

Spaxton Parish Plan - Part 2

Document prepared by the Spaxton Parish Plan and Village Design Statement Working Party.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Commercial Developments

Environmental

Footpaths

Gas Supply

Housing

Law Enforcement

Public Transport

Recreation and Young People

Roads and Traffic

Appendix 1- Results of 2002 Questionnaire

Appendix 2 - Useful telephone numbers

INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of:

- 1) Areas of concern which were raised by the inhabitants of Spaxton in their responses to the 2002 Parish Plan and Village Design Statement Questionnaire.
- 2) Actions taken by the Parish Plan and Village Design Working Party including summaries of the replies from various official bodies to communications from the Working Party explaining these areas of concern.

A summary of the results of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1.

Copies of the letters to and from official bodies are lodged with Spaxton Parish Council.

Responses concerned with the appearance and physical structure of the village are covered in Part 1 - Village Design Statement.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Concerns regarding employment

There is widespread support for small scale commercial developments that do not unduly affect the visual character of the area (see Appendix 1, question 8). In particular, parishioners wished to see more of the following: cottage industry, craft workshops, market gardening, farming, community shops, home working, new technology, and bed and breakfast accommodation.

More people work outside of the parish than within it, according to the 1996 village appraisal. More local employment would mean less travel-related pollution and a more sustainable way of life for the parish. In addition home-working would bring employment to those

who for various reasons, such as having young children at home, are currently not able to participate in paid work.

There would seem to be local support for the following:

Farming and market gardening.

The parish already contains people who have been involved in cottage industry and craft workshops. It would be well worth recruiting them onto a sub-group to examine this issue.

Another approach would be to promote the use of the village hall for art and craft shows.

New technology and home working call for the participation of enlightened employers. This seems to be an area where involvement of local and regional government would be particularly appropriate.

Expansion of bed and breakfast accommodation could be encouraged through co-operation between the parish council, the local tourist board, and the AONB.

Action Taken

A correspondence was engaged in with Somerset County Council regarding the concerns expressed about employment. It is clear from this that local people have to take the initiative if they want anything to happen. The South West of England Rural Development Agency has a strategy document entitled Rural Renaissance (copy with Parish Council) which details how grants and other support can be applied for. In addition the Somerset Community Chest offers small grants for community projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Concerns regarding dogs

Concerns were expressed about dog fouling within the built up area of the village and uncontrolled dog barking occurring at antisocial hours.

Action Taken

A correspondence was opened with Sedgemoor District Council regarding the concerns expressed about dog nuisance. Sedgemoor District Council's (Dog Fouling) Order 1999 requires people in charge of dogs to clear up fouling on roadside verges where there is a speed limit of 40 mph or less and on footpaths and bridleways where there is a boundary on each side of the path. Dog walkers are expected to carry with them a plastic bag to pick up their dog's mess and dispose of it hygienically. The Order does not apply to agricultural land, woodland, marshland, moor, heath, or rural common land. There are substantial fines for failure to clear up dog fouling where the Order applies and new signs have been displayed on roadside signs within the speed restricted area and at the entrances to Church Path. Dog Wardens can investigate excessive barking and cases of fouling in controlled areas. Individuals could report dog fouling and excessive barking and Sedgemoor District Council could take court action if the individual who reported the nuisance was prepared to act as a witness in court.

A note on this subject was placed in the 'Spaxton Community News' for August – September 2003

Concerns regarding Public Toilets

The 2002 questionnaire drew several comments on the lack of public toilets in the village.

Concern was expressed over the use of side lanes and footpaths as toilets. Now that the Quantock Greenway runs through part of the village, the need may be greater.

The Working party felt that the benefits of providing public toilets would need to be weighed against the cost of building and maintenance and the possible problems of vandalism and maintenance of good hygiene. A grant would be needed initially and perhaps perpetually to cover cleaning and repairs.

Action Taken

A correspondence was opened with Sedgemoor District Council regarding the concerns expressed about Public Toilets. It appears that the maintenance of toilets is not a statutory duty for the council and, due to financial constraints, there are no additional facilities planned for Sedgemoor.

Concerns regarding Litter

Respondents expressed concern regarding litter on roads, both built-up, and rural, within the parish. Especial concern was expressed regarding the presence of numerous plastic bottles and bags in ditches and other watercourses.

