

A scenic view of a church tower behind a large tree, with a field and horses in the foreground. The church tower is a prominent feature in the background, partially obscured by the branches of a large, leafy tree. In the foreground, a green field is visible, with two horses grazing. A wooden fence runs across the middle ground, and a fallen log lies on the grass in the lower foreground.

A Parish Plan for Sutton cum Lound 2010 – 2020

**Produced by
The Sutton cum Lound
Parish Plan Steering Committee**

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Introduction

This Parish Plan sets out how the people of Sutton cum Lound would like to see their village developed or preserved over the next 10 years. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework for the future, by reflecting the requirements of the community and outlining the actions required to achieve the goals identified.

This Plan has been published by the Sutton cum Lound Parish Plan Steering Committee, and will now form the basis for future consultation exercises with planning agencies and external funding bodies. This document is intended to be a 'living document' that will develop along with the needs of the parish.

The Steering Committee is made up of a group of volunteers from within the Sutton cum Lound community.

A total of 320 questionnaires were issued of which 113 were completed and returned, giving a 36% response rate. From these responses, the views of 241 people were recorded and analysed to produce the consensus of opinion contained in this document.

Nearly two thirds of all respondents have lived in the village for more than 15 years and by far the most popular reasons for living in the area were the country setting and the community feeling.

Other consultation events were held following the questionnaire analysis, including an open event for members of the community to further enhance the input from local people. Different events targeted different sectors of the community.



Transport and Highways

Traffic

Speeding traffic was highlighted as a major issue in all parts of the village, with 88% of all respondents having recorded that this is a problem.

Concerns were recorded about the potential increase in traffic due to the proposed development of the car auction site between Sutton cum Lound and Retford.

In terms of solution the consensus that interactive signs, spot checks and other speed calming measures would generate a culture of respect for the speed limits, but there were predominately negative feelings towards speed bumps and cameras.

Actions required: -

Look into the feasibility of having flashing speed signs at all entrance points to the village

Encourage more speed checks to be carried out in the area

Encourage a community speed watch scheme for the village

Road Maintenance

A number of comments were made regarding the poor maintenance of the roads, especially the road surfaces on Station Road and Town Street.

Pavement maintenance also caused concern especially where overhanging trees and hedges reduced the width of pavements meaning pedestrians were forced to walk on the road. This was a particular issue for users of mobility scooters and parents with pushchairs and buggies.

Action required: -

Investigate ways of consolidating maintenance issues and utilise an effective reporting mechanism



Weight Limits

The noise from the traffic on the roads in the village, particularly from speeding vehicles and HGV access through the village, is a concern and there is strong opinion (86% of respondents) that the weight limit should be re-enforced and reduced further.

There is also a clear feeling that too many large lorries come through the village during daytime hours causing a great deal of road noise as well as travelling too fast, as there is adequate provision for other routes.

Action required: -

Consult with relevant authorities to introduce a 7.5 Tonne weight limit within the village

Car Parking

The majority of respondents agree that inconsiderate car parking in various areas within the village is a real concern, but this would depend largely on where people live as some areas obviously do not suffer any kind of parking issue at all. Residents who recorded comments identified specific areas such as the shop, school and Village Hall on event nights, as particularly hazardous, as well as around the main junctions in the village.

It is proposed that these areas are identified fully and investigated to establish whether improvements can be made. A number of comments noted that parking is not a problem when the speed limits are observed.

Actions required: -

Look into the feasibility of having a turnaround point at the local school

Engage with residents to remind them to keep pavements and pathways clear to allow access for pushchairs and disability scooters

Encourage the village school to establish a walking bus to reduce the amount of parking problems before and after school

Public Transport

The general consensus of the current bus service is that it fulfils only a specific need i.e. school transport and commuting to Retford. The bus service is regarded as so infrequent that it is not suitable for casual use. This means that most households in the village have their own transport and do not regard public transport to be a viable alternative.

Action required: -

Support the need for a Community Transport Scheme within the Retford area

Village Management

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour of all types seems to have been experienced by a large proportion of respondents.

Where youths were indicated as being the source of anti-social behaviour it was identified that the lack of facilities for youths is likely to be the problem, the rectification of which should be given a high priority.

It was also frequently mentioned that a more visible police presence would be a solution that could curb some of the anti-social behaviour issues that some people are obviously experiencing.

