

St Osyth Parish Plan 2004



The Creek, St Osyth

 The
Countryside
Agency

St Osyth Parish Plan Your Community – Your Future?

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Your Community – Your Future?

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few months, the Parish Plan Working Party has been trying to find out what you all think of the Parish of St Osyth. What do you think of it now and how would you like to see it in 10 years time.

Data has been gathered and opinions sought. This, combined with information from the Millennium Survey produced in 1998 and District statistics, forms a broad picture of the Parish of St Osyth in 2004. Over the next few pages we examine this information, define the position at this time and finally compile an Action Plan.

2. INVESTIGATION TIME-LINE

- Annual Parish Meeting – representatives from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) gave a brief presentation on Parish Plans and how this project would benefit the Parish. Over 22 village organisations were in attendance.
- The Rural Community Council of Essex and the Parish Council held a joint meeting in the Village Hall. Representatives from many village organisations attended and took part in brain storming sessions geared to gauge the broad opinions of residents on many issues.
- In November 2002 an article appeared in the St Osyth News listing the positive points of the village as well as some of the drawbacks. There were also some suggestions for changes and improvements, all of which were designed to provoke comment and encourage residents to consider their feelings about St Osyth at present, and think about how they would like to see it in the future.
- Comments were gathered from a meeting run in St Osyth by the RCCE attended by invited representatives from all the Parish organisations.
- This was followed up with a survey that went out to every home, and an open meeting, which was held in April 2003.
- Elections slowed up the publication of the findings of the survey and meeting, but a few articles have appeared in the local press and these elicited a response in respect of possible long term solutions to traffic concerns. Interest has also been shown in youth issues.
- The draft of the St Osyth Parish Plan was distributed to local organisations and promoted at the Annual Parish Meeting along with an invitation to attend a final meeting to discuss the findings and Action Plan.

- A final meeting of the Parish Plan Steering Group was held with additional interested parties from village organisations.

3. **WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS DOCUMENT**

- The Parish Council
- The Parish Plan Steering Group which included non-Council Members
- Local organisations
- Over 600 respondents to the survey
- Young people from the Parish
- Visitors to the April 2003 Open Meeting
- Rural Community Council for Essex

Age of Survey Respondents:

Under 18 years	15%
19 – 25 years	3%
26 – 45 years	17%
46 – 65 years	29%
Over 65 years	36%

61% of respondents, almost equal numbers of men and women, came from the village with 33 % from Point Clear and the rest from other areas.

4. **SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

St Osyth lies on the north coast of Essex and covers 15 square miles. It consists of the village centre of St Osyth, the ward of Point Clear and the hamlet of Chisbon Heath.

The latest electoral register shows 1275 dwellings in the ward of St Osyth village and Chisbon Heath, with 905 in the ward of Point Clear. Over 116 of the village buildings are listed. The 2001 census records 4119 as the population, which swells to over 20,000 in the summer months.

5. **THE ENVIRONMENT**

- a. **Roads** – If you asked residents what they thought of the roads in the Parish you might receive a different response depending on the time of year you asked the question. Undoubtedly the summer months see a huge influx of holidaymakers at weekends, often leading to a build-up of cars queuing at the one main crossroad in the village. This, combined with inconsiderate parking, aggressive driving, delivery lorries and an accumulation of exhaust fumes can make the village centre, at times, quite unpleasant. Survey respondents were also concerned about the speed of traffic and felt that the village centre is hijacked in the summer by the sheer volume of traffic, making shopping and socialising extremely difficult. However, once the summer holidays are over the traffic generally subsides to a more acceptable level.

Any solution that might be put forward to improve the situation should take a holistic view of the situation, looking at the problem over the

whole year and in relation to other areas of the village. A knee jerk reaction following a bad summer is to be avoided, if only to prevent a so-called solution where residents are inconvenienced unnecessarily for the majority of the year.

