

Public Comments Arising from the Parish Plan

The list of headings is taken from other Parish Plans and is only intended to stimulate some thinking about how we can share our thoughts about the future of our village. I welcome ALL comments on this subject! DG
(Some personal information has been withheld)

Agriculture and Horticulture

- Agriculture and Horticulture: This section seems to place a great reliance on FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) as if it was an official government body, rather than the private pressure group that it is. So far as flooding is concerned the recent establishment of a new Somerset Rivers Authority is to be welcomed and I am cautiously optimistic that proper steps will now be taken to at least minimise the impact of flooding on West Sedgemoor and Wickmoor. JH

- Would be interested to learn about the range of crops grown and their uses i.e. food or other. DG

- Generally the parish is rich in farmland and more interaction between farmers and the non-farming parishioners is desirable. Footpaths are the main point of contact and it is noticeable that there is only lukewarm acceptance of them by both farmers and walkers. Farmers see no benefit to them in maintaining footpaths and non-farmers see no benefit to them in maintaining them and also walking only on them, there is a tendency to roam with dogs outwith footpaths. A footpath group in the village may wish to explore the idea of a covenant with landowners to help maintain footpaths and to negotiate areas for dog roaming. As I mentioned in the Transport and traffic theme there are some lost footpaths and perhaps it is time to abandon some paths and concentrate on those with a realistic chance of being used regularly. Otherwise the CRN perhaps should consider a framing section where we could all be informed of the progress of the farming year and the current problems. PG

- I would love to see South Drove made into a bridle path – it makes a fantastic 10mile loop to ride via Fivehead & is one of the only soft / off-road riding areas here. More bridle paths please! anon

The Built Environment

- The Built Environment: There is a strong undercurrent of ‘nimbyism’ behind this section. If further development is to be opposed throughout the Parish, Curry Rivel will stagnate. Children of the present residents (some of whom have lived in the village far longer than the authors of this plan) will have to move away, and the village will become a colony or wealthy older people, as unreasonably restricting supply will push prices upwards and only the wealthy will be able to live in the village. That said, any development should be appropriate to the village, in other words smaller developments (say no more than 1 acre, 0.4 hectare) at relatively low densities (say no more than 10 dwellings per acre, 25 per hectare). (I don’t know the present position, but until a few years ago Central Government and District Council policy guidance was that a density of 18 dwellings per acre, 40 dwellings per hectare should be the norm. Whilst this density may be acceptable for urban development and the outskirts of large towns, it is entirely inappropriate to a village environment.) The document suggests that new housing should be built with natural stone rather than “fake stone” (reconstructed stone). This is unrealistic on account of cost, as it would push housing further out of the reach of younger buyers. JH

- In my opinion the parishioners have made quite clear their opposition to further building in CR. It seems to be a nonsense to try and turn CR into a dormitory village without enhancing employment in the village. The attempt to reduce personal carbon footprints means as many people as possible should walk to work, clearly not possible if new parishioners work in Taunton, Yeovil etc. Although retirees are often seen as cost to the community it should not be forgotten that they have a very small carbon footprint as they often do not travel on a daily basis and undertake quite a lot of unpaid work for the community, as well as cultivating quite a large`area of land in an environmentally friendly way. So homes for retirees are not so bad. PG

- In my opinion the businesses in CR are very important to protect and enhance. If any building is to be approved in CR should it not be possible to include in it some small business units? Sandpits must need more space for storage and the initiative to form a business forum for local firms is excellent. I would strongly support further work on helping the existing businesses expand in CR. PG

Comment left in the box in the Post Office from RH & KJ Tillet. Curry Rivel Parish Plan Comment. Built Environment. Whilst the new Government NPPF has rightly increased opportunities for both residential and industrial development the unintended consequences of this has meant that the potential for unplanned opportunistic urban

development into the surrounding countryside at and beyond the limit of sustainability is now being approved in a number of areas in the District largely owing to the late adoption of District Council Development Plans. We believe that , unless there are compelling reasons otherwise, further development in Curry Rivel should be in accordance , with the SSDC Draft Local Plan 2006 - 2028 in that development should be strictly controlled and limited to that which: Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and / or Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement and / or Meets identified housing need , particularly for affordable housing. RH & KJ Tilling (address provided). DG

- I am in favour of small developments that are designed with consideration of the permanent impact on current residents. All housing should be built with natural stone, or suitable bricks, not that awful fake stone! Anon
- Curry Rivel like many rural areas is being urbanized unnecessarily. Stop further development except for a small number of “affordable” homes. Anon
- Keep Curry Rivel as a village – once lost, never regained. Don’t let it become a commuter town! Anon
- No more housing estates in Curry. Only a max of 4 homes built in one area at a time and each house should be different to keep the character of the village. SF

The Business Environment

- Business Environment: Is there any justification for the continuing listing of the Bell Hotel? It is clearly never going to reopen as a pub; meanwhile the building is deteriorating day by day and is becoming an eyesore. Might not community interests be better served by demolition and redevelopment of the site (provided that this included premises valuable to the community or for small business use, and was not simply converted into residential units)? JH

