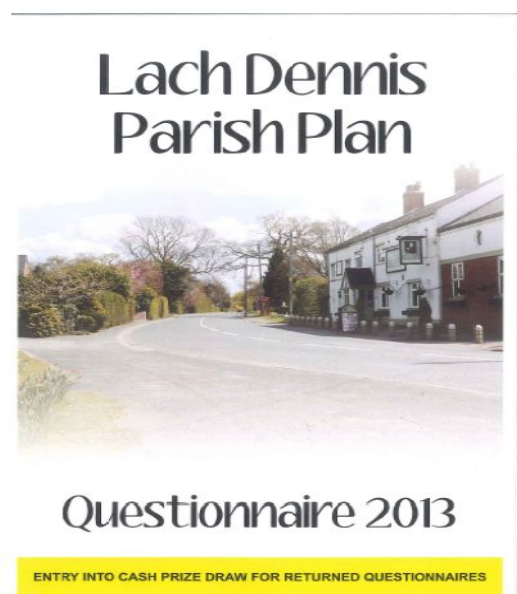
- Lach Dennis has an aging population. Many people in this age group can feel isolated from other residents and can struggle to reach shops and services outside the village;
- There are few local amenities but residents enjoy the rural aspect and most are accustomed to travelling to nearby towns to meet their needs;
- There are no schools so children have to travel outside of the village for education;
- Aspects of the village which were rated excellent include its rural location, its safety and good signage;
- Aspects of the village which were rated as poor include its pavements, roads and grass verges, speeding traffic and a general lack of amenities;
- Many residents were unaware of village activities and services because of poor communication;
- Any future housing development should be under five dwellings or in refurbished abandoned buildings; and
- Most knew about the Homewatch scheme but would appreciate a list of emergency contact numbers.

Following the analysis of this survey, the steering group decided it was probably insufficient for the preparation of this plan but it provided a good starting point for drafting a second questionnaire in terms of the issues to be addressed.

The Main Questionnaire

The survey was distributed to every household in the village during May 2013. A total of 117 questionnaires were delivered and 72 were returned, an excellent response rate of 62%. 40 of those who responded had previously filled in the first questionnaire.

Appreciation must go to the steering group members who took the trouble to deliver and collect the questionnaires, sometimes requiring

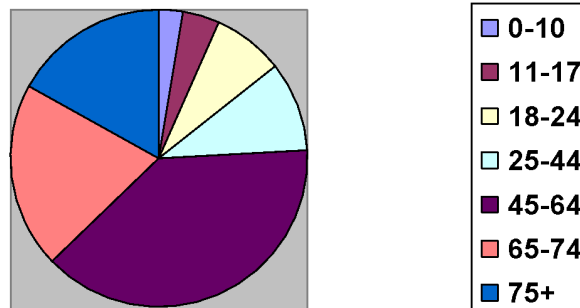


two or three visits.

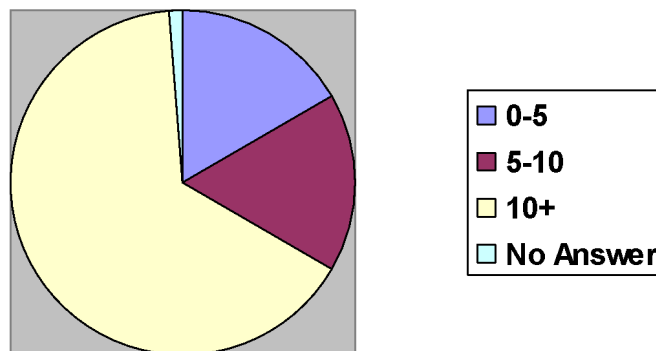
The analysis took around 30 hours to complete which was longer than expected mainly because the response was greater than anticipated and because of the complexity of some of the responses.

Before asking questions relating to specific topic areas, respondents were asked to answer a number of more general questions (see charts below). The profile of the households who filled in the questionnaire seems to fit well with the demographic profile of Lach Dennis. It can therefore be assumed that the results have given a good representative sample of those who live in the village.

How many people are there in each age group in your household?



How long have you lived in the village?



What is the total number of people by gender, including children, in your household?

