



Ashurst Parish Plan



2006



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What is a Parish Plan?

In 2000 the Government issued a Rural White Paper setting out their agenda for the countryside and encouraging local communities to take more control of the development of their own parish. A Parish Plan is a way for local people to make known how they would like their community to develop in the future. It aims to help rural communities have a greater say in their own affairs. It helps local people set down their vision for the future of their parish. To be really effective it needs to represent the views of as many people in the community as possible.

A Parish Plan can cover everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the parish, from social housing to places for children to play. It should address the needs of the entire community, including local businesses, and will span a period of five years. The Plan will be used to inform local government and other decision making bodies of the needs and concerns of the community, and will influence how changes in the community are made. The Plan can also be used to support applications for funding and to canvass for support from both local and national government. The Parish Council will use the Plan as a focus for their ongoing work.

What are the Benefits of a Parish producing a Parish Plan?

- It can be used as an evidence base for grant applications to show community need for specific projects.
- It helps guide the Parish Council in their work. One of the discretionary requirements of 'Quality Status' is to have produced a Parish Plan. It shows that the Parish Council is listening to its community.
- It helps a community plan for the future, to ensure that community facilities can be maintained and updated to suit community needs.

How is a Parish Plan produced?

A Parish Plan is produced by the local community in partnership with the Parish Council. The first step is to hold a public meeting. The public meeting is an interactive forum enabling the local community to have their say on a variety of issues from health, community safety, to housing and transport. They are invited to write their comments on large sheets of paper, saying what is good in their parish, not so good and any changes or ideas they have. From this public meeting, a Steering Group of 8 – 12 people is formed with 2 or 3 representatives from the Parish Council on the group.

There are many consultation techniques available to involve the whole community, but the most commonly used one is a household questionnaire. Using the information gathered at the public meeting, and other consultation, the Steering Group create a questionnaire to be distributed to every household.

The results of all the consultation methods are then assembled to produce the draft Parish Plan that is presented to the Parish Council for endorsement. The final Parish Plan is then distributed to every household, and the hard work really begins – implementing the Parish Plan!

Introduction to the Ashurst Parish Plan

On 26 September 2005 Ashurst Parish Council held an open public meeting in the Village Hall to learn about Parish Plans. Beverley Turner, Parish Liaison Officer at Horsham District Council explained what a Parish Plan is and how it might benefit the community of Ashurst.

Some 50 members of the Ashurst community attended this meeting to hear about Parish Plans and how they are prepared. Everyone was invited to express their views around the following issues by writing on charts supplied by Beverley:

- Local housing
- Movement and transport
- Community safety
- Facilities and services for younger persons
- Facilities and services for older persons
- Leisure and cultural activities
- Good health
- Lifelong learning
- Helping business to succeed
- Protecting our world

These charts gave a good insight into the valued features of Ashurst, any concerns or problems faced by local residents and changes or ideas for the future. It was recognised that Ashurst is a very rural parish, so reaching all members of the community would be a challenge. It was decided that the best way to do this would be to send a questionnaire to every household, one for every adult in the household to complete.

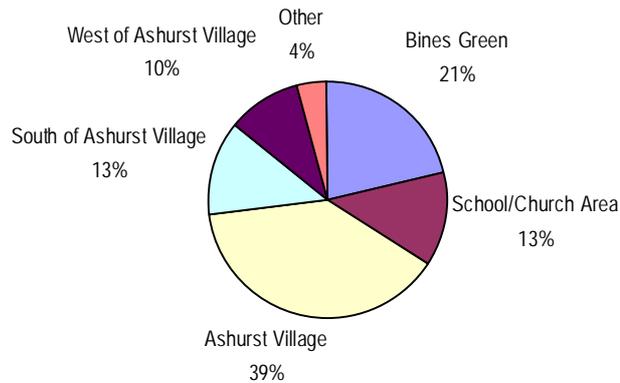
The charts from the public meeting were used to compile a draft questionnaire. The draft questionnaire was discussed in a meeting held on 08 December 2005. Some 12 members of the Ashurst community turned out to help shape the questionnaire for their parish.