- As a self-employed person working from home in the village, and one who often works remotely for a larger organisation from home: - Agree with all the ideas in Tony's posting above - Especially broadband speed - Get-togethers for local small businesses (note that Great Bow Wharf in Langport provides this too) - Register of such businesses, e.g. on the village website, could be interesting. I.e., companies that don't need to advertise services locally, but just to help with mutual support - There could be an annual "work fair", allowing businesses and community to meet - Could try to inspire children and youngsters for work ideas -

Could maybe support work experience, trainees, etc. for villagers - Post office is a good resource for local business; losing it would be a problem. MG & CW

- This post offers clear idea in support of the new visitors of blogging, that genuinely how to do blogging. MB
- Comment by J de 21.8.14 by email. Village Plan Curry Rivel 2014 Under the heading 'community' is the key point: Future development of our churches. At the present time the church of St. Andrew's and the United Reformed Church are the focal points of Christian worship in Curry Rivel. However, there are other people within the community who prefer to worship outside the village. The churches they visit include the Baptist Church in Fivehead, St. Clear's in Somerton, the Roman Catholic Church in Langport, the parish Church at Drayton and the Methodist, Salvation Army and Christadelphian churches in Taunton and possibly others. It may appear to the small congregations at our village churches that we are living in a 'post Christendom' community but there are more people of faith within our boundaries than most are aware of. These people -though following their preferences for style of worship- do regularly work together to help each other and enhance our local and wider community in various ways. It is probably almost unknown that two members of the URC mow part of St. Andrew's churchyard on a regular basis and that St. Andrew's and the Baptist church run a highly successful 'Messy Church' project in the School Hall. That often 39 children and their carers attend shows how popular this is. The two local congregations occasionally worship together, sing together and support each others fund raising events. They also, along with other churches in the area, support the youth project CLYP which enables the student worker, Helen, to carry out her important work with our teenagers who attend Huish School and other youth projects in Langport. Each church runs social events for the community and has halls which provide venues for all sorts of activities. In the case of the restored Old School Room (a case in point of cooperation between church and the wider community) more funds will be required for further work to proceed. One of the largest village events, the church fete, is organised by a team from St. Andrew's and run on the day with much help from the people of the village. It is always an inclusive and successful event that harks back to the village fetes of old. Some seem to want this event to be a 'village fete' but surely it already is. The proceeds do indeed help, in a small way, to keep the church viable but it is members of the congregation who organise it and when, in the past, volunteers from the village have been asked to help with the organisation no one has come forward. The local school, being a C of E primary, has twice weekly visits from Reverend Scott Patterson and at each end of term there is a service in the church, well attended by parents. St. Andrew's church is a large, grade one listed building and, also, has a fair sized

churchyard to be maintained. In the future, with the dwindling numbers and ageing of the congregation, it will depend on the village community whether they wish these assets to the village to remain in the well-kept state that they are at present. Without regular help from the village, particularly the physically fit, the standard will shortly begin to deteriorate. An alternative may be some financial help to fund contractors. DG

- Curry Rivel Parish Plan – Business Economy Theme Initial Consultation Meeting 30 June 2014 held at Living Pretty Present • KM – Proprietor Living Pretty Coffee Shop and retail - employs 10 staff • TB– Accountant, Property Developer, Hypnotherapy and restaurant owner • HL – landowner and farmer - employs one person • PF General Manager Crisp Clean – employs 43 people • TG –self-employed management consultant and partner in Edenhurst, a small local bed and breakfast – no employees Apologies were received from PG, Proprietor Wiltown Garage Ltd Tony opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their time and providing a short background to the Parish Plan and the purpose of bring a number of people with different business interests together. A lively discussion ensued and a number of key themes emerged that we all seemed to agree on as follows: As with any good plan, an overarching vision for the Parish village would be necessary on which any objectives, changes and actions would be based. Something like: ‘to make Curry Rivel an attractive place to families to happily live and work and create a healthy environment for small business to start up and grow’ Over the decades many of Curry Rivel’s businesses had closed and were continuing to do so. Young people were being forced to live and work away due to a lack of job opportunities, affordable housing and things to do. For those remaining there are few prospects. From an employer’s perspective recruiting people locally with the right mix of technical and personal skills is difficult. Most employees at Crisp Clean travel commute to and from the village. We all felt that despite the large number of interesting but disparate organisations providing a range of activities for different interest groups, the Parish lacked a ‘heart’ – a central hub for the community where sports and recreation and other interest groups could play and socialise and new groups created. There would be greater synergy between the various groups as well Curry Rivel would not be a first choice for businesses to set up in due to shortage of skills, planning restrictions and suitable premises. Low broadband speed is a significant disadvantage and a deterrent to many businesses that depend upon the internet to conduct their operations efficiently. It is also a frustration among many home based businesses and people who work from home as opposed to their place of employment The demographics of the Parish were not known exactly but we all agreed that it was a desirable aim to achieve a balanced population which the village certainly does not have at the moment. Key issues that need to be addressed High speed broadband is a

must for most businesses. If we don't get this it deters people who work from home from moving here and will certainly not attract established small businesses who rely on a high speed broadband Availability of skilled and unskilled labour - many people commute to Curry Rivel as houses are too expensive and it is not viewed by families as an ideal place to live With so many young people being forced away from the village to get work and housing we need to address how our young people can get local jobs and housing Selfemployment and business start-ups should be encouraged in the form of advice, premises (starter units). A survey of existing self-employed and people working from people should be carried out to establish the issues and barriers Suggestions to kick start

