

Parish & Community Led Plans in Gloucestershire

Tewkesbury Borough Report

Report produced by GRCC through analysis of the GRCC countywide database of parish and community led plan actions: December 2009



This is one of a suite of reports produced by GRCC to provide information on the status of actions arising from parish and community led plans in Gloucestershire. It will be of interest to statutory authorities with a duty to engage and involve, to organisations who deliver services in rural

communities and to the communities themselves. This report explores actions from the parish and community led plans completed in Tewkesbury Borough. Thank you to all communities who have contributed.



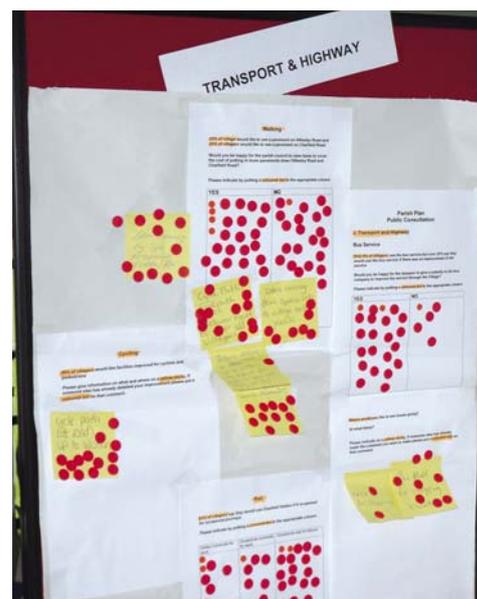
Consultation events can involve a good proportion of the local community.

What is a Parish & Community Led Plan?

A parish and community led plan is a working document produced by communities. It sets out a community's vision for the future and creates an action plan covering issues or aspects it wishes to develop, retain or strengthen.

These issues are identified and prioritised through wide and varied consultation and relate to social, economic and environmental aspects of life within that community.

See the 'our work' section of the GRCC website www.grcc.org.uk for more information or contact GRCC on **01452 528491**.



Communities use a variety of consultation techniques.

Involving communities

Parish and community led plans contain a wealth of information about community needs and priorities which can be useful to those who have a statutory duty to engage and involve people in defining local services and priorities (as set out in the July 2008 statutory guidance, Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities). Many local authorities nationwide, including those in Gloucestershire, have adopted parish and community led plans within their engagement strategy in order to increase opportunities to respond positively to local challenges and to deliver better services.

Hignam allotments were developed in response to their plan



GRCC database of Gloucestershire Parish & Community Led Plan actions

Distric	Parish	Villars	Object/Action	Theme (LSP)	TOPIC	LAA	Status of implementation	Notes/Comments
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Ensure future affordable housing sites at Churchover reflect the mixed range of housing required including affordable homes, affordable care homes and inclusive design. Encourage the public to report instances of anti-social behaviour to the police.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Anti-social behaviour & reporting	1. Natural & built environment	Completed	See local plan.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Forward detailed comments (consultation feedback) to police to raise specific anti-social behaviour complaint areas.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Anti-social behaviour & reporting	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	The 2019/2020 plan is in progress on a regular basis, see timeline.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Raise awareness of the 'Together Looking After Our Neighbourhoods' guide.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Anti-social behaviour & reporting	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Investigate the feasibility of using mobile CCTV to periodically monitor identified areas.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Communities	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Has been suggested to Gloucestershire Police as a regular basis, see timeline.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Reduce incidents of underage drinking through and purchasing.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Communities	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Working with police and GRCC to meet standards.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Promote the 'safer streets' card scheme.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Communities	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Enforce street ban areas.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Anti-social behaviour & reporting	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Police patrol areas and play areas.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Promote community transport schemes.	1. Transport	Communities	1. Natural & built environment	In progress	Campaign and website for the new buses on the 8700.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Support the development of the proposed new GP surgery at Deerpark Lane.	2. Health	Health services/communities	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Community groups of date in this project.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Join the PCT for intergenerational support centres to be established locally as part of the new Deerpark Lane development and provide the support facilities.	2. Health	Health services/communities	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Working with PCT and GRCC.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Encourage membership of existing neighbourhood watch schemes.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Neighbourhood watch	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	Working with PCT and GRCC.
Forest of Dean	Churchover	Churchover	Encourage residents to maintain a diary of incidents.	1. Crime, disorder & community safety	Neighbourhood watch	2. Safer streets communities	In progress	GRCC are encouraging.