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Male	Female	No Answer
74	78	1

Are you:

Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Self-employed	Retired	Unemployed	Other	No answer
31	12	22	60	0	6	1

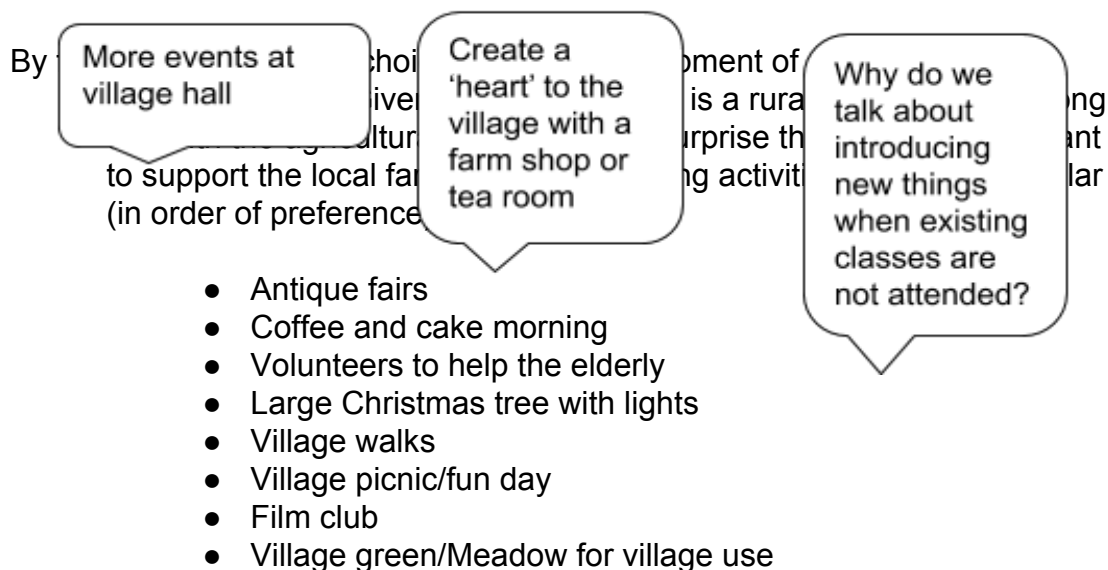
The results of the initial questionnaire, the main questionnaire and the business questionnaire (see section 5) give a good view of what Lach Dennis residents consider to be important. These results are the basis on which this parish plan and action plan has been produced. The results presented in the following chapters are a summary of the key issues that were raised in the questionnaires. For anyone wanting to see the full analysis please make a request via the PPG chair (details at the back of the plan) or go to the website at www.lachdennis.com

1 Community Spirit

There are already lots of weekly activities taking place in the village hall such as bingo, dancing, dog training and yoga. There is also a thriving Women's Institute group within the village. In addition, the village hall hosts a number of popular events such as barbeques, quiz nights, race nights and seasonal parties. Most respondents to the first questionnaire said that they attended the hall for various activities. However, the majority of respondents rated community spirit in the village as 'poor', many thought there was a lack of information and some complained about not feeling welcome.

1.1 Village Activities

It was apparent from the first questionnaire therefore that people would like to see a number of new activities within the village to help bring the community closer together. In the main questionnaire, many of the suggestions that were made at the open event/first questionnaire were used along with some additional ones, and respondents were asked to list their top five preferences out of 22 options. They were also asked to suggest any other activities which weren't on the list.



A number of respondents also commented that better use should be made of the facilities and events that are already in place in the village. It may therefore be worthwhile ensuring that these activities are well publicised and that any new visitors are made to feel welcome through 'mentoring' by an existing member.

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were also asked to list the top three issues that should be a priority for the village over the next 5 years. A number of comments related to the community, including

more suggestions for village events, altering the demographic of the village to include young families and the introduction of a police liaison officer. Other comments related to community spirit in general with several people suggesting that the village hall could be made to feel more inclusive.

1.2 Village Communication

In the second question, respondents were asked about village communications and whether people would like to see any improvements. By far the most popular method of communication in the village is through the quarterly newsletter (48 respondents) and 35 respondents use the Homewatch e-mail newsletter. 22 respondents use local notice boards and the same number visit the recently launched website (www.lachdennis.com).