Action Taken

A correspondence was opened with Sedgemoor District Council regarding the concerns expressed about litter. The council operates over 700 litter bins and aims to empty them when they are no more than three-quarters full. They are currently carrying out a review of bin use and may relocate some underused ones into areas with unmet needs.

A note was placed in the 'Spaxton Community News' for August - September 2003 suggesting that, whenever possible, walkers pick up litter they see on their route and dispose of it properly. It would also help if residents picked up litter which had been dropped outside their own homes. Sedgemoor District Council currently (October 2003) offers litter collecting packs to concerned individuals.

Concerns regarding Aisholt Common

Some concern was expressed regarding the possible overgrazing and damage of Aisholt Common.

Action Taken

A correspondence on this matter was opened with the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Service. The correspondent said that there had been some discussion with English Nature regarding the Common, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The grazing had been scheduled to cause minimal damage to the common. The intention is to establish a Countryside Stewardship Scheme for Aisholt Common, but this will only be commenced once a similar scheme has been piloted for the common near Over Stowey.

Concerns about Turf Production in the AONB

Concern was expressed about continuing operations by Somergreen Turf within the AONB.

However the Parish Plan Working Group is aware of advice from Sedgemoor District Council that the Public Enquiry in 1997 found in favour of continued operation and consequently decided not to pursue this matter.

FOOTPATHS

Concerns regarding footpaths

The Village Appraisal of 1996 recorded that 64% of the persons who responded used footpaths, 30% more than once per week, 30% more than once a month and 30% more than 6 times per year. This amounts to very substantial usage. However, it is known from a full survey carried out at the request of the County Council (The Milestones Survey, 1994/5) that only about 30% of the network is easy to use, the rest being in equal proportions difficult or impossible to use. Also 65% of respondents to the Village Appraisal

requested details of paths be published.

In the vast majority of cases paths described as 'impassable for all but the most determined' were so classified due to obstructions, mostly a result of neglect rather than deliberate obstruction, the usual causes being due to uncurbed vegetation, or in a few cases lack of restoration after ploughing. Other problems included lack of waymarking, and stiles and gates in such bad repair as to make the walk difficult. A recent partial survey (May 2002) has indicated that the condition of paths has changed very little.

The attractive countryside can be appreciated from a car and roads, but a good deal more is to be seen and enjoyed from walking and riding away from traffic. It is also evident that the local economy suffered greatly from the Foot & Mouth restrictions on access to the countryside; from this it is probable that there would be gains to the local economy by attending to rights of way maintenance. Bed and breakfast business is supported by 75% of respondents to the questionnaire and it is reasonable to assume that such unobtrusive businesses and support for local shopping would be enhanced by improved condition of the rights of way network.

Action Taken

In November 2002 there was correspondence with the Rights of Way Officer for Sedgemoor District Council. This was followed by a meeting between the officer and a representative of the Parish Plan and Village Design Statement working party, who also jointly visited a selection of paths. The meeting discussed paths which had been designated by the Parish Council during the course of the last 13 years as priority paths for general upkeep and maintenance. The basis of selection was to provide local circular routes and through routes, typically allowing walkers to reach the hills from the village without recourse to a vehicle.

Some paths had been added to the priority list at the request of walkers, and by riders in the case of bridleways. The Rights of Way Officer has been advised of the location of recurrent problems on the priority paths and others where there is serious damage due to

surface erosion by running water. This particular problem mainly affects bridleways where erosion leaves a narrow channel which is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, for horses to negotiate.

Individual route guides have been published for priority paths from time to time in Community News, these will be updated and republished. There is also interest on the part of the AONB Office in promoting a circular route to the south-west of Hawkridge reservoir of around 6 km. The AONB office is planning an interpretation board for Hawkridge Reservoir, and the Working Party suggested to the District Council that they might consider siting one in the conservation area around the parish church.

The Rights of Way Officer says that it is planned to institute regular maintenance on the priority paths. This contrasts with the current position where maintenance is only carried out as soon as practicable after receiving a complaint re path condition. Such a response is often too late and, due to financial constraints, too little. In view of these plans for routine maintenance the officer has been advised of the priority areas and work to improve paths is expected in the near future. A further benefit to rights of way is that the Rights of Way Officer's invitation to Cannington College to help with paths in the parish as part of practical course work for students has been taken up. Some drainage repairs and improvement are included in the students' work.

