Rushbury Parish Plan Revision 2012

Rushbury Parish Council

September 2012

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Preface	5
Introduction	6
Results	
Infrastructure	8
Open Market Housing	9
Renewable Energy and Power Transmission	12
Broadband Services	14
Place Plans	16
Acknowledgements	21
Appendix	22

Executive Summary

A revision of the Parish Plan was required to bring it up to date and take account of changes to the local Shropshire plan and changes in national planning guidance. A survey was undertaken by delivering a questionnaire to all registered voters in the parish. The response rate was disappointingly low at around 50%.

What Rushbury Wants

Planning

- to remain as countryside
- infrastructure problems to be solved before or simultaneously with the building of new properties
- any new building to be on previously developed land not on greenfield sites
- no commercial scale wind turbines or biomass energy production plants in the parish
- no electricity transmission lines on pylons passing through the parish

Place Plans

Economy and Employment

- access to value for money fast and reliable broadband services to facilitate home working
- encouragement for small business
- promotion of tourism

Social and Community Infrastructure

- increased services to allow the frail elderly to live independently in their own homes
- support for Ring and Ride services
- support for voluntary services such as the Mayfair Centre

Natural Environment and Climate Change

- protection of AONB and recognition of its importance as a local and national amenity and as a valuable economic resource
- encouragement for agriculture and local food production

Transport and Highways

- more train services stopping at Church Stretton
- better integration of public transport services
- more frequent bus services
- better facilities at Church Stretton station
- better maintenance of local roads
- extension of speed limits to Wall Bank and Rushbury
- further safety measures on B4371 at Wall Bank and East Wall
- better facilities for pedestrians

Law Enforcement

- enforcement of speed limits in the parish
- reduction of litter by more frequent litter picking on the main roads and more care by refuse and recycling contractors
- prevention of noise and other nuisances caused by patrons of licensed premises and the Village Hall

Preface

This survey and report was undertaken to supplement the original Parish Plan and not to replace it. The original plan still applies except in areas covered by this later revision. This was report was received and adopted by Rushbury Parish Council at the meeting on 17 September 2012.

Introduction

Purpose of the Revision

Parts of the existing Parish Plan were out of out of date. Much of the original plan remained valid but there had been a turnover of people in the parish and the views of those that remained might have changed. The planning system had changed both nationally and locally. The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012¹. Shropshire Council adopted the Core Strategy Development Plan Document in February 2011². This current strategic plan for Shropshire up to 2026 defined the parish of Rushbury along with similar rural areas as 'countryside'. This meant that no new open market houses (those that may be bought and sold without restriction) would be built there. Shropshire Council recognised that some rural communities may wish to have some open market housing development and it would facilitate this by according them 'Hub' or 'Cluster' status. The first purpose of the revision was to determine if the local community (at the level of settlement, hamlet or village rather than the whole parish) wished to have some open market housing development within the next 15 years and if so how much and broadly where. If development were to take place then money (known as Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL) would be paid by the developer to be spent within the local community. The revision was an opportunity to obtain an initial indication as to how parishioners felt these funds should be spent were they to become available.

The second aim was to produce guidance for the Parish Council on the views of parishioners relating to planning issues concerning renewable energy generation and power transmission that had not been current when the plan was first produced. Plans for large scale commercial wind turbine and solar photovoltaic panel installations had caused considerable controversy elsewhere in the country as had plans a biomass energy facility within Shropshire. Plans for new overhead power transmission lines to connect wind turbines in Wales to the National Grid were likely to impinge on Shropshire.

The availability and quality of broadband internet services in rural areas was another issue that had arisen since the previous plan was developed. This was an opportunity to ascertain the extent of local use and associated problems.

The final aim related to Place Plans, the local plans that are reviewed and agreed annually by Shropshire Council and town and parish councils. These were introduced as part of the ongoing strategic planning process and are based on a market town and surrounding area, so our Place Plan relates to Church Stretton and surrounding parishes. It is essentially a wish list for which funding may or may not be available. It was obviously desirable that our Parish Plan should feed into our Place Plans so the revision provided an opportunity for parishioners to express their views.

