

## Community Project Group

### What information has been collected?

#### Our own observations

We identified the following existing facilities that are being, or have been used, to build community:

- Ruishton Village Hall – *Village Day, Flower show, Brownies, Guides, Carpet Bowls, Keep Fit, Wine making, Friendship Club, RATS, CARDS, Quizes, Bingo, Sunday meeting Alex Bowler*
- Ruishton School and Preschool - *Rainbows*
- Churches of St Georges, Ruishton and Holy Cross, Thornfalcon
- Ruishton Church meeting room – *In Stitches, Coffee Stop*
- Playspaces
  - Henlade Close
  - Recreation space next to Ruishton Village Hall – *village day, Diamond Jubilee Weekend, football*
- Post office and Shop at Henlade
- Ruishton Inn
- Nag's Head at Thornfalcon (with Play area)
- Hairdressers

Some of the above were hired out by people coming into the area, but also hosted events that actively build community locally. These things are shown in italics

Some of the above might have potential for further use:

Ruishton Inn (owned by Wadworths)- potential for a real hub for the area

Other facilities exist, which bring people into the area, but we felt do not actively build community

- Mount Somerset
- Woodlands Castle
- Premier Inn
- Toby Cavery

We also noted that the Scout Hut in Ruishton Lane exists and was built by Bernard Collins. It is without running water and Henlade Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meet in Creech Village Hall.

Some groups build community, but meet in people's homes including the book club, ladies coffee club. Others are networks on social media e.g. Ruishton Mummies and Daddys. Health walks also take place monthly.

We felt that the area covered by the plan was lacking in the following

- Sports facilities
- Café
- School of sufficient size, given growth predictions

- Lunch clubs
- Choir
- Book exchange
- Allotments
- We do not have a place for those needing care to go e.g. a residential or nursing home. So those who need this care have to leave the community to find it.

We also thought about care in the community:

- Care is provided in 24/25 Newlands Crescent and Somerset County Council's 'Newholme' with 7/8 residents
- social isolation is potentially an issue
- carers travelling in
- inter-generational care
- informal care by neighbours
- dementia sufferers and their carers

A key feature of healthy building community we felt was bridge-building between age groups

### **Village Hall**

The village hall is well used and we have a list of groups using the village hall. Many of these groups come from outside of the area and often there are only a very few from the area who attend. We estimate that only about 15% of usage is people from the catchment area of the Neighbourhood Plan.

There are some issues with the current location around car parking, and distance for those who have mobility issues through age or disability. The village hall is cut off when the floods rise from the river Tone e.g. last winter it was cut off once. So this is a rare occurrence, but has significant impact on hall use when it happens.

### **Village agent**

Initially we received a positive response about meeting Audrey Mansfield, but when we tried to fix a meeting it transpired she was no longer working as our village agent. We do not seem to have a direct replacement. See below for email text

'My role is changing somewhat and I am no longer doing Village Agent hours. I still work with the Community Council for Somerset but work with Adult Social Care in Taunton Deane & GP's in Broadway & Ilminster.

If someone needs the support of a Village Agent but not through the above avenues they can still come through me & an adjoining patches Village Agent can support them.

Sorry I can't attend your meeting, I am sure your going in the right direction, its a great step forward to be getting a plan in place considering the previous flooding in the area.

I am aware that steps are being taken within the plan to support the most vulnerable in the village & I think that would be my biggest concern so its great that that is being considered.

My colleague in Moorland has been part of the setting up of their plan in her capacity as a resident and I know she would be happy to be a point of contact if you want to check your not missing anything on a planning side of things.'

### **Village Day**

A consultation was part of village day in July 17, and we await the results of this. One comment was that parking at village hall not that high priority as people can walk there.

## **What have we learned from the survey?**

### **From years 7-11**

We learned that they appreciated the friendliness of the community. They also appreciated the park and our environment.

Requests were for:

- outdoor gym
- drinking water fountain
- shop

### **From Main Survey:**

People like

- Countryside (Ruishton & Thornfalcon)
- Closeness to Taunton and Junction 25
- Sense of community in the village
- Facilities in parish

The survey suggested many use the village hall, Post Office at Henlade, pubs and churches, but we do feel that the results may be misleadingly high as we are not able to separate occasional vs regular attendance.

Community groups were felt to be less important (just under half) than other issues and this reflect the fact that people who can, will travel to clubs. This reinforces the village hall observations that clubs are not necessarily driven by those in the community.

### **Extra facilities needed as follows:**

- Recreation for teenagers and older people.
- Village focal point (Ruishton Inn suggested by some). Possibly more central than village hall. A central hub which could involve Community café / shop (78% would like consideration) possibly the pub during the day.
- Recreation field parking
- Allotments – good for all ages including the school

- Cycle paths.

## **What further information do we need to be thinking about for the future?**

1. We need to be thinking about at café/shop and investigating models e.g. North Curry model for café, shop. – feasibility. Who would run it? What sort of shop are people thinking, of and potential viability need to be considered. Alongside this the consideration of the location of any shop. An analysis of village hall use during the day and the feasibility of pub being used during the day would help.
2. Village hall for functions not regular use. Most users are from outside the parish. Village hall is a victim of its own success especially re location and so community café from there difficult to do.
3. Occasional user vs regular use of both village hall and church need to be considered to clarify the survey results.
4. Community feedback from village day needed
5. What are the needs for people with disabilities and older people, carers and socially isolated (p14 of survey)? How do we get to that information?
6. Meeting opportunities in the village.  
Using the skills we have e.g. mentoring.

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