- b. **Car Park** - The majority of residents still favour the establishment of a central village car park although it is noted that locals are some of the worst offenders for double yellow parking. Many doubt that motorists would actually park and walk and there is the perennial problem of where to site any car park. Whilst owners of the Priory, both past and present, allow parking on their land at The Bury, winter erosion is becoming a more serious problem and the grass takes longer and longer to recover.
- c. **Recycling** - Recycling is still popular with residents as proved by the 'Pink Sack' scheme initiated by Tendring District Council last year. Residents responded to this easy and convenient method of disposing of their waste - however some people's enthusiasm ran out at the same rate as the actual pink sacks. Many stated that they would welcome the return of the handy 'pink sack', or another easy container for storing their recyclables. Several respondents complain that they have difficulty finding the space to store this waste, which is only collected every two weeks. There is a strong indication that people prefer doorstep collections to travelling to a recycling centre, although the one at the Village Hall is well supported. The survey highlighted a desire for an additional centre to be established at Point Clear. Another suggestion put forward was for an amnesty on old white goods and a collection occasionally for unwanted bulk rubbish. Apparently, in areas of Colchester a skip is placed centrally and residents bring all these items to one place.
- d. **Open Spaces and Walking** - Many people enjoy walking within the Parish and they would like to see improvements to public rights of way. As 'rights of way' range from remote coastal paths to well used and made up routes within the village centre it is not possible at this stage to identify exactly whether or not this is a call for additional paths or just improvements to those that are already in existence. The Council is working in partnership with Essex County Council to survey and maintain existing paths. The proposal to try to establish a path that can be used by wheelchairs, prams etc was supported by the majority of respondents.

6. TRANSPORT

Concerns were expressed about the cost of local buses as well as the access difficulties experienced by people with disabilities, pushchairs etc

The lack of service to the beach was highlighted especially as it is too dangerous to walk this route. Young people in particular complained about the poor Sunday

services and the fact that there were no late buses, particularly to return them from Clacton and Colchester.

7. TOURISM

St Osyth is well known by many people as a popular holiday destination. The combined number of static caravans at St Osyth Beach and Point Clear Bay make it the largest centre for holiday accommodation in Essex.

Residents recognise the benefit of visitors and tourists to the village, despite the problems that they bring in respect of increased traffic, noise and litter. It is felt that St Osyth should have more attractions for visitors and top of the list would be an easily accessible heritage centre or museum. The popularity of the recent 'Arts Weekend', which included live music and fireworks on The Bury backs up the call for this activity to become an annual event.



Visitors to Music on the Bury

St Osyth also supports some of the finest wildlife and natural features in Essex and large parts of the Parish have been included in areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The good network of public footpaths and lanes enables visitors and locals to appreciate and admire the wealth of flora and fauna.

8. DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING POLICY

The 1998 Millennium Survey stated that there was strong and clear opposition to any major housing development, especially on the margins of developed areas where it was seen to be detrimental to the countryside.

In 2003 the views have not changed. The RCCE's findings showed that people expressed concern that community spirit and traditions would be diminished by any expansion of the village. Participants felt that the village was big enough to support existing core businesses such as the Post Office, the two butcher's shops, Londis, Spar etc without the need for further growth.

The latest survey showed clearly that this was still a popular view with only 1% of respondents supporting the building of any large estates. There were also some very strong comments on development collected at the Open Meeting such as “..keep development to a minimum as we will soon have no countryside left...”, and “definitely no more housing.”

However, 23% of respondents would support some additional single dwellings in controlled locations and 23% also felt that there should be more low-cost housing for sale or rent to provide young St Osyth residents with the option of staying in the village. People would still prefer to buy rather than rent their accommodation. A large percentage of respondents again stated that no further accommodation was required. There was little support for additional caravan parks or general infill. 20% would also like to see some small workshop provision as this would provide local employment and help the economy.