Questionnaires were distributed to every household in the parish of Ashurst by post at the beginning of March 2006. Two questionnaires were sent to every household. Parishioners were given until 31 March 2006 to complete and return the questionnaire in the reply paid envelope to the Strategic & Community Planning Department at Horsham District Council.

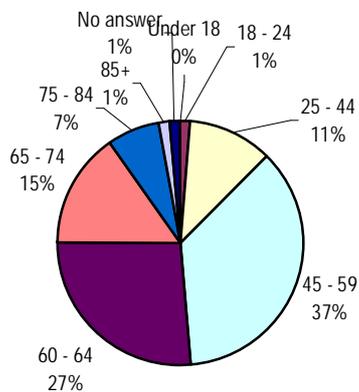
72 questionnaires have been returned giving a response rate of 35% when compared to an electorate of 206.

The questionnaires were analysed by Horsham District Council, who calculated results percentages against the number of the questionnaires returned.

Responses to the questionnaires came from the following areas of the parish, giving a good cross section of views from all areas of the community:

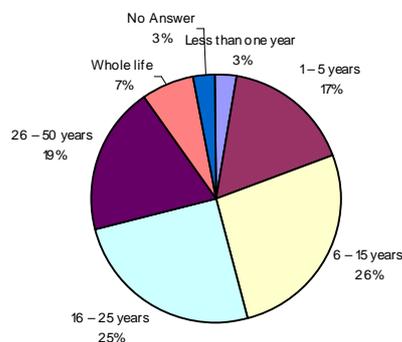


The age range of respondents was:



These figures are significant as they show that the questionnaire was completed by the often 'hard to reach' group of economically active residents of the parish.

Interestingly, there is not a large turnover of residents in the parish when one analyses how long people have lived in the parish:



Example of Questionnaire Results

Respondents were asked to say what they most liked about living in Ashurst:

Comment	Total
Friendly Community	32
Rural feel	20
Quiet/Peace	19
Beautiful	9
Pub	7
School	7
Countryside	6
Not over developed/unspoilt	6
Church	6
Nice people	5
Good walks	5
Recreation ground	4
Location	2
Lovely place to live	2
Lack of lighting	2
History	1
Old and new buildings	1
Electric gates	1
High security lights	1
Village atmosphere	1
Good access to A23/A24	1