Waymarking will be part of the work to improve priority paths and attention to other paths will be given within the limitations of available resources. It has been noted that in other areas maintenance work is sometimes carried out by local volunteers - if anyone wishes to be involved in this the Parish Council would be pleased to hear from such persons. Users of rights of way may report problems to the Parish Council or to Sedgemoor District Council.

The Parish Council holds details of path routes, if there is any uncertainty about the matter.

GAS SERVICE

Concerns regarding the possibility of providing mains gas

A few respondents enquired as to the possibility of mains gas being laid on to the main village.

Action Taken

A verbal rough estimate was obtained from Fulcrum Connections, Ferry Rd, Grangetown, Cardiff CF11 0X (contractor for Transco). This company suggested that such works would cost around £200,000 - to be shared among those who take up the service. It seems that the service could only be provided to customers fairly closely grouped, viz. a cluster at Four Forks and a cluster from Spaxton School to West End i.e. a total of about 200 dwellings.

Even with a 100% take up that would mean about £1,000 installation fee to each customer.

Clearly the provision of a gas service is currently out of the question. If Transco were, for some other reason, to bring a main closer to Spaxton than the existing one along the A39, it would be worth asking again.

HOUSING

Concerns regarding residential accommodation

Both the 2002 questionnaire and the 1996 Village Appraisal /Review highlighted concerns regarding the shortage of housing available for young people, in the form of affordable starter homes in the private sector and also in the preferential allocation of Council houses to people from outside the Parish. Both of these cause a drift of young people away from the village and from the support of family and friends.

Concern was also expressed for those at the other end of the age

spectrum, the lack of Nursing Home / Sheltered Accommodation for the elderly – again causing movement away from the village.

Action Taken

A correspondence was opened with Sedgemoor District Council regarding the concerns expressed about allocation of Council housing in the village, requesting that these concerns be taken into account in the future. The matter was passed from Sedgemoor to the Rural Housing Enabler working for the Community Council for Somerset and funded by Sedgemoor District Council and the Quantock Housing Partnership. The Housing Enabler reported that he could conduct a Housing Needs Survey in Spaxton if the Parish Council was interested.

He would need to be invited by the Parish Council and would need a letter of introduction from the Chairman of the Parish Council to accompany the survey. He would analyse the results and feedback information to the Parish Council and, if necessary, help them to identify suitable land for affordable housing.

Further correspondence with Sedgemoor District Council concerned the allocation of existing social housing. It appears that current social housing is allocated through a districtwide points system which takes no account of the origins of persons in need.

A correspondence was opened with Somerset County Council regarding the concerns expressed re the lack of Nursing Home / Sheltered Accommodation for the elderly. Whilst the Corporate Director of Social Services agreed that there was a deficiency in provision within the South Sedgemoor Area, it was felt that the demand within Spaxton was unlikely to justify provision of such care within the village itself.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Concerns regarding policing within the village.

Residents feel that there is no visible police presence, no local police contact, a poor police response to calls, and no neighbourhood watch scheme. The police force has not sent a representative to Parish Council meetings for some time. A previous Spaxton Patrol scheme, set up a few years ago during a spate of local burglaries and vandalism, was not supported by the constabulary and was abandoned.

Action Taken

A correspondence was opened with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary regarding the concerns expressed. A meeting was arranged with the local Community Beat Officer. At this meeting the current position regarding rural policing around Spaxton was discussed.

Currently Spaxton village had no watch schemes but many related schemes are operational in Aisholt, Merridge and among local businesses and farms. The Beat Officer explained which phone numbers should be used to summon the police in different situations (see Appendix 2).

The Community Beat Officer together with the Section Inspector from Bridgwater attended an open meeting at Spaxton Village Hall in January 2003 to answer residents' queries, to invite residents to consider enrolling as Special Constables, and to invite initiatives to set up Street Watch schemes in Spaxton. A mobile police office regularly visits the Village Hall car park and non-urgent concerns can be reported to the staff in it.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Concerns regarding the bus services

Both the Village Appraisal Review and the 2002 Questionnaire drew comments from residents regarding the lack of regular transport.

