

BLANDFORD ST MARY PARISH PLAN



13 JUNE 2009

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HISTORY OF THE PARISH

Some historical dates of interest are shown at Annex A.

The earliest origins of settlements in Blandford St Mary are not clear however it is known the ford over the Stour, close to where the bridge now stands, was in use during Roman times.

A small settlement certainly existed during the Saxon period but it was not until the Norman invasion that Blanford Parva (Little Blandford) was recorded. A subsequent owner William Martel gifted part of the village to the Nunnery of St Mary in London.

It is not known when and where the church was established but it is known that in 1286 the local parson was named Richard de St Veste.

A serious fire in 1657 followed the Civil War in which most Blandford St Mary residents supported the Parliamentary cause, however, as a result, the rationalization of land led to the establishment of brick making in the village, which remained an economic mainstay for many years thereafter.

The fire, which almost completely destroyed Blandford in 1731, also damaged Blandford St Mary as a result of airborne sparks blown across the river. Doubtless local brick makers were kept busy during the re-building of Blandford.

The 1801 Census recorded a population of 292, sufficient numbers to justify establishment of a local school, St Mary's School built on the site where now stands Homebase.

The arrival in the district of the railway led to the opening of a terminus station in Blandford St Mary in 1860, later in 1863 the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway was extended through Blandford to Templecombe.

In 1882 the Hall and Woodhouse Brewery from Ansty took over the earlier Hectors Brewery. After a fire destroyed the old brewery in 1899, the new brewery was opened in 1900 on the current site. Hall & Woodhouse continue as a major employer and local benefactor to this day.

After the second World War, in 1951 the village population was still just under 300 and grew slowly to just under 1000 over the next forty years as a result of the building of the Chettell Way Estate in the 1980's. 1990 saw the opening of the Blandford by-pass, which split the village in two and has done little to enhance community spirit and cohesion.

In 2000 the Montain Bridge was opened providing the first dedicated pedestrian link into Blandford. The building of the Bryanston Hills estate to the South of the village and a number of other smaller developments led to growth in population to approximately 1600 by 2007.

In 2007 Hall and Woodhouse announced plans for a re-build of the brewery and establishment of a number of houses, flats and some commercial premises which could result in a 25% increase in population.

INTRODUCTION

During the Blandford St Mary Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 3rd October 2007 it was decided to solicit support, including a financial grant, from Dorset Community Action to assist with the production of a Parish Plan. **Item 17/2007**. Councillor Addison volunteered to manage the project and report to the council on a monthly basis.

Following a meeting with Simon Thompson of DCA, a bid for funding was submitted via Dorset County Council. A grant of £2775 was approved on 31st December 2007. An agreed time scale was established which envisaged completion of the project by May 2009 or shortly thereafter.

Subsequently valuable assistance and advice was provided not only by DCA staff but also by Jo Rose, DC11 Forum and Mark Brownbridge from NDDC to whom we offer our grateful thanks together with many others in countless organisations and groups who provided valuable information and support to Steering group members over many months.

Steering Group

A number of volunteers who had previously expressed support for the production of a Parish Plan assembled in the Blandford St Mary (BSM) Primary School Hall on Tues 26th February 2008. The following office holders were agreed by those attending: -

Mr J C Addison, MBE Chairman
Mr A Daffern, Secretary
Mrs L M Siwek, Treasurer

Additional members were: -

Mrs A Davies-Hutton
Mrs A-M Lyth
Mr J Dallison
Mr M Dallison
Mr G Barnett
Mrs D Rogers

During the process of producing the Plan a number of group members withdrew for a variety of reasons leaving a core-working group of four.

Residents who had experience in designing questionnaires joined the Group in order to draw up a suitable format for use in the collection of data.

At an early Group meeting the following principles were considered and agreed: -

1. Ensure Steering Group remains no more than 5-6 in number. Assistance or guidance from other parishioners or advisors to remain 'ex-officio'.
2. Keep meetings to a minimum on an 'as required' basis.
3. Keep paper to a minimum and maximise use of electronic means for communication and storage.
4. Maximise prior experience of those involved in plans for other similar villages.
5. Aim for a first draft plan no later than five months after completion of initial public consultation process.
6. Apply 'plain English' standards to all documents and plans
7. Working documents, drafts and notes to be in Word format; completed sections to be in Adobe pdf.

Subsequent discussions identified specific topics of interest to group members who undertook to oversee the collection of information and data within these areas and assist by plan drafting.

Aim and Objectives

The aims of the Parish Plan process were agreed by the Steering Group as: -

To identify Parish needs and establish viable targets

To develop interest in community projects

To complement local Strategic Plans at Town, District and County levels

To help other agencies, statutory and otherwise, to understand Parish needs and views

Generate Action Plans for the future

To give the Parish Council a new focus

The advantages of undertaking the plan process are numerous and include: -

Assists in building community spirit

Establishes new partnerships and contacts

Provides assistance if the Parish Council subsequently wishes to attain 'Quality Parish' status

Methodology

The methods used to develop the Plan were identified in various help documents including the DCA Toolkit and followed a common sense format.

Early research identified a Parish structure with a Parish Church but comparatively few businesses or commercial premises, no social support services such as surgeries; pharmacies etc and one C of E sponsored primary school. It was therefore decided to seek the views of the approx 1600 residents in 629 domestic premises and not to generate additional questionnaires for commercial premises.

Two initial public awareness sessions were held with a dual aim; to recruit parishioners willing to assist with support tasks, and to solicit views on plan contents, concerns and aspirations. The next step which took, at four months, longer than scheduled or expected was to develop, pilot, print and distribute a questionnaire designed to be delivered to every household but with sufficient inserts to allow each member of even large families to respond. Once completed questionnaires had been collected they were distributed among group members who carried out a collation process using prepared Excel files. This was once again a longer process than expected, taking three months.

Conclusions were then developed and presented to the public at a Public Forum. Group members then set about the process of drafting recommendations and Action Plans.

The Questionnaire

Two residents whose experience included the development and management of questionnaires assembled the Questionnaire. The document was based on a series of fundamental questions

posed by Group members based on their selected topics. It was decided at an early meeting that questionnaires would be totally anonymous.

The initial questionnaire was then issued to fifty selected addresses where the recipients were asked regarding their views of the effectiveness of the document as a means of obtaining data and soliciting views. Replies led to a subsequent modification of the forms. A great deal of discussion centered round how the questionnaires were to be distributed and collected. It was finally decided that envelopes would be hand delivered by volunteers to each of 629 domestic premises. The printing was carried out by the local secondary school at Blandford who also provided the envelopes. Each envelope included a household sheet which identified type of property and number of residents, together with a brief explanation of the parish Plan process together with a privacy statement and contact details for queries or requests for assistance. (Form A). Four copies of Form B for completion by each member of the family were also included. Envelopes and questionnaires were not numbered until after collection. Envelopes were then numbered to assist monitoring collation progress and for audit purposes.

Completed questionnaires were collected by the same volunteers responsible for delivery who made a minimum of two collection visits to each address and in some cases more. One visit was carried out during the day and one in the evening to allow for family members at work. Two drop off addresses were included in the envelopes for those who were not in during doorstep collection visits. The final total collected was 209 envelopes containing 338 completed questionnaires representing 33.2% of households and approximately 22.5% of residents.

Of the returns collated 158 (46%) were completed by males and 180 (54%) by females. Analysis of ages showed 14% were submitted by those eighteen or under, 54% by adults and 32% by those at or over retirement age.

SOCIAL FACTORS AND ASPIRATIONS

Life in Blandford St Mary

Residents were asked to express their views on the overall quality of life in the Village.

A very large majority of respondents (69%) feel part of the Blandford St Mary community. Over 2/3 feel this identity is important. It is likely that any future attempt to amalgamate BSM with Blandford Forum would be strongly resisted by a substantial majority unless significant advantages from such an amalgamation could be shown.

In written responses, overall many opinions given on Blandford St. Mary as a place to live were positive. Some examples are: -

“A quiet backwater of Blandford”

“A good area to live “

“Blandford St. Mary is very pleasant and convenient for Blandford”

“Lived here for 60 years and would not want to move”

“Moved here from London so feel very safe, quiet and with nice friendly people”

The Council Tax bill for a Band D property in Blandford St Mary (09/10) is £1498. The equivalent amount for a Blandford resident is £1615. As the question was not directly asked it is not clear whether respondents would prefer to retain parish status in order to qualify for the lower tax level.