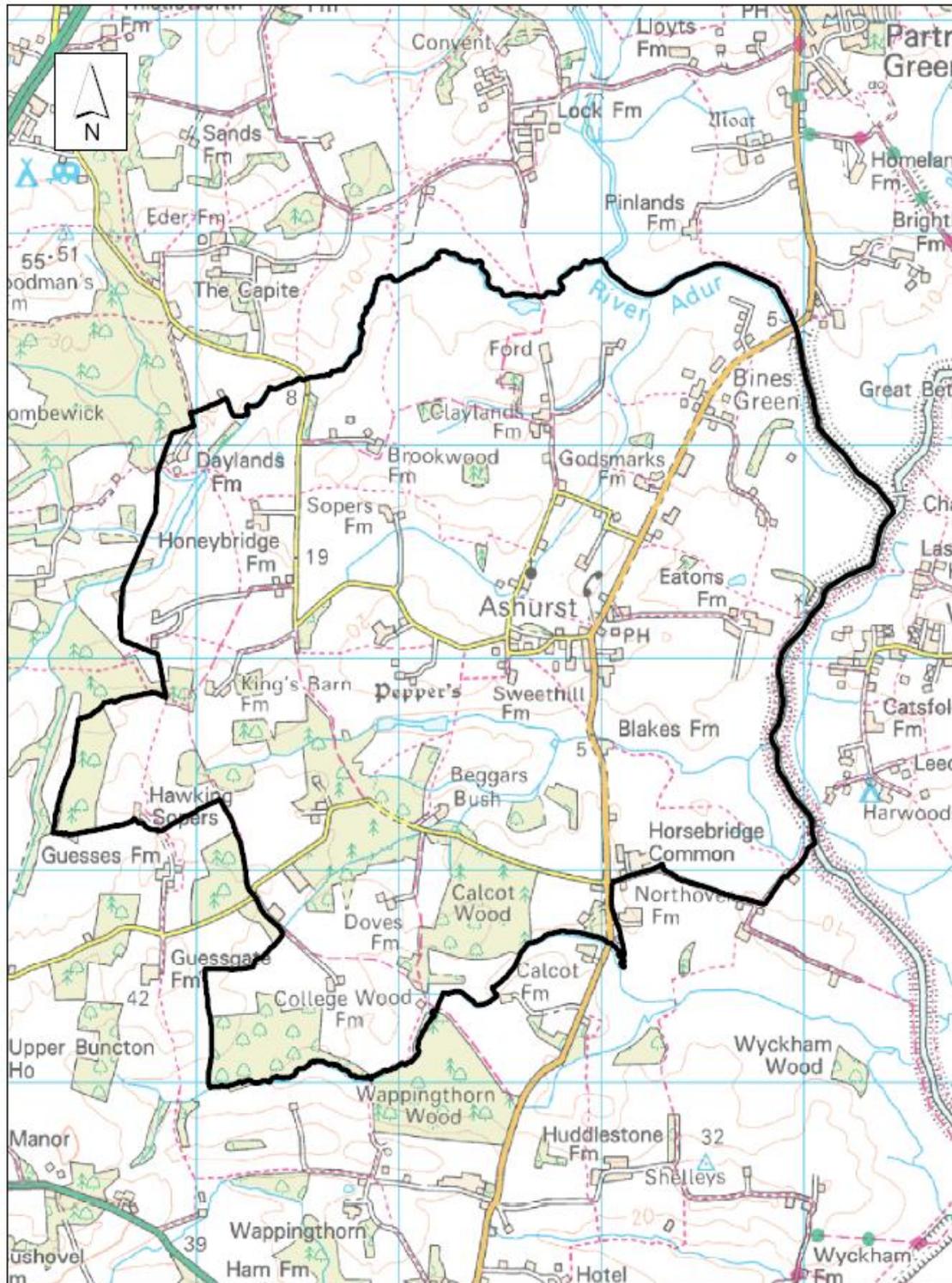


Cows at Eatons Farm

Respondents were asked to say what they least liked about living in Ashurst:

Comment	Total
Speeding/main road	24
No regular meeting place/village shop	6
Helicopters	3
Motorbike noise at weekends	3
Traffic calming measures out of character	3
Newcomers who want to change things	3
Honeybridge Lane rat run	3
Police not enforcing speed limits	2
Council Tax too expensive	2
Not enough services	2
Poorly maintained roads	2
Lack of public transport	2
Not knowing neighbours	2
Need more pedestrian walkways along B2135	1
Spread out	1
Mr X's helicopter	1
Electric gates	1
Holiday cottages thus less neighbours	1
Walking to school very dangerous	1
Vulnerability to travellers	1
Motorbikes speeding on B2135	1
People developing properties for profit then moving on	1
Unless you live in centre of village you get forgotten	1
Nothing	1
Traffic to Old Barn Nurseries	1
Price of pint in pub	1
Gossip	1
A few who try to control village life	1
Roadside litter	1
Fly tipping	1
Poor state of Village Hall	1
Heavy vehicles on village roads	1
Aeroplanes from Shoreham	1
Traffic on Peppers Lane	1

Map of the Parish of Ashurst



Ashurst Parish		Horsham District Council	
		Park North, North Street, Horsham West Sussex, RH12 1RL. Head of Development, Ray Wright, Directorate of Planning	
Reference No :		Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright 2000. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. LA No.100018583	
Date : 12/5/06	Scale : not to scale		
Drawing No :	Revisions :		

A Brief History of the Parish of Ashurst

Prior to the Norman Conquest the parish was basically as we know it today but was divided under the control of three manors. This changed as the inhabitants of the area were gradually given control of the affairs of the parish mainly through the church and their elected representatives.