9. EMPLOYMENT/LOCAL BUSINESS

There are over 40 commercial premises within the Parish, three quarters of which are shops, plus fast food outlets, several pubs and offices. The St Osyth Business Association (SOBA) have an ongoing membership of approximately 70. The survey respondents felt that local businesses should be encouraged to help create more local employment opportunities. As mentioned previously, the creation of small workshops was generally favoured as well as development of tourist attractions as these also create employment.

The Orchards Holiday Park in Point Clear Bay is currently the largest employer within the Parish although there are others outside the holiday industry who employ many people, such as the food processing factory at High Birch Farm at Chisbon Heath, and the Primary School.



The Red Lion, Clacton Road

The Parish Council has actively pursued the inclusion of the provision for a small Business Park in the new Local Plan currently in draft form.

10. EDUCATION

- a) **Children**- it appears that there are no concerns regarding provision for the younger aged children with adequate playschool, toddler group and child minding facilities. However there does appear to be a need for after school clubs and holiday play schemes, perhaps reflecting the fact that in many families both parents may be working.
The Primary School is already oversubscribed and many children are still being educated in demountable classrooms adjacent to the main school.
- b) **Adults** – the survey called for additional adult education provision suitable for all age groups. Learning IT skills is still on top of the list for classes and a call for more fitness and arts and crafts activities were listed as important. Other suggestions received were for classes in local history, practical DIY, yoga, dance, fitness for older people and sign language.

11. SERVICES

The survey revealed that approximately 18% of residents experience problems with their physical and mental health. Many of these have highlighted difficulties with transport when they need to attend health clinics, hospital etc. They would like to see day care facilities situated more conveniently, preferably a central village location with parking.

Many respondents expressed great concern as both the village doctors' surgeries are full and their lists closed. It is also very difficult to find a National Health dentist prepared to take any more patients.

12. THE POLICE AND SECURITY

The survey revealed that residents of St Osyth have a poor opinion of the service provided by the local police. Despite low crime statistics many people have a sense of unease and would like to feel more secure both in their homes and when they are out. They would like to see more obvious evidence of police patrols and better enforcement of traffic restrictions. Many comments were received from people claiming to have witnessed police patrol cars ignoring illegally parked vehicles on double yellow lines and this has not helped public relations.

Respondents to the recent survey, the Millennium Survey and the various open meetings all felt that there should be more for young people to do in the village. Some residents feel threatened by groups of youngsters, something that naturally the young people themselves are apparently quite aggrieved about, as they feel that they are all stereotyped as trouble makers by the older population. Some respondents called for the installation of CCTV cameras around the village and better street lighting.

13. YOUNG PEOPLE – THEIR COMMENTS

Age of respondents	Number of respondents
Under 10 years	31
11 – 14 years	24
15 – 18 years	14

It had been hoped to receive more feedback from the younger generation and a separate page had been included with the survey specifically aimed at finding out their opinions and needs. It appears that the generation gap between youngsters of today and the more elderly population has never been wider, with the perception that young people pose a real threat to their security. Despite the fact that there is a relatively low incidence of groups of youths apparently loitering at a variety of locations, all young people are tarred with the same brush. However most of the adults, according to the main survey, would like to see young people more involved in the community and they all feel that there is not enough for them to do.

There was a call for more local jobs to be available to young people. Several respondents had part time jobs outside the village but found that the bus timetable made weekend work, especially on Sundays difficult. The sort of work that they would like to be available in the village included that of shop assistants, waitressing, apprentice work, regular Saturday jobs and gardening. Everyone thought that a central notice board advertising such employment would be really useful as many didn't have the confidence to approach prospective employers.

The bus timetable is also apparently not ideal for socialising in Clacton or Colchester with the last bus being too early for many. They also felt that the fares were expensive and the buses were not reliable enough.

Half of the young people expressed concern about their personal safety when walking in the village and they called for more police presence, both on foot and in cars. One person suggested a Junior Neighbourhood Watch scheme with teenagers looking out for younger children.