Actions required: -

Organise activities for young people to keep them occupied

Explore the opportunities to provide a Youth Club

Regular police visits to advise people of their behavioural responsibilities

Communication

Village Communication

Most people found out about events in the village through the "By The Way" magazine, with word of mouth communication coming a close second. The Retford Times was also a popular source of information. This would suggest that the more traditional methods work better than the technological equivalent.

Three quarters of respondents thought the magazine, "By the Way" was interesting, although many felt the magazine contained too much 'church' information, didn't focus enough on Sutton cum Lound itself, and lacked specific pages for the Parish Council and Village Hall. There were also a number of comments relating to the layout and presentation needing updating to a more modern style, and that there were too many adverts and not enough editorial content.

The "By the Way" magazine however is not specifically a magazine for just the Sutton cum Lound Parish so many of the points raised were not appropriate. In this light it has been suggested that there should be a village 'flyer' or newsletter containing information particularly for the Sutton cum Lound village regarding upcoming events, Parish Council and Village Hall Committee minutes, Neighbourhood Watch news etc.

There was general agreement that the existing notice boards were not being used to their full potential, and that better use of the notice boards for more village related issues such as publishing the Parish Council minutes, notices of forthcoming events and planning applications were the most popular suggestions.

Actions required: -

Investigate the feasibility of producing a Sutton cum Lound Village Newsletter

Improve the quality and quantity of the notice boards around the village

Encourage residents to submit articles to "By The Way" and a newsletter by provision of a central collection point

Establish ways in which the newsletter could be produced and funded

Parish Council

The vast majority of people had no idea how the Parish Council funds were spent.

The village was split almost 50/50 about how well the Parish Council publicises activities with a large proportion of respondents wanting a newsletter highlighting the current issues, or the minutes being published in By The Way or on the village notice boards.

The format of meetings was also an issue for some, with suggestions that the meetings be more informal.

The biggest majority of people did not know how the planning system works in the parish.



Actions required: -

Feed comments from this consultation document to the Parish Council to help create a better communications policy

Environment & Conservation

A good number of people walk the footpaths around the village but reported that dog fouling was a problem. Blocked thoroughfares were also high on the list along with poor sign posting. Nearly everybody wanted more footpaths and circular walks around the village.

Dog fouling was perceived to be a problem in all parts of the village, with a suggestion that there was a need to educate dog owners as to their responsibilities towards clearing up after their pet.

Other suggestions for improvements included road signs for the school, church and Village Hall, as well as better maintenance of grass verges. Also, the reduction of light pollution by replacing or reducing the number of street lamps was mentioned.

Actions required: -

Actively promote use of all the rural walks and footpaths

Look into the feasibility of developing more local walks with literature produced by local residents

Improve signage and provide good local map with historical information and local landmarks highlighted.

Ensure that the verges are cut regularly

Investigate methods of control and publicise legal responsibilities of dog owners

Discuss ways to improve street lighting issues within the village

The glass and clothing recycling facilities located at the front of the Village Hall were popular with respondents although most people wanted to see the area in which they were sited improved and better managed.

Actions required: -

Consult with BDC to get the recycling facilities emptied more frequently to improve the look of the village

Continue the work to improve the aesthetics around the recycling facility

Village opinion was split between having some kind of historic building conservation and being unsure as to whether this was useful or not. A number of comments were made regarding the church and graveyard, as well as Sutton Manor, Sutton Lodge as well as the old vicarage and village green.

There was overwhelming support to preserve green space.

Actions required: -

Engage in discussions with owners of local historic building to encourage conservation and preservation of village heritage

Consult with the community to ascertain if preservation orders should be established on the trees and buildings in the village

Investigate improvements to the village green

Actively promote the use of and the need for community green spaces within the village

There were a good number of suggestions as to the location of additional seating in appropriate places around the village, with the village green being the most prevalent.

A large number of respondents requested more litter bins at various locations around the village. Some specifically mention dog waste bins, although others were sensitive to the fact that more bins would require more maintenance.

There were mixed feelings about the planters. Most people seemed to think they were fine, a small number wanted them removed.

Actions required: -

Establish a programme of improvements to street furniture to improve the village aesthetics

Identify litter 'hotspots' and provide suitable facilities

Most people thought that taking part in some sort of village competition would be beneficial to the village.

The majority of people wanted to be involved in some form of voluntary conservation activity, with the most popular being to improve the village aesthetics and bird watching.