- set up a Portal on the website for people thinking of self-employment and for existing businesses
- identify the unique selling points of the Parish and develop a 'Welcome to Curry Rivel' pack providing essential information to people moving or thinking of moving to the area. Issue to estate agents and have a copy on website
- Social hub for the village that brings community together, offers modern facilities for sports and other recreations
- Investigate how high speed Broadband plans could be speeded up – would businesses and households contribute to the costs
- Investigate 'incubation units' for small businesses to start up with low start rents and business support and financial advice on hand
- Identify the population demographics of the Parish
- Speak to SSDC economic development officer about plans and support available
- Consider establishing a 'Curry Rivel Small Business Group'

We all agreed that some of these suggestions might not meet with universal support

- but we need to shout loudly to get change and achieve the goals. No-one present wanted to put their time into this if there was not the means and will to bring about the changes. We all agreed to meet again after the holiday season to review the response from the community to all the other themes. In the meantime Tony would summarise the discussions to date, send out the links to the Somerset County Council Economic Development Plan and contact a local Economic Development Advise with a view to attending a further meeting of the group possibly in September. Meeting closed at 20.30. Thanks again to Kate for hosting our first meeting TG 3 July 2014`. TG

Communication

- Dear Mr Atkins, We visited the Village Plan Exhibition on Sat and agree strongly with your comments on communications. The present Post Office acts a communications hub for the village and it will be greatly missed. It will need to be replaced in some way. High Speed Broad band is becoming essential if the community is to benefit from developments (Entertainment and business)available to the connected parts of the country. This is will be

particularly important for small businesses and for home working. We hope these comments are of use. TP

- I can't believe anybody (comments above) hasn't asked BT or others to sort out the broadband. I asked BT and before they came I was getting 3/4mbit after they left 5mbit. Result! Cost me nothing. GP
- High speed B/Band essential. I pay for up to 8 Mb – expect 2 – 3 Mb I'm told. I get ¼ Mb – 26 Kbs! Fraud. anon
 - I work from home – High speed Broadband please! anon
 - Fast Broadband please. MA
 - High speed Broadband please anon
 - Mobiles Vodaphone on / off not consistent signal (sic). Anon
 - The assertion that the Langport exchange including Curry Rivel may not be upgraded is simply wrong. The connecting Somerset website confirms this. PC

Community

• Community: 'Eastfield' was gifted to the Parish Council in 2007 by Aller Rugby Club on the strict understanding that it was to be used only for sport and recreation (or agriculture). At the time the Trustees of the Club stressed that the money to buy the field in 1987 (£8,000) was raised by the members of the club by the sweat of their brows; there were no wealthy donors or outside grants. In my opinion, some of the proposals now being aired represent a gross violation of trust. It is totally inappropriate for this facility to be turned into some kind of nature reserve to please the neighbours. JH

• I have long thought that the present village hall and the two sports fields at Westfield and Lower Wiltown presents Curry Rivel as a rather disparate village and that what is needed to bring the village closer together is a community hub in the centre of the village. I have a vision that in 10 years Curry Rivel would have a state of the art community hub - somewhere where all the groups could use modern facilities and offer sports and recreation facilities both for existing sports clubs with potential to start up new activities like tennis, crown bowling, etc. It could also act as base for youth organisations and even have offices that could

house public services on a part time basis. The field behind the Shell garage seems eminently suitable for this purpose offering more than adequate space for the sports facilities, a modern multi purpose building, car parking. The field is at present privately owned but I am sure if an approach were made to the owners they would certainly consider entrusting the field for the purposes described. JM

- Re comment 3rd Oct. Ambiguous is too mild a word to use about the way the PC has changed its mind over what to do with Eastfield. First arranging public consultation, setting up a subcommittee with public participation, doing a public survey, rubbishing the results and finally scrapping the sub committee so it could do as it wished. So far the wildlife , natural interest , beauty and scientific biodiversity has been largely destroyed. Wild flowers, wild orchids ,butterflies, moths, bats, small mammals all brushed away. Instead of an educational gem it is just left closely mowed at our cost! School educational visits could be encouraged, residents could be allowed to walk with their dogs,a few cider apple trees could be planted and we could learn how to make our own brew. So no it shouldn't be sold to finance other plans it should be treated as a valuable natural asset in a sea of intensively farmed land and housing developments (and I applaud the work done by some farmers to be wildlife friendly

- Long term the Parish should aim to build a modern community hub that can provide a number of key services as well as be a home for the numerous community groups, sports teams (existing and new ones that might evolve) and provide managed office services including office space with high speed broadband for new and existing small businesses. The Bell Hotel, empty for so many years, falling apart and a blight on the village, would be an ideal premises for this provided money and grants could be raised.TG

