

# Charlton Marshall



## Parish Plan



# Charlton Marshall

# Parish Plan

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Charlton Inn  
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Our Efficient Team of Volunteers

# Parish Plans

## Aims and Objectives

An initiative by the Government was announced in the 2000 "Rural White Paper", in order to set out a framework for communities to plan their own future, with funding for the process through the Countryside Agency.

A **Parish Plan** is intended to be a statement of how a community sees itself developing over the next few years.

### Aims

- reflect the views of all sections of the community
- identify features and facilities that people value
- identify local problems and opportunities
- set out how residents want the community to develop in the future
- prepare a plan of action to achieve this vision

### Objectives

- identify a plan of action which can influence and be taken forward by the Parish Council, individuals and groups within our community, and/or by our District or County Council and/or by other service providers.
- give evidence of our need for winning funds over a short, medium or long term.
- to enhance the future of Charlton Marshall and its residents.



## The Parish

Charlton Marshall stretches from the River Stour to beyond the A354 in the west. The northern boundary includes Newtown and entry to the parish from the south on the A350 is just before the first house, "The Lodge".

At Thornicombe, the parish commences in the south along the line of Combs Ditch, just before the lane to Charisworth. The caravan site and new houses at Red Barn Farm are included before the boundary turns and runs parallel to, and including all dwellings on, the Park Hill / Thornicombe road and Charlton on the Hill.

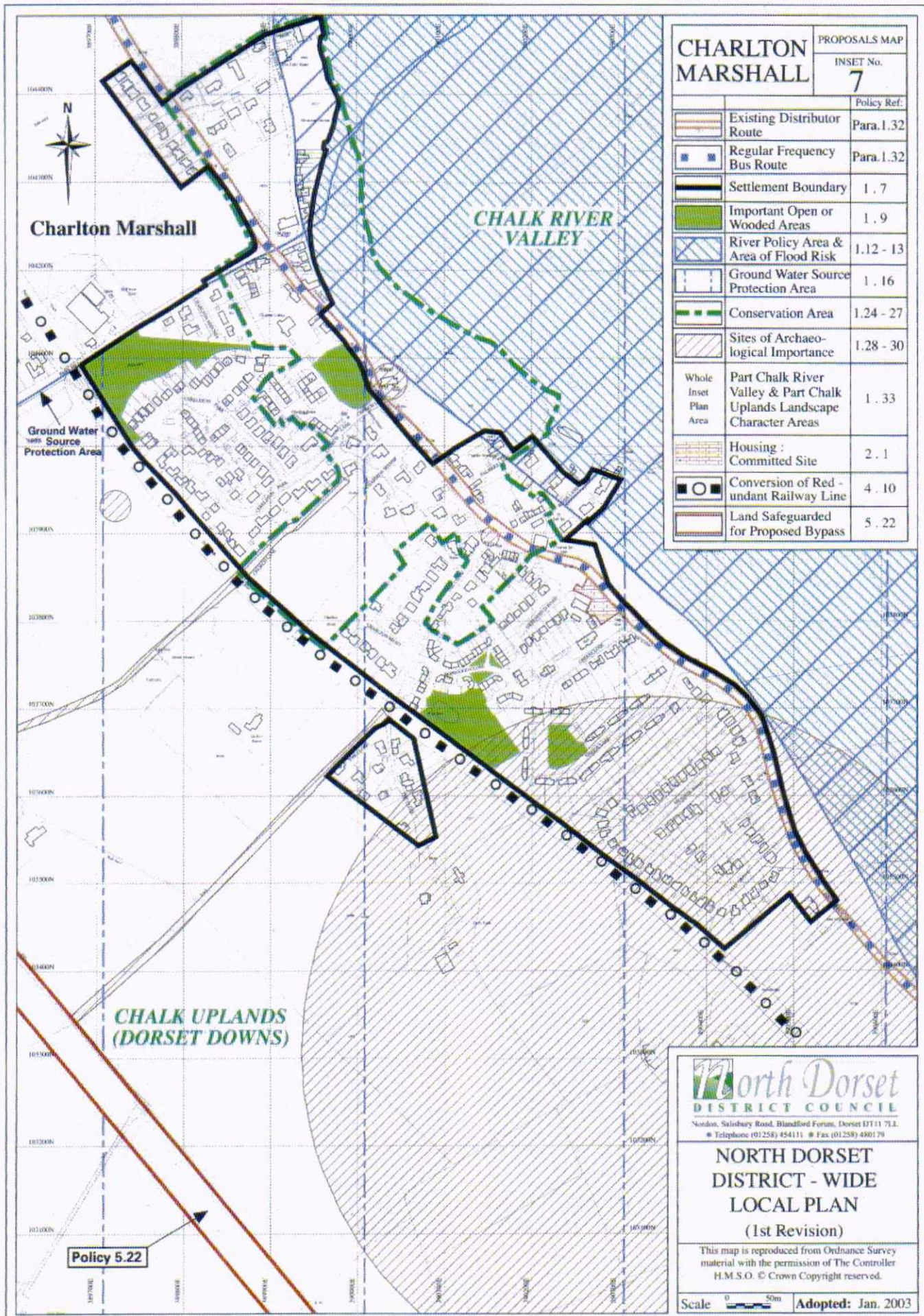
The population of the parish in 2001 was 1,150. The 2004 Register of Electors shows that there are 484 households in the parish: 20 of these are within the

widespread hamlet of Thornicombe and a further 34 are spread either individually or within homesteads away from the Village Development area, where the remaining 430 households are located.