Most of the young people would like to see a youth club return to the village and they would also like to see a newsletter or page in the St Osyth News dedicated to their age group. Several young people even said that they would be interested in helping with this but unfortunately as the surveys were confidential we cannot contact them directly.

14. PUBLIC UTILITIES

Most of these were considered to be reasonable by respondents to the survey. The electricity supply, refuse collection and telephone were considered good but mobile phone reception was, not surprisingly, thought to be poor. However, the installation of mobile phone masts within the village remains controversial. Gas provision has been extended to many more homes in the village and Point Clear in response to public demand although not every part of the village has been connected. Street cleaning, winter road gritting and street lighting were considered poor. Water pressure, or lack of it, during the peak holiday times remains a concern for many people.

The Council are currently reviewing the schedule that TDC has for street cleaning and have come up with some proposals that will see more areas swept while others are swept less. Local people might be responsible for some of the litter, but the amount of rubbish lying in the roads greatly increases during the peak holiday times.

15. RECREATION AND SPORTS FACILITIES

There are now three main recreation areas and playgrounds within the village:

- Cowley Park, where cricket and football are regularly played, and where the playground area has been revamped and a youth shelter erected
- Point Clear Playground, designed for the youngest members of our community
- The Priory Meadow, currently an open green space but where the Parish Council are planning to develop an area suitable for the needs of teenagers.

Despite concerns with the playground at Point Clear, which has experienced damage to fencing apart from other things, most people felt the recreation facilities in the village were good or reasonable. Since the survey Cowley Park has seen major improvements that appear to be popular.

It was felt that there was room for improving the existing sports facilities at Cowley Park, especially the Tennis Court, and a long list of suggestions for additional activities emerged although many would be better located at one of the big halls. Dancing topped the list for both sexes, followed by keep fit, aerobics for girls and women, yoga, pilates and roller-skating. Comments included the need for better tennis courts, provision for motorbikes and grounds free of dog excrement.

16. THE CEMETERY

St Osyth is fortunate enough to have its own cemetery. Within the Cemetery is a museum and archives managed by the Historical Society, and a wild flower meadow. The Cemetery is a well-kept and attractive place with benches and an abundance of wildlife to watch. The majority of the respondents to the survey agreed that the Cemetery should be regarded as a place where any member of the public can go to walk or sit, whether or not they have an official reason for visiting. However, it appears that there are still many residents who are unfamiliar with this valuable village asset.



St Osyth Cemetery

17. THE OLD PRIORY MEADOW SCHOOL SITE

a. The Priory Meadow Recreation Ground

Formerly the playing fields of the old Priory Meadow School, and now in the ownership of the Parish Council, the Survey asked residents how they would like to see this area evolve. Suggestions received include: adventure playground, benches and litter bins, street lighting, area for ball games, picnic area, place to walk dogs

although some would prefer no dogs, environmental area, community gardens, shelters for all age groups, a skateboard ramp.

b. A New Community Facility

St Osyth Almshouse Association have planning permission for a large, two story building to be used as a community facility on part of the old Priory Meadow School site. However, it now appears that the new secondary school, Bishops Park, will offer a number of services to the surrounding communities, including St Osyth, and until the exact level of provision has been ascertained this project has been delayed with no expectation of a speedy resolution.

The 1998 Millennium Survey originally highlighted the need for a day centre in the village based on the number of residents with health and disability problems that affected them on a day-to-day basis. It also revealed that a high percentage of residents were aged 60 years or over.

St Osyth also has private and a local authority run residential homes, sheltered private accommodation and a large number of bungalows and almshouses specifically designed for the older population. If this is coupled this with statistical trends over the whole district it would indicate that the percentage of older people living in the parish is unlikely to reduce over the years.