Unlike residents in more rural settings most Blandford St Mary residents live within walking distance of Blandford town which houses almost all the services and infrastructure necessary to

support their community including medical and dental surgeries, pharmacies, solicitors and estate agents, specialist food shops, secondary school, library, pubs and restaurants.

The parish population therefore could be considered to be parasitic in the sense that they enjoy all the advantages of the town services without having to match the Blandford residents tax levels.

In 2005 a survey commissioned by NDDC and supported by Blandford Town Council asked Blandford St Mary residents if they would support amalgamation with Blandford. The advantages and disadvantages of such a move were not clearly identified and even now the details of how the 961 hectares of mainly agricultural land would be absorbed have not been clarified.

Demographics and Statistics

The Parish has an area of 2375 acres (961 Hectares) and is bounded to the North by the River Stour. The A 354 divides the village to the East cutting off Lower Blandford St Mary and the parish church from the bulk of the village. Most of the approximately 1600 residents live in the area between the Stour Meadows and the Blandford St Mary Primary School.

Some figures of relevance are shown below. Where figures have been obtained from independent sources or verified by other means these are followed by *. The remainder have been extrapolated from Questionnaire findings.

Population 1607*

Males: 46.7%

Females: 53.3%

Children under 18: 17%

Adults 45%

Retired: 38%

Life Expectancy *(NDDC)

Males: 79.4

Females: 83.5

Land Use*

Domestic Bldg including gardens 2.1%

Non Domestic Bldg 0.5%

Green space & agricultural 94%

Water 0.7%

Housing

Houses: 85% (532)

Bungalows:	8%	(49)
Flats:	7%	(48)

Property Values (2006)*

Detached Houses	£286K
Semi detached Houses	£254K
Terrace Houses	£172K

Health* (Self Assessed)

Good Health	72.7%
Fairly good Health	20.1%
Poor Health	7.2%

The Office for National Statistics forecast a 30% increase in the County population by 2021, which, if accurate, would result in a community of approximately two thousand one hundred residents by this date.

Housing

Blandford St Mary is made up of three types of housing. Social, Part Ownership, and Privately owned. The Housing Associations that operate in the area are Raglan, Signpost, Sovereign, and Western Challenge although the Signpost Housing Association (SHA) maintains local authority dwellings in Blandford St Mary. SHA have 158 local properties on their books representing 25% of the domestic properties in the community. Of these 48 are flats, 46 are bungalows and 64 houses, mainly two and three bedroom. The local council at Blandford is responsible for the lettings register and hold the nomination rights.

Housing types include the older part or Lower Blandford St Mary where there are no social developments, divided from the remainder of the community by the bypass. On the West side of the bypass there is a sheltered housing scheme called Bryanston Court. This contains 28 purpose built flats for the disabled elderly and over 50s. It is surrounded by bungalows that are also part of the social support scheme. Many people living on the West side of the bypass have purchased their homes, under the 'Right to Buy' scheme. This has left fewer homes for rent. In common with many similar communities there are not enough disabled adapted homes in the area, and yet with over 30% of the population over retirement there can only be an increase in the need for this type of accommodation.

The comparatively new development built between 2000 and 2005 is called Bryanston Hills, comprising some 200 + homes, built as, and on the same model as Prince Charles' homes at Poundbury in Dorchester. They were in fact designed by the same Architect. Each house is built to a separate design as opposed to rented housing, which are mostly of uniform design for practicality and speed of build. Bryanston Hills development starts just past the Village School, and reaches as far back as behind the Bryanston court complex. There is a mixture of homes in the older part. The buildings consist of some disabled homes that were built in 2007 as part of the

Bryanston Hills development, and are family size. Some or most of the bungalows were built for older people or those with disabilities in 2000.

The proposed Hall and Woodhouse development would add approximately 350 to the population. It will add to us being more like Blandford but without the shops. Many residents expressed concerns regarding the type of accommodation planned and feared overcrowding.



Housing Development

Housing development in the County over the next 12 – 15 years will be determined by planning decisions taken in accordance with the current 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Listing'. This shows potential for twelve houses within the village, mainly on 'brown field' sites in close proximity to existing houses. Of far greater strategic interest are the listings of 550 dwellings within or close to the parish, comprising 360 at the A350/354 junction (2/03/0460), 150 at Dorchester Hill (2/03/0540) and 40 at Lower Bryanston Farm (2/03/0541).

Factors that will determine the future of these proposals will be taken at national level and include the economic outlook, the expected increase in population in Dorset, and social needs. In order to strengthen the voice of the local community in these circumstances, decisions should be taken considering the needs of the district as a whole.

What is clear however is the fact that most of the Blandford St Mary support structure is based in Blandford and therefore if it is decided in the future to add substantially to the parish housing stock then the effect on the Blandford infrastructure must be considered most carefully before proceeding.

Older Generation

31.25% of questionnaire respondents were at or over retirement age, which, if reflected in the whole community would indicate almost 500 residents are senior citizens. The only dedicated complex for the elderly is Bryanston Court a mixture of Flats and Bungalows. Other than events held in the Bryanston Court lounge there are no other facilities in the village for the elderly.

More clubs for the elderly are needed such as Lunch clubs, Bridge, Keep fit, and discussion clubs where they can go just simply to talk about their memories of years gone by, there are many other potential activities such as Art and Sewing clubs.

A Community Hall would be of advantage to many of them and would give most a new purpose in life. Many older people are still very active well into their 80s. Many would welcome such clubs, to enable them not only to take part in but also to meet new people and get to make new friends who they can converse with about their lives, and History.

Disabilities

Most of the people with disabilities are the elderly who have problems with getting around and find things like gardening, shopping and replacing a light bulb quite difficult to cope with. Some younger disabled residents can manage with the help of their family to live a reasonable life. A mobility scooter service is available within the village supported by the Dorset Disabled Action Group. Assistance with decorating their homes was a request from some. There could be the need for some sort of DIY group to be formed. This would also help the community and make for a nicer friendly atmosphere. There is no doubt that a lot more things could be done for the elderly and disabled to help them lead a more active life in the community.

The Church

There is only one place of worship within the community and the C of E St. Mary Church is situated in Lower Blandford St. Mary. It has a long history with Richard de St.Veste, Parson, being recorded in 1286. Its flint and greensand chequering and 14th Century tower make it a fine building. It is a popular setting for weddings and people have been happy to take advantage of the new rules that allow non-residents to marry in the church.

The Benefice includes Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury Churches and Sunday services are conducted at these three locations. Important dates in the Christian calendar, such as Easter and Christmas, are celebrated at the various church premises and comprehensive listing of services and activities of clubs and groups affiliated to the three churches are published in the 'Three Villages News', available by subscription. There are close links with St Mary's Aided Primary School as it is a Church of England School. The school uses the church as a learning resource by visiting the church and researching its history and current use. The Rector visits Bryanston Court, a sheltered housing development, to offer communion to the residents. In the questionnaire 18 (5.3%) respondents recorded that they attended worship.

The Blandford St Mary Church has held some varied and interesting events. A 'Memory Day', with photographs and memorabilia of past times, an 'Apple Day', to celebrate the autumn harvest and Christmas tree displays which included school and community entrants. It has been the venue for excellent concerts.



The well attended Horticultural Craft Show and Fete, organised by its own committee, uses the church grounds every August to host this popular village event.

Written requests on the questionnaire were for the church service times to be displayed on the notice boards and printed in the local Newsletter the “Mary-go-Round”.

Youth and Education

A total of 14% of respondents were aged eighteen or below with 33 questionnaires (10%) from children aged 11 or below. It is probable that some were completed with help from parents. The number of completed questionnaires from children in secondary education at 14 tends to suggest that very few youngsters have much interest in local affairs.

St Mary’s Sponsored (C of E) Primary School in Birch Avenue and the associated pre-school group provide the only educational facility in the community. Although with a school roll of approximately 170, all primary age children in the village could be accommodated, some children are educated elsewhere and others attend from adjoining villages. The twice-daily influx of cars can, and does, provide the only area of regular congestion apart from the Bournemouth Road.



The School has a very good reputation and the latest Ofsted inspection, carried out in January 2008 reported a Good standard in almost all categories except for Syllabus and Personal development and Wellbeing which were graded Excellent. The School was largely re-built in 2008 reflecting the expansion following a change in 2005 from First School to Primary School.

Secondary education is provided by the Blandford School that caters for children ranged from 11 to 18. An approximate roll of 1400 children is supported from within Blandford and surrounding villages including Blandford St Mary. An Ofsted report in 2008 graded the School Good in all categories.