¹(http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf)

²(http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/viewAttachments/AWIN-8VXHF7/\$file/shropshire-core-strategy-2011.pdf)

Method

The original plan had been developed by a working group of parishioners formed by the Parish Council. For this revision it was decided that this was not appropriate because the areas of interest were more closely defined and more technical relating to the planning process. A small subcommittee of three councillors was formed and parishioners were invited to join this group by a notice in the Parish Council Newsletter. No volunteers came forward. A progress report was made at each council meeting and documents were made available for comment by the whole council. A timetable was produced for the development work starting in autumn 2011, the annual Parish Meeting in April was used as the platform to launch the public survey which took place in late Spring 2012. Analysis and report writing were completed over the summer and the final report adopted in September 2012.

The subcommittee worked by holding a few meetings but most of the communication was by e-mail. The advice of Shropshire Council planning department was obtained during the development of aims, survey questions and background information. The technical nature of the matters on which the views of parishioners were sought made the development of clear concise questions difficult. They were also topics which did not easily capture the public imagination; planning matters only come alive when there is a proposal that is seen as a real and present threat. It was decided to try to overcome apathy by introducing the survey with articles in the Parish Council Newsletter over the winter, but these themselves were of necessity of a technical nature. It was considered very important to limit the number of questions being asked, four sides of A4 was adopted as a maximum size for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was accompanied by a sheet of instructions and 'Frequently Asked Questions' in an attempt to explain the issues involved. The final questionnaire and instruction sheet were approved by the whole council.

It was decided that the only reliable method to define the target population would be to use the official list of registered electors. This is available to the Clerk to the Council but is confidential and not available to members. The Clerk produced a list of properties with the number of electors registered at each address, but not their names. The properties were allocated to one of seven settlements within the parish, properties between settlements were allocated to the nearest settlement. The list was divided into ten and the Clerk and council members were each allocated a list of properties together with the appropriate number of questionnaires for delivery with envelopes for their return and instruction sheets. It was suggested that only one repeat visit was made to collect forms unavailable on the first occasion but the details of delivery and collection were left to each individual. The survey was completely anonymous and no identification was on the questionnaires. A spreadsheet was prepared to collate the results for analysis. The Parish Council has added some comments on the results and highlighted the main messages in the executive summary.

Results

The response rate was disappointing, many survey forms were not returned, some forms were returned blank and on many forms individual questions were not answered so that response rates vary for each question. It is felt that many who did not respond were genuine 'don't knows' rather than 'don't cares'. This probably reflects the hypothetical nature of many questions.

Infrastructure

Question

The current policy of the parish council is that no new development should be allowed in those areas of the parish that rely on mains sewers for foul drainage until current provision is upgraded so that all current properties are connected, problems of flooding have been solved and there is spare capacity in the system.

Do you agree with this policy? Yes / No

The majority of responders in all settlements were in agreement with this policy.

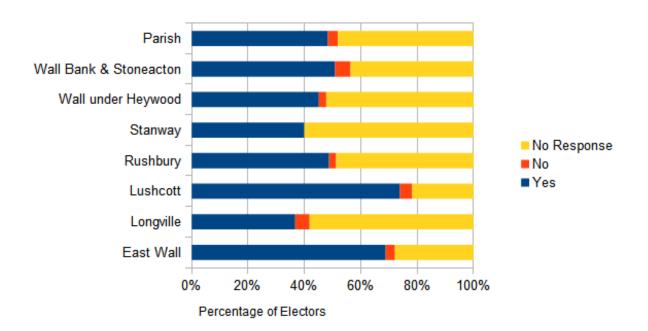


Figure 1: Infrastructure

It is not surprising that most parishioners agree with this statement. There is a longstanding problem in Longville and Severn Trent have a proposed scheme to deal with this for which planning permission is currently sought. There is also a problem in Wall and Rushbury with flooding of raw sewage onto fields following heavy rainfall. The Council considers that insufficient consideration has been given to capacity of the system before new properties have been allowed to connect.