The 2003 survey specifically asked residents to consider what sort of use they would like to see provided in the new community facility and a wide range of suggestions were received. There was some concern expressed that any facility should not be limited to a single age group, but should cover the whole age spectrum. The majority of respondents highlighted the need for non-age specific day care facilities but provision of the elderly came a close second. Listed below, are the main suggestions in order of popularity:

- Day care centre with a clinic and medical facilities
- Community Centre for older citizens with meals and entertainment
- Leisure centre with play scheme
- Youth centre
- Adult education centre
- Centre for all to use
- Centre for adults with disabilities including workshops for independent living skills
- Evening social club for young people
- Doctor/optician/dentist/chiroprapist
- Advice centre
- Social services
- Supermarket with parking
- Landscaped gardens
- Library
- Banking facilities

18. MARTINS FARM

Martins Farm is located opposite the old Shangri La Caravan Park, along the B1027 on the way to Colchester. It used to be the local landfill site but Essex County Council has gradually reclaimed it since the tipping ceased. The area is now being turned into a Country Park and should have seen the first phase opened this spring. It is intended that the site will be eventually handed over to Tendring District Council, with some responsibilities ultimately passed to the Parish Council. Residents felt that the following items were essential for inclusion on this site and many are already being implemented:

Good parking
Good disabled access and cycle path
Good litter control
Plenty of seating and picnic areas

Bridle ways and footpaths
Nature trail
Toilets
Dog walks



ST. OSYTH PARISH PLAN – ACTION PLAN

19. ACTION PLAN – actions arising from the evidence in this Plan

All the evidence gathered from the various sources show that St. Osyth and Point Clear continue to be regarded as a 'nice' place to live. Listed below are some of the main issues that have been highlighted by the report and suggestions of possible action:

PROPOSED ACTION	LEADER	TIMESCALE
1. INFRASTRUCTURE PROBLEMS		
There are a number of infrastructure problems, which can only be solved by the District, and County Councils. The Parish Council and village must enlist the co-operation of the principal authorities in seeking solutions.	The Parish Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council.	Ongoing.
The Primary Care Trust (PCT) should be advised of the lack of medical facilities available within the village, especially the full lists at both surgeries	The Parish Council and The Primary Care Trust.	1 year.
The Tendring Hundred Water Company should be advised by the Parish Council of concerns re water pressure, particularly during the summer months.	The Parish Council and Tendring Hundred Water.	Immediate.
2. ENVIRONMENT		
The District Council must be asked to address the lack of public car parks in the village. The Parish Council has had discussion with landowners in the past, but the associated costs have beaten them. However, the Steering Group felt that the Parish Council should, in co-operation with the Principle Authorities, re-open discussions with landowners to investigate the possibility of either purchasing, or leasing, suitable land for this purpose.	The Parish Council and Tendring District Council.	1 – 3 years.
Residents are looking forward to the time when the parking restrictions are decriminalised, the Parish Council should work actively to ensure that sufficient warden cover is allocated to the Parish.	The Parish Council and Tendring District Council.	October 2004.

ST. OSYTH PARISH PLAN – ACTION PLAN

PROPOSED ACTION	LEADER	TIMESCALE
<p>The Parish Council should be encouraged to use the consultation on Planning matters referred to them by Tendring District Council, to encourage small business use of premises in the village, and redundant buildings in the countryside, provided that they are suitably located for the purpose.</p>	<p>The Parish Council and Tendring District Council.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Footpaths around the village should be way marked and efforts continued to bring about the creation of wheelchair access footpath alongside the Mill Dam. Strong links with Essex County Council, through the P3 Footpath Partnership Scheme, should be maintained and encouraged as a valuable contribution to the work on village footpaths.</p>	<p>The Parish Council and P3 Team at Essex County Council.</p>	<p>Current.</p>
<p>Recycling initiatives should be encouraged. The Point Clear Community Association, for example, should be urged to investigate the possibility of siting a further collection point for bottles, paper, clothes etc in their car park.</p>	<p>The Parish Council and Point Clear Community Association.</p>	<p>Immediate.</p>
<p>The Parish Council should be asked to contact the District Council to request a scheme to dispose of larger unwanted items of rubbish.</p>	<p>The Parish Council and Tendring District Council</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>3. DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING</p>		
<p>The Parish Council, with the District Council, should continue to support the establishment of a light industrial business park to the north of the B1027 and help, as appropriate, any application from a landowner to facilitate such a development</p>	<p>The Parish Council, Tendring District Council and St Osyth Business Association.</p>	<p>1 - 5 years.</p>
<p>The Parish Council should oppose any major housing scheme. However smaller infill developments should be regarded more favourably with the Parish Council investigating what benefits could be accrued to the village through arrangements such as 'section 106 agreements'. Any 'ribbon development' ought to be strongly resisted.</p>	<p>The Parish Council in conjunction with Tendring District Council, Planning Department.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