Amenities include the Church, a Public House, Village Hall and Church Rooms, in which is the Post Office. The Parish owns the Cemetery and some very small areas of open space. There is also an equipped childrens' playground within a playing field. Running north to south is the Trailway, a bridleway to Spetisbury and eventually, to Blandford.



# Village Map







## A Brief History

In the last 160 years the village has grown from having less than 100 homes to over 500 today, from unmade gravel or mud roads and tracks to both minor and major tarmac roads through the village.

We know that there was habitation at least a thousand years ago in the now Parish of Charlton Marshall, with evidence of Anglo-Saxon burial mounds in the area, but it is only in the last 50 years that tremendous growth has taken place, and also change. The village stocks can still be seen beside the church and the old village pump near to the existing post office.

There were two shops, a petrol station, non-conformist chapel, second public house, railway station and school, but alas all these benefits have disappeared, some very recently.

There is also a wealth of history all around the parish, and just outside its boundaries, from Iron Age forts to the remains of the station platforms of the Somerset and Dorset railway. The old railway track bed now forms part of the bridleway known as the Stour Valley Way.

The River Stour was an obvious source of water for the inhabitants of Cerelton, as it was known around the time of the Roman occupation. The river with its unhurried flow and the associated wildlife, such as herons, kingfishers, deer and wild flora still brings a certain attraction, even in the hectic times in which we now live - a haven for walkers, artists, or those who just want to while away some time.

## Process Leading to Plan

### Public Consultation



*Formation of Steering Group – Grant Application*



# Collection of Ideas



*Two Youth Events*



*Permanent Post Box on display at Post Office*

## Launch Day!

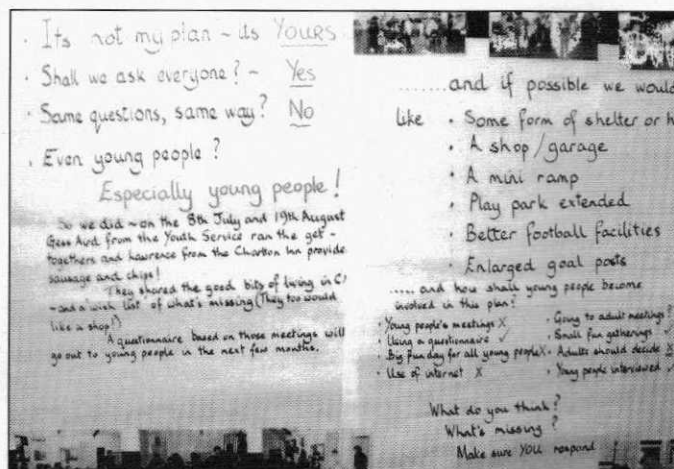
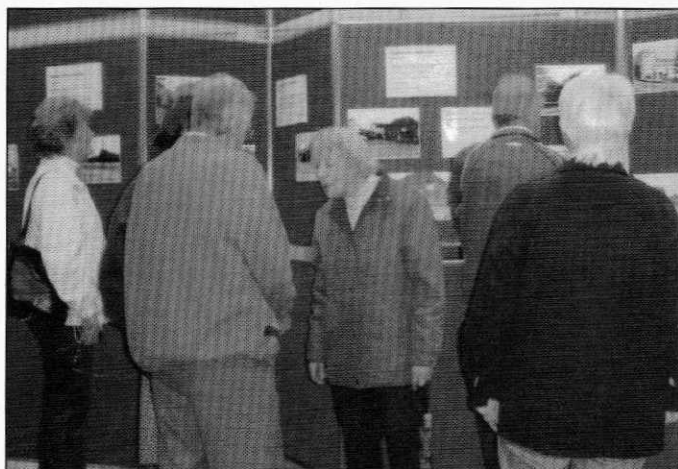
*with Community and Service Providers*



*Moving from PAST to PRESENT to FUTURE*



# Feedback Events



**Household Survey**



**Youth Survey**

*Distributed and collected  
60% households and 60% of youth replied*

**Independent Analysis**  
*By DCA Community  
Research Assistant*



**Youth Survey Report**  
*By Steering Group Member*

**Consultation**  
*With Community &  
Service Providers*

**to**

**Review issues**  
*Give advice/support  
Influence implementation & outcome  
Enable preparation of action plan*

**Produce Action Plan For Parish  
Council To Approve**

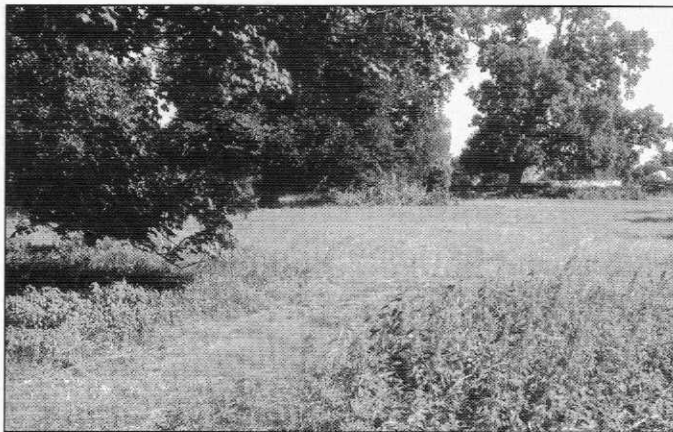


# The Survey Findings

Overall a total of 291 questionnaires were received from the Household Survey. In addition a separate survey of youth opinion was conducted resulting in a completion of 66 returns. Approximately 60% of all households responded, which, compared to the experience of similar exercises in other Dorset villages is a good response rate.