Current Situation

Current bus services (March 2003) run as follows;

The First Bus service, No 18, runs on two days a week enabling residents to go to Bridgwater for just two hours.

The First Bus services, Nos. 23 and 23A, run from the upper end of Hawkridge Reservoir to Taunton and back from Mondays to Fridays. This service allows a full day in Taunton but the pick up point at Hawkridge is nearly 2 km from West End.

The Dial-a-Ride Doorstep Mini-bus Service is open to all who register for the service. It operates for those with Special Needs or who are unable to use public transport. Spaxton is served regularly on Tuesdays and on Fridays for journeys to Bridgwater but the system is flexible and can provide for small group trips elsewhere as required.

During the College term there is a bus service to Bridgwater from Monday to Fridays.

The secondary school buses to Bridgwater run Monday to Friday but currently are not available to the public.

Action Taken

It is recommended that the following be considered;

Services allowing travel to work in Bridgwater and Taunton.

Services to Cannington and Nether Stowey for other needs e.g. doctor, butcher, baker

The Bridgwater bus should allow more time in town.

Extra services should be provided in school holidays for young people stuck in Spaxton.

The general public is allowed to use school buses.

RECREATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Concerns regarding lack of facilities for Young People.

During the last two decades or so there have been three Youth Clubs which operated in the village hall. Experience showed that there was a constant need for support for the adult organisers and when each club closed it was due to insufficient support. Various youth services offered guidance on running the clubs and how to obtain the relevant local support. At the time a rota of parents and possibly other adults was suggested but unfortunately too few helpers were available and thus each club closed. This history is considered important in relation to setting up new club-based activities for young people.

Requests have been made for skate boarding, bike park, bike ramps, in-line skating facilities, an astro-turf pitch, table tennis, a youth club or youth shelter - i.e. somewhere to meet, Brownies & Cubs, basketball hoops at the village hall, and a tarmac court at the village hall.

Action Taken

In November two representatives from the Parish Plan Working Group met with the Corporate Director for Somerset District Council, a District Councillor with special interest in youth services, and the Chief Executive of the Community Council for Somerset, to discuss prospects for these facilities. It was considered that there was probably a greater demand for the first three activities since a

group of youngsters had attended a village hall committee meeting to make a case for such facilities. There had been some ad hoc use of the village hall car park with temporary ramps which had posed problems of safety and insurance. The scheme installed at Nether Stowey was noted and there has been discussion with some of the persons who assisted with the provision of the facilities at Nether Stowey. It has become apparent that the most popular apparatus would be a 'half pipe' installed on the upper playing field and consideration of the feasibility of providing such equipment will pass to potential users, supporting fundraisers and the village hall committee (which also manages the upper and lower playing fields).

A meeting was held in October 2003 to examine the possibility of developing such facilities. The Working Group representatives were also advised of the 'Young Somerset' scheme. Subject to funding, this is to provide mobile ramps which can be collected on trailers for use on, for example, one evening per week by established groups where there is suitable management to arrange collection and return of equipment, ensure safe practices and compliance with insurance requirements. The tendency for youngsters to prefer to manage their own activities has to be tempered by requirements to operate safely and within conditions set by insurers.

The Village Hall Committee is considering the other proposals to improve recreational facilities identified in responses to the questionnaire and in direct representations by young people who have attended some of its meetings.

Concerns regarding lack of Facilities for the Village

Some respondents to the questionnaire believed that the village hall is unattractive. Others wanted a 'village green' near the village hall, wildlife haven, park benches on the green area of the S-bend.

Some suggested that someone should create woodland near to the village hall in which future generations can walk freely (rather than use car), create 'green belts' around existing playing field to keep housing at a distance and thus avoid complaints about sports activities causing a nuisance.

Action Taken

Interested parties are invited to contact the Parish Council and, or, the Village Hall Committee to discuss the possibility of taking these suggestions further.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Concerns regarding Speed of Traffic

Both the 1996 Village Appraisal/Review and the 2002 questionnaire resulted in concerns expressed from residents over the speed of traffic using roads in the locality. In the recent questionnaire 168 respondents favoured introduction of speed limits compared with 29 who were against.

Action Taken

Representations from the Parish Plan Working Party to the County Council (Highway Authority) evidently overlapped with those from others, as well as changes in both national legislation and local policies which, after consultation with the Parish Council, culminated in the introduction of speed restrictions in early 2003.