Higher Education needs not met by University attendance can be provided by a variety of trade and craft courses at Bournemouth and Poole, Weymouth, Yeovil and Kingston Maurward Colleges.

Adult Education needs are catered for through the Dorset County Council Education Department and a variety of courses including Arts Crafts and Media, Business and ICT, Health Fitness and Leisure, Language Science and Maths and Skills for Life. Questionnaire returns showed only five residents were taking Adult Education courses. Respondents below the age of eighteen were more concerned with social issues and lack of facilities rather than their education and job prospects.

Community Facilities

The Parish does not have a facility or Community Hall suitable for a wide range of social activities. Although the primary school has a newly re-built large hall with kitchen facilities the hourly rental of £20 mitigates use by smaller groups.

117 residents (55%) would support the provision of a Community Centre or Hall. 68% would support some form of cultural activity such as a Film Club. Many other uses were suggested including Lunch Club and Toddlers or Youth Club.

The numbers expressing a desire for a Village Fete (64%) is a good indication that some residents have an interest in enjoying community occasions such as a Fete. Blandford St. Mary is fortunate to have an established Horticultural Show and Fete, held every August in the Church environs.

It is perhaps surprising that a considerable number would see the Community centre used as a base for a village fete. More people want to play bridge than see a Youth Club established.

Suggested Uses for a Community Hall Include: -

- Dancing Club
- Keep Fit
- Choir
- Pensioners Club
- Bingo
- Parties
- Adult Education
- Mother & Baby Groups
- Art Club
- Social Events
- Venue for U3A (University of the third age)
- Leisure Activities
- Bowling
- Children Clubs
- Youth Groups
- Film Club
- Lunch Club

Bridge Club

Some of the suggestions duplicate existing facilities, available either through the Church or privately run. It is of interest that most of the suggestions would involve small groups.

The current Hall and Woodhouse proposal to build a new brewery on the existing site and, as part of the development, to construct small commercial units, flats and houses, and a Community Hall would give the community a small room of probably 30-50 capacity suitable for many of the small groups suggested.

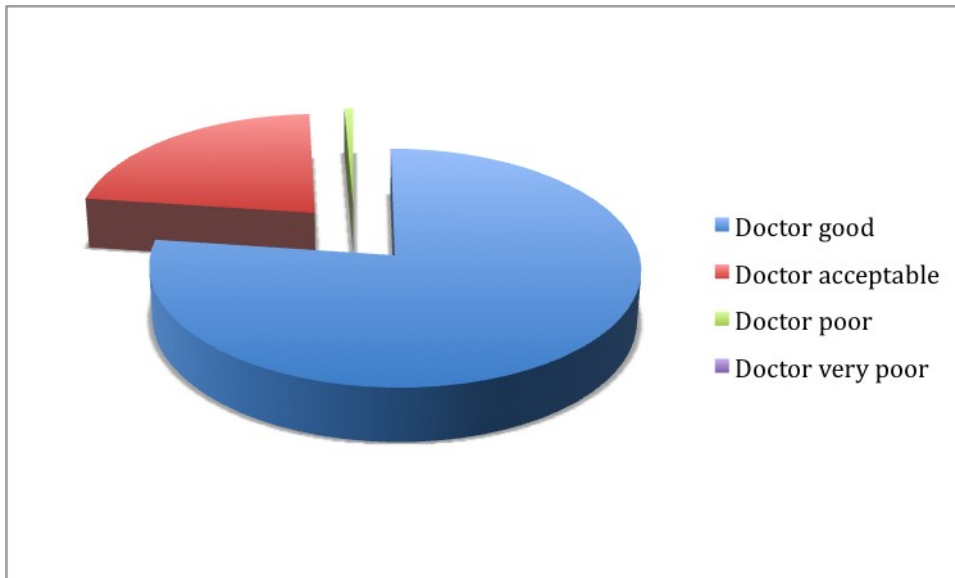
These proposals do not make provision for a Hall large enough for a Youth Club or private parties at which alcohol would be served. However the Visitors Centre at the Hall and Woodhouse brewery, the Sealy Suite at the Crown Hotel and the Corn Exchange in Blandford all are licensed, available for rent, and are suitable venues for large parties or gatherings.

Health and Medical Services

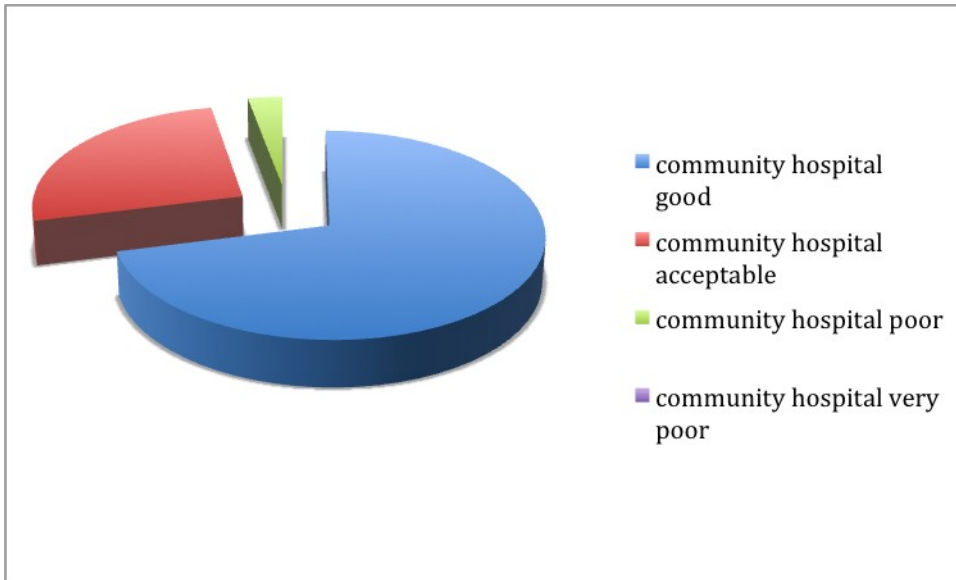
The community has no medical facilities within the village. Two medical surgeries and a community hospital sited in Blandford supply almost all the community medical needs. Large general hospitals with specialist support services and clinics are located in Dorchester, Bournemouth and Poole. The Foundation Trust Hospital at Salisbury also provides specialist support for some Dorset residents including those from Blandford St Mary.

In 2006/2007 the Dorset NHS Foundation Trust was assessed as 'Excellent' by independent auditors and was rated third among the forty Trusts within the South West Region. Seventy eight percent of patients questioned felt their overall care was excellent, good or very good, and similar high levels of satisfaction are reflected in our findings.

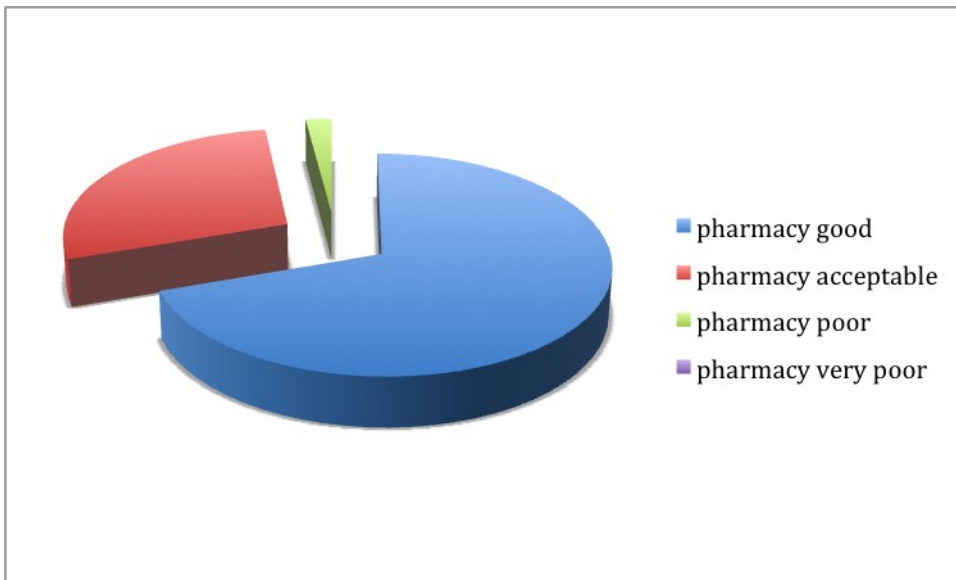
The questionnaire asked about levels of satisfaction and service for local surgeries, pharmacies, hospitals and dentists.



99.3% of respondents thought their surgery provided a good or acceptable service.

