

INTRODUCTION

In November 2000 the government made a strong commitment to a major change in the way local government and parish councils respond to the needs of their constituent communities.

The Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside – The Future' launched the concept of parish plans whose purpose is to:

“ set out a vision of what is important, how new developments can best be fitted in, the design and quality standards it should meet, how to preserve valued local features and to map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard the future ”

Plans should

“ identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved ”

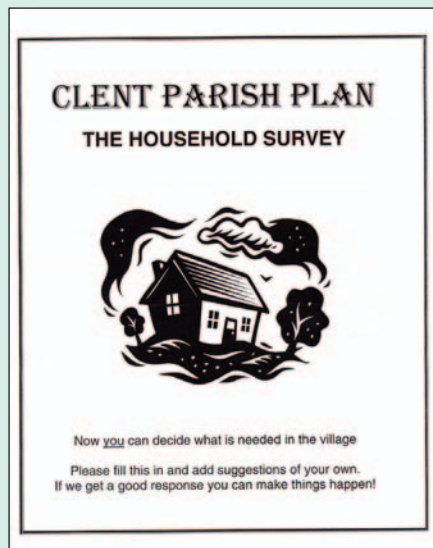
Parish plans are part of the Countryside Agency's 'Vital Villages' initiative and grants of up to £5000 have been made available to parish councils to help fund the cost of producing such plans.

Late in 2003 Clent Parish Council called a general meeting of the Parish to discuss how our Parish Plan could best be developed. 'Brainstorming' teams were asked to identify the main areas of interest and concern. Afterwards volunteers were asked to put their names forward to form a Parish Plan Steering Committee. There were around 15 volunteers.

The parish Council felt that, although the Steering Group would be a sub-committee of the Parish Council, it should produce the Plan largely independently. However two members of the Council were appointed in an advisory capacity. The inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee was held on 12th June 2004. As time passed a number of the original volunteers withdrew due to other commitments leaving the following hard core team:

Suzanne Sweeney (Chair), Annie Harris (Treasurer), Stan Bloxham, Steven Malek (Parish Councillor), Dick Chater, Ed Moore (Parish Councillor), Andy Martin, Paul Stamps

In its introductory brochure, the Countryside Agency suggested a number of ways to determine the needs of the Parish. These included discussions with special interest groups eg clubs and societies, setting up of a series of focus groups, and production of surveys.



The Steering Committee decided that everyone in the Parish should have the opportunity to have a say in future developments.

The only way to carry this through effectively was with a comprehensive questionnaire.

This was produced and two copies were sent to each household in the Parish in October 2004.

Through a detailed statistical analysis of the responses the needs and wishes of the Parish could be quantified, clearly showing the depth of feeling on any particular issue.

The Steering Committee has met regularly since October last year. Through careful study of the results of the survey and the accompanying comments it believes it has established a clear idea of what Clent Parishioners want now and in the future.

Its findings are laid out in this Parish Plan.