In terms of improvements, the most popular ideas in order of priority were to create a village information pack for new residents/visitors, more frequent updating of the notice boards and the existing newsletter to be produced monthly rather than quarterly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Publicise existing village communications through the village through
2	Ascertain existing village hall and users views on possible changes/improvements
3	Introduce a mentoring scheme to welcome new members
4	Explore potential for the following new activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmers market/shop• Antique fairs• Coffee and cake morning• Volunteers to help the elderly• Large Christmas tree with lights• Village walks• Village picnic/fun day• Film club• Village green/Meadow for village use
5	Create a village welcome pack for new residents
6	Ensure that notice boards are kept up-to-date
7	Investigate the potential to change the newsletter to monthly rather than quarterly

All pretty good as they are for a little village – well done to those who put the effort in

2 Environment

This section of the report covers the physical environment of the village such as traffic and footpaths. It also covers some of the less savoury elements of the environment such as drainage and sewers!

In the first questionnaire, most residents rated the village highly for its rural location and attractiveness. Most people also felt that safety in the village was excellent and most were aware of the local Homewatch scheme. Litter, dog fouling and the state of hedges and trees were not raised as particular problems. However, many people felt that the village was poor or very poor in terms of peacefulness, public footpaths, traffic, roads, pavements and verges.

2.1 Flooding

Whilst the majority of residents' properties have not suffered any flooding over the last 10 years, a number of people have encountered either run-off from fields (21%) or sewers overflowing (23%). The largest issue that was highlighted was run-off from roads, with drains and ditches being unable to cope after periods of wet weather. 33% respondents said that their properties, including their gardens, had been affected by this. Some views were also expressed that flooding has increased since the gas storage contractors started work.

2.2 Improving the attractiveness of the village

Based on the answers to the first questionnaire, respondents were asked to list their top five priorities for local roads, lanes and footpaths in order to make the environment more attractive. The most popular priority was stopping or reducing vehicle damage to road verges and keeping roadside verges mown. Clearly marked and maintained footpaths and more accessible pavements were also popular choices. Despite dog fouling not being highlighted as an issue in the first questionnaire, a large number of people were also keen to introduce dog waste bins.

Better mowing of verges when bulbs have finished in order for them to bloom next year

Dog bin as a **PRIORITY** at end of Hangmans Lane site

2.3 Local maps and leaflets

There was overwhelming support in the survey both for a downloadable leaflet of walks and for maps of local footpaths and bridleways to be put on the village notice boards. This suggests that many people are keen to use the local footpaths in and around the village and that respondents enjoy exploring the attractive rural environment of the parish.

2.4 Traffic

As many people had expressed concern about traffic in the first questionnaire, the main questionnaire asked people to list their top five priorities for controlling the speed of traffic in the village. By far the most popular methods were the use of illuminated interactive speed indicators and reducing the existing village speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. People were also fairly supportive of new gateway signs to the village, 'built out' gateways to the village with coloured surfaces and reducing the speed limit on Pennys Lane to 40mph. However, speed humps and cushions and a local Speedwatch scheme with volunteers received far less support.



RECOMMENDATIONS

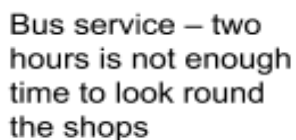
1	Request relevant organisations maintain drains and ditches on a regular basis to avoid water run-off from roads
2	Explore options to reduce vehicle damage to verges
3	Ensure that verges are mown regularly
4	Survey local footpaths and highlight any which are not clearly marked or maintained
5	Explore ways to make local pavements more accessible
6	Investigate the introduction of dog waste bins
7	Put maps of local footpaths and bridleways on the village notice boards
8	Produce a downloadable leaflet of local walks
9	Explore the potential for a number of illuminated interactive speed indicator signs, gateway signs and 'built out' gateways in the village
10	Explore the potential for reducing the village speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and 40mph limits on Pennys Lane

3 Facilities and Services

This section of the plan covers what types of improvements to local services, utilities and facilities respondents would like to see. In the first questionnaire, people rated local facilities and amenities as average to poor. Many expressed difficulties with access to shops, medical and other facilities outside of the village. However, it was also apparent that some residents were unaware of some services that already exist, such as the local bus service and the mobile library service.