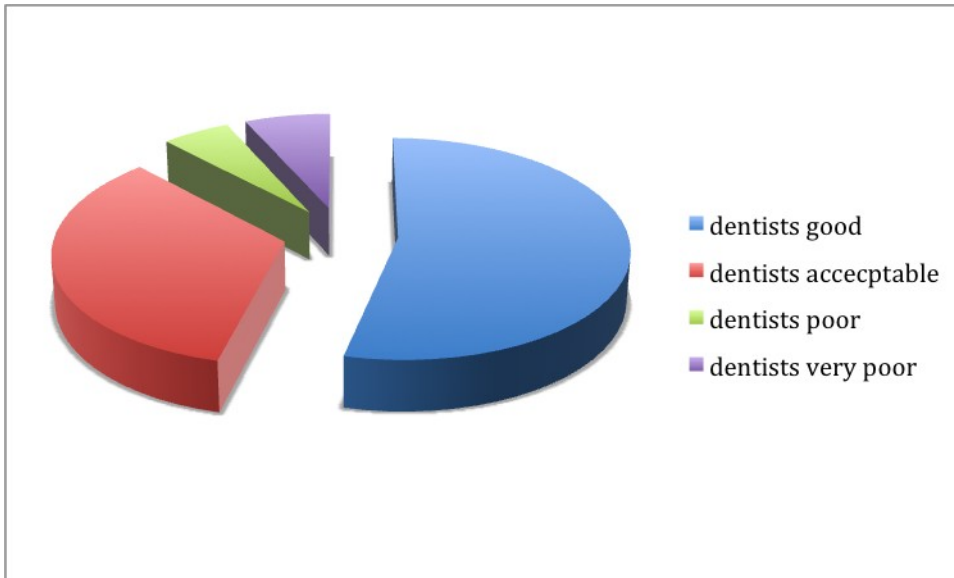


Satisfaction with the local Blandford Community Hospital is also at a very high level with 97.1% seeing the service as Good or Acceptable.



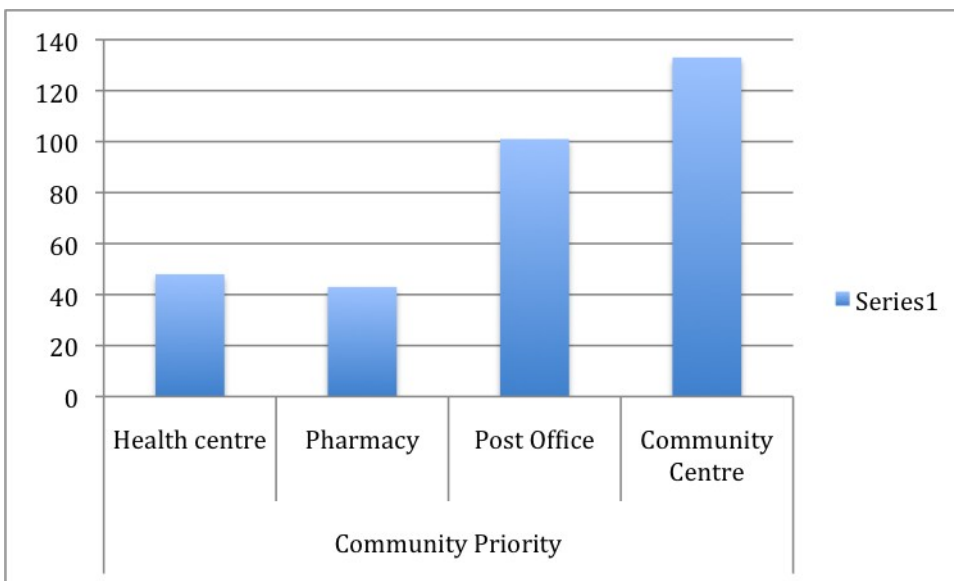
There are three Pharmacies within Blandford and yet again very high levels of satisfaction with 97.1% respondents feeling the service was good or acceptable.

However the situation with local dentists, again based in Blandford, was less satisfactory with 12.1% of respondents saying their dentist was poor or very poor.



In common with a reasonable number of the entire population some comments were made regarding the lack of dentists willing to treat NHS patients.

Local aspirations give a higher priority to a Post office than a Health Centre which would almost certainly not be justified with a population under 2000. Respondents were asked which facility amongst Health centre; Pharmacy, Post Office or Community Centre should be afforded highest priority.



Sport and Leisure

Blandford St Mary has limited sports and leisure facilities. There is no community hall, provision of which could provide a multitude of activities. Details of community options and activities are detailed in the previous sections of this questionnaire. Although many activities for use of the community hall were suggested not many residents were willing to volunteer help with these activities

The majority of sports activities in the area are provided in Blandford Forum. The main facility is the Blandford Leisure Centre. This has been previously funded by North Dorset District Council however this funding will cease at in March 2010 and the Centre will close if alternative funding is not found. If the centre is closed then, combined with the limited progress of a community centre,

sports and leisure activity for the community will be limited to Football, Rugby and Bowls Clubs in Blandford.

There is a skate park in Stour meadows; this provides a valuable amenity for young people of all age groups for the community of Blandford, Blandford St Mary, and outlying villages. It is however also a focal point for antisocial behaviour and littering.



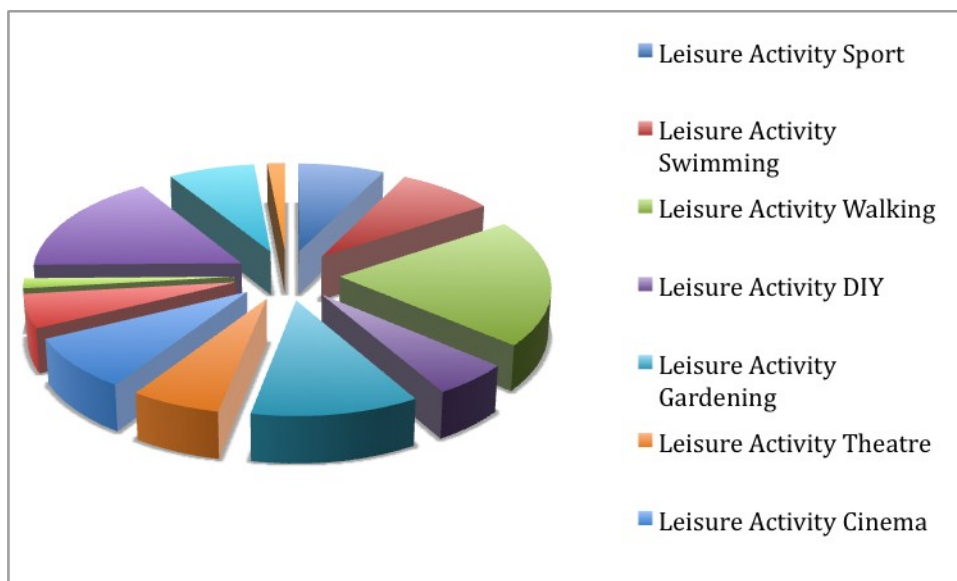
A play area is available which consist of an enclosed play park, a football pitch and a half court basketball area. This area has been funded by grants from the lottery and fundraising by a local Action Group and provides activities for many young residents. Other opportunities for play provision have been considered under Hall & Woodhouse Redevelopment.



The survey indicated that a large number of residents enjoyed the countryside (72%) with the one of the next highest being gardening (41%). The high number which enjoys the countryside may be an indication that they wish to stay in this area.

Leisure Activity

A surprisingly large number of respondents reported an active interest in a wide range of leisure activity. By far the largest number (243) listed walks and enjoyment of the countryside followed by 138 who listed gardening as an active pursuit. Sport and swimming with 88 and 99 respectively made up the numbers of those engaged in active exercise. The more sedentary activities included 194 who enjoy eating out or visit to the pub, 100 who listed cinema and 64 who like or visit museums. Of disappointment to the Parochial Council was the fact only 18 said they regularly attended a place of worship.



A sample of additional Comments from residents are listed below: -

“Village needs a Youth Club”

“BSM. Needs some allotment plots to meet the demands of its residents”

“More community Activities. Venue for U3A/ Social Events”

“Not much of a community as no Community Hall”

“It is a lively village to live in and access to Blandford is good. A Community Hall would be good to hold mother and baby groups, birthday parties, clubs for children etc”.

Law and Order

Although Blandford St Mary with 1600 residents is historically a village and currently enjoys parish status, its proximity to the much larger town of Blandford with only the river Stour separating the two communities has a significant bearing on anti social behaviour (ASB) in the area and, to a lesser extent, the incidence and perception of crime.