Only 19 members of these households have moved permanently away from Charlton Marshall in the past year (6.5%) and the most common reason for moving away is to live independently (11) or to set up home as a new household with a partner (5). Only one person has moved away because there is no suitable housing to buy and none have moved due to lack of rented accommodation of any kind.

A small number of children are unable to take part in after school activities with 7 households saying this is due to lack of transport home, 6 the distance involved, 5 the expense and 4 that their interests are not catered for.



## Personal Section

The personal section of the questionnaire was completed by 590 people, 292 men and 304 women, over half of the entire population (including children) of the village. Pleasingly 35 children aged between 11 -15 completed the questionnaire, as did 10 16 -17 year olds. (In addition to their own survey!) The majority of the people completing the survey however were aged between 25 and 59 (52.7%). The vast majority of respondents lived permanently in Charlton Marshall although 15 (2.6%) of those who replied did not.

Charlton Marshall is a village with many newcomers as almost a third of the 573 people who answered the question had lived in the village for five years or less

(32.7%). Another third had lived there for between 6 and 15 years meaning it is quite rare to be a native born Charlton Marshaller! To the question 'where did you live before?' the most common reply was within a ten-mile radius of the village (44.2%). However virtually a third of residents had moved here from over 30 miles away and 14 (2.7%) had moved to Charlton Marshall from overseas.

The main reason people chose to move to the village was love of country life, selected by 40.2% of respondents. Love of village life was chosen by 22% and the availability of housing was a factor for a similar number (21.3%). A fifth of people came to live in Charlton Marshall because they were working in the area, 68 people (12.1%) were brought to the village by retirement. It is not however the village amenities that people find important but rather the community and the environment.

## Work

385 people answered the question about where they worked and of these 61 (15.8%) work in Charlton Marshall itself. A further 121 (31.4%) work within five miles of the village and 163 people (42.3%) work within five – twenty miles of the village. This means that 40 people or just over 10% of the total work more than twenty miles from their home.

48 people answered the question, which asked people who were actively looking for work or wished to change jobs what barriers were preventing them from accessing opportunities. 14 people thought their lack of qualifications was an issue and 12 thought it was their own disability or ill health. 11 people – almost a quarter – were hampered by lack of access to transport and 9, just under a fifth, by the cost of childcare locally.

Unsurprisingly the main means of transport to work or study is the car. 23 people work from home and 14 walk to work – presumably both of these categories belong to the group who work in Charlton Marshall itself. Only 3 people cycle to work and another 3 use a motorcycle / scooter / moped. Even the bus is relatively little used – a total of 25 people use the bus.

As far as encouraging business and employment in and around Charlton Marshall is concerned views are mixed. Small-scale industrial workshops on the whole do not find favour. 157 respondents definitely did not want these and a further 88 had reservations. Small business development met with the most approval - 42 people were strongly in favour and 109 in favour – but even this has to be counterbalanced by the fact that 96 people definitely did not want this and 75 had reservations. Even on the topic of more jobs in Charlton Marshall people have no really clear views: in fact over 30% have no strong opinion.

The comments added to Q18 'How do you think Charlton Marshall could be improved to create more opportunity for employment?' highlight the variety of views. On the one hand many people are clearly not in favour of encouraging any employment uses in Charlton





Marshall 'Charlton Marshall should remain residential', 'I do not wish for any opportunity for employment in the village', 'No employment required. Blandford and Poole are easily accessible'. On the other hand there are suggestions for diversification, the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings, 'more employment sites, designated areas for business / industrial development' or the 'development of scrubland and derelict buildings as is currently happening on Park Hill'.

Some suggest that employment opportunities could best be created by improving public transport - 'better transport links to areas of employment', 'improved public transport', 'better transport' and so on. Easily the most common suggestion is for a village shop, sometimes allied with proposals for a craft outlet or a shop selling local crafts. A few respondents also suggest encouraging home-based working for which broadband and cable access would be useful.

Others suggest that there is a lack of land or suitable space for new development and others that poor public transport and the difficulty of access to the A350 would hinder business development. As far as the village shop is concerned, several write that competition from Tesco would be an issue and one or two that the population might not be large enough to sustain a village shop.

## Transport and Traffic

The vast majority of the 519 people who answered the question about what they used their vehicle for, unsurprisingly use it for leisure (91.3%) and shopping (89.3%). Over half use their vehicle to get to work and almost a third for business journeys. In addition 111 people (21.4%) of the total use their cars to take their children to school or college.

Relatively few people are regular users of either the public bus service or the community bus provided by Nordcat. The community bus in particular is very little used with



445 of the 534 people replying (83.3%) never using the service as against 374 or 70% who never use the scheduled (Wilts & Dorset) buses. Just over 5% of respondents (27 people) use the bus daily and a similar number (28) use it weekly. 2 people use the community bus daily (presumably to take them to college) and 5 use it weekly.

Local taxi services are also relatively little used with most people using them either never or occasionally.

Buses did however generate several additional comments including the need for a bus shelter to protect school children at the main bus stops on both sides of the A350, that later bus services from Bournemouth and Poole would be useful and that 'there are 100 homes off Church Lane: the older residents who use the bus need a stop near the church on both sides of the road'.