3.1 Dial-a-Ride Service/Volunteer Driver Scheme

The questionnaire outlined the current twice-weekly Dial-a-Ride bus service from the village into Northwich. Only 2 respondents out of the 71 people who answered the question currently use the service. This is not surprising given that there is a high level of car ownership in the village. However, a further 15 people expressed an interest in using the service. This suggests that it could be publicised more widely in order to attract further passengers. One person suggested that 2 hours was not long enough to look around the shops in Northwich so there could be scope to alter the timetable to give passengers longer to shop.



Bus service – two hours is not enough time to look round the shops

A number of people were also prepared to take part in a volunteer driver scheme in the village. Although only 4 were prepared to drive on a weekly or monthly basis, 19 people said that they would volunteer occasionally.

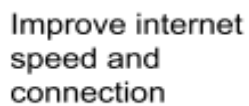
3.2 Mobile Library

It is disappointing that only 3 people who answered the questionnaire currently use the mobile library service. Again, there may be a case for publicising the service more widely across the village, especially as 12 respondents didn't know about it. 21 people said they weren't interested in the service and a number said that they preferred using libraries elsewhere such as the one in Northwich.

3.3 Utilities

Respondents were asked you to indicate their opinion of the services provided by utility companies in the village. Internet speed was the service that was identified as needing the most improvement, with 18 people saying that the service was very poor. Mobile phone reception and sewage were also issues that 12 people scored as very poor respectively. In addition, a number of respondents also felt that snow clearance/gritting (18 people) and street lighting (12 people) were poor.

In terms of those services which people felt were provided well, the postal service stood out as the best with 19 saying that the service was excellent. However, a small number commented that they would prefer an earlier delivery time. The majority of people were also generally satisfied with electricity, gas and refuse collection services.



Improve internet
speed and
connection

Since the questionnaire was published, it is pleasing to report that superfast broadband is being rolled out across Cheshire from the end of March 2014 to the end of 2015. Lach Dennis will be one of the first rural areas across Cheshire to be upgraded so significant improvements should be seen to the broadband service within the next 12-24 months. See <http://www.connectingcheshire.org.uk/> for more information about the new service and when it is likely to be delivered to individual households.

3.4 Other Services

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to list the top three issues that should be a priority for the village over the next 5 years. A number of comments related to the need for additional facilities in the village. In particular, there were several comments about the need for a village shop. One respondent commented:

“There is a need for a small shop or general store. There must be many people in the village who do not drive. I have to plan carefully/shop online etc. so I don’t run out of things... A small store cum post office would be a huge boon, if people would use it instead of the supermarkets for small everyday items. It would also provide an added focus for the village”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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1	Publicise the Dial-a-Ride service on the village notice boards and on the website
2	Investigate to see if existing Dial-a-Ride passengers would prefer a longer shopping time in Northwich
3	Investigate setting up a volunteer driver scheme in the village
4	Publicise the mobile library service on the village notice boards and on the website
5	Contact mobile phone companies to investigate whether reception could be improved locally
6	Contact United Utilities and Cheshire West and Chester Council to investigate whether sewage treatment could be improved locally
7	Look into the possibility of a 'Snow Angels' project in the village to protect vulnerable people in cold weather
8	Investigate the potential for a community shop in the village

4 Housing and Development

In recent years, the community has seen the local development of a large Morrisons distribution centre and three gas plants. There has also been a number of recent housing and other development proposals that could have an impact on the village, including several high profile residential planning applications.

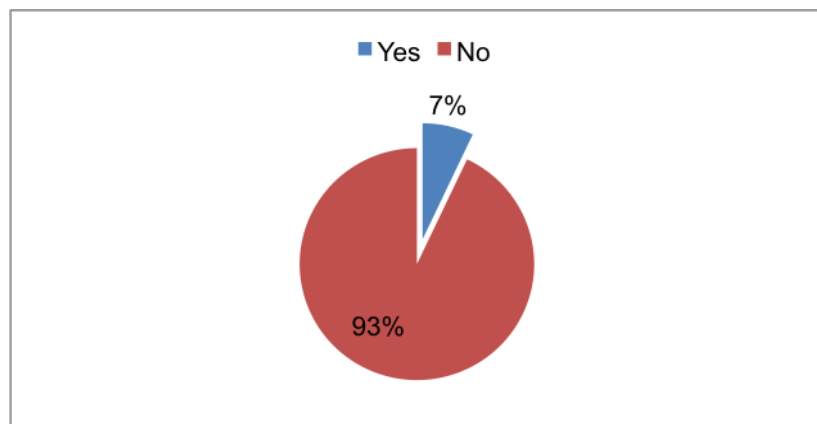
The parish plan cannot present a view on the potential merit or disadvantages of any specific future development plans. However, it can help to illustrate the views of residents on the future of the village and set out actions to help communicate these views to the Parish Council and other relevant authorities/organisations.