Dorset in general and North Dorset in particular enjoys a much lower incidence of crime than many other rural Counties.

Dorset County Division is also one of the largest in England and Wales, covering 1,000 square miles, in which over 400,000 people reside. The Division is made up of six local authority areas Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland. Each local authority area shares its boundaries with a policing district, led by a Section Inspector. Blandford St Mary is supported by the Rural South element from the Blandford Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Based on questionnaire responses 234 (98%) of respondents felt safe in their area by day and only 4 (2%) indicated they were fearful or very fearful. There was little variation at night 202 (83%) residents felt safe or very safe in their neighbourhood with 39 (17%) feeling fearful or very fearful.

This reasonably low perception of local crime is supported by the response to a question regarding direct experience of crime with only seven residents having been victims locally and 101 respondents who have never been crime victims. 87.5% of residents within the Portman Ward which included Blandford St Mary feel the local Police provide a Good or Excellent service (Balanced Scorecard Performance Monitoring)

By comparison ASB is seen by many as a serious nuisance; aggressive behaviour, swearing, graffiti and littering was perceived as being a blight within the parish. The Police however report very few calls under this heading. Shop lifting at the two large local stores, Tesco and Homebase represents a fair percentage of local incidents classified as crimes, few of those apprehended are resident in the parish. Criminal damage and ASB at the local Skatepark are also of concern although a significant numbers of users come from Blandford or further afield. Under-age drinking and drug use is of concern to the local Police although not often included as of concern by Blandford St Mary residents.

Blandford St Mary is represented on the local Blandford PACT (Partners and Communities Together) panel which coordinates Police and Local Authority responses to safety and security issues raised by residents. Community members vote on items of concern and the issue receiving most votes is then subject to determined and concerted action by Police and statutory organisations. At the time of Plan drafting the issue being addressed in the Blandford Rural South district was the dangerous road junction, Fairmile, New Road, Dorchester Hill. This matched the greatest concerns within questionnaires which were traffic problems, including speeding and unsuitable heavy vehicles.

Communications

All Analogue TV transmissions will be switched over to digital by 2012, the key effect of this is that to receive the new digital transmission Turning off the analogue transmission will mean that all current analogue TV sets will need to be converted to receive digital TV via a set-top-box (STB) or be replaced with an integrated digital TV set (IDTV) to decode digital signals. Videocassette recorders (VCRs) will also be affected.

Although not covered on the Parish survey there have been a number of residents complaining about poor TV reception on the analogue networks which it has been suggested is being caused by mobile phone transmitters

Residents are aware of the Blandford St Mary Parish Council meetings. The minutes of these meetings are printed and distributed by volunteers to all households in the Parish.

The council have a number of notice boards available for publications and it was identified in the survey (12%) that the notice board could display the minutes from these meetings. There were a number of comments from the survey that highlighted a weakness in communicating where these notice boards are located.



It was also suggested that the Parish Council should provide a welcome pack for newcomers to the Parish; this would detail essential information on contact addresses for services, facilities, hospitals and doctors surgeries, etc.

There is no post office in Blandford St Mary; the majority of residents depend on Blandford Forum to provide these services

There have been some concerns about delivery of postal services both from residents and the local businesses, where the stated delivery times are not being met.

The questionnaire asked the residents if a website should be made available. Of the respondents that answered, 38% indicated yes the village should have a website with 15% stating no or no comment. There were 44% who stated they had Internet access with 16% indicating no or no comment.

The finding that a large percentage of residents have internet access and that a Website was seen as a positive and necessary addition to village life coincided with an offer from a new resident, Mrs Christine Iredale to manage the introduction of an appropriate site which is now established and proving very popular and successful. The site can be found at: -

<http://blandfordstmary.wordpress.com/>

The website provides the following pages

- About Blandford St Mary
- Contact Us
- Diary Dates
- Junior Pages
- Parish Council matters (meetings, PACT, etc)
- Blandford St. Mary's Church

It is quite likely that as a greater number of residents find the Website informative and useful a greater sense of community may be engendered. The presence of a well-supported community forum will also provide good opportunities to highlight and publicise Adult and Further Education opportunities for residents.

There is interest in the Parish Council and requests were made for:

- More information on actions taken
- Questionnaires on important matters
- A Website for those with Internet access.
- A 'Welcome Pack' for new residents.

Suggestions for the Notice Boards included:

- Event Information
- Church times
- Pact Meetings information
- Neighbourhood Watch Updates

Some residents would like to receive much more information as regards the social, religious and political life of the Parish although a very small percentage responded to questions regarding Parish Council activity and supports the view that most are either apathetic or feel the Council have no relevance to their lives.

The following represents a selection of comments from the questionnaire

"Mail used to be delivered before 9.a.m. It is now late morning or p.m."

"More general info & Community News required".

Roads, Traffic & Transport

The A350 is the major A class road of the region connecting to the South with the port of Poole and to the North passing through the rural heartland of Dorset and Wiltshire to the M4 motorway. Prior to the construction of the Blandford bypass the Bournemouth Road in Blandford St Mary was the main road into Blandford Town. Local and through traffic caused considerable congestion in the narrow streets. With the bypass completed there was obviously a decrease in traffic volume through Blandford St. Mary.



Due to subsequent development, Blandford St. Mary now has a busy Tesco supermarket/fuel station and Homebase DIY store that attracts shoppers from the many villages that surround Blandford. In addition there are a number of offices in Stour Park adding to the number of vehicles visiting the area.

In the questionnaire residents were asked what their concerns were regarding the traffic volume, speeding traffic, probable danger spots, traffic control measures thought necessary and whether there was a need for a safe crossing anywhere on the roads of Blandford St. Mary.

Over half of respondents (57%) indicated they felt it necessary for pedestrian crossings to be provided on the Bournemouth Road. A vigorous local campaign in 2008 was successful and a pedestrian crossing will be installed in 2010, possibly preceded by a 'Lollipop lady' manned crossing. The siting of a crossing considered to be of the highest priority was at the Tesco roundabout followed by the Bryanston Gate roundabout.

Residents often complain about heavy vehicles using the Bournemouth Road, especially late at night. Some are transiting the town by taking a short cut rather than use the longer by-pass; others are delivering to supermarkets in the town or to industrial estates in the NW segment of Blandford. There are no size or weight restrictions on vehicles using the Bournemouth Road and given the nature of all roads into the town little prospect of excluding commercial vehicles from Blandford St Mary. As far as traffic danger spots are concerned it was felt that the entire length of the Bournemouth Road, especially where there are no pavements, constituted considerable danger. Speeding traffic was of great concern and traffic control measures suggested were, in order of priority: -

Lower speed limit	34%
Speed Monitors	28%
Calming measures	23%
Weight restrictions	23%
Signage	15%

High traffic volume in Birch Avenue at school times was mentioned. However, just 8 respondents (2.3%) indicated a crossing was needed there.

The Dorchester Hill junction with New Road and Fair Mile road elicited concerns which included speeding traffic, lack of pavement for pedestrians and, on occasions, uncut hedges that impeded both pedestrian and vehicular views of the road. This area falls on the boundary between Bryanston and Blandford St Mary There was a low response to the question 'Is there a need for a safe crossing anywhere?' with 14 (4.1%) of requests for a crossing there. This response may reflect the comparatively smaller population numbers living in this area, which does not diminish the requirement for safety improvements being considered necessary for those who do live there or who use the above mentioned roads.



In April 2009 a joint approach to the County Highways Department by the Parish Councils of Bryanston and Blandford St Mary was mounted, with the support of the County Councillor Hilary Cox in an effort to re-address the problem

In written responses, Lower Blandford St. Mary residents would like a safe crossing at the Dorchester Road/ Bournemouth Road, the A354 and A350 roundabout.