Following a pilot in the Forest of Dean District, supported by Gloucestershire County Council, GRCC has drawn together actions from parish and community led plans in Gloucestershire into one document so that they are accessible to communities and potential partners.

The database is in the form of a searchable Excel spreadsheet where each action is categorised under a topic heading and is linked to both Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) themes. 'Traffic light' codes are used to give information on the status of actions, and communities regularly provide these updates to GRCC.

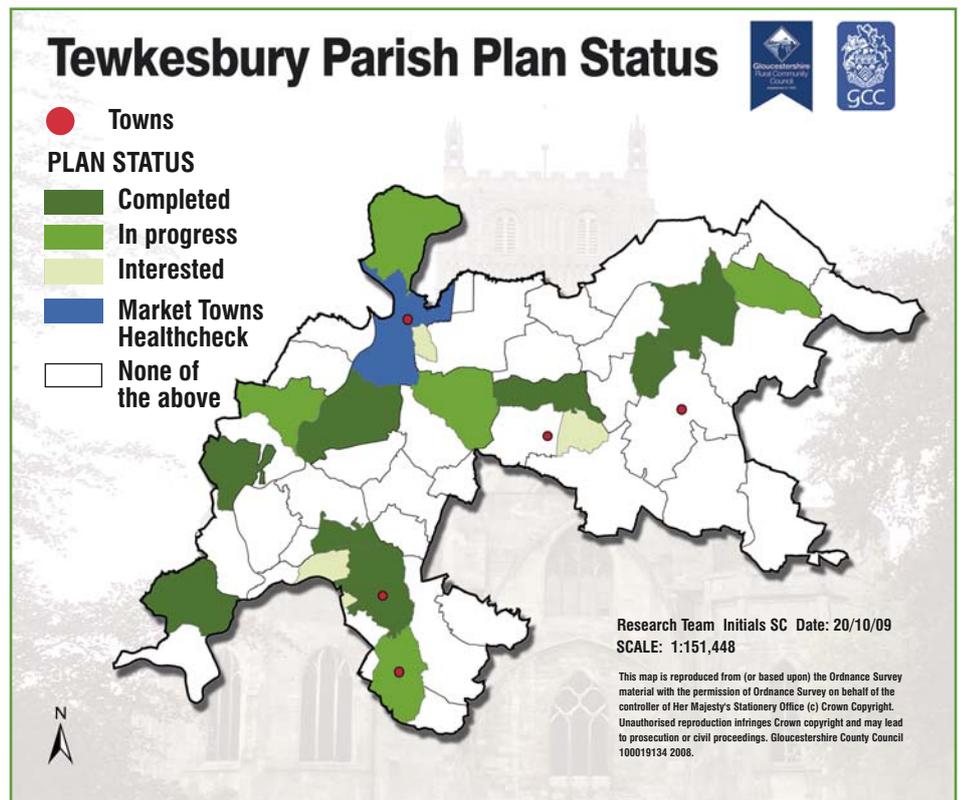
The Parish Plan database can be viewed on the GRCC website www.grcc.org.uk – follow the link from 'Our Work' and the information is also linked to MAIDeN's parish profiles.

Supporting Tewkesbury Borough communities

Actions from 8 parish and community led plans in Tewkesbury Borough are included in the GRCC database. The first of these plans was developed in Deerhurst in 2003.

Information provided by communities to GRCC suggests that a further 5 plans are in progress within the borough. Additionally, over the past 6 months, 5 communities have contacted GRCC regarding support for new parish and community led plans.