Concerns regarding Traffic Calming

112 of those completing questionnaires were in favour of introduction of traffic calming and 66 were against. In addition to concerns about traffic flow and obstruction/confrontation, areas highlighted as needing calming measures included the vicinity of the Post Office, School and Village Hall.

Action Taken

At an initial meeting on 12th November 2002 with two members of the working party, the Assistant Highway Service Manager explained that parked vehicles are seen as an effective traffic calming measure, subject to some concerns over obstruction to heavy vehicles, but the situation could be reviewed in the light of

experience with the then proposed speed limits.

The working party considers that although the need for traffic calming in the vicinity of the School and Village Hall may well have been greatly reduced by the new speed restrictions a serious problem still remains at Spaxton Post Office where people and, more worryingly, children can step out into the path of westbound traffic. The speed limit has little bearing on the risk of accident here because people leaving the shop cannot be seen by drivers until they have set foot on the carriageway. Two members of the working party viewed the situation again with the Highway Authority Traffic Engineer on 1st May 2003 and it was agreed that a draft scheme would be drawn up to provide a white line along the south side of the carriageway for a distance of about 30 metres to guide traffic away from the edge of the road and the Post Office doorway. The draft scheme includes re-alignment of the central white line and has been viewed favourably by the Parish Council. The Highway Authority is expected to take steps towards implementing this.

Concerns regarding Car Parking

Concerns were expressed about obstruction and congestion caused by parked vehicles especially in the vicinity of Spaxton Post Office, School, the junction of Peartwater Road with High Street, and Barford Road. In addition some people considered parked vehicles to be an advantage in helping to slow down speeding vehicles. Concerns were expressed at difficulties experienced with heavy vehicles being seriously obstructed and of difficulties in passing where narrow roads and tight bends are involved.

Action Taken

At a meeting on 12th November 2002 the Assistant Highway Service Manager explained that Somerset County Council would only be concerned with imposition of statutory regulation to control/ban parking on the highway. It is unlikely that such statutory orders will be imposed in Spaxton area because of difficulties over enforcement (a matter for the police). To be effective enforcement needs to be seen as consistently applied. If a dangerous

obstruction occurs then that is a matter for the police and should be reported without delay. If parked vehicles are likely to cause obstruction to heavy vehicles servicing premises, or local farmers need to move large vehicles, it is suggested that they should plan well ahead, make contact with residents and thereby avoid finding themselves obstructed by parked cars.

At an on-site meeting with the Highway Authority Traffic Engineer on 1st May 2003, at the junction of Four Forks Lane and Barford Road, it was agreed that it might be possible to mark the east side of the carriageway with square white brackets to discourage parking to alleviate the difficulties experienced by larger goods vehicles making access to Four Forks Lane.

Off Street Parking

Concern was expressed by some at the need for off street parking to combat a problem of obstruction caused by vehicles parking on the highway. Particular concerns highlighted the areas near the School, the Village Hall, Peartwater Road, High Street/Peartwater Road junction and Barford Road. (NB this must be considered against the view mentioned earlier that parked cars are an effective form of traffic calming).

Action Taken

At the meeting previously mentioned, the Assistant Highway Service Manager and the Traffic Engineer pointed out that provision of off street parking, other than on a privately funded and operated basis, was a matter for Sedgemoor District Council. They suggested that it was very unlikely that such provision in Spaxton would be considered either practical or financially feasible.

Concerns regarding Dangerous Junctions and Narrow Roads

Respondents to the questionnaire complained of a lack of adequate vision when emerging from roads at junctions together with tight

bends on narrow roads and a lack of sufficient overtaking places. The junctions at Peartwater Road/High Street (where walls have been raised in recent years obstructing the view towards Hawkridge); High Street/Pightley Road (no view towards School when emerging from Pightley direction); and Four Forks junction, were of particular concern. The road through Lower Merridge was also named as an area experiencing increasing problems associated with vehicle conflict, lack of passing places, increased volume and speed coupled with damage to property caused by vehicles using the road. The recent granting of planning permission for more houses in Nether Stowey may well increase these difficulties as more people will be likely to use the road as access to Taunton.