There is mention of a church in Ashurst before 1200 but the registers for births, marriages and deaths start in 1560. The church bells have dates starting in 1719. The list of Rectors of Ashurst start in 1401 and remained separate from Steyning until 1952 when it was made in plurality with Steyning vicarage.

In 1830 Ashurst with its small enclosures and wide hedgerows was said to have the appearance of "an entire wood". The parish has remained like that for many centuries through to the present day.

The population in 1724 was 50 families and had only grown in 1801 to 55 houses giving accommodation to 73 families and 385 people (the first government census). By 1891 this had reached 73 houses and 329 people. In 2006 it is just over 100 houses with about 220 people.

In 1893 we find the then vicar of Ashurst, The Rev. A. Jackson, was organising a library, a temperance society, a weekly mothers meeting, a Sunday bible class and a series of fortnightly entertainments. There were also choral concerts in the church at this time. He had also stated a little earlier that there were no "really poor" in the parish.

The West Sussex County Council was created in 1888 to look after the roads and county as a whole. The Parish Council was created in 1894 as was the district council known as Steyning West Rural District Council.

There was a private dame school started in Ashurst in 1809 which carried on until about 1873 when the present school was started by the church with help from local people. This was in the dwelling that was previously a "poor house" for those unable to support themselves and their families. In 1874 there were 64 children attending the school.

During the early part of the last century an organ was donated to the church by Mrs Thornton of Lock and the Village Hall was built on land given by the owner of Eatons, Mr Champion. The building was built with the support of three local landowners. In 1932 the recreation ground was purchased with the help of Mr Lloyd a local landowner.

Acknowledgment: Don Cox, Ashurst History Group.

Communication



82% of the respondents obtain information about events and issues in the parish from the Church Magazine, and 80% of respondents by word of mouth.

28% of respondents use the Village Hall notice board, and 20% find things out at the Village

School. 80% of respondents think there are sufficient notice boards in the parish.

Parishioners look to Steyning, Partridge Green and Horsham in order of preference for shops and services outside of the parish. It is important to remember this when considering what services are available close by, and how easily these services can be accessed from Ashurst.



Communication Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Continue to promote community events, clubs and Parish Council news via the Church Magazine and the Steyning parish newsletter.	Church Steyning parish newsletter Ashurst Parish Council All community	Ongoing
Investigate starting a parish website.	Ashurst Parish Council	Short Term
Investigate starting a parish email database.	Ashurst Parish Council	Short Term

Young People

Nearly 20% of respondents see the need for a Parent and Toddler Group and Playgroup in the parish.

There was almost an even split over whether the play area and equipment is adequate for Ashurst, and whether the play equipment is suitable for all ages. 22% felt there is a need for a multi-purpose ball court at the recreation ground.



Only 8% of respondents would like to see the mobile youth café visit Ashurst, and 15% would like to see a weekly Youth Club at the Village Hall. 22% support youth trips to the Steyning Youth Club.

As a whole, 54% of respondents think that the parish is sufficiently supportive of the village school.

Facilities and Services for Young People Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Investigate the feasibility of re-starting the Parent and Toddler Group in the Village Hall.	WSCC	Short Term
Ask HDC to assess the play area and equipment and make proposals for longer term development of multi-age range equipment.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Medium Term
Include consideration of a multi-purpose ball court when considering the longer term development of play facilities with HDC.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Medium Term
Investigate community transport to take teenagers to the Youth Club in Steyning.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Short Term
Ask the School Governors to involve the wider community with school events.	School Governors	Ongoing

Community Safety

There was an even split on satisfaction with Police cover in the parish. 39% of respondents had been victims of crime in the last five years, and there was an even split as to how happy they were with the Police response. 78% felt that more should be done to fight rural crime, and 53% would join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

82% of respondents support the need to enforce the speed limits in the parish.