Since 2005, GRCC has not been funded by Tewkesbury Borough Council to provide support to

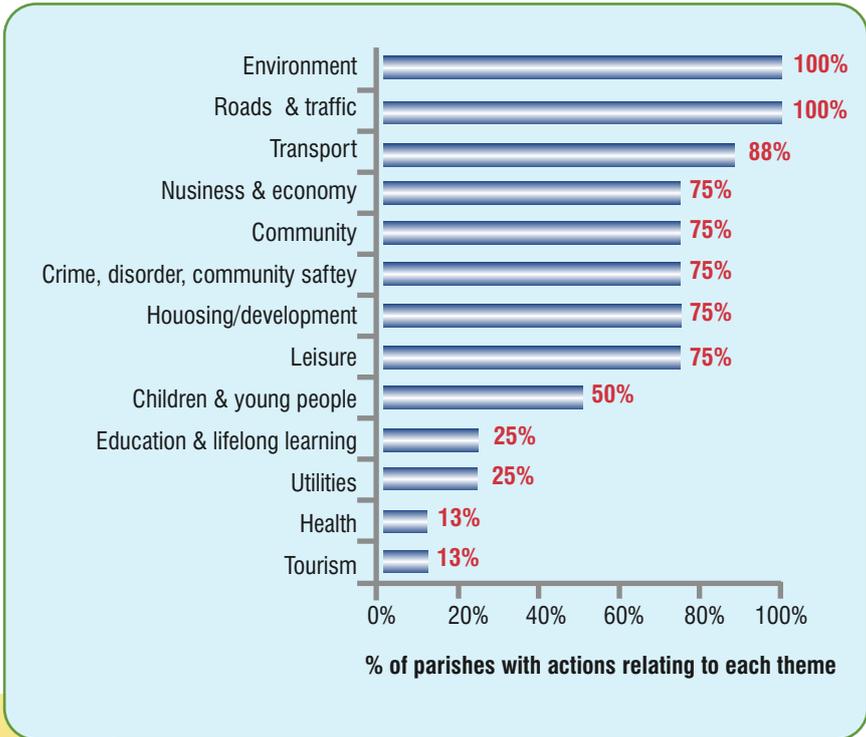


communities to develop and move forward actions from parish and community led plans and there is no longer a Tewkesbury Borough grant scheme available to support actions generated by communities.



Issues and actions raised by Tewkesbury Borough communities

The process of developing a parish and community led plan enables issues to be raised and an action plan formulated to address those issues. Although each community's action plan is unique, there are common areas raised by communities in Tewkesbury Borough.



All 8 Tewkesbury plans on the database have actions relating to the **environment**. **Parish cleanliness and maintenance** is featured in many of these environmental actions, e.g. Down Hatherley's action to 'hold 6-monthly community litter picks'. 5 of the 8 communities on the database have actions to resolve the issue of dog fouling, 5 have actions relating to tree planting for aesthetic or environmental reasons and 5 have actions relating to recycling, e.g. Churchdown's action to 'include recycling information in the parish information guide' and Winchcombe's aim to 'create a community compost scheme'.

Common topics within the theme of **community** include building or improving **village halls/ community buildings** (4 parishes) and setting up or improving a **village website** (3 parishes).

6 communities have actions under the theme of **leisure** and 4 of these relate to **developing leisure facilities** e.g. Gotherington's action to 'improve facilities in the children's playground, particularly for younger children'. Other 'leisure' actions relate to setting up **activities** such as Down Hatherley's action to set up fun days and a history event.

Some actions relate to **older people** in communities but these are often included within wider actions, e.g. "Give special consideration to the provision of housing for first time buyers and older people" (Gotherington) and "Hold personal safety and awareness raising events for older and vulnerable people" (Churchdown).

Actions relating to **roads and traffic** appear in all 8 plans. The most common topic in this category is **road safety and speeding**, with 7 of the 8 parishes having actions on this issue, e.g. Churchdown's action to 'investigate feasibility of installing mobile speed flashing signs'. Other topics on the theme of roads and traffic include **parking** (4 parishes) and the **condition of roads and/or pavements** (4 parishes). Within the theme of **transport**, 5 parishes have actions on community/voluntary transport and 3 on public transport.

4 of the 6 parishes with actions relating to **crime, disorder and community safety** wish to set up or promote local **neighbourhood watch schemes** e.g. Toddington's action: 'A neighbourhood watch scheme to be established by volunteers who expressed an interest'.