Action Taken

The Highway Authority Traffic Engineer agreed to look at the junctions of Peartwater Road and High Street together with Pightley Road and High Street. The possible use of mirrors was discussed on 12th November, but it was pointed out that the Secretary of State's approval has to be sought, as was the case when mirrors were installed at Marsh Mills and Four Forks junctions. Difficulties over the siting of mirrors on private property were also highlighted. The Assistant Highway Service Manager reported that considerable work had been taken over recent months on the road through Lower Merridge and Courtway and was still as yet incomplete. He further suggested that it is very unlikely that any priority will be afforded to improvement schemes to modify roads and junctions to favour motorists over pedestrians, cyclists, buses and others.

At a further meeting with the Highway Authority Traffic Engineer on 1st May 2003 it was confirmed that mirrors are only agreed in exceptional circumstances because some drivers find the view in convex mirrors misleading especially when lights are reflected. However, it was agreed that there was some scope for improvement of the junction between Peartwater Road and High Street by the providing road edge white lining and moving the stop line for Peartwater Road slightly southwards to increase visibility of vehicles both emerging from Peartwater Road and those travelling

east from Bush Road to High Street. A draft scheme has been viewed favourably by the Parish Council. The Highway Authority is expected to take steps towards implementing this. The stop line for vehicles emerging from Pightley Road onto High Street will be moved slightly north at next repainting. This will not make any significant difference to the vehicles emerging but it will allow vehicles travelling west along High Street to see the emerging vehicle a little earlier. However there was no scope whatsoever for the provision of white lining to improve the situation for traffic emerging from Four Forks Lane. Also, because Four Forks Lane is unadopted, warning road signs alerting drivers using Barford Road to the presence of Four Forks Lane cannot be provided.

It was confirmed that no-one can demand that walls and buildings be demolished or moved in the circumstances seen in Spaxton in order to improve sight lines. However there is provision to request (and if necessary demand) that hedges or other overgrown vegetation be cut back.

Concerns regarding Flooding

158 of those completing questionnaires expressed the need for more road drains and 111 considered that better maintenance was needed in keeping culverts and drains clear to prevent blocking and flooding. Concern was expressed that farmers and contractors could do more to clear up after hedge cutting and similar operations. It was also considered that farmers should be more alive to 'run-off' from fields causing flooding problems on roads. The issue of flooding, directly related to turf stripping in the Aisholt/Merridge area, was raised by some residents there and it is understood that they are corresponding with central and local government on the issue.

Action Taken

At a meeting with the Highway Authority Traffic Engineer, it was pointed out that flooding is a very complex matter with no single authority involved. The Highway Authority can be involved, but landowners, the Water Authority and District Council are also likely

to be involved. Sedgemoor District Council have an officer with particular responsibility for land drainage. The problems associated with recent flooding of High Street with a resultant threat to properties were raised. The Highway Authority Traffic Engineer reported on remedial work already undertaken and ongoing cooperation with landowners to address other outstanding issues. It was noted that there is an potential problem over flooding in the Aisholt area which needs to be monitored and will involve landowners.

Highway repair and obstruction from vegetation

Concerns were expressed about pot-holes, edge-of-highway maintenance, and overgrown vegetation, particularly at junctions, which affected visibility.

Action Taken

The Highway Authority Traffic Engineer explained that there is now a 10 year recovery programme to try and rectify maintenance which had been neglected over previous years.

He pointed out that funds are limited and that there is a work force of only 16 to cope with the whole of the Sedgemoor Area. It was agreed that anything that could be done to encourage residents to promptly notify problems such as large potholes, overhanging branches, and vision obstructed at junctions, directly to the Traffic Engineers office would be preferable to people waiting to report through some other body e.g., Parish Council.

Heavy Vehicles arriving in Spaxton by mistake

Some respondents mentioned an increase in heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) arriving in the village, the drivers obviously having lost their way having travelled from the Bridgwater direction. Drivers have then to find somewhere to turn before retracing their way to the Enmore turning at Durleigh.

Action Taken

At the meeting on 12th November, the Traffic Engineer agreed to look at the signing at the junction between the Enmore and Spaxton roads at Durleigh to see if anything could be done to lessen the possibility of people losing their way here. The Assistant Highway Service Manager also drew attention to the Somerset County Council Freight Strategy currently being worked upon to identify 'pinch points' to discourage HGVs from unsuitable routes. However he cautioned against placing too much reliance on bans to prevent routes being used by HGVs, pointing out that if they needed to access addresses, regulations concerning width or weight will not apply.