As far as traffic danger spots are concerned, of the 428 people who answered this question, two hundred and eighty five people (61.9%) considered that outside Charlton Inn is a danger spot. The next most dangerous location is considered to be the Thornicombe junction onto the A354 - just under half consider this to be dangerous (208 people or 48.6%) In declining order of danger comes the Meadow Road/A350 junction, then outside the church and finally the Park Hill / A350 junction.

Several people added comments about traffic issues. For example 'Thornicombe junction is in need of some sort of traffic calming measures! as it is almost impossible to emerge from, every one I know dislikes the junction, as it is unsafe' - 'the bus stop outside The Charlton Inn is in a very dangerous position. It is too close to the corner where traffic comes from Blandford Forum direction'.

Another wrote that speeding traffic is a danger in their view 'as our garden backs on to the main A350 and as we are regular walkers'. In fact a majority of people consider speeding traffic is a problem in Charlton Marshall - 314 or 57.4%. One person wrote a lengthy comment about living on the main road and having her heart in her mouth every morning when she watches mothers with pushchairs and young children trying to cross this road.





## Cyclists and Pedestrians

On the whole residents judge facilities for cyclists to be poor – that was the opinion of 52.6% of the 540 people who answered this question. Only 37 (6.9%) judged them as good and just over a quarter as reasonable. Most people claimed that if the Trailway were extended to provide safe access to Blandford they would use it at least occasionally. In fact 33 people claimed they would use it every day and almost a third thought they would use it once a week. Only 90 people (16.2%) thought they would never use it.

There were several additional comments here about the amount of dog mess on the Trailway and how this puts off many people, particularly if pushing buggies, from using it. 'Need more dogs waste bins along Trailway. Increased level of waste – putting off families using the facility'. To judge by the additional comments the Trailway is a popular facility, unfortunately marred by this problem.

As far as roads, paths, street lighting and so on is concerned, the only option that received majority support was a by-pass and even this one only barely – 287 of the 535 people who answered (53.6%) would like to see a by-pass. By contrast only one solitary person wants to see roundabouts and relatively few want to see traffic islands, dropped kerbs or more pavements. In fact 64 people (12%) would prefer to see none of the options suggested. Just over a quarter of respondents would like to see more footpaths and slightly more (27.7%) would like to see cycle lanes. The suggestion of more street lighting brought several hostile comments about light pollution and not wanting to make a village look urbanised, that this was one of the features that attracted them to the village – 'we like to see the stars and don't need the extra expense'.

As far as local footpaths or bridleways are concerned over a third of people said they had experienced difficulty when using local footpaths or bridleways. Although only 192 people said they had experienced difficulty 214 people then listed the difficulties they had had! The most

common difficulty was bushes / nettles with over a half (53.3%) experiencing this. Mud and water was a problem for nearly a third of people followed by crops across the path (22%), signposts missing (19.2%), high stiles (17.3%), locked gates (16.8%) and barbed wire (14%). 'One person wrote – 'We love walking, but often the arrow signs are missing, not visible, or not put there in the first place, better signs needed.' Another suggested that 'worrying about bushes and nettles or mud and water was rather silly as this was the countryside!'

Residents were asked whether they would like to see footpath maps, leaflets of walks or guided walks in the area. Although nearly 30% of people had no opinion, a majority were in favour of maps of local footpaths (299 or 59.2%). Leaflets were less popular as a suggestion although still supported by 197 people (39%) and 98 people (19.4%) thought guided walks were a good idea.

## Educational Facilities

Many people skipped this question, presumably because they have no children and so did not expect it to be of relevance. In fact of all the facilities suggested the most popular is adult education evening classes (131) It may be necessary to do some more detailed work on this to find out what particular kind of classes people are seeking.

There seems to be little demand for full day care – only 13 people ticked this – or for a nursery school (22) or more registered childminders (24). 34 people think the village needs a playgroup. 65 people however would like to see after school clubs and 73 holiday play schemes.

## Housing

Most people think the amount of housing constructed in the village in the past ten years is either about right (269 or 49.4%) or have no opinion (129 or 23.7%). Almost a



quarter thinks there has been too much new housing (127 or 23.3%). One person wrote in the margin 'how about in the past 60 years!' However most people do not think Charlton Marshall can accommodate any more new housing. (63.4% or 344 of the 543 who answered this question). Only 85 people (15.7%) think it can accommodate new housing and just over a fifth don't know.

When asked to specify what kinds of accommodation the village needs only 461 people replied and of these a slight majority said no further homes were needed (51.8%). A quarter of respondents thought the village needed homes for young people and 70 people (15.2%) thought small family homes were needed. All the other choices were wanted by 10% or fewer of inhabitants.

## Health and Social Care

Very few people have a problem collecting medicine on prescription – 15 people (2.8%) said they did. Of these the main problem, from the added comments, was that they did not drive or had no access to a car. One wrote that whereas this was not normally a difficulty he / she was currently incapacitated. 'Elderly neighbour kindly drove to Whitecliff surgery to collect, but computer was down so she had to walk to a chemist in Blandford to pick up the drugs'.

There is some support for a 'good neighbour' type scheme in Charlton Marshall with 222 people (41.2%) saying yes to such an idea, despite a number asking for clarification as to what such a scheme was. There is also a body of people prepared to help such a scheme: although 90 people say they would never be prepared to help, 248 (53%) would help out occasionally, 72 once a month (15.4%) and 58 people are prepared to help once a week (12.4%).