4.1 Affordable Housing

The need for affordable homes is an issue that is frequently raised across many villages in rural Cheshire. According to the 2011 Census, 82% of households in the village are owner occupied compared to the national average of 64%. In addition, there are far fewer social rented and private rented properties than the national average.

It is interesting to note that there is also a very large percentage of detached houses in Lach Dennis. 71% of all homes are detached, compared to the national average of only 22% (2011 Census). Typically, detached homes are more expensive than other types of property. In this context, the questionnaire asked if respondents knew of anyone who had moved out of the village because they could not afford to buy or rent in the area. Of the 71 people who responded to this question, 5 people knew of people who had left the village because they could not afford to live there.

Do you know anyone who has had to move out of the village because they could not afford to buy or rent a home in the area?



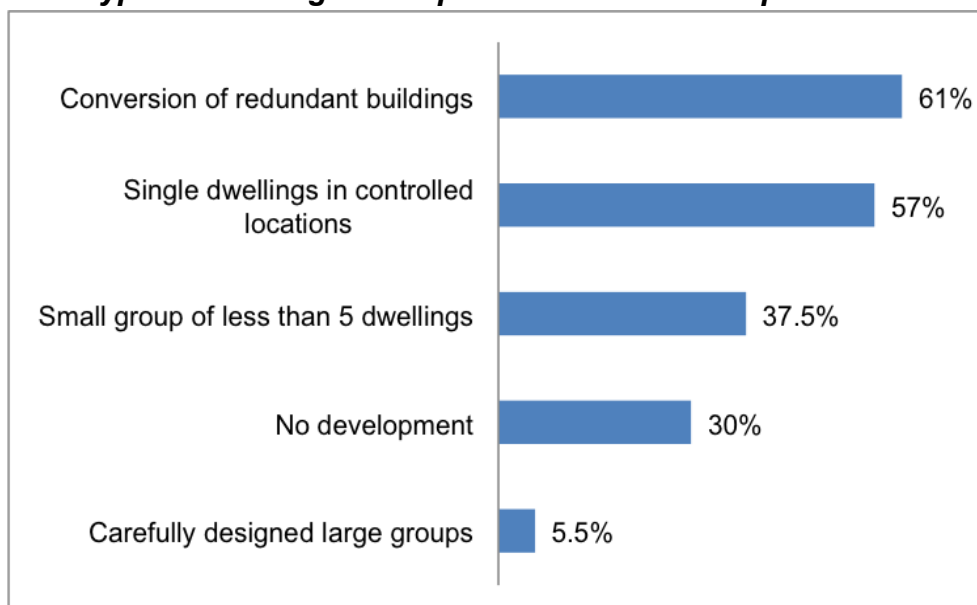
In order to plan effectively for the future, respondents were also asked if they, or anyone in their family, would be looking for alternative accommodation in the village in the next 5 years. 16% of respondents answered yes to this. The majority of these people would prefer low cost sale homes/owner occupied homes rather than rental properties.

It does appear, therefore, that there could be a case for a small affordable housing scheme within the village. A more detailed housing needs survey in due course may help to identify specific requirements.

4.2 New Housing Development

The majority of people did support some level of future housing development in the village. The table below shows that the most popular types of development would be the conversion of redundant buildings into new homes and single dwellings in controlled locations (known more commonly as ‘infill’ development). Very few people were in support of carefully designed larger groups (i.e. more than 5 units) and 21 people said that they wanted no development at all. It is clear therefore that small housing small controlled developments would be acceptable in the parish over large-scale housing developments.

What type of housing development would be acceptable in the village?



4.3 High Speed Rail

As the questionnaire was being developed, news was emerging about a new High Speed Rail Line (HS2), whose route is likely to pass through some parts of Lach Dennis. Whilst this new line and its potential impact on the village in future years are beyond the scope of this plan, residents will have views about it and these should be captured as proposals are developed.