The working party undertook a further communication with the the Highway Authority Traffic Engineer arguing that traffic emerging from the Enmore Road onto the Bridgwater – Spaxton road may obstruct or distract drivers heading to Taunton from viewing the existing signage directing them to turn left. Better signing is thus still needed here.

APPENDIX 1: Results of the 2002 Parish Plan and Village Design Statement Questionnaire (241 respondents)

1. Details of respondents

	Age of respondent			TOTAL
	0-15	16-59	60+	
Aisholt	1	11	5	17
Charlinch	1	11	4	16
Four Forks	11	36	15	62
Merridge	0	6	4	10
Spaxton	12	67	33	112
Other*	5	12	7	24

** Other areas were: Twinell, Hawkridge, Courtway, Radlet, Keenthorne, and Tuxwell.*

2. Tick all the words you feel best describe the character of your area.

b) rural	192
e) friendly	186
a) peaceful	178
c) agricultural	162
d) isolated	46
g) commuter village	41
h) busy	29
i) other	27
f) noisy	18

**sorted by number of people in agreement*

3. Tick all the words you think describe the appearance of your area.

g) rural views	189
a) picturesque	126
h) spread out	114
d) well kept	95
f) interesting variety of houses	89
c) historic buildings	70
e) modern houses blend in	48
b) untidy	22
i) other	8

**sorted by number of people in agreement*

4. Would you prefer development to be:-

	YES	NO
a) infill, using existing gaps between houses	123	85
b) groups of houses within existing village boundaries	93	92
c) extension of existing built-up areas.	47	123
d) (if you live in Spaxton/Four Forks) in the green area between Four Forks and the rest of Spaxton	46	126

**5. Which materials do you think should be used for any
New Buildings**

	YES	NO
a) stone	202	10
c) rendered and painted	121	27
b) brick	102	66
d) other suggestions	25	
e) roofing material :- red tile	150	31
slate	127	31
thatch	119	33
other suggestions	17	

**6. Which materials do you think should be used for any new
Garden Boundaries**

	YES	NO
d) hedges	182	11
a) stone	173	10
b) wooden fences	121	42
c) brick	52	80
e) other, please specify	15	0

** sorted by totals answering yes*

7. What style would you prefer the following to be in?

	Traditional	Modern
a) post boxes	209	22
b) telephone boxes	193	37
c) street and road signs	182	44
d) sign posts	194	34
e) lamp posts	167	32

8. Which of the following types of business would you like to see more of in your area?

	YES	NO
c) cottage industry / craft workshops	176	19
b) market gardening	160	27
g) community shops	139	45
a) farming	134	34
d) bed and breakfast accommodation	129	44
i) home working / new technology	128	37
h) small business / light industry	80	83
f) nursing homes	75	87
e) other holiday accommodation	55	99
j) other ideas or views	23	0

** sorted by totals answering yes*

9. If you consider your area has a traffic problem, or that it may have in the future, which of the following measures would you think appropriate:-

	YES	NO
b) speed restrictions	168	29
a) traffic calming	112	66
d) pavements	93	68
c) street lighting	70	100
e) road widening, specify roads	40	108
f) other, please specify	37	0

**10. Recently there has been flooding in parts of the parish.
What measures would you like to see taken to prevent
repeat occurrences?**

	YES	NO
a) more road drains	158	17
b) culverts	111	35
c) other suggestions, please specify:-	54	0

APPENDIX 2: Useful Telephone Numbers

Bus Information for Somerset	01823 356700
Dial-a-Ride (Somerset Community Transport)	01278 434881
Police (Community Beat Officer Voice Mail)	01823 363287
Police (Emergencies)	999
Police (FAX Bridgwater)	01823 363367
Police (General)	01823 337911
Quantock Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Office	01278 732845
Sedgemoor District Council Dog Warden	01278 435435
Sedgemoor District Council Environmental Health	01278 435435
Sedgemoor District Council Housing Department	01278 435435
Sedgemoor District Council Rights of Way officer	01278 435435
South West of England Rural Development Agency	01392 214848
Spaxton Parish Council (Clerk)	01278 671259
The Highway Traffic Engineers Department, Dunball	01278 684465