## Policing

On the whole people are not very satisfied with police coverage in Charlton Marshall. Of the 530 people replying only 17 (3.2%) would rate it as good. Just over a quarter would class it reasonable but 245 (46.2%) describe it as poor. Almost a quarter has no opinion. Almost half of respondents belong to a local Home Watch scheme (241 or 48.1%). Of the remainder, although just under a quarter are not interested 138 (27.5%) would like to be a member although not at present.

The anti-social behaviour that concerns Charlton Marshall residents the most is irresponsible dog owners (cited by 55.2% of respondents). This is followed by vandalism (45.2%) and theft (42.1%) Bonfire smoke worries over a quarter of residents (148 or 28.5%) and verbal abuse concerns 78 people (15%). Drunkenness is very low down the list (3.7%) and 59 people (11.3%) have no concerns over crime at all.

The issue of bonfire smoke clearly arouses some feeling. On the one hand, people write that bonfires are part and parcel of living in the country and that it is a perfectly acceptable activity and should not be classed as anti-social behaviour. On the other hand some people clearly find it a terrific nuisance. One person suggests what might perhaps be the compromise solution – 'I don't want to ban bonfires but would like people to be more considerate when they have them. Maybe have a ban on bonfires between certain hours of the day'.

The most popular measure to combat crime and anti-social behaviour is easily more activities for young people, wanted by 284 of the 449 who answered this question (63.3%) Next came a greater police presence (42.8%) and then better consultation between police and local people (35.9%) 137 people (30.5%) thought a neighbourhood watch was needed and exactly the same number thought improved street lighting was needed. Only 66 people (14.7%) thought more drug / drink education / prevention was needed, reflecting the fact that drunkenness was not considered much of an issue in the village.



## Services and Amenities

Respondents were asked how often they used the counter services at the village Post Office, the Village Hall, the Church Room (excluding for Post Office purposes), the Church, the Charlton Inn and the Trailway (i.e. the old railway line). The Trailway is the most used facility over all with only 58 people (10.7%) claiming to never use it as against for example 55.1% who never use the Church Room and 39.4% who never use the Church. The Trailway also easily has the highest number of people using it more than 4 times a week – 71 people (13.1%) use it this regularly whereas only 7 people visit the Post Office this often and only 3 admit to visiting the Charlton Inn this often!

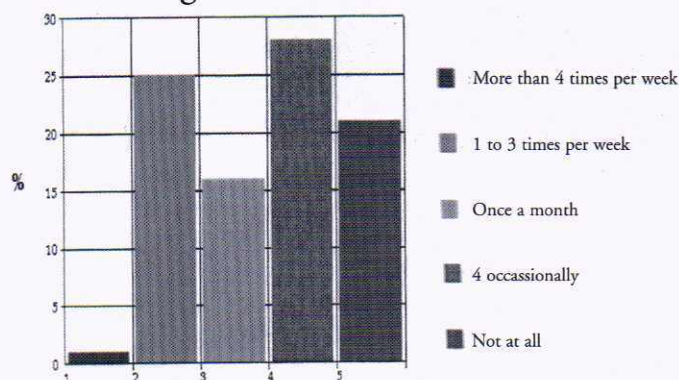
Clearly there are few regular churchgoers filling in this questionnaire as only 15 people use the church weekly although a further 31 visit the church around once a month. Just over a third use it occasionally. The following tables may illustrate more clearly the results.



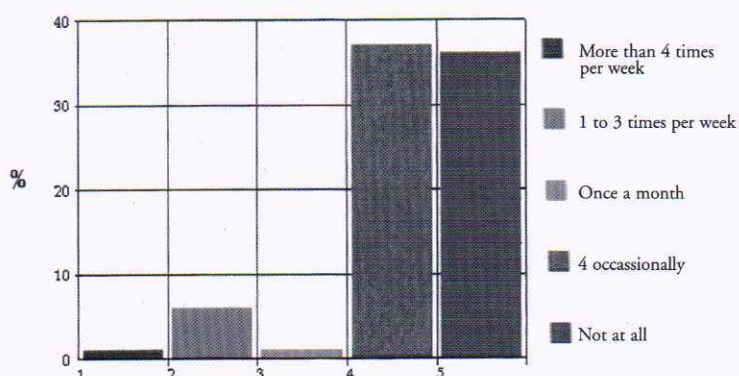
## How often do you use the following amenities and facilities? The Church



## Table showing how often the Counter Service at the village Post Office is used



## How often do you use the following amenities and facilities? Village Hall



Relatively few people experience difficulties with access, parking, disabled facilities etc at these venues. The greatest difficulty is experienced at the Church by 51 people, just over 10% of the total followed by the Trailway (48) and the Post Office (47). 37 people have problems with the Church Room but only a handful (9) with the Village Hall and 3 with the Charlton Inn.

Only 55 people (9.2%) are regular users of the Village Hall for the activities listed. None of them goes to table tennis and only 3 to Scouts, 4 to dog training, 6 to exercise classes and 7 to Brownies. 9 people go to Beavers or Cubs, 14 do short mat bowls and 17 belong to the Art Society.

The Church Room is used by 153 people, principally for local information (60.1%) and coffee mornings/community markets (58.2%). 45 people use it for meetings (29.4%) and 9 people attend the W.I. there, 7 art sessions and 4 whist.