The questionnaire asked if people were aware of the local campaign group - Mid Cheshire Action Against HS2 Action Group – which has been set up to express the views of the local community. 88% are aware of this group so clearly the campaign against the new line has had a far reaching impact across the village. It is important that residents are kept fully informed about the proposals as they move forward. It is recommended therefore that information is kept up to date both on the village notice boards and on the website.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Carry out a more detailed housing needs survey to identify specific future affordable housing requirements
2	Inform the local authority that the community would be in favour of small scale housing developments in the village over much larger scale housing proposals
3	Publicise latest developments on HS2 through village communication channels

5 Business

As well as the main questionnaire, which went to every household in the parish, a number of local businesses were also invited to respond to a separate business questionnaire. As may be expected, many of the issues raised in this survey matched those in the main one – with slow broadband speeds and speeding traffic being the key problems.

Altogether, 9 completed surveys were returned from local business people including an IT management consultant, a painter/decorator and several local farmers.

The questionnaire asked if there were any improvements to infrastructure that would improve their businesses and the two most popular answers were better broadband speeds and mobile phone coverage. According to the 2011 Census, 25 people in the village work from home so improving these services would undoubtedly help the local economy.

In terms of transport concerns, the majority of businesses felt that speeding traffic was an issue and the majority also felt that road maintenance could be improved. Surprisingly, nearly half of businesses who responded had been affected by crime or anti-social behaviour in the past year so there could be scope to seek advice from Cheshire Police.

There was a mixed response to producing a business directory and advertising on the parish website and in the village newsletter. It could be useful in future for a business ‘champion’ to step forward to represent the views of our local businesses. It would be helpful if a volunteer could be found to take this forward – information on how to get involved is set out in the ‘What Happens Next’ section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Seek advice from Cheshire Police on how to reduce crime rates and anti-social behaviour which is affecting businesses in the village
2	Find a business ‘champion’ to help represent the views of business in the village

Acknowledgements

The Parish Plan Steering Group wish to thank everyone who has been involved in the production of the plan and in particular the people of Lach Dennis who completed the questionnaires and attended any feedback and presentation sessions.

We would also like to acknowledge the help we have received from:

- Lach Dennis Parish Council in helping to initiate and continually support the parish plan and also for their financial contribution
- Sarah Baron and Claire Jones of Cheshire Community Action for their expertise and guidance throughout the process
- Cheshire West and Chester Council for their financial assistance through the Parish Plan Development Grant
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- Lach Dennis Village Hall Committee for their financial contribution towards the plan
- The Anonymous Donor
- Neuro Muscular Centre Design and Print
- Kay Morrall for analysis of the main questionnaire
- Everyone who supplied photographs for the document
- All the volunteers who made the production of this plan possible

Glossary

CW&C	Cheshire West and Chester Council
PPG	Parish Plan Group
PC	Parish Council
HS2	High Speed Rail Line project

Action Plan

Timescales: SHORT = 0-12 months MEDIUM = 1-3 years LONG = 3-5 years

COMMUNITY				
Number	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	W
1	Better publicity of existing activities and events	Publicise existing activities and events through village communication channels	Short	Vi Ev W N
2	Ascertain existing use of village hall and users views on possible changes/improvements	Carry out a survey of existing village hall users	Medium	Vi Pa
3	Introduce a mentoring scheme to welcome new members	Organisers of existing activities to arrange mentoring scheme for new members	Short	Vi Ev
4	Explore potential for the following new activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers market/shop • Antique fairs • Coffee and cake morning • Volunteers to help the elderly • Large Christmas tree with lights • Village walks • Village picnic/fun day • Film club • Village green/Meadow for village use 	Find volunteers to investigate the potential for these activities and help to set them up if feasible Parish Council to investigate a Christmas tree project	Short/Medium	Pa Vi Pa
5	Create a village welcome pack for new residents	Investigate what may be included in pack and how it can be resourced (e.g. sponsorship)	Medium	Pa
6	Ensure that notice boards are kept up-to-date	Elect a notice board co-ordinator to maintain up-to-date information	Short	Pa Pa
7	Investigate the potential to change the newsletter to monthly rather than quarterly	Investigate whether there is sufficient material and look into cost implications	Short	Pa N