On housing estates it was considered that narrow roads with cars parked on both sides of the road could be a problem for emergency vehicles and in particular Upper School Lane and Lower School Lane on the new Bryanston Hills estate with several right angle corners could prove impassable for large emergency vehicles, such as a Fire Engine in the event of an incident in this area, particularly in the evenings or at night or weekends

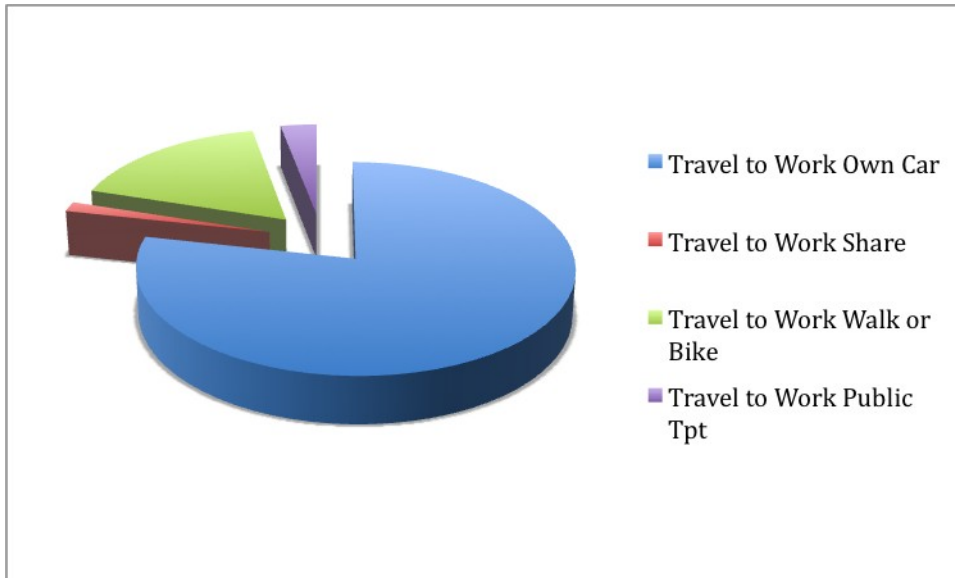
Bus services for the community are supplied by the Wilts and Dorset Bus Company, scheduled services by Damory Coaches and NORDCAT (North Dorset Community Accessible Transport). These provide regular services and permit residents to reach local towns, Poole, Dorchester,

Weymouth etc. Some young people who wish to be able to return from towns late at night or early morning make complaints about the services finishing too early! Many elderly Blandford St Mary residents need short distance localised transport for journeys'. The local taxi firms provide a comprehensive service, a taxi from St Mary's Primary School to one of the town surgeries costs approximately £3.50, a reasonable price for the occasional journey but not cost effective for multiple journeys for a pensioner or the unemployed.

The questionnaire asked how the employed travel to work. The responses were: -

Use own car:	78%
Share car:	1.5%
Walk or Bicycle:	17%
Public Transport:	3%

This represents quite a high proportion of 'environmentally friendly' residents and doubtless reflects the opportunity for many to walk to work either in Blandford or Blandford St Mary. However direct observation shows many young, fit and healthy residents will, many times each week use their car to travel 8-900 yards, either to Tesco or the Hamm car park for business in town.



ECONOMIC FACTORS AND ASPIRATIONS

Employment

184 respondents representing 54% of those at working age are in full time employment. If this percentage remains valid within the entire parish then approximately 850 persons would be employed and contributing to the local and wider economy. 49 respondents are in part time employment out of the 144 in or seeking employment, which at 34% is a surprisingly high percentage. The figure of 7 unemployed (4.8%) is lower than the official figure for the NDDC area 7.8% and is probably inaccurate.

Tesco and Homebase which both lie within the Blandford St Mary boundary are major local employers with a high percentage of part time and job sharing employees. This possibly accounts for the high percentage of respondents in part time work.



Other employers with a significant number of employees are Hall and Woodhouse brewers, Telesoft Technologies and Solicitors Blanchard Bailey. It has not been possible to obtain an accurate count of the number of Blandford St Mary workers who are employed within the parish but the fact that 16% of respondents regularly go to work by bicycle or foot is very encouraging from an environmental perspective.

Production of the Parish Plan coincided with a substantial national economic down turn. If significant redundancies among local workers were announced at any of the employers mentioned above it would have proportionally a more serious effect than if from within a larger urban employment pool. Hall and Woodhouse have announced major plans for a rebuild of the brewery, and construction of a substantial number of commercial and domestic premises which, although providing some short term employment, would ultimately lead to some loss of local jobs with a smaller and technically advanced brewery.

There are a substantial number of local residents who work at a significant distance from their homes. Destinations include Poole, Bournemouth and Salisbury. It is expected, without real evidence that the majority within this category would be professional, skilled artisan workers or students. With no local rail link or bus and coach service scheduled to support commuters, there are almost certainly comparatively few long distance daily commuters.

Clearly there will also be a number of residents who work in Blandford, some at the Industrial estates to the North of the town and some in Blandford town centre probably in retail or service positions.

The Future

Blandford as a whole has the second highest unemployment percentage in the County. The current economic downturn is likely to raise unemployment in the parish. It is essential that any strategic plan affecting the community gives priority to developments with long-term employment possibilities rather than housing.

In view of the comparatively high levels of unemployment consideration should be given to strategic developments which are likely to provide local employment within the Parish enabling workers to walk to work with environmental and social benefits.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND ASPIRATIONS

Village Open Space and Environment

Blandford St. Mary residents value the proximity of the nearby open countryside and the green environment in the immediate vicinity. In the questionnaire, 243 (72%) gave enjoyment of the countryside as their favourite leisure activity.

The conservation area known as Stour Meadows, giving open space for recreational use, and pathways providing a walking route into Blandford town, was given as the most used green space. Local footpaths and the riverside were also popular. The maintenance of footpaths was considered satisfactorily by 170 (50%) of people with exactly the same number stating that Stour Meadows was also satisfactorily kept.



A scheme is currently being considered and a bid for funding under the Liveability scheme submitted to improve access to the water meadow by providing a walkway suitable for prams and mobility chairs around the entire area. This path whilst enlarging access would not have any affect on the meadow as a natural 'overflow flood plain'.

Neither Stour Meadows nor Skate Park were judged as 'well' maintained. Comments were received regarding litter, cans and sometimes broken glass being left in the proximity of the Skatepark.

The Skatepark itself attracted lots of favourable comments " Skatepark is great, used by a range of ages." Bring back Skate Fest." "Skatepark is a good facility for young people" Some ideas suggested for this area were " Perhaps a mountain bike course could be put on the flood defences". "A graffiti wall could be provided" and "Girls should be asked what they want" An adverse comment was that the lighting at the Skatepark was not good in the winter.

The grassed area by the Stour Inn was again considered satisfactorily maintained by 147(43%) of respondents. It was suggested that this green would benefit from attention "it could be a really attractive centre of Blandford St. Mary with weeding and improved planting". Few residents appreciate that Bryanston School, rather than the local council, own this ground.



A good variety of play equipment at the Play Park within a fenced off area provides an excellent safe environment for young children. Adjoining is a recreation green referred to by some as the "village green". Its maintenance is judged to be satisfactory by 104 (30%) of people.

In the newer development of Bryanston Hills, there are no dedicated play areas for children. The Badger Sett green, with established trees and more recent plantings was suggested as being ideally suited for a “Saturday Wildlife Club for children. With adult input, perhaps the Dorset Wildlife Trust, an interest in nature within the local environment could be encouraged, with the provision of bat boxes and hedgehog homes”.

The Trailway, a 3 meter wide multi-use trail, suitable for walkers, the disabled and cyclists, also provides a safe off-road route ideal for families. This local section was extended in 2008 from Charlton Marshall to Blandford. Following the track of the former Dorset and Somerset railway line for most of its length, with wonderful views across the fields looking towards Lower Blandford St. Mary, the trailway at present ends at Wards Drove, an ancient track which was formally part of the medieval St. Mary’s Drove.



The general upkeep and condition of the green spaces, roads and buildings within Blandford St Mary were seen as very important or important to 314(92.8%) of people.

Environmental improvements specified and given a very high or high priority were;

Removal of graffiti	42%
Better planted green spaces	33%
Better maintained public spaces	28%

A substantial majority sees the removal of graffiti as a first priority -- this would require local authority action.

Positive offers of help to maintain the village environment included: -

Assistance with an organised litter-pick and maintaining public spaces, being part of a team to keep Blandford St. Mary tidy, especially Dorchester Hill, up to and beyond the gate. Areas identified as being regularly spoiled by louts dropping litter are Birch Avenue from St Mary’s School to Bournemouth Road, Stour Park Road from the Bournemouth Road to the Stour Meadows entrance and the A350 from the A354 junction to Church Lane in Lower Blandford St Mary.

In written comments other concerns in need of attention were highlighted:

“Weeds growing in gutters and pavements, grass cuttings not picked up, trees needing pruning as street lights are covered”. Litter is seen as problem by 144 (42%) people and 72 (21%) said graffiti was also a problem. Dog fouling was mentioned as being an unnecessary blight with more action required from the NDDC Dog Warden.

A request was made for a dog bin in Lower Blandford St. Mary.