Open Market Housing

Question

Do you wish to see new OPEN MARKET houses built within the settlement in which you live? Yes / No

Settlement	Electors	Yes	No	No Response
East Wall	61	16	29	16
Longville	117	26	22	69
Lushcott	23	6	8	9
Rushbury	80	10	29	41
Stanway	20		6	14
Wall under Heywood	155	33	44	78
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	55	15	9	32
Parish	511	106	147	259

Figure 2: Responses by Settlement and Parish

${\sf Question}$

What is the maximum number of houses that should be built in the following time periods?

2011-15	None	Up to 5	6 – 10	11 or more
East Wall	28	17	1	
Longville	22	17	4	3
Lushcott	8	4		
Rushbury	24	5		
Stanway	7	1		
Wall under Heywood	37	21	7	5
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	10	16	6	6
Parish	136	81	18	14

Figure 3: Number of Houses 2011 - 15 (Responders)

2016 - 20	None	Up to 5	6 – 10	11 or more
East Wall	19	23	2	
Longville	15	15	10	4
Lushcott	9	7		
Rushbury	26	11		
Stanway	6	2		
Wall under Heywood	29	24	10	4
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	12	14	4	4
Parish	116	96	26	12

Figure 4: Number of Houses 2016 - 20 (Respondents)

2021 - 25	None	Up to 5	6 – 10	11 or more
East Wall	21	22	2	
Longville	15	14	7	8
Lushcott	8	6	2	
Rushbury	26	12		
Stanway	6	2		
Wall under Heywood	28	25	9	5
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	7	20	3	1
Parish	111	101	23	14

Figure 5: New Houses 2021 - 25 (Responders)

Question

What sort of site should be used for development?
Should there be development of:
Greenfield (not previously developed) sites Yes / No
Brownfield (previously developed) sites Yes / No
Infill (between existing buildings) sites Yes / No

Settlement	Greenfield		Brownfield		Infill	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Wall	7	40	30	18	21	25
Longville	19	21	40	5	34	11
Lushcott	1	14	8	8	9	8
Rushbury	1	33	23	13	13	21
Stanway	1	7	6	2	4	4
Wall under Heywood	13	54	51	21	31	41
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	12	17	25	4	18	9
Parish	54	186	183	71	130	119

Figure 6: Preferred Type of Site (Respondents)

Question

Can you suggest any uses for money from the Community Infrastructure Levy should market development take place? Please specify.

Responses

Many of these were very individual but some can be grouped together. In approximate order of occurance suggestions were:

• provision of pavements and footpaths (Longville and between Wall and Rushbury) also cycle paths

- schools (a few specified Rushbury)
- roads specifically maintenance, traffic calming, extending speed restrictions, gritting and parking facilities in Rushbury
- improving public transport
- village shop(s)
- village hall
- community amenities (some specified not in Wall), community education, community sessions at village hall, childrens play facilities
- open spaces and allotments
- rental housing
- flood prevention and drainage
- utilities mains sewers, mains gas, recabling, high speed broadband
- renewable energy schemes, district heating schemes
- medical facilities, elderly care home
- one off suggestions included street lighting, public toilets, a village flag pole, equestrian event facilities and a trading estate.
- some suggested this was a bribe and should not be taken and another suggested a council tax refund.

Before the survey took place the Parish Council decided that a decision to change the status of any settlement in the parish from countryside should be on the positive response of over half of the electors. This was not achieved anywhere in the parish. This is not surprising given the vague nature of the proposal. Parishioners would find it much easier to come to a decision on a specific proposal to build on a named plot. There will always be uncertainty about agreeing to some unspecified development even if numbers are limited and guarantees are given. Governments, councils and policies change and being seen as a place for development may bring unwanted consequences.

It is clear that the quantity of development if any that is acceptable to most residents is limited, the modal value was up to five properties in any five year period in all settlements. It is also clear that development of previously undeveloped land is not acceptable to most, any development should be on previously developed sites. Responses were about equally divided on the use of infill sites.