ENVIRONMENT				
Number	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	W
1	Request relevant organisations maintain drains and ditches on a regular basis to avoid water run-off from roads	Write to CW&C and United Utilities outlining survey results and request more regular maintenance of drainage systems	Short	Pa Pa C C
2	Explore options to reduce vehicle damage to verges	Survey most affected parts of the village and look at ways to address such damage	Short	Pa
3	Ensure that verges are mown regularly	Parish Council to ensure that their grass cutting contract is adequate	Short	Pa
4	Survey local footpaths and highlight any which are not clearly marked or maintained	Write to CW&C Footpaths Officer with survey results and request upgrades where required	Medium	Pa Pa C C
5	Explore ways to make local pavements more accessible	Survey local pavements and investigate ways to make them more accessible	Long	Pa
6	Investigate the introduction of dog waste bins	Carry out a survey to look at the problem and identify the quantity and location of potential bins	Medium	Pa Pa
7	Put maps of local footpaths and bridleways on the village notice boards	Print out and laminate maps and put these in the 2 local notice boards	Short	Pa
8	Produce a downloadable leaflet of local walks	Set up a working group to take this forward	Medium	Pa
9	Explore the potential for a number of illuminated interactive speed indicator signs, gateway signs and 'built out' gateways in the village	Parish Council to contact CW&C Highways Department with survey results and community's preferred speed reduction measures Consider a community speed campaign/survey using local volunteers	Short	Pa C C Pa
10	Explore the potential for reducing the village speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and 40mph limits on Pennys Lane	Parish Council to contact CW&C Highways Department with survey results and community's preferred locations for speed reductions	Short	Pa C C

FACILITIES AND SERVICES				
Number	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	W
1	Publicise the Dial-a-Ride service on the village notice boards and on the website	Put information on the notice boards and on the website	Short	N C
2	Investigate to see if existing Dial-a-Ride passengers would prefer a longer shopping time in Northwich	Carry out a survey of existing Dial-a-Ride passengers to see if any improvements could be made to the service	Medium	Pa D
3	Investigate setting up a volunteer driver scheme in the village	Carry out a survey to identify need for the scheme and recruit potential volunteers	Medium	Pa
4	Publicise the mobile library service on the village notice boards and on the website	Put information on the notice boards and on the website	Short	N C
5	Contact mobile phone companies to investigate whether reception could be improved locally	Prepare an e-mail/letter in this respect setting out the views expressed in the plan	Short	Pa
6	Contact United Utilities and Cheshire West and Chester Council to investigate whether sewage treatment could be improved locally	Prepare an e-mail/letter in this respect setting out the views expressed in the plan	Short	Pa C C
7	Look into the possibility of a 'Snow Angels' project in the village to protect vulnerable people in cold weather	Contact CW&C about the local Snow Angels project	Medium	Pa
8	Investigate the potential for a community shop in the village	Carry out a survey to identify need for the scheme and recruit potential volunteers	Medium	Pa
HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT				
Number	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	W
1	Carry out a more detailed housing needs survey to identify specific future affordable housing requirements	Contact CW&C for advice on carrying out a housing needs survey	Medium/Long	Pa Pa
2	Inform the local authority that the community would be in favour of small scale housing developments in the village over much larger scale housing proposals	Use as evidence in planning applications	Short	Pa
3	Publicise latest developments on HS2 through village communication channels	Put information on the notice boards and on the website	Short/Medium	N C

BUSINESS				
Number	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	W
1	Seek advice from Cheshire Police on how to reduce crime rates and anti-social behaviour which is affecting businesses in the village	Contact Cheshire Police and ask a representative to speak at a public meeting	Short/Medium	Pa
2	Find a business 'champion' to help represent the views of business in the village	Advertise for a volunteer through communication channels	Short	Pa

What Happens Next?

The idea to produce this parish plan began in October 2011 and ended with its launch in Spring 2014. Over several years, we have sought the views of the community and have worked to bring them together into an aspirational yet realistic action plan.

However, this is certainly not the end of the process. We now need to turn the plan into actions, and implement the projects which have been identified as representing the needs and wishes of the community. We hope to continue working closely with the Parish Council and to harness the goodwill of volunteers who have offered to help with implementation.

The key task of the existing steering group is now complete – i.e. the production of this report. We now need to make way for an implementation team who will drive the projects identified forward. Some of the members of the original group may continue but we seek a number of new, enthusiastic members to help us into the next phase.