Community Safety Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Invite the Police Community Support Officer assigned to the parish to a Parish Council meeting to hear local concerns.	Ashurst Parish Council Sussex Police	Short Term
Ask the Police Community Support Officer to be seen visiting the parish at least fortnightly.	Ashurst Parish Council Sussex Police	Short Term
Join the Community Speed Watch Scheme to have SID (Speed Indicating Device) in the parish to deter speeding motorists.	Ashurst Parish Council HCDRP	Short Term
		
Start a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.	Ashurst Parish Council Local community HCDRP	Short Term
Support the Farm Watch Scheme.	Ashurst Parish Council Local community HCDRP	Ongoing

Leisure & Cultural Services

Recreation Ground and Cricket Pavilion



Cricket Pavilion

78% of respondents support the need to renovate the cricket pavilion shown here. 4 people suggested combining the cricket pavilion with a re-located Village Hall.

20 respondents suggested tennis courts as additional facilities at the recreation ground. 68% of respondents

agree that the recreation ground should be maintained from the Ashurst portion of the Council Tax. 64% thought that the recreation ground is well maintained, 40% said there is enough seating but there was an even split on whether there are enough litter bins. However, the most important issue surrounding the recreation ground seems to be the problem of dog fouling. 29% said dog fouling is a problem, but this topic was the main focus of additional comments in this section from dog bins not emptied often enough, to more enforcement needed.

Village Hall

53% of respondents thought that the Village Hall should be modernised or extended.

64% of respondents do not want to see the Village Hall re-located elsewhere.

39% of respondents would like fitness classes in the Village Hall, 25% would like

bridge, 22% would like short mat bowls, 4 people would like to play badminton (!), 2 would like a history group and 2 would like to see a WI in the parish.



Leisure Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Renovate the cricket pavilion.	Ashurst Parish Council Cricket Club	Long Term
Investigate the provision of a tennis court (or ball court) at the recreation ground.	Ashurst Parish Council	Long Term
Report when the dog litter bin is full to the Parish Clerk.	Local community Ashurst Parish Council	Ongoing
Ask HDC to empty dog litter bins more often.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Short Term
Ask HDC Dog Enforcement Officer to visit recreation ground regularly.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Short Term
Ask HDC to letter drop all properties in Ashurst about the dangers of dog fouling.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Short Term
Support the Village Hall to remain in its current location.	Ashurst Parish Council Village Hall Trust	Ongoing
Support the modernisation and improvement, and if necessary, future re-development or re-build of the Village Hall.	Ashurst Parish Council Village Hall Trust	Ongoing
Encourage those that are interested in particular activities to start a new club/activity in the Village Hall.	Village Hall Committee All community	Ongoing
Advertise the clubs and activities available in the parish in the Church Magazine and on the proposed parish website.	Ashurst Parish Council All clubs and societies	Short Term
All clubs and societies to notify the Parish Clerk of their events and activities for inclusion in the Church Magazine, Steyning parish newsletter and proposed parish website.	Ashurst Parish Council All clubs and societies	Ongoing

Local Housing



Ashurst is a very rural parish. This is the view looking north at Bines Green Common. 36% of respondents say that they know a young person that would like to live or needs to live in the parish but either cannot afford to or there is no suitable accommodation. 17% of respondents know of an older person in the same situation.

Just over half of all respondents think there is a need for an affordable housing scheme, either rented or shared ownership, and 71% think any such scheme should be limited to people with a local connection. However 65% of respondents are against new small scale development in the parish, but 65% also want to see more young families in the parish. 81% agree to the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential use and 64% agree for their conversion to office/light industrial use.



67% would like to see the production of a Parish Design Statement to record the parish's valued natural and built characteristics, and to set down guidelines and principles for the future shape of Ashurst parish area.