Although it is unlikely that any Community Infrastructure Levy will be available in the next few years the answers to the question are of interest because they give an insight into aspirations of parishioners. Many of these are similar to answers given to questions about place plans and will be discussed there. Some relate to development that should be part of a development such as utilities, access roads and open spaces while others should be provided by Shropshire Council from their topslice of CIL for example enhanced education facilities. There is a separate requirement to provide or contribute to social housing with any open market development.

Renewable Energy and Power Transmission

Question

Which commercial (not a single installation at a property or farm) renewable energy developments should be allowed within the parish?

Wind Turbine farm Yes / No

Biomass energy generation Yes / No

Settlement	Wind		Solar		Biomass	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Wall	8	37	29	19	14	33
Longville	16	27	29	18	16	27
Lushcott	2	6	7	2	3	6
Rushbury	10	29	23	15	19	21
Stanway	2	6	2	6	5	3
Wall under Heywood	20	45	41	27	29	35
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	8	22	21	10	7	17
Parish	66	172	152	97	93	142

Figure 7: Commercial Energy Developments (Repondents)

Comment

Development of large scale renewable energy facilities in rural areas, for example Wales and Devon, have provoked considerable public opposition. We wished to test public attitudes in Rushbury. While solar panels seem to be acceptable, biomass generation and particularly wind turbines are less acceptable. This no doubt reflects the percieved nuisance from smell, noise and visual impact.

Question

Is it acceptable to have more overhead transmission lines (including those on pylons) passing through the parish? Yes / No

Settlement	Power Lines	
	Yes	No
East Wall	5	37
Longville	6	37
Lushcott	2	7
Rushbury	5	35
Stanway	2	6
Wall under Heywood	9	18
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	8	23
Parish	37	163

Figure 8: New Power Lines Acceptable (Respondents)

At the time of the survey plans were awaited for a new development of large scale power transmission lines on pylons that would almost certainly cross Shropshire connecting wind turbines in Wales to the national grid. Not surprisingly the majority of respondents did not want such a development in the parish.

Broadband Services

Question

Do you use broadband services:

in connection with business Yes / No

for personal use Yes / No

Settlement	Business		Personal	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Wall	28	16	46	2
Longville	39	10	43	6
Lushcott	6	2	13	0
Rushbury	13	25	36	5
Stanway	5	2	8	0
Wall under Heywood	18	50	58	15
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	17	14	30	3
Parish	126	119	234	31

Figure 9: Broadband Use (Respondents)

Question

Do you have any problems with access to broadband services? Are there any improvements (e.g. speed, quality, cost) that you would like? Please specify

Responses

In order of occurance

- speed (too slow)
- quality (loss of connectivity, unreliable in high winds)
- cost

Comment

Perhaps the most surprising results were the number of people using broadband for business and the number who do not use it for personal activities. Given the obvious importance it is not surprising that there were many complaints, mainly about speed but also the quality of the connection and fewer about cost. It is a fact that users in rural areas pay more for a worse service than those in urban areas being unable to take advantage of higher quality faster and cheaper services available in cabled areas and those where the local exchange has been unbundled. The 'Connecting Shropshire' project is in progress and we hope that this will result in a much improved service in the parish.

Place Plans

Economy and Employment

Question

Do you have any suggestions regarding the local economy and employment within the parish? Responses (In order of occurance)

- encourage small business, reduce business rates, reduce regulation
- encourage tourism
- open retail outlets
- encourage agriculture and horticulture
- develop schemes aimed at the young and women
- improve transport
- encourage home working, use village hall as business hub
- one each of develop renewable energy, light industry, mixed development around Longville and a trading estate
- some felt that decline of employment in rural areas was inevitable and others that development should take place in the 'wider area'.