- In my opinion the strategy for enhancing community spirit in the Parish should be about increasing interactions between the many people and groups developing events and community actions in the Parish. A good start would be to make the Annual Parish Meeting a much more meaningful event. At present some groups and a representative of the School produce reports about the past year's achievements. Would it not be better to encourage all groups to attend and share details on what they need to improve and enhance their activities - in effect laying out a "shopping list" of how they could do more for the community if they had help in some way.? This may lead to other groups that are attending to indicate that they either they can provide the help needed or that groups that previously have not worked together could cooperate to synergise activities. One

example where I am actively involved is the Horticultural events organised in the village. The summer show is run by a very small group of volunteers and there is only a small overlap of people from Sedgemoor Gardens(SGC) who also run a Spring Show but using Long Sutton village Hall. Many of the SGC members are from Curry Rivel and these two organizations could benefit from greater interaction to run both Shows, much of the hardware needed could be shared etc. This must be replicated across the Parish I am sure. Turning to the Combined Charities run by a small team in the village, this gives small grants to deserving individuals from an invested pot of money donated in the past by CR philanthropists. Could this be extended by raising new funds? If the Combined Charities undertook a fund raising drive they could act as a focal point for all deserving people and activities in the Parish. This would be useful as they could then develop a hub with all the information needed to apply to many of the charities that give money. Much time is spent when raising money on finding information about charitable trusts that may be able to help. By building a database of such information the Combined Charities would be able to coordinate grant applications for a range of projects that may flow from the Parish Plan. The development of a hub for such an activity would need some sort of Parish Office. This leads onto a Strategic view of the long term future of the village hall and the other community facilities. The members of the Parish own the village hall, Westfield and Eastfield, the car park, the Green, war memorial and the cemetery. This public ownership means that much of the precept raised from us all goes to keep these places maintained. In the long term we must ask the question "do we get value for money from these assets and what is the community benefit?" If a new hub could be developed in the next 20 years would it not provide better community service if a village hall was sited in a position where it could have much better parking and access, also have changing facilities ,sports pitches and play grounds on the same site? The building could also have a Parish Office where all the databases relating to the various activities of the Parish could be stored. It could also be the Combined Charities office and Grant Officers office. A strategic goal for the Parish Plan could be the finding of a suitable site, preferably donated, the planning of the site and obtaining planning permission and then the phased building, financed partly by grants and appeals but also by the selling of existing Community Land. Turning to Eastfield, the use of this land has been ambiguous for many years, its use was restricted by a covenant placed on Aller Rugby Club before it was given to the Parish but indemnity insurance has now been taken out by the PC thus allowing the covenant to be practically ignored. The field is not really needed for an extension of playing fields as demand for playing fields in CR is not excessive (last years

annual parish accounts show Westfield playing fields raised £71 in fees), but it does sit next to a wildflower meadow that is in private ownership. This overlaps with the Biodiversity theme and begs the question of whether Eastfield would be better being partly used as a community orchard and partly linked to the wildflower meadow. However if the new hub was being developed would it be of greater benefit to the community to sell the field either for agriculture or for development. Obviously the latter would not meet with any enthusiasm from the residents in and around Holdens Lane but perhaps they could become very involved in raising money for the new hub if Eastfield was sold for Agriculture/horticultural use to make up the difference between the sale price as development land or agricultural land. These questions should be actively debated by the Parishioners and a time scale of a year set for a decision. PG

- Curry Rivel needs a SLINKY (community transport scheme using a minibus that is adapted to take wheelchairs. Existing taxi service cannot do this). It is one of the few places in Somerset without one -[www.somerset.gov.uk/roads,parking and transport/Public transport/community transport & SLINKY](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads,parking%20and%20transport/Public%20transport/community%20transport%20&%20SLINKY). anon
- The “Curry Rivel News” has potentially an important function of communication within the community. Anon
- Would like more dance based events. Also Fri night / day exercise or social events. Anon
- Why Church only?? What about the Chapel? And the Minister n family who work on their behalf?. Anon
- That’s true – perhaps you could join the group & provide the category & contents yourself?. anon
- I’m saddened and appalled that you obviously have not visited it. St Andrews is open EVERY DAY from 8:30 – 6 p.m, sometimes later, or sunrise to sunset during the winter. Anon
- I’m saddened and appalled that it’s always locked! anon
- We are saddened and appalled the Church is not given a category. Curry Rivel may be full of non-church goers but the church should be at the heart of the community. In Scott Patterson & his wife we have young pro-active Christians working

hard to make up for the disasters they inherited 12 months ago. They should be included too. JY

Countryside and Wildlife

- It's actually a cool and useful piece of information. I am glad that you shared this useful info with us. Please stay us informed like this. Thanks for sharing. ME

- Hi David I've had a quick look at the info in the zip - there's a lot of info! Am happy to go over it with you, but can't do anything in the coming days, in fact possibly not until after the 22nd I'm afraid. They've produced really helpful maps for you and records. I suggest you ring the record centre to ask what is meant by the headings along the top of the excel spreadsheet (to open this, click disable macros), to see what legal standing the various categories have, if you think this could be useful (red data, LBAP, somerset notable etc). Do they think some columns are more important than others? (I think you'll find that no individual species are really protected by law, but I only looked quickly.) (a list of county notable species is on the SERC website, the rest could in fact also be googled). Is it OK to make the County Wildlife Sites public? And why are they Wildlife Sites? Are they ancient woodland for example? The data will need sifting. I'm not sure the record centre can help you with using, filtering and interpreting the results. What do you think people will most want to know? Perhaps you could select certain species eg orchids and map them? Or just a map to show the Wildlife Sites and SSSIs to show that these have some form of protection status - there's clearly a good number of good habitats in the parish - but what about the blank spaces? There must be loads of birds and bats etc in those! Have a look too to see how recent the records are - some may be too old to be any use. Remember - absence of records doesn't mean that something isn't there, just that someone hasn't sent in a record. Records are reliant on people sending them in