A suggestion of plantings being placed on roundabouts, perhaps sponsored by “Homebase” was made and, as previously mentioned, plantings on the Stour Inn green is thought to be a good idea to improve the environment.

Another idea put forward was for a community garden. Requests for allotments were made from five people. Gardening was given as a favourite activity by 138 (41%) of respondents and gardening help requested by 12 people. A “garden swop” was suggested, people with no garden space tending and growing vegetables in the gardens of elderly or disabled folks with produce shared or sold at low cost. It may be that this idea could be explored further, once having identified interested parties.

The portacabin in Birch Avenue received adverse comments;

“More action required to remove unsightly portacabin”

“It (the portacabin) looks awful, not a great view when entering the development”

“Hut” next to school absolute eyesore”

“The portacabin and fencing is in a dreadful condition”



This temporary building is owned by Blandford St Mary Homes Ltd, developers of the Bryanston Hills estate and was made available, together with the ground on which it stands, as a community facility pending the building of a community hall. In the event the Hall could not be built at this location and an element of the 106 development funds carried forward to support the Hall and Woodhouse proposal.

The road condition of Dorchester Hill was described as being in a bad state of repair, being “very uneven and dangerous for elderly, the young and mums with pushchairs”.

At present this road is not lit and requests were made for lighting to be installed.

A suggestion regarding street lighting in the whole of Blandford St Mary was to turn off streetlights at 10.30p.m and on again at 5.30-6a.m. to save power and money.

It is encouraging to note that a positive response was received with regard to the possibility of taking part in an organised 'clean-up' or giving help to enhance the green space areas, perhaps with assistance from our keen gardeners. Eighteen respondents offered to assist in this type of activity. It is hoped that those expressing interest in such environmental issues would be willing to be involved and participate with some kind of 'Environmental Task Force'. It is acknowledged that many individuals already take action to combat litter in their immediate vicinity and contribute, by their own efforts, in keeping their local area pleasant and well maintained thus benefiting the overall appearance of the village.

Waste and Recycling

Dorset has a good recycling rate of 45%. New residents to the area receive waste and recycling information with the council tax mail-outs.

The waste collection in Blandford St. Mary is by a weekly bag collection. Items for recycling are collected fortnightly via the green box scheme.

In Blandford St. Mary there is a limited recycling site at the Tesco car park, which allows for the disposal of glass and plastic bottles, paper and cans. Other sites are in the Marsh and Ham and Somerfield car parks with a much larger facility at the Shaftesbury Lane household recycling centre.

The questionnaire asked what priority (in order of *very high, high, low, or not required*) should be attached to:

1. More recycling facilities
2. Collection of bottles and cardboard

As far as more recycling facilities are concerned 171 people replied, 71 (21%) of those gave 'more' facilities as the highest priority with the 'very high' priority rating receiving a lower figure of 49 (14.4%). Those considering more recycling facilities being required as a low priority were 48 (12%) and 8 (2.3%) felt that no further facilities were needed at all.

The collection of bottles and cardboard question elicited fewer replies -163- but with higher numbers considering collection being of 'very high' priority. A total of 91 (26.9%) ticked the 'very high' priority box with 51 (15%) the 'high' priority box. Those who felt that extra collections were of low priority or not required at all numbered 21 (6.2%)

A comment was made that none of the above considerations were justified in view of the proximity of Blandford and local siting of recycling bins. However, in view of the fact that a high majority who filled out the questionnaire were of pensionable age it may be that a 'very high' request for collection reflects this and the possibility that, for the elderly and especially for those without transport, the weight of bottles and cardboard is considerable and not easy to take to recycling points.

Extending and strengthening the re-cycling collection was considered to be a priority.

That priority is echoed by the published aims of the local authority as in future years there will be considerable financial implications for Dorset Councils regarding the amount of waste sent to landfill over a prescribed limit. It is hoped to achieve a 60% recycling and composting rate within in the next six years, waste being seen as a valuable resource and not a disposal problem.

CONCLUSIONS

Blandford St Mary as a community has no focal point and very little social cohesion or spirit. In practice the village is a dormitory area of Blandford simply divided from the larger element of the town by a river.

Almost all of the infrastructure and services needed and used by the residents are located in Blandford, as are leisure and sports facilities. The local church St Mary's has a number of good social events but attracts most support from parishioners to the South East in the small community of Lower Blandford St Mary and from adjacent villages of Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury.

The community has a large percentage of senior citizens and the disabled. There are no village based support services or clubs beyond shopping trips organised by Blandford based local charities.

Similarly there are few facilities for children and youngsters. The skate park, administered by Blandford Town Council is good quality and well supported. The Parish Council owns a children's play park and ball games area but there is no Youth Club or Scouting Group.

The community is lucky in having some wonderful countryside close at hand including the Stour meadows, flood plain and water meadow. Access is at present limited for the disabled or mums with pushchairs. The village will, at some stage be transited by the Dorset Trailway which is destined to become a major walking and cycling route throughout the County.

There are no allotments in the village but allotments are needed and would be well supported.

There is no Community Hall or meeting place suitable for a wide range of social groups or clubs. There are larger licensed facilities that are suitable for larger gatherings but would be too expensive for small groups or clubs.

The local primary School and Nursery Group provide an excellent pre and primary education, the majority of primary pupils come from outside the village. The School does not otherwise support the community.

Secondary education needs with a wide variety of courses are available in the County but necessitates travel away from the village. Adult education centres also provide many interesting courses. Five residents were taking cultural or 'hobby' courses at the time of the survey.

The majority of residents are environmentally aware and support 'green policies' including extended re-cycling initiatives. Support for countryside protection and enhancement is strong.

Residents are appreciative of a low incidence of crime but are very concerned with anti-social behaviour including noise, graffiti and littering. Traffic concerns with regard to excess speed, inconsiderate driving and dangerous crossings and junctions for pedestrians, are prevalent and are, for many residents, their most serious concern.

Job opportunities within the village are severely limited and more housing without compensating job creation schemes would represent a retrograde step.

Blandford St Mary is somewhat of a dichotomy being a comparatively large village community approaching a population of 2000 with little community spirit, few social facilities or opportunities and an uncertain future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been formulated by members of the Steering Group based on statistical information contained in the Parish Questionnaire, information from other sources and organisations and direct comments from parishioners at the three public consultation seminars offered throughout the entire process.

A Research Group of 2 to 3 persons should be established to identify the advantages and disadvantages of an approach to NDDC and DCC with a view to review the current Parish boundaries and consider the implications of amalgamation with Blandford Town. This group, which would remain independent of the Parish Council, should establish social, environmental and financial factors associated with a larger local authority. Findings should be submitted to the Parish Council and, if necessary, a local referendum held to solicit views from the entire population of the parish.

A contingency plan should be prepared by The Parish Council to include detailed costing in the event that the proposed development of the Hall and Woodhouse site is cancelled or postponed beyond 2011. The plan should identify possible sites for the purchase, design, planning, build, maintenance and legal costs of a Community Hall specified to meet the needs identified in the Parish Plan 2009.

A Senior Citizens Task Force should be established to support Action Plans for the elderly or disabled. This should aim to provide direct 'hands on' support for activities without duplicating support provided by other charitable or philanthropic organizations. POPP should be asked to act as advisor. CRB clearance would be required for those involved. The Task Force should work closely with the Parish Council but would not be inhibited from seeking support and funding from external sources. Services might include shopping, dog walking, gardening and the establishment of self-help or hobby groups. Whenever possible young persons should be encourage to provide active support.

The Parish Council should work to provide allotments within the Parish for the benefit and use of Blandford St Mary residents. Funding should be sought from as many sources as possible, including Liveability, A detailed plan including land purchase, legal costs, rents and maintenance should be drawn up and submitted to the public for comment prior to proceeding.

The Parish Council should work to make the core residential area of the parish between Birch Avenue, Dorchester Hill and including Bournemouth Road a 20 mph zone. This will assist in meeting the aspirations of a large majority of residents who feel that speeding traffic and inconsiderate driving represents their most serious long-term concern. If successful this would not only help enforcement where necessary but also would contribute to a reduction in pollution and make Blandford St Mary probably the first "All 20" village in the County.

A 'Young Rangers Group' should be established to assist with community service within the parish. Any adult coordinators would need CRB clearance. The Parish Council should be asked to provide financial support, as should other youth support organisations within the County. Tasks would include anti graffiti and anti littering patrols, nature watch in conjunction with the Dorset Rangers and Dorset Wildlife Trust. Support may also be offered for the Dorset Trailway section within the village.