Comment

Only a few answered this question and some that did felt that a continuing decline in employment within the parish was likely, development taking place within market towns and larger conurbations. More positively agriculture is still seen as important and perhaps as a consequence of climate change will become even more so by responding to the need to produce more food in the UK. Home working and the development of self employment is also seen as important for this rural area. Tourism is very important to the area and needs to be fostered by safeguarding the natural environment that attracts the tourists and providing high quality facilities for their enjoyment. Several respondents mentioned the development of retail facilities here and also as a use of CIL; most were no doubt thinking of a village shop. While this would be a great convenience it is doubtful that it would be economically viable. However there is perhaps scope for existing businesses to consider expanding by say selling every day provisions or newspapers to order.

Social and Community Infrastructure

Question

Should more be done locally to care and provide for the growing elderly population (such as provision of suitable accommodation and care services to maintain independent living)?

Responses (In order of occurance)

- much general support
- improved and or free public transport
- more support to remain at home, more nurses, better NHS facilities, general local community support, meals on wheels from local pubs
- provision of sheltered housing, local care home
- expand the Mayfair Centre
- a few felt that it was a family responsibility or that the countryside was unsuitable for the frail elderly

Rural South Shropshire is a popular retirement area and many of those who retire to the area will wish to stay when they become frail. There will be increased numbers of elderly and very elderly because of demographic trends. Rural areas present particular challenges for the elderly and for their care. Because of the dispersed population public transport is sparse or absent and the cost of care is higher than in urban areas due to the distances between clients for carers. Transport is a problem because of access for the elderly who be unable to walk for even short distances. The ring and ride service is invaluable and must be retained. The Mayfair Centre in Church Stretton is a valued resource that must also be maintained. Support should be increased for those who wish to remain living independently in their own homes. There is a lack of suitable accommodation for purchase or rent for the elderly many of whom would prefer to downsize to more easily maintained single storey properties rather than remain in large family homes. In the rural areas there is a lack of warden assisted or sheltered accommodation.

Natural Environment and Climate Change

Question

Our parish is enclosed within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; should more be done to protect and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

Out of 150 responses 75% agreed that more should be done to protect and enhance the AONB, of the remainder one half felt the existing protection was adequate while the other half felt there was too much protection.

Comment

There is clear support for the AONB and an appreciation of its importance both locally and nationally for the amenity that it provides. It is also important economically as it it is one of the main factors that encourages and supports tourism. We are pleased that AONBs are given special protection in the National Planning Policy Framework but must continue to ensure that decisions on land use have due regard to the need to protect this resource.

Question

We are being asked to reduce carbon emissions, while fuel price rises are affecting homes, businesses and travel in rural areas more than most. What would help with this?

Responses (In order of occurance)

- improved public transport and car sharing
- more encouragement of renewable energy sources including community schemes and ground heat pumps
- reducing taxes on fuel or fuel prices for rural residents including group fuel purchase schemes
- working from home, living nearer to work, more local employment
- provision of cycle paths, tramways on old railways, recharge points for electric cars, road speed reduction

- use of delivery services
- home improvement, provision of mains gas and family size reduction

While sympathetic to the desire to reduce fuel costs for rural residents by subsidies or tax reduction, this would be a matter for national government who would have to balance the need to reduce carbon emissions and consider the equity of urban dwellers supporting those living in rural areas, often by choice. Better public transport services may be used by a few but lacks sufficient flexibility for most and a similar problem affects car sharing schemes. Inevitably the private car will remain the preferred mode of transport for most residents as the only viable option. Working from home and encouraging workers to live near their place of employment, if necessary by building more houses in these areas are more realistic strategies. The use of delivery services combined with online shopping is saving of personal time as well as carbon emissions and is to be encouraged. Local shopping is also to be encouraged and perhaps some existing facilities should consider expanding the scope of their operations to provide more local everyday needs. Installation of small scale renewable energy schemes is also to be encouraged along with home improvement to increase energy efficiency. Stretton Climate Care are doing useful work in the area.