36% would like to see areas of the parish designated as a Conservation Area, 6 people suggested the whole parish, 5 suggested Bines Green Common, 4 suggested the river walks, 4 suggested Church Lane, 3 suggested the school area, 2 suggested the area around the pub and 2 suggested Horsebridge Common.

Housing Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Local Housing Needs Assessment to identify local housing needs.	HDC AirS Rural Housing Trust	Medium Term
Follow up any identified local housing need from the above assessment ensuring that any resulting development has a local connection policy in perpetuity.	HDC AiRS Rural Housing Trust	Long Term
Support conversion of redundant farm buildings for 'live/work' usage, if there is a direct link between a workshop/business use and a residential unit on the same site, possibly as part of the same building although not necessarily if there is a complex of buildings.	HDC Ashurst Parish Council	Ongoing
Investigate the merits of producing a Parish Design Statement, including consideration of conservation issues.	Ashurst Parish Council Local community HDC	Long Term
Investigate designation of areas of the parish as Conservation Areas.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Long Term



The view from the Recreation Ground towards Chanctonbury Ring.

Movement and Transport

57% of respondents would like a bus service for Ashurst. 18 people would use it to travel to Steyning, 11 to Horsham, 6 to Partridge Green, 5 to Brighton and 4 to Shoreham. However, the potential bus route would travel along the main B2135 road, leaving passengers a long walk to and from their home to reach the bus stop. Just over the half of the respondents were aware that the Steyning community bus door-to-door service and Dial-a-ride scheme extends to Ashurst.

63% of respondents do not think that a safe walking route is needed between the church and recreation ground, and 54% do not think one is needed between Horse Bridge Common and the village. However one person did ask that the footpath from Spithandle Lane to the school should be improved for all weather use.

63% of respondents think that the footpaths are well maintained and 67% think that they are accessible. One person commented that the footpath between Batts and Blakes Farm needs to be re-routed as it is very dangerous. Comments revealed that bridleways are not so well maintained as footpaths and some have obstacles. One person said that the bridlepath between Kings Barn Farm and Spithandle is unridable. 83% of respondents do not support the conversion of bridleways to BOATS, Bridleways Open to All Traffic.

Just under half of all respondents would like to see a walking/cycling route between Ashurst and Partridge Green and Ashurst and Steyning.



52% of respondents would like to see a speed restriction introduced northwards from the village to Bines Green, as seen here. Half the respondents find the junction of the A283 and B2135 difficult to negotiate.

The highest response rate to any question in the questionnaire was 92% for the number of respondents who think road signs

should be kept to a minimum in the parish.

There were lots of comments about Honeybridge Lane, the need to reduce speeding or completely deter vehicles from using the lane. 74 % of respondents say that signage is needed to identify it as a single width carriageway, whilst 68% think it needs passing places.

Movement and Transport Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Lobby WSCC for a bus service for the parish.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Long Term
Continue to share the community transport facilities provided by Steyning.	Ashurst Parish Council	Short Term
Accompany the WSCC Access Ranger on their routine maintenance visit to the parish, drawing to their attention the comments made on the questionnaire about the condition and accessibility of footpaths and bridlepaths.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Short Term
Investigate cycling/walking routes to Partridge Green and Steyning.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Long Term
Lobby WSCC to impose a speed restriction from the north of the village to Bines Green Common.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Medium Term
Lobby WSCC for double white lines to restrict overtaking from north of village to Bines Green Common.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Short Term
Lobby Police to enforce speed limits especially at weekends 6 – 9am Sunday mornings.	Sussex Police 	Ongoing
Keep road signage to a minimum in the parish.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Ongoing
Lobby WSCC to install 'Single width carriageway' signs at the entrances to Honeybridge Lane.	Ashurst Parish Council WSCC	Short Term

Good Health

89% of respondents agree that the parish is adequately served by doctors and surgeries, but only 40% agree that the parish is adequately served by dentists.