6 parishes have actions relating to **housing/development** and all of these refer to the provision of **affordable housing**, including actions such as undertaking a housing needs survey in conjunction with GRCC, ascertaining the demand for shared ownership within the parish and discussing the feasibility of affordable homes with Tewkesbury Borough Council. Another example of an action relating to **planning and development control** is Ashleworth's action to 'Investigate feasibility of developing existing redundant sites... for business development'.

Status of Parish & Community Led Plan actions in Tewkesbury Borough

There are almost 300 actions from Tewkesbury parish and community led plans in the GRCC database and the number of actions within each individual plan ranges from 17 to 73.

The status of nearly 90% of the actions is known, and recent analysis by GRCC shows that 84% of these have either been completed or are in progress. This is testament to the energy, enthusiasm and determination of community members and the

support received from partners.

Some actions from parish and community led plans can be completed relatively quickly (e.g. the production of a newsletter or installing street furniture), while others need greater investment of time and/or resources and therefore take longer to come to fruition.

Toddington’s action to build a new village hall required considerable



Tewkesbury Borough status of actions. Figures total 101% due to rounding.

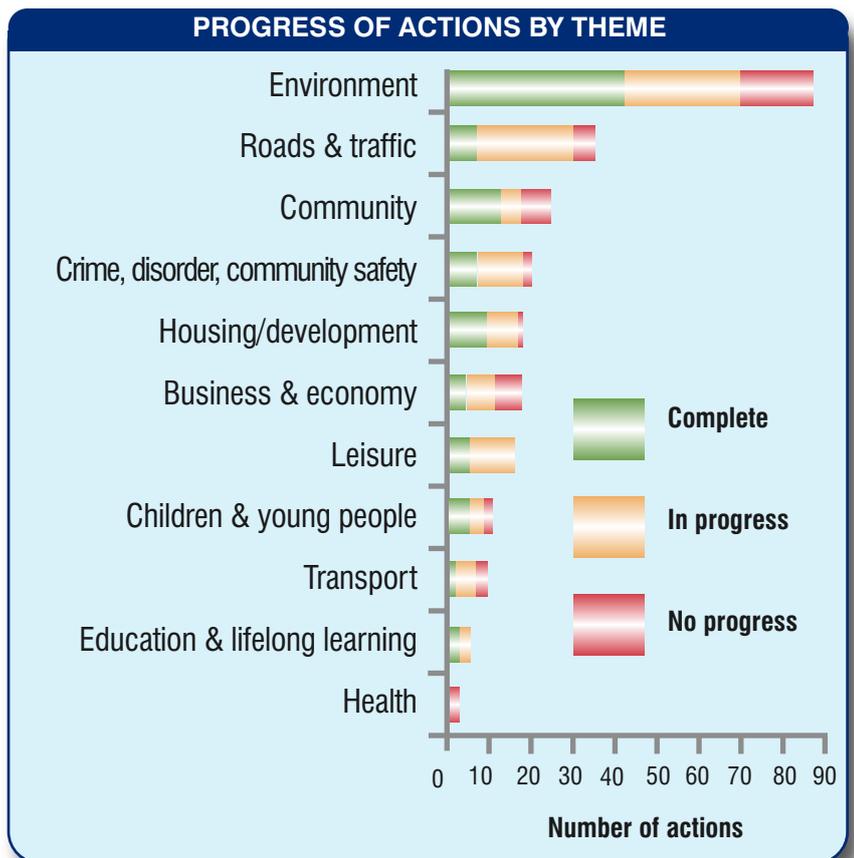
resource and project management expertise.

Barriers to progress of actions for Tewkesbury Borough communities

Reasons for non-progress have been provided by communities to GRCC for around a third of the ‘red’ (no progress) actions in Tewkesbury Borough parish and community led plans.

It is generally the case that actions that can be independently completed by the community are more likely to have been achieved. There are proportionately more incomplete actions in the categories of transport and business/economy.

In some cases, volunteering fatigue has set in and enthusiasm for an action has waned but in other cases, lack of support from authorities or lack of available funding has caused a barrier which dampens community enthusiasm. In some cases the action is found to be outside the parish’s remit, such as Gretton’s action to improve the collection of large household items.