In the main questionnaire, we asked if you would be willing to work on a parish plan project. 22 of you responded to say yes so hopefully you can now start to get involved in the delivery part of the plan. We were also pleased that 9 of you offered to help to set up such projects. Many of you kindly left contact details so we will be in touch shortly to see where you may be willing to help out.

For those of you who didn't volunteer in the questionnaire, there is still time! If there are any projects that you would like to be involved in specifically or you would just like to volunteer in general, please visit our website or contact Penny on 01606 46219 or ppg@lachdennis.com.

Useful Emergency Telephone Numbers

Public Services

Homewatch	101
Police	101
Dial-A-Ride	01606 784100
Village Hall (booking)	07766 266180
Vicarage	
United Utilities	0845 7462200

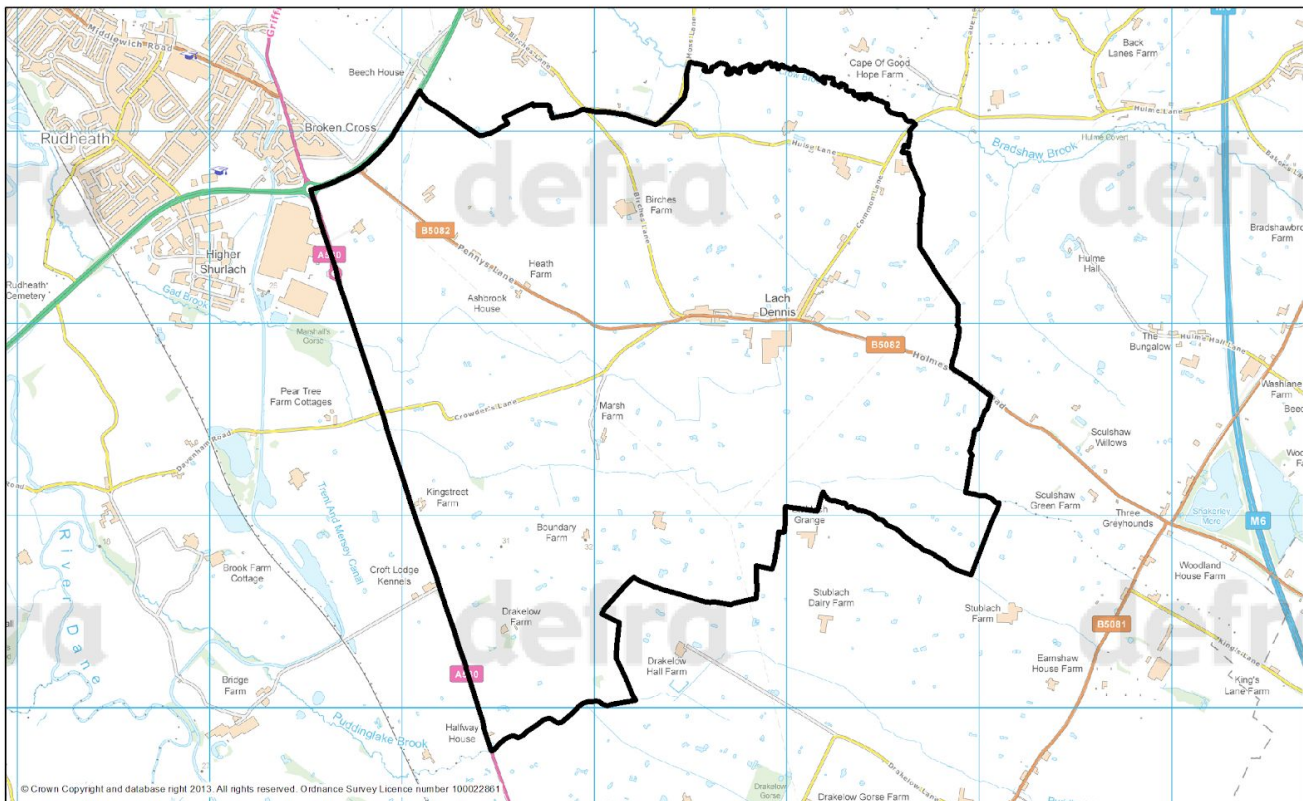
Personal Contacts:

Doctor
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Dentist
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Gas
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Electricity
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Garage
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Friends
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Neighbours
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Maps of the Parish



Lach Dennis Parish



Source: 2011 Census Output Area boundaries: Crown Copyright.
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