40% believe the parish is adequately served by a minor injuries unit, yet 51% think it is adequately served by an A & E Department. 17% of respondents have difficulty getting to hospital. 88% of respondents have access to a pharmacy; 4 respondents have difficulty getting there. 26% of respondents would use a good neighbour scheme to help with visits to the doctor, hospital or with shopping. 3 respondents would like to see Steyning Health Centre open on Saturday mornings.

Health Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Contact the local pharmacy or doctors surgery that serves Ashurst to find out if they can help with a prescription delivery service.	Ashurst Parish Council PCT	Short Term
Support the Steyning Good Neighbour Scheme and its extension to serve Ashurst.	Local community Horsham District Age Concern	Short Term
Support Steyning Dial-a-Ride and other community transport to continue to serve Ashurst	Ashurst Parish Council Dial-a-Ride Local community	Ongoing

Business

86% of respondents support the diversification of farms in order to survive. 88% of respondents said that they would use a local produce shop and 85% of respondents would use a village store.

Business Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Support the rural diversification of farms appropriately through the planning system.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Ongoing
Support the establishment of a local produce and village store through the planning system.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Ongoing

Protecting our World

72% of respondents are happy with the household recycling collections, although the same number would like to see a household collection of glass. Some respondents were unhappy about recycling being dropped in lanes littering them. One respondent suggested that a clothes recycling bin is needed in the parish.

53% felt that fly tipping is a problem with 18 respondents identifying Honeybridge Lane, 9 Spithandle Lane, 2 Pepper Lane, 2 Golden Lane and 2 at the car park by the bridge over the River Adur. 3 respondents said that rubbish is dumped by the bridge over the River Adur at Honeybridge Lane and one respondent mentioned by the river north of New Wharf Farm.

64% of respondents would be willing to participate in a spring clean of the parish. Helicopters accounted for 13 complaints about noise, and motorbikes drew 10 complaints.

Two people suggested that the oak tree on the boundary of the recreation ground and School Lane should have a tree preservation order and one person suggested the pinus tree at Clappite Wood.

48% and 47% of respondents would like to participate in a biodiversity study of the parish and sustainability appraisal respectively.

Protecting our World Actions

Action	Key Partners	Timescale
Lobby HDC for a household glass recycling collection service.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Long Term
Report fly tipping as soon as it is first seen to HDC. Advertise HDC fly tipping contact details in Church Magazine and on parish website. To report fly tipping contact HDC on 01403 215350	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Short Term Ongoing
Organise an annual spring clean of the parish.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Ongoing
Publicise to whom you should complain about helicopter noise in the Church Magazine and on the proposed website.	Ashurst Parish Council	Ongoing
Survey the parish's trees and identify those that warrant tree preservation orders.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Medium Term
Conduct a biodiversity study and sustainability appraisal as part of the Parish Design Statement proposed in the Housing Actions.	Ashurst Parish Council HDC	Long Term

Acknowledgements

- The Parish Plan Steering Group:
 - John Eager
 - David & Susie Fischel
 - Alan Griffiths
 - Diane Griffiths
 - Liz Hamilton
 - Chas Hammond
 - Tim Ireland
 - Roy Powel
 - Hazel Roxby
 - Jim Rucklidge
 - Anita Rudlain
 - Di Stevens
 - Beverley Turner, Parish Liaison Officer, Horsham District Council

Glossary

HCDRP	Horsham District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership
HDC	Horsham District Council
PCT	Primary Care Trust
WSCC	West Sussex County Council

What Next...?

The actions in this Parish Plan were endorsed by the Ashurst Parish Council on 06 July 2006. It has been noted that the overall feel from the responses to the Ashurst Parish Questionnaire is that this is a rural parish treasured for its uniqueness, its beauty, its peace and quiet, rural isolation and lack of services. Ashurst is small, unspoilt with a special village atmosphere that parishioners wish to preserve through this Parish Plan.