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shouldn't be sold to finance other plans it should be treated as a valuable natural asset in a sea of intensively farmed land and housing developments (and I applaud the work done by some farmers to be wildlife friendly). DG

- Wow, we are getting some really good comments on this Theme and it timely as we are all trying to move on to produce a Draft Parish Plan by the end of Oct. So keep them coming please. Somebody said Theme leaders should each show our photograph with our Theme paper and I'll ask the web master if it can be done. From all these comments and personal contacts I am getting a good picture. Many villagers appreciate our lovely countryside, the great local walks and views, the wide range of bird species and wild flowers. Its good to have the RSPB highly respected reserve in our Parish with its cranes,herons,winter wetland visitors plus guided woodland and meadow walks.In the village the open gardens day was a fantastic success including several wildlife friendly areas. Its clear that the more we can experience all these natural wonders the more we and our children and grand children can appreciate our luck in living here. Knowledge is a powerful tool to help us in all this and the comments about meeting up with like minded villagers to share our local experiences would be a significant contribution to the Parish Plan now, and in the future. If you want to come along on 21st and / or 23rd Oct email me for details. DG

In my opinion CR parish is in a very good position with regard to its range of both animals and plants. There seems to be a good concentration of insects, birds and mammals in the Parish. This is of course stating the obvious because there is a large bird reserve in the Parish and mixed flocks of finches and corvids are seen everywhere on the ridge behind the Church. There are also many raptors, buzzards, sparrowhawks, kestrels and it cant be long before the red kites arrive. What should the Parish do to build on this diversity.? Does this not link with the Physical environment theme and its avowed attempt to slow down runoff from the ridge to the moors. Should we not work with FWAG (farming and wildlife group) to persuade landowners on the ridge to have assessments done by FWAG as to how their land practices could be slightly modified to slow down water run off and also benefit wildlife. Thus planting a corner of a field with trees or shrubs would help to slow down run off and also provide cover for all sorts of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals. The ideal,of course would be to link these areas with corridors (hedges) to the main wooded area on the ridge. With regard to the ridge, there are two County Council Fields leased to a tenant farmer at Hellards Hill, could they be leased in the future to the Parish for a Community orchard and wildlife preserve, could they become a community action trust? They are close to

the existing woodland (one covers part of the woodland) and could link with it to form a very useful block for a wildlife preserve. They would also link to the woodland currently owned by CR residents. Is there interest in forming a group to take this forward? PG

Footpaths: - Some stiles are inaccessible to older people - Most paths to the north of Dyer's road are very poorly maintained and not signposted (apart from misleading "footpath closed" signs). - Path from Butt Lane to Water Street very boggy! - A map on the website or paper copy with footpaths, notes, viewpoints, etc. - Wiki on website where people can add notes about footpaths Reserves / Community Orchard - The orchard off Church Road would be a great site! - We could make more of the existing private nature reserve? Local wildlife & plants - Part of the churchyard is great for wild flowers, but could be even better with management optimised for them, e.g. hay cut at the right time (set up a volunteer team?) - Some hedgerows would be nicer if not cut so low; request to farmers on behalf of the village? Can a village body approach local farmers about wildlife on behalf of the village? - Some road verges would be better if not cut until August, but cut at some point after that. E.g. Red Hill verges are usually cut too early. - Ideas to encourage wildlife-friendly gardening: Info on website, info sheets, contact details of locals willing to give specific advice; SWT has good info leaflets and an awards scheme - Knowledgeable locals could lead walks and do talks; money raised could help with resources needed for management - would owners of wildlife-rich fields allow such groups on their land? - Could invite local groups, e.g. botany group - Could start a wildlife watch group for local children, similarly a youth group of conservation volunteers; and maybe an adult volunteer group to work on private and public land, by invitation (paid in beer and pies!) - Set up a Wiki page on website where people can add sightings, ideas, etc. - local assets: good range of habitat: moors, woodlands, fields, open hilltop; corresponding great range of birds, animals & plants - Need to watch out for ash dieback, and think about how to manage their loss - Encourage people to send wildlife records to the SERC database (www.somerc.com); such recording is great ammunition for countering planning applications! Also opens people's eyes to the state of nature in the parish. MG & CW

- Have you ever considered about including a little bit more than just your articles? I mean, what you say is valuable and everything. However think of if you added some great graphics or video clips to give your posts more, "pop"! Your content is excellent but with pics and videos, this website could undeniably be one of the most beneficial in its field. Wonderful blog. ZP

- Written comment by post by Mrs KT: "The sparsely built up edges of the village, and Wiltown in particular should not be further urbanised. It is important to protect the endangered species of shy birds who are thriving and breeding in these peaceful places. To list but a few regular visitors and residents in my garden. Spotted Fly Catcher (Red list down by 47%) Song thrush (Red List) Barn Owl (Amber List) Grey Wagtail (Amber List) Mistle Thrush (Amber List) Green Woodpecker (Amber List). DG