ST. OSYTH PARISH PLAN – ACTION PLAN

PROPOSED ACTION	LEADER	TIMESCALE
The Parish Council should be urged to consult with the principle authorities and support the offer from the St Osyth Almshouse Charity for a multi-purpose building on the former Priory Meadow school site.	The Parish Council in Tendring District Council and Essex County Council.	5 – 10 years.
The Parish Council should continue to support the provision of low cost housing.	The Parish Council, the Almshouse Charity and Colne Housing.	Ongoing.
The Parish Council, in consultation with the principle authorities, should seek to upgrade a number of unmade roads within the Parish.	The Parish Council in conjunction with TDC and Essex County Council.	1 – 10 years.
The Parish Council should be urged to support the campaign for Broadband access to the Internet for St Osyth residents. This will improve the technological use of modern equipment for both residents and existing businesses while also opening the doors for new businesses to locate here.	The Parish Council in conjunction with St Osyth Business Association.	1 year.
4. YOUTH		
The County Council should be asked to consider facilitating a later bus service connection with Clacton and Colchester. This would enable teenagers from St Osyth and other rural areas to attend clubs and functions in these towns.	The Parish Council in conjunction with Essex County Council.	1 year.
The Parish Council should continue to seek funding assistance for teen and rising teen amenities on The Priory Meadow Recreation Ground. The two existing playgrounds are suitable for young children but more adventurous facilities are required to meet a total absence of recreational services for this age group.	The Parish Council in conjunction with Tendring District Council and Essex County Council.	1 – 4 Years.
A board should be erected at a suitable location for the advertisement of local job vacancies, particularly for young people.	The Parish Council in consultation with Job Centre and St Osyth Business Association.	Immediate.

ST. OSYTH PARISH PLAN – ACTION PLAN

PROPOSED ACTION	LEADER	TIMESCALE
<p>5. TOURISM</p> <p>Tourism initiatives should be promoted. A published guide listing the historic merits of the village centre should be produced and a further guide to local footpaths should be encouraged.</p>	<p>The Parish Council with St Osyth Business Association and the Holiday camps.</p>	<p>1- 3 years</p>
<p>The importance of the richly diverse wildlife of the Parish will be promoted.</p>	<p>Essex Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Consideration should be given to the establishment of a heritage centre, possibly in conjunction with an information point for visitors, in a central location.</p>	<p>The Parish Council, TDC and English Heritage</p>	<p>1 – 10 years</p>

20. SUMMARY AND REVIEWS

The compilation of the Plan and subsequent Action Plan has been a rather protracted affair due to the amount of work and the number of people involved. However, this final document gives a good indication of the health, status and opinion of the Parish at this particular moment in history and should, in particular, provide a good working document for the Parish Council to adopt.

The Parish Council, in co-operation with the principle authorities should endeavour to ensure that the issues highlighted in the Action Plan are tackled promptly, or taken into consideration when relevant. Progress reports should be given back to residents, either through the St Osyth News or by reports that would be distributed to every household.