Most people think they would use a community shop, at least occasionally, if one were opened. In fact a majority of people (296 of the 548 replying) believe they would use it weekly. Only 15 people think they would never use it; 84 people (15.3%) don't know if they would use it or not. Large numbers of people believe they would not be able to help with the community shop but there are people prepared to help on a regular basis. In fact 23 people, just over 5%, would volunteer to work behind the counter on a weekly basis and the same number to stock the shelves. Fewer people would volunteer for the accounts although even here 11 people are prepared to help weekly. The numbers prepared to help regularly with supplies are again small but 9 people are prepared to do this weekly too. The numbers prepared to help monthly or occasionally are much higher – in fact 90 people, just over 20% of the 441 who replied to this question, would help occasionally with filling shelves.



The idea of a community shop clearly interests people: several write apologetic notes about the reasons why they cannot volunteer (full-time work, young baby etc) whilst others add suggestions about what it should stock and so on. 'A community shop selling good basics and farm shop type groceries (it's no good trying to compete with Tesco) perhaps specialising in locally produced food with integral coffee shop so mums could meet after school run or indeed be employed there' is one suggestion.





# Clubs, Societies & Meeting Rooms

Of the various suggestions for new clubs and activities in Charlton Marshall there are three which appeal to over a third of the 356 people who answered this question: these are walking and rambling (37.4%), a gardening club (36.8%) and a social club with talks and trips etc. (35.4%) There are substantial numbers of people interested in all the other activities listed with the possible exception of a debating club, which only interests 17 people.

In addition there are 89 people prepared to help organise and run such clubs: 26 people would be prepared to help with a gardening club, 23 with a social club and 22 with a walking or rambling group. Even the apparently less popular options such as a debating society or a yoga group have small numbers (4 and 3 respectively) prepared to help run them.

## Facilities for Young People

313 people answered this question and of these almost two-thirds (198) would like to see goal posts / nets at Hopegood Close. Over half (177) would like a skateboard ramp and almost as many (173) would like a basketball net. 163 would like a marked reduced size football pitch. A third (104) would like a shelter but there is much less interest in an additional roundabout – only 54 people requested this.

The comment that the 'pavement and grass verge opposite end of Hopegood Close should not be used as a cycle / skateboard ramp' suggests that an impromptu skateboard ramp has already been established! It is clear from the comments that residents living in Hopegood Close would like goalposts etc. on the field to discourage ball games outside their houses and balls in their gardens and so on. One person suggested however that with an excellent skate park in Blandford plus other nearby facilities such as the Leisure Centre there was no need to provide costly facilities in Charlton Marshall itself.

## The Church

Of the 543 people who answered this question 20 (3.7%) went to church every week and 26 (4.8%) went monthly. 56% had not been to the Church at all during the past year and 157 people (28.9%) had been fewer than 6 times i.e. probably only for a carol service or similar. Of the 429 people who answered Q52 about what would encourage them to use the Church more the most common response given by 174 people (40.6%) was that they were not attracted at all. However 160 people, over a third, would like to see it as a venue for plays, films and music. Different types of services would attract 78 people (18.2%) Adding toilets would encourage 51 people (11.9%) to use the Church more but only relatively small numbers would be attracted by meetings (41), activities for the young (26) or as a venue for youth functions (35).



On the whole respondents feel that the Village Hall and Church Room are adequate for the needs of the village – almost two-thirds said yes to this question (330 of the 521 who replied) and most of the remainder have no opinion. Only 35 people feel they are inadequate. Nevertheless for the future 41.5% consider that a single purpose-built hall facility would be a good investment for the community. Roughly the same number of people (153) has no opinion on the question as are opposed to the idea (151).

There are three suggestions for where the best site for such a facility would be that keep recurring. These are: the field next to the church, the field next to the Charlton Inn and on the site of the existing Village Hall. A couple of people wrote comments here to the effect that the Village Hall was more than adequate as it stood and there were other suggestions for sites such as where the old petrol station was, on the site of the unfinished houses and at Park Hill where the farm used to be.

There were several additional comments written at the end of the surveys on this issue, some of them quite lengthy. One suggested that Charlton Marshall should aim for a modern Village Hall similar to Durweston where she attended many activities. Another suggested that 'Investing



in a general stores on the site of the old filling station – to include the PO would benefit the village – where the part built buildings are, could be made into parking area. This way we would have – stores, PO, Pub and local garage in one area – with village hall behind. The current PO and church rooms would remain as church rooms with conversion of PO area into toilets / kitchenette. New PO in local store would improve the security!

Another reply points out that 'it is costly to maintain two old buildings and difficult to fund two separate buildings. Furthermore you then have to find two groups of people to manage separate buildings.' They 'feel there needs to be a small and large hall with shared facilities, and parking plus possibly a community shop / PO.' Yet another resident writes: 'The field next to the Church on the east side would make a very good leisure area. A village hall could be built with good parking and lawns, gardens etc. with river frontage. All village events could be held here, such as fetes, sales, club activities etc. An area could be created by the river for people to sit and picnic and also limited fishing for village residents. The present village hall could be demolished and the land developed incorporating 1 and 2 bedroom affordable flats / maisonettes for locals. This would greatly offset the costs of the new leisure area'.

The above gives only a flavour of the suggestions, some more practicable than others!