- Thank you for sending round various thoughts and minutes on the parish plan. I'll try and come on tuesday, but in the meantime here are a few thoughts re biodiversity: I think that one aim of the parish plan is to raise awareness of local inhabitants about what's in the parish. This needs to happen before people can make judgements on what do do with the parish environment, if anything. To raise awareness, it's critical that people are involved in noting the biodiversity in the parish. Your idea of a wildlife day is great. We could also ask people to note down things like birds, hedgehogs, slowworms in their gardens, then glowworms, bats, flowers etc elsewhere over the year. Records could be collated via the record centre at the SWT. There is another tack to collating peoples' awareness, which is a questionnaire survey on what people value about their parish, without needing to name and count wildlife. Could another point of the parish plan be to record the state of Curry's environment? It's hard to say what is the state of nature in Curry parish - compared with what? But starting to note it is a starting point. Older inhabitants might remember species/habitats which no longer occur. I think paying someone to do all surveys and present a report is slightly pointless, as people won't feel they 'own' it. But an 'expert' helping out with certain groups eg bats would be helpful. Perhaps we could invite the bat group over for a couple of evenings, for example. The county council is in the process of mapping, with SWT help, wildlife networks through the county, that would inform the planning process (to go with the 2 year old planning act). An overview of what these are will be out soon (June?) - it would be interesting to see how the parish fits with this. We could ask people who are interested in surveying which groups of species. I don't mind doing a bird survey round a few fields for example, or taking some people out to learn bird or plant identification. We could organise events like glowworm hunts on particular evenings. Would go down well with families. For such surveys, landownership is important in order to get permission to survey, unless done along footpaths Part of the parish Churchyard by the way is pretty species rich in plants -would be nice if this part was managed more as a meadow, but then there's the issue of who will hay cut it - is easier to mow regularly. Offer a work party to the PCC for example? There are also local wildlife sites in the parish, which are examples of good habitat, like the meadows you look after. Well done for all the thoughts you're putting together, and galvanising people to do things, it's great that something is happening. CW

- I write in connection with the Parish Plan, and in particular the issue of balancing public access to farmland and wildlife conservation. I am Manager at Burton Pynsent Farm and we have gone to great efforts to promote wildlife friendly farming. This has involved the creation of field margins (some with wild flowers etc) , wild flower meadows, creation of traditional orchards, and managing grassland extensively. This is all managed in conjunction with Natural England under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. The margins in particular are aimed at increasing pollen and nectar sources for butterflies (in particular the brown hairstreak which is endangered), and as a food source for barn owls (voles etc) While the majority of our work has been successful, we do have issues with the margins, as members of the public view these as walking areas and when accompanied by dogs it completely defeats what we are trying to achieve by causing a large amount of wildlife disturbance, particularly nesting farmland birds. We have the same problem with land we farm in Drayton Parish.> We do try to keep all definitive rights of way (footpaths) passable, and would appreciate if you could bring this problem to the attention of those developing the plan. If the public could kindly keep to the paths this would help our wildlife. Yours sincerely. GT

- Can farmers not put electric fencing across footpaths or take out signs for footpaths or place locked gates across. anon
 - Local “flash” flooding is an issue. I would like to see community tree planting take off in our village as a long term solution. Can we get an EU grant?! T
- We should have a dog bin at the Village Green as many people walk their dogs there. anon
 - More dog waste bins should be available around the village anon
 - Dog bins needed on Public Footpaths! Please. Anon
- What about a Community orchard on Eastfield. There are lots of wild flowers already – everyone could benefit. anon
 - Dog poo bin on Dyers Rd pls!. anon

Education and Young People

- The village seems to lack a good place where teenagers can "hang out". My daughter, 27, reports that the village has little to interest people of her age. If it's true, as reported in the business section, that most businesses are one or two people, maybe there is a way that interested businesses could register an interest to take youngsters on work experience, come to the school to talk about work, etc. (I'd be happy to volunteer for that kind of thing). MG & CW
- We have Guides, Brownies, Rainbows. DO NOT HAVE A scouting presence. anon
- *Crisis for Curry Rivel Guides At the end of the summer Curry Rivel Guides will fold if no adult volunteers are found to help Jane Brooke keep it going! Please consider helping. anon
- More older kids apparatus at West field park (zip wire). anon
- School capacities should be quoted as village expands so must the intake annually. Anon

Have we overlooked anything?