Actions required: -

Investigate opportunities to participate in village competition schemes

Encourage development of conservation groups in the community

Leisure & Education

The overwhelming feeling was that leisure facilities for children and young people within the village are poor. The majority feel that there should be a play area on the village green on Portland Place or behind the current Village Hall. There was a strong indication that the land around the Village Hall was poorly utilised. The majority of respondents asserted that the parish should provide good quality play facilities and that there is a need for two different areas; one for teenagers and one for younger children.

Actions required: -

Identify suitable open spaces for play areas to be sited and apply for relevant funding

To undertake more young person's activities on a regular basis within the village

There was a great deal of interest in providing the village with a landscaped park or garden to provide a meeting place and an area for quiet contemplation.

Questions were raised about the provision of allotments in the community.

Actions required: -

Develop a plan for the provision of a garden area within the village

Work with County and District Council to create a local community orchard

Develop an area for use as a community allotment site



There is a significant demand for the parish school facilities to be made available to the community outside school hours, with the most popular opinion that this should be based around education rather than sport and leisure. However, since any such usage would require supervision, this seems unlikely to be a viable option. There is a very strong opinion in the village that there is insufficient provision of out of school and holiday activities, however only a very limited number of respondents indicated that their children would attend such schemes.

There is a moderate demand for adult education with the main areas of appeal being: -

- Hobbies
- Information Technology
- Arts and Crafts
- Languages



Most people agreed that a computer facility for the use of the community was a good idea.



Most respondents expressing an opinion felt that the Village Hall would be the best location, followed by the local school, and that such classes would be best run in the evenings, or alternatively in the afternoons.

Actions required: -

Promote courses that are offered by North Notts College and encourage College to use the Village Hall as a venue

Utilise local volunteers to run various courses including health, fitness and languages

Look into funding to run adult education classes

Investigate further the requirement for a community computer facility



Housing

Throughout the comments within the housing section, there is a strong theme that the existing green spaces in and around the village should be preserved and that the village will lose its character if it expands further. Less than 50% of respondents indicated that there should be additional low cost housing within the village. Of respondents who felt that housing within the village was inadequate, there was a ratio of 2:1 for more starter homes for the young against low cost housing for the elderly.

An overwhelming majority did not want to see any further development in the village.

Actions required: -

Challenge any development within the parish and the surrounding areas, including infill and green spaces

Consult with the planning department to ensure the character of the village is maintained if any future developments are agreed

Encourage residents to support the Parish Council when necessary to challenge any developments on green spaces within the village



Village Hall

Over half the respondents felt that the Village Hall was adequate for the needs of the parish, although they recognised that it required refurbishment and modernisation. However, an overwhelming majority of respondents would be in favour of a major redevelopment of the hall site.

The Village Hall Committee have been made aware of the results and comments from the questionnaire and have begun to investigate funding opportunities to assist with the refurbishment, although this is proving difficult as Sutton cum Lound is regarded as an affluent area.

Actions required: -

Improve the fabric of the facility

Improve Energy Efficiency of the building

Improve communication to encourage residents to support community functions organized by the Village Hall Committee

Encourage residents to take a more active role in the running of the Village Hall



What Happens Next?

It is an old military adage that “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail”, and this is true in many areas of life. Many expect that “something should get done” or “someone should have done something before it was too late”, but the reason for “nothing getting done” is very often due to a lack of a formal plan.

This Parish Plan addresses this and, whilst not being a document that states precisely what is to be done to the letter, sets out formally the “somethings” that the community have indicated should get done. In the Parish Plan the community now has a strategic checklist of these issues against which future progress can be guided, compared, monitored and controlled.

With this document published, the work of the Parish Plan Steering Committee is now complete. The Parish Council will now adopt the plan and consult with others to take the action points forward.

Many of the actions raised in this consultation are already in progress and the first results should be seen and reported very soon.

Some actions may require further, more focussed consultation exercises and it is hoped that you will actively participate by making your voice heard when these activities take place.

The Parish Plan is an important document that covers a whole range of topics and in itself gives a village a solid grounding for controlling its own future.



Acknowledgements

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The Village Hall Committee

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Finally, I would personally like to thank the members of the Parish Plan Steering Committee who have voluntarily given many hours of their time and exceptional support over the last two years in the production of this plan.

David Wilson
Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Committee





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