## Information

Most people get their information about what is going on in Charlton Marshall from the Parish News (309 or 60.9%) or from the free paper, the Blackmore Vale Magazine (52.7%). A third get information from the Post Office and a fifth from local newspapers. The notice boards are less well used for gathering information – 93 people (18.3%) get information from these. A majority of people feel the amount of information they get about the village is adequate with 52.7% rating it reasonable and 10.8% good. However against this almost a quarter (23.6%) think the amount of information they get is poor.

People have lots of ideas about what sort of information would be useful to newcomers, most of it of a very practical nature such as bus times, phone numbers for the doctors, days for refuse collection, mobile library, wet fish van, and details of community activities and events. Several suggest a welcome pack – one adds 'as at Spetisbury' and a few also suggest a first free copy of the Parish Magazine would be a good idea. One says this is a difficult question as it depends on who they are as to what information they will find useful. Finally one person, presumably speaking from experience, wrote, 'You soon find out what you need to know by asking neighbours'.

## Parish Council

Relatively few people have an opinion as to whether the issues discussed at the Parish Council reflect local

concerns: over half of the 506 people replying had no opinion on this. Of the remainder 165 said yes and 61 said no. However people do seem interested to know more about the Parish Council as over half said yes, they would like to know more (271 or 52.6%). 112 people don't know (21.7%). This does of course mean that over a quarter of respondents (132 or 25.6%) do not want any more information on the Parish Council!

Most people do not want to pay a higher council tax to meet the needs of the village – 63.3% said no to this. However 104 (19.3%) were prepared to pay more and 94 (17.4%) had no opinion on the question.

Twinning was not particularly popular as an idea – 42.8% didn't want it and 35.7% had no opinion on the question.

## Environmental Issues

The suggestion that there should be special open spaces in Charlton Marshall for local people to picnic and children to play met with a lot of approval with three-quarters of people in favour of this idea. There are several favoured locations that are suggested by many people – 'by the river', 'the field next to the Church' and 'the field next to the Pub' are probably the most popular although other suggestions include knocking down the half-built houses and using the space as a green area or having an open space near to the existing play area on the west side of the village. There is also a very heartfelt plea for 'anywhere that keeps our front garden from being used as a football pitch!'

The one thing Charlton Marshall residents think would improve the centre of their village is a by-pass, wanted by 341 (69.5%) of the 491 people who answered this question. A small number (55 or 11.2%) think it does not need improvement and over a third (185 or 37.7%) would like traffic calming measures.

## General Issues

The most popular way of finding the money for the implementation of any of the suggestions in the questionnaire is by fundraising, supported by 71.6% followed by sponsorship (50.9%). Moderate council tax increases are supported by just over a quarter of respondents but anything higher than that would be an unpopular move – only 16 people (3.4%) support this suggestion.

To the question on how people would like to see Charlton Marshall develop most people would like it to stay as it is (69.4%). Over a quarter would like to see it as a working community (27.7% or 143 of the 517 who replied) but far fewer would like to see it as a retirement or commuter



community (42 or 8.1% in both cases). The idea of it developing as a tourist centre is very unpopular with only 19 people (3.7%) wanting it to develop in that way.

Of the suggestions as to what would improve the quality of life in the village, over two thirds of the respondents think a bridge across the river would do so. This is the only suggestion to receive majority support. More dog waste bins are supported by 203 people or 41.7% and more events / activities with Spetisbury by a similar number – 201. Over a third would like to see more bus shelters and just under a third of respondents would like to see more tree planting. Just under a quarter think a ban on bonfires would improve the quality of life in the village but there is very little demand for more post boxes – only 48 people (9.9%) judge this would improve the quality of life in the village.

There are several additional comments about the bridge, mainly concerning what a good idea it is. 'I strongly agree on a bridge across river wide enough to ride horses over, I have phoned the council many times to make it possible to get across....'

Finally in the general comments several people write that they like the village as it is. 'Leave the village as it is, I like it'. 'There is absolutely nothing wrong with the village. It should be left the way it is. It certainly should not be expanded to accommodate more housing and the set up of businesses investment should be with existing business in Blandford where people can easily travel to work', are typical comments.

A few people suggest that the main problem with the village is the 'eyesore' of the unfinished buildings opposite the Charlton Inn. 'It's well past time that the half-built houses opposite Charlton Inn were demolished'. 'Having lived here all our lives the worst thing about the village is the eyesore opposite the Pub, which should be pulled down forthwith and returned to its original state'. This gets mentioned in several different contexts and clearly vexes many.

## The Youth Survey Report

Up to this point, reference to comments and opinion made by our village's young people have largely derived from the main household survey. As mentioned earlier a separate survey of all seven to seventeen year olds was conducted simultaneously with the household survey.

Sixty-six replies were received, which represented a completion rate of approximately 60%. Further analysis showed that most responses were from 10 to 14 year olds (59%) followed by the 15 to 17 year olds (23%) and the 7 to 9 year olds (18%).

All who responded were in full time education, 63 at school and 3 in Further Education.



The predominant method of travel to school was by car although the bus and the bicycle were used on occasions. The intention to complete full time education was strongly noted (97%) and of these 60% hoped to progress into Higher Education.

A large number of Charlton Marshall youngsters have friends outside the village and most of these use private transport, either car or cycle to visit their friends.

The survey revealed a wide variety of spare time pursuits with over 40 activities listed, ranging from seeing friends (the most popular) to jewellery making and playing the drums.

When presented with a list of activities in which youngsters actually participated, the replies reflected, not surprisingly the influence of the provision available in Blandford or at school. Swimming topped the list followed by various after school activities including music, dance and other after-school clubs. Some respondents used the Village Hall for Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies.