Transport and Highways

Question

Do you use any of these modes of public transport regularly? bus Yes / No train Yes / No ring and ride Yes / No

Settlement	Bus		Train		Ring & Ride	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Wall	6	38	11	35	2	43
Longville	5	43	17	31	0	49
Lushcott	0	10	3	7	0	10
Rushbury	5	34	15	15	1	37
Stanway	1	7	4	4	1	7
Wall under Heywood	15	58	14	58	5	68
Wall Bank & Stoneacton	2	27	9	20	1	27
Parish	34	217	73	170	10	241

Figure 10: Public Transport Use (Respondents)

Question

If yes, are there any changes that might improve the services? Responses (In order of occurance)

- more regular bus services
- trains stopping hourly at Church Stretton
- better integration of services and better time keeping
- cheaper services and allowing more use of bus passes
- for rail, better service to London, better parking at Church Stretton, ticket machine at Church Stretton station

If no, are there any changes that would encourage you to do so? Responses (In order of occurance)

- a quarter of responders specified no or none
- more services
- cheaper services
- better integrated services

Comment

The proportion of responders using buses is small and it is doubtful if services were more frequent or cheaper that they would provide an economic return for operators. Train use is twice that of buses but there appears to be a problem in that not all services between Shrewsbury and Hereford stop at Church Stretton. There also appears to be a case for better integration of public transport services.

Question

Are there any problems with the public highways in your local area? Please specify Responses (In order of occurance)

- lack of proper maintenance
- speeding including extending 30 mph speed limit
- flooding
- safety issues on B4371 Wall Bank, East Wall, Wenlock Edge
- parking in Rushbury
- problems with verges, hedges, passing places and road signs

Comment

Dissatisfaction with local roads is probably the main problem for local residents. Road maintenance is seen as poor with complaints about the lack of repairs and the ineffectiveness of those that are attempted. In some areas flooding of highways is endemic and no solutions are provided. Speeding is another problem; while we are grateful for 30 mph speed limits through Longville and Wall these are regularly ignored and are not enforced. Residents in other locations would like speed limits to be introduced especially through Wall Bank, around East Wall crossroads and through Rushbury.

There is also a problem of a lack of safe paths on which to walk in and around settlements particularly in Longville and between Wall and Rushbury. The latter situation has been examined by the Parish Council but no viable solution was apparent. There is a footpath between the settlements but it includes stiles and is difficult to walk in bad weather.

Law Enforcement

Question

Do you consider the police presence and response adequate in your area?

Of over 120 responses two thirds replied yes and a third no, there was mention of a need for longer opening hours in Church Stretton.

Question

Have you had problems with antisocial behaviour (such as excessive noise, leaving of litter, minor vandalism or intimidation) in your area?

Of 180 responses over a half reported no problems. Those that mentioned problems included:

- litter especially from passing cars and refuse/recycling collection and also dog fouling and messy gardens
- noise particularly related to the Village Hall and public houses
- more serious events each reported by five or less people were fly tipping, theft from honesty boxes, vandalism to property, interference with livestock, parking and use of trail bikes on private property, use of air rifle on public footpath and intimidation.

Comment

There appear to be relatively few problems with crime in the area the biggest complaint about lack of law enforcement relates to speed limits. There is a need for more regular litter picking along the B4371 and prevention of littering during refuse and recycling collection although this may be as much a responsibility of residents as contractors. Noise is an occasional problem for a few properties.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Joy Tetsill, Shropshire Council for assistance with the background details of Core Strategy Development Plan and related issues.

We thank Eaton Electric Limited who donated the printing of the Questionnaires and Notes for Completion.

Appendix

Rushbury Parish Council (as at September 2012)

Councillors

Mrs. L. Bodimeade

Mr. A. Henderson

Mr. J. Henderson MBE

Mr. M. McFarland (Chairman)

Mrs C. Riley

Mrs. V. Riley

*Dr. C. Stevenson (Vice-Chairman)

*Mrs. P. Stokes-Smith

*Mr. J. Welsh

Clerk to the Council

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ALL POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE CLERK

Parish Council Website

http://www.shrop.net/rushburypc

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