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Tewkesbury Borough communities driving actions forward

Examples of grassroots community action in Tewkesbury Borough driving forward projects include:

- Gretton and Winchcombe set up **community composting schemes** as a result of their parish plans
- Churchdown has driven forward a number of actions, including forming a **walking group** and publishing a **parish information guide**.
- As a result of its parish plan, Ashleworth instigated a **community led feasibility study** regarding options available for a village hall and sports club and was awarded Lottery funding to develop a solution.
- Highnam has set up a volunteer committee which **maintains footpaths** in the parish.
- Several communities, including Gotherington have installed **dog mess bins**.
- Toddington reports great interest in the newly formed **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**.

In some cases, partnership working is crucial to a project's success and examples include:



Building a new village hall at Toddington involved over £700,000 of investment and took 5 years to come to fruition. This new hall is now a demonstration project in the South West on new build and energy options for halls.



Developing local recycling points was a common feature of early plans.

- Deerhurst's resilience group (which was set up in response to the parish plan) worked with the Environment Agency and other partners to secure a **flood defence scheme**.

- Churchdown worked with Gloucestershire County Council to improve **access for cyclists and disabled users** of Churchdown Park.

A study conducted by GRCC in 2008 of the outcomes of Down Hatherley's parish plan showed its impact in terms of **improved road signage and traffic calming measures**, plus rerouting of local bus services. There have been improvements in the way in which the **parish council** runs meetings and increased **representation** within and outside the community e.g. on the village hall committee and airport consultative committee. A new **website** has been developed and the number of noticeboards increased. A **village fun day** has been established and various activities have been set up such as a **walking group, litter picking group** and **history group**. All areas in the parish are now covered by the **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**.

Gotherington residents are delighted with their refurbished play area.



Benefits of Parish and Community Led Planning

'Parish & Community Led Planning enables local people to create stronger, more vibrant and more resilient communities, better able to respond to local challenges and opportunities. It represents genuine value for money, as communities across the country take on responsibility for making things happen, rather than waiting for others to do it for them.'

Commission for Rural Communities 2008

The new Comprehensive Area Assessment for local authorities assesses how well local authorities are seeking to understand and meet local needs, set priorities, improve the area and people's lives and it supports the engagement and empowerment of citizens.

This report illustrates the impact of parish and community led plans and their ability to successfully identify and drive forward actions. Use of this structured approach, which involves the whole community, can provide clear evidence of need which is essential for local prioritisation. People relate strongly to the village or parish in which they live and are more likely to be engaged and involved at a very local level. The information from parish and community led plans in Gloucestershire can be used to help identify local priorities for safer and stronger communities and hence feed into Neighbourhood Management clusters.



In Down Hatherley, there has been an increase in the number of people from outside the parish wanting to use the church since it has been put on the village website.



Many communities have developed or extended Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

Other areas covered in this suite of reports about parish and community led planning include:
Gloucestershire County
Cotswold District
Forest of Dean District
Stroud District

We keep the plan alive by reviewing it at every Parish Council meeting in part, and then reviewing it in full annually. Progress and updates to the community are dispersed through the parish council newsletter and meetings.

Down Hatherley Parish Plan case study comment

This 'bottom up', community driven and managed process empowers and galvanises communities, increasing people's feeling that they can affect decisions in their locality and increasing the community's resilience. Parish and community led planning can also raise awareness of citizenship and increase capacity and volunteering within communities. The parish council can play a key role in the development of the plan and carrying through actions. The process used by parishes, supported by GRCC, has become increasingly robust and inclusive, resulting in plans of good quality. The firm evidence of need also gives strength to funding applications.

The next step will be for communities to decide whether to refresh their plans and this refresh process will provide the opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved and to update the action plan for the future. It is essential that parishes have support to tackle this refresh process and to move forward further actions.

The GRCC countywide database of parish plans can give partners an overview of actions relating to their service area. GRCC staff will be happy to talk to organisations/ networks about how the database can be interrogated and used. Contact details are below.

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