- You don't seem to have any discussion of the area's heritage, and its potential to engage the community and provide interest for visitors. There's a mention of a conservation area in the 'built environment' theme, but no discussion. I'm not aware of a 'walking trail' leaflet, for example. JS

More opportunity to shape the Parish Plan

• I do think more should be done with reference to gas to the village. With information coming through about oil particles being harmful. The government investing in gas storage in wales and the cost of electricity high. Gas has and is the cheaper option. Just to say it will be expensive and not much more info. In my opinion This needs a lot more research and calculation of costs before being left out of the plan. No communication made or reported about with the nat grid for guide lines on issues or costs. I await your reply comments thank you. RD

• Hi David I've had a quick look at the info in the zip - there's a lot of info! Am happy to go over it with you, but can't do anything in the coming days, in fact possibly not until after the 22nd I'm afraid. They've produced really helpful maps for you and records. I suggest you ring the record centre to ask what is meant by

the headings along the top of the excel spreadsheet (to open this, click disable macros), to see what legal standing the various categories have, if you think this could be useful (red data, LBAP, somerset notable etc). Do they think some columns are more important than others? (I think you'll find that no individual species are really protected by law, but I only looked quickly.) (a list of county notable species is on the SERC website, the rest could in fact also be googled). Is it OK to make the County Wildlife Sites public? And why are they Wildlife Sites? Are they ancient woodland for example? The data will need sifting. I'm not sure the record centre can help you with using, filtering and interpreting the results. What do you think people will most want to know? Perhaps you could select certain species eg orchids and map them? Or just a map to show the Wildlife Sites and SSSIs to show that these have some form of protection status - there's clearly a good number of good habitats in the parish - but what about the blank spaces? There must be loads of birds and bats etc in those! Have a look too to see how recent the records are - some may be too old to be any use. Remember - absence of records doesn't mean that something isn't there, just that someone hasn't sent in a record. Records are reliant on people sending them in! CM

Other Themes: Have We Overlooked Any?

- As a person that works from Home, I would like to reiterate the importance of broadband to the far reaches of the parish. Although the CDS funding is certainly helping, it continues to fail to deliver services to far reaching properties.. a goal it was set up to achieve. It is important for the Parish Council to know that even if Curry Rivel gets FTTC broadband (Fibre to cabinet), many properties will still fall outside of the 2km fibre drop off profile and will not benefit. The whole point of the CDS scheme is to bring broadband to areas that it is not economically viable for BT Openreach to do themselves. Unless more cabinets are installed throughout the parish, those properties with little or no broadband will still not be any the better off. MF

Parish Plan - have your say

- General comment: The document gives the impression that it is an official publication by the Parish Council. Indeed the opening paragraph says that it is produced under the auspices of the Parish Council. However, apart from one representative of the Council, all the authors are self-appointed who do not have to work under the strict criteria applicable to elected Councillors. I understand that the Clerk to the Parish Council has yet to receive a copy! In my opinion the document must be read in that light. Unless and until the document is adopted (with or without modifications) it is NOT an official document. JH

The Physical Environment

- A fascinating geological report, Peter. But maybe some of it would be better as a reference document on the website? - Significant parts of the parish are lowlying, next to the Parrett, and are subject to flooding - Some parts of the parish also suffer from flash floods in high rainfall, from run-off from fields, e.g. the lower parts of Dyer's Road. Maybe we can encourage farming practices that limit such run-off, e.g. how fields are left after harvest - It might help to record such over-land flows; this can help to guide any building planning - Even at the top of the hill, the water table is close to the surface in wet weather; there seem to be natural wells that add to run-off issues. It would help to map and try to understand these ... - To guide targeted tree & hedge planting to try to reduce speed of run-off, could monitor run-off along the Curry ridge, to see where water is gathering - Encourage, or make compulsory in planning, use of SUDS (www.uksuds.com) in development, e.g. discourage concrete drives. - As well as flooding, it is said that Curry is the driest village in Somerset. So any plan should address this too. E.g. could pool (sorry!) knowledge on ideas for gardening in these conditions; we have installed an underground tank, and would be happy to show any interested villagers. - Many parts of the village have wonderful views; we can see for miles on three sides, with views as far as Montacute and Stourhead, as well as views of the church and village itself. These are great assets that should be protected in any development planning. - Maybe the footpaths maps and website section could list some of the best places for views. - As mentioned in our comments in the conservation page, "walk and talk" sessions on geology from any knowledgeable villagers would be of interest - Maybe someone would be prepared to write notes on: geology through buildings, rivers and streams, soils ... - There's a useful weather station in Curry with local forecasts here: <http://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/hdfForecast?query=curry+rivel> - Curry has a fantastic night sky on clear nights, with the Milky Way clearly visible. This is an asset that needs to be protected in the plan. Encourage good lighting practice. - Peace and quiet is also a valuable asset that needs to be protected, including from traffic noise on the A378. Can we do anything about all the helicopters?!
MG & CW

- clear culverts. clean out stream courses. encourage water butt use - bulk buy for parishioners? clean out road drains/gullies/culverts. anon
- Brilliant ideas from Ben Thorne at his talk. Every little effort helps, but they are only small steps and too much buck is being passed onto the local communities without the support money from all levels of government. anon

- Multiple pronged approach needed: 1) land management discussions with all local farmers and and land-owners (non-farmers) 2) negotiate/factor in ongoing maintenance programme with house developers 3) insist/negotiate maintenance clearing of gulleys and drains 4) negotiate sale of SCC owned fields in Curry Rivel. PG
- Please can something be done about The Bell? It could be a great asset to the village. AH
- Don't think need conservation area as can be unnecessary steps in people who want to do alterations etc. to their homes. (sic) Anon

Public Services and Public Safety

- How about a 20 MPH limit along the narrow P.O. pavement stretch? It's really scary walking along there. Or a zebra crossing there, as a "natural traffic calming"? (but they're a bit ugly). anon
- It has been noticed that along the main road the footpaths are not easily accessible, i.e. the hedging in places not trimmed back. anon
- Doctors surgery Langport and medical services should be statutory consultees on all planning applications. anon
 - How about a surgery / health centre in C.R. instead of further development anon