A Community Exchange Scheme should be developed based on the Village website to allow residents to offer unwanted serviceable items to other residents. The scheme should be supported by a transport system to allow the move of heavy or bulky items for the elderly or disabled.

An Environmental Action Group should be established to organise improvements to the small piece of untended land in Birch Avenue between the Rosefields and Southover junctions, and to investigate the possibility of making improvements to Stour Inn Green with support from Bryanston School who own the land in question.

An anti-littering team should be established to provide ongoing weekly support in order to supplement existing services. The parish Council should provide appropriate support including insurance and purchase of collection and protective materials where necessary.

The Parish Council should provide support and encouragement, not including funding, for the Stour Meadows Enhancement Scheme proposed by the DT11Forum and supported by Dorset Rangers.

The Parish Council should be petitioned and encouraged to work towards community improvements in the following areas: -

An extension of the current re-cycling programme to include collection of all re-cycled products including cardboard, glass and waxed cartons as soon as economic factors permit.

Removal of the unsightly Blandford St Mary Homes portacabin adjacent to St Mary's Primary School.

Provision of additional litter bins at the junction of Dorchester Hill and Beckett Close and two in Birch Avenue.

Reduction in the hours street lighting is on as a cost and energy saving measure and to achieve reduction in light pollution.

Road repairs on Dorchester Hill.

Safety improvements for pedestrians at the junctions of Dorchester Hill, Fairmile Road and New Road.

Installation of a safe pedestrian crossing at Bryanston Gate.

Installation of additional Notice boards for use by residents
The Parish Council should provide a Welcome Pack for new residents to include information regarding services, utilities, shops, transport and other local information of potential usefulness. The future of the Council newsletter 'Mary Go Round' should be reviewed in light of the availability of Council information on the website.

Following publication of the Parish Plan it should be adopted by the Parish Council. Recommendations agreed by the Council should be implemented and the process reviewed on an ongoing quarterly basis.

ACTION PLANS

BLANDFORD ST MARY PARISH PLAN

RECOMMENDATION/ PROJECT	ACTION	TIME SCALES	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
Research amalgamation with Blandford	Identify small group willing to carry out research. Must include a balance of those in favour and against	By end of September 09	None
Design a Referendum document	Research Group	End 09	Seek external funding £350
Conduct referendum	Identify independent Auditors and distribute to all domestic addresses	By 1 March 2010	Not yet known
Circulate results	Website, press and Mary-Go-Round	By 1 July 2010	Not yet known
Community Hall Contingency Plan	Identify councillors willing to undertake production of Plan	1 year from Sept 2009	Land registry, legal, design and land purchase costs to be identified and submitted to Parish Council for consideration.
	Quotes for build obtained	Up to 1 Jan 2011	Build, insurance and maintenance costs submitted to Parish Council for consideration.
	Solicit funding	Not yet known	Not yet known
Establish Senior Citizens Group	Social needs already identified from Questionnaire. Identify those willing to help and in what categories.	Six months from Group Leaders identified	Research sources for external grants including POPP.
	Identify volunteers in all categories and CRB action where required	As soon as can be recruited	£31 per check unless enhanced checks are required for any volunteer
	Implement scheme	Early 2010	Not yet known
Provision of Parish Allotments	Identify working group to support Parish Council working towards provision	End 2009	Not yet known
	Liaise with groups and organisations managing allotments	As soon as possible after start of project. Ongoing.	Nil
	Identify land and costs	Mid 2010	Not yet known
Become a 20 mph Community	Lobby NDDC, DCC and others to work towards the entire community to the North of the Ring road, including Bournemouth Road becomes subject to a 20 mph speed limit	Not yet known	Maximum publicity highlighting the fact that traffic problems are of major concern to the entire population who want to see slower speeds on all village roads.

Establish Youth rangers Group	Action Postponed pending further planning	Not yet known	Not yet known
Establish Environmental Action Group	Establish Group membership and lead	Autumn 2009	Not yet known
	Investigate funding sources and planning requirements		
	Determine precise costs for both Birch Ave and Stour Inn Green projects	2010	
Establish Parish Re-cycle and swap	Draw up Terms and Conditions including legal provisions and transport	End Aug 2009	Nil
	Publicise service	Aug - Oct 09	Within existing resources
	Initiate Service	01-Nov-09	Possible revenue from Website advertising
Parish Council Lobbying Activity	Council to provide continuous and ongoing support for: -		
	Extension of existing re-cycling services		
	Removal of BSM Portacabin	By end 2009	Costs by others
	Provision of extra litter bins		
	Reduction in street lighting hours and costs	By Spring 2010	Saving to NDDC
	Provision of a pedestrian crossing across Bournemouth Road at Bryanston Gate		Not Yet Known
	Road safety improvements at junctions New Road/Fairmile Road and Dorchester Hill		Not Yet Known
	Provide Welcome Pack	Nov 2009	PC Funding
Parish Plan Adoption and Audit	Parish Council to adopt Parish Plan	Sept 09	Nil
	Establish Priorities	By 1 Jan 2010	Nil
	Review progress each quarter		Nil

BLANDFORD ST MARY

JUNE 2009

PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP

J C ADDISON, MBE, Chairman

L M SIWEK, Treasurer

A DAVIES-HUTTON, Member Environmental Matters

J DALLISON, Member Transport and Communications

Chronological Brief History of Blandford St. Mary.

- 1086 Earliest mention of Blanford, derived from Blaen-y-ford or 'the place near the ford'. Village of Blanford Parva(Little Blandford).
- 1152 Lord of the Manor, William Martel, gave half the land to the nunnery of St. Mary, Clerkenwell, Islington, London. This gave rise to two manors, Blanford Marie (Manor House) and Blanford Martel (Chettel Down House).
- 1286 "Richard de St. Veste, parson of Blanford Marie" is recorded. A date of when the first church existed is unknown.
- 1657 Serious fire in Blandford St. Mary.
- 1701 Brickmaking established at Farm Close (site of Homebase and Tesco) and at King Croft and Corn Croft between the church and the river until 1814 and is thought to have played a significant role in rebuilding Blandford Forum and the village post 1731.
- 1731 The village suffered badly from the Blandford Forum fire as sparks crossed the river and ignited thatch.
- 1732 Old Rectory built.
- 1740 Rebuilding of properties at and adjacent to The Stour Inn (known as The New Inn c.1960; also recorded in 1842 & 1858 as such).
- 1770 Hector's Brewery set up by William Clapcott in addition to one in White Cliff Mill Street, Blandford Forum.
- 1790 The Manor House was used as "The School House" but for how long is unknown.
- 1801 First population census recorded 292 residents; the average population over the following 150 years was 349.
- 1846 St. Mary's School established on current Homebase site.
- 1856 Railway construction started cutting across the village on a line near the current Tesco site.
- 1860 The Dorset Central Railway was opened to traffic from Wimborne terminating at Blandford St. Mary before being extended in 1863 to Templecombe via Blandford Forum as the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway. Passenger and freight services ceased in March 1966 and February 1967 respectively.
- 1872 Brewery Cottages built.
- 1882 Hall and Woodhouse Brewery, founded by George Woodhouse at Ansty in 1777, takes over Hector's Brewery which was destroyed by fire in 1900 shortly after a new brewery was built.
- 1899 New Brewery constructed by Hall and Woodhouse.
- 1918 Lives lost in First World War: 22. Dwellings: 330.

- 1945 Lives lost in WW2: 2
- 1951 Population: 285.
- 1953 25 houses built on Pigeon Close. 1961 Population: 307.
- 1971 Population: 450.
- 1979 River Stour in flood. Banks and walls built
- 1981 Population: 450. Dwellings: 361.
- 1982 Chettell Way estate built.
- 1984 Brewery extension by Hall and Woodhouse.
- 1986 20 dwellings South of Beckett's Close. Play Area created;
- 1991 Population: 923. Blandford Bypass opened 1st January.
- 1992.- 1994 "Tesco" store and petrol station; 90 dwellings off Birch Ave.
- 1997 Preetz Bridge opened. St.Mary's School opened in Birch Avenue; extension added 2008
- 2000 Montain Bridge opened. Approx. 150 dwellings started on Dorchester Hill estate.
- 2001 Population: 1233; 512 dwellings; 4 houses in Old Ford Yd
- 2002 Skatepark at Stour Meadow.
- 2003 "Homebase" established.
- 2004 Twelve new houses built in "The Maltings ".
- 2005 BSM invited to join Blandford Forum; declined
- 2007 Hall and Woodhouse submit planning application for new brewery, residential and commercial development.