The survey sought also to find out why our youth were not attracted to what was currently available, the responses yielded 'nothing of interest', 'too expensive' and difficulties with transport were cited by 9 young people.

The final question asked our youth to list four ideas they would like to see the village adopting for the future. The 'top five' scoring most votes were: Village shop (37 votes), more play / football space (20), extension of the Trailway into Blandford (17), a skateboarding area and/ or a meeting place (11) and a footbridge over the river (8).





## General Conclusions

What has emerged can be highlighted by the following points: -

- Generally positive about the village and its sense of community
- It is a good place to live
- There are issues on which there is division of opinion such as housing and commercial development
- There are plenty of opportunities to support and improve the existing range of village facilities and activities
- Access provision both within and outside the parish require change
- The provision of more 'open access' amenity space by the river is widely supported
- Further investigation into the feasibility of a village shop
- The role and location of the village hall as part of the future development of Charlton Marshall
- Many of our young people not only care about their local community but are prepared to play an active part in 'making things happen'

Following final consultation with the community and response from service providers, this plan has evolved.

This is with the knowledge that the District and County Councils and their youth organisations, the Police and Dorset Community Action are committed to assisting us to achieve our ambitions.

What is needed now is our commitment to take it forward.

For all it takes for negativity to flourish is for good men to stand by and do nothing – you then become a victim of the action of others. Adapted from a quote by Reggie Leach.

**“Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire”**

**By**

**Getting involved**

**Meeting people**

**Enjoying the  
challenge**

**Making a positive  
difference to our  
community**

**Contact:**

**Ann Weatherley-Barton - Parish Clerk**

**Telephone: 01258 480227**

**e-mail: [xpressanny@aol.com](mailto:xpressanny@aol.com)**



# Action Plan

## Action Required

Pursue young peoples' activity wishes of more football play space, basketball stand and youth shelter. Continue discussions with DCC Area Youth Worker, for "outreach bus" to regularly visit Charlton Marshall.

**Complete legal work for lease of play field. Set up project group for design, plan, purchase and installation of static leisure equipment. Maintain link with Area Youth Worker. Assess availability of volunteers required to work with young people.**

Research viability of Holiday Play Scheme in Charlton Marshall and investigate schemes outside Parish and feasibility of providing transport if necessary.

**Review with Dorset County Council the provision and location of bus stops and shelters nearer to main housing areas.**

Contact Wilts and Dorset Bus Company regarding use of late buses and possibility of extending the service.

**Research dangerous aspects of A350/Park Hill and A354/Thornicombe junctions with DCC - Highways.**

Continue dialogue with Dorset County Council regarding reducing speed of traffic on the A350.

**Regularly inform residents of progress by DCC towards building by-pass.**

Set up meeting to seek volunteers for a Trailway Interest Group with the primary intent of ensuring that the extension to Blandford is provided

**Continuous review of footpaths to identify obstructions.**

Discuss ways to improve awareness of keeping Charlton Marshall tidy. Possible Village clean-up day; dog-mess awareness campaign - signs on Trailway at points where dog bins exist; more dog-waste bins; tackling vandalism; dealing with bonfire nuisances.

**Find out if there is an in-depth demand for Adult Education in Charlton Marshall and in what subjects? If so research possibility of arranging them with DCC and/or local volunteers.**

Arrange with Homewatch, a meeting to provide information / discussion in order to encourage new members. Could include talk on home security etc.

**Research setting up link with Surgeries/Pharmacies for a medicine collection and delivery service. Is Pharmacy delivery service possible? Are volunteers available ?**

Consider re-positioning and/or additional Post Boxes near areas of most housing.

**Create Village network for a Good Neighbour Scheme seeking guidance and help from the Parochial Church Council Pastoral Visitor.**

Improve the economic viability of the Church Rooms by restoring the fabric to modern standards. Work with the Parochial Church Council/Whites Trustees towards making the building physically and aesthetically acceptable.

**Pass results of Survey to Parochial Church Council for review of activities held in and the resources available to the Church, aiming towards encouraging its wider use.**

With the Parochial Church Council, finalise welcome pack for new residents and proceed towards printing. Consider need to also produce information about our Parish for general distribution which may also form part of Welcome Pack.

**Gauge level of interest towards setting up a group of volunteers to research and take forward, with Dorset Community Action help, a Community Shop.**

Consultation between Village Hall and Church Room committees to look at future and ascertain feasibility of new purpose-built shared accommodation.

**Work towards formation of an Interest Group to encourage the setting up of Social/Interest Groups including considering joint activities with Spetisbury.**

Improve communication i.e. Longer notice and forward notice of Parish Council Meetings on more display sites. Implement intention of publishing Village Newsletter. Monitor Parish Plan every six months. Revise and update Parish Plan annually.

**Continue past policy of raising funds for projects rather than increasing the rate precept.**

Create a vision design statement for the future of the Parish, including landscape, open spaces, access, land use and conservation.

**Establish an feasibility study towards bridging the River Stour involving Dorset County Council and North Dorset District Council.**

NB: Time Scale  
Short = 1-2 years  
Medium = 1-5 years  
Long = 1-10 years

## Time Scale

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**MEDIUM**

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**LONG**

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**SHORT**

**MEDIUM/LONG**

**SHORT TO LONG**

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT**

**SHORT/MEDIUM**

**LONG**

**MEDIUM**