Transport and Traffic

- Very supportive of crossings and traffic calming through the village; a by-pass is an unrealistic option. Some lorries through the village are probably unavoidable, but the route should not be used as an alternative to A303/A358 to or from the M5 at Taunton, and the 7.5 tonne limit at Langport should be enforced. Also would very strongly like to see a proper cycle path connecting Curry to Langport. Many local journeys could be made by bicycle with a safe and well-maintained cycle route. PT & CT
- In my opinion the main concern of the Parishioners is the main road and its impact on the residents. The main road is here to stay and we must find ways of making it optimal for both pedestrians and vehicle owners. In some places there are narrow pavements on both sides of the road, surely a professional survey is needed to achieve the optimal width of pavement along the main road, this may

result in there being only one pavement but wider on a single side of the road but perhaps this could be linked by pedestrian crossings. A project could be organised to get expert advice on the optimal layout of the walkways through the narrowest part of the village without a budget being set initially, then a public debate could be held to decide the way forward. It is quite surprising how insurmountable problems can be overcome by application of novel solutions not previously considered. Control of speed in the main road occupies a great deal of people's time and effort. What has been the number and severity of accidents in the high street over the last decade? This information was not in the background papers and, in my opinion, is really essential to understand the necessity for further action. The presence of parked cars acts as a strong traffic calming presence but does encourage speeding as cars exit the area. Can signage be used to warn traffic that there are obstructions (parked cars) in the centre? Perhaps "Beware parked cars ahead narrow carriageway", this is a non-standard sign and may be prohibited under EU law of course. It has been suggested that a by-pass for CR is sought. This would be very disruptive for the residents on the outskirts of the village and would mean some of them having to lose land by compulsory purchase, it would be very expensive as engineering solutions would be needed for the undulating landscape and, as the road would not really be a through road, it would probably not remove 50% of the traffic from the main road. Perhaps a better approach would be to close the road at Fivehead.? Thus the road would only be used for access to CR, Fivehead and Swell. Access to other villages beyond Fivehead would be from Taunton. Obviously the downside is that the direct route to Taunton from CR would be cut. This is probably as unacceptable to some residents as cutting a bypass through residents' land. In my opinion the footpaths in CR are in need of a reappraisal, some are archaic and I can name two whose path is completely lost. Is it not time to reappraise the footpath network and close those that are not accessed and lost to cultivation and to open new ones that better reflect the requirements of the parishioners? A covenant with the landowners ought to be sought as generally the outlying footpaths are not maintained or even protected, often being ploughed and planted over. Conversely some residents walk over planted fields where there are no footpaths, causing financial loss. A conversation is needed between the interested parties to take the strategy forward. PG

- Yes to pedestrian crossing, speed bumps and speed cameras! - Agree that the so called cycle path to Langport is all but unusable for cycling. It needs to be wider, and properly maintained. - Agree to idea for quiet tarmac. MG & CW

- "Please, please, please, would there be a plan to create a safe crossing (zebra crossing) to go across the main road. Surely, with plans to monitor traffic, roads and buildings there should be (a) plan to protect villagers trying to cross the road in safety." anon
- I agree! I'll look at the Sutrans web site to see if we can make contact with them to discuss the idea. If anyone else has any knowledge that would be useful please let the Plan Group know. Someone will say its too difficult, expensive or impossible but that shouldn't stop us trying. DG
- An excellent and rewarding meeting last night with Ben Thorn from FWAG. Very good presentation of a complex problem. We were encouraged to take some of our questions further but Ben explained that there is no one simple answer and hopefully we can get further assistance from Ben in time to make a good contribution to the Parish Plan and any ongoing actions for our community. DG Footpaths signage needs to be improved. There is no sign for the footpath from Heale Lane towards Burton Pynsent monument. Anon
- A pedestrian crossing is needed near Chatham Place / Westfield and possibly elsewhere also. Anon
- Pelican / Light operated crossing anon
- No mention of Community Speedwatch – The Volunteers! Anon
- Make A378 into a “B” Road; Prohibit HGVs except for access & obvious exceptions. Anon
- A suitable road crossing to Westfield. Anon
- With bigger tyres on cars and 4x4s becoming the norm the road noise from vehicles between Currywoods way and Langport is becoming increasingly louder and can be heard up as far away as Battrams Farm. Nearer in St Andrews and Dyers Close the noise can be intrusive at times. There is no reason why the road surface cannot be treated with a 'quiet' tarmac rather than the current practice of merely top dressing with chippings and tar which doesn't last long . MG
- The arguments for sustainability, reducing traffic on the roads and encouraging a healthy lifestyle I should imagine that many people would like to see a proper cycle

path between Curry Rivel and Langport. The existing footpath is narrow in places often overgrown with hedge creep and frankly downright dangerously close to speeding vehicles. It should be possible to plan and build a proper and safe footpath and cycle route to Langport with the help of Sustrans and other agencies/organisations. Such a path would enable children to cycle to the school at Huish Episcopi and for all cyclists to link into the existing sustrans network. MG