

LIGHTHORNE

Parish Plan 2012

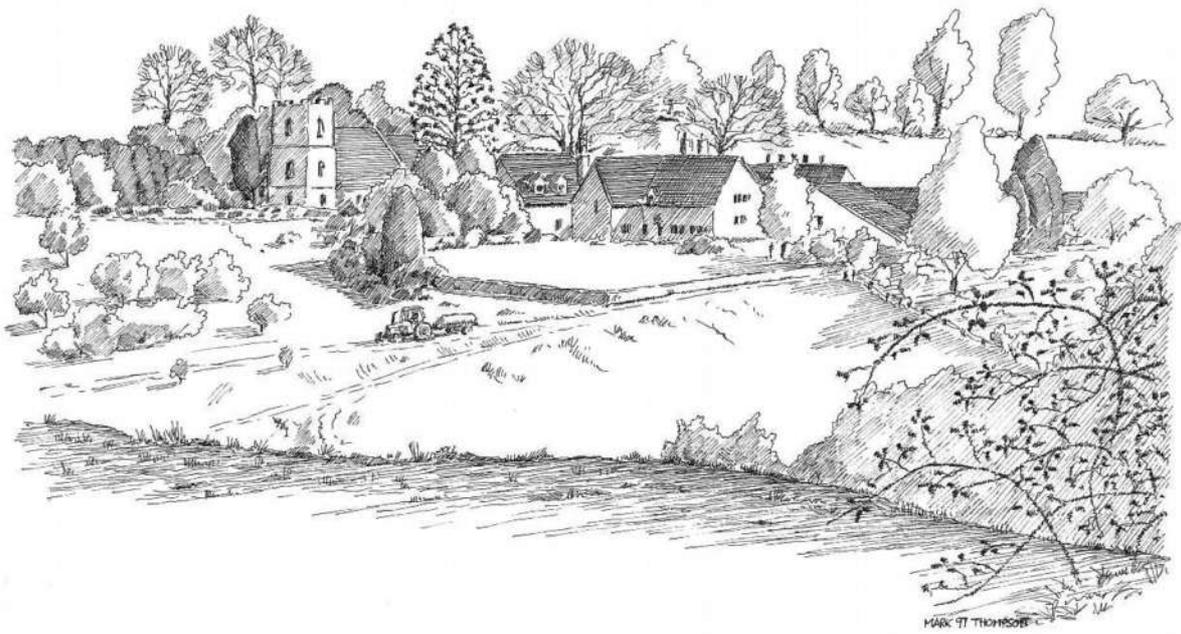


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Cover illustration: Church Hill Farm.

Introduction

This Parish Plan is part of a nationwide initiative to encourage local people to become more involved in decisions affecting their local community. It reflects the views of those living within the Parish on different aspects of life in Lighthorne and how they would like Lighthorne to develop in the future.

This Plan is also designed to help Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC), Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and other local and national bodies to take account of the views of Lighthorne residents when considering:

- planning or development proposals affecting our parish,
- support and funding for local projects, and
- other issues affecting Lighthorne such as the provision of local services.

The Plan includes a number of “actions” where potential improvements have been identified.

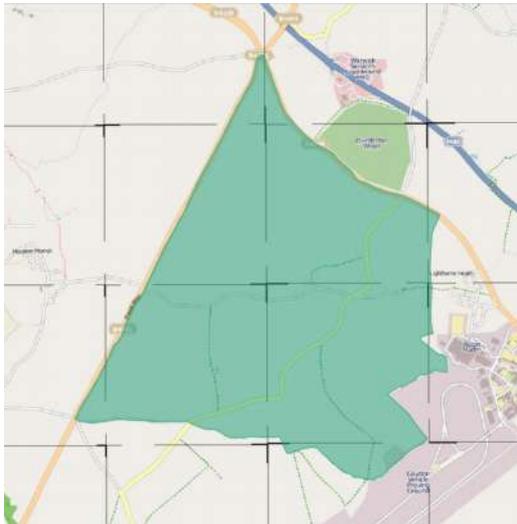
At the Annual Parish Meeting in 2010, Lighthorne Parish Council invited residents to volunteer to form a committee to prepare the Parish Plan, taking account of the views of residents. The committee consisted of Tony Cairns, Jess Daniel, Paul Tait and (until Summer 2011) Olivier Broderick. The Committee drew on the expertise of other members of the Parish in preparing the Plan. The Committee started by preparing a questionnaire which included questions on a range of local topics along with space for residents to make their own suggestions and comments. The questionnaires were hand-delivered to all residential properties within Lighthorne Parish in Spring 2011 and the results were presented at a public meeting in the Village Hall in August 2011. The Committee would particularly like to thank Mike Rigby for his help in preparing and analysing the questionnaires.

150 households out of the 230 in the Parish completed the survey, a response rate of 65%. 263 adults and 46 children gave their views as part of the survey. The adult response rate was 68%, based on the number of registered electors in the Parish.

In preparing this Parish Plan we are conscious that the requirements and preferences of residents are likely to vary considerably depending on where people live in the Parish. Where possible we have tried to reflect this in the Plan.

Following a further round of consultation within the Parish and review of the draft Plan by Stratford-on-Avon District Council, the Plan has been approved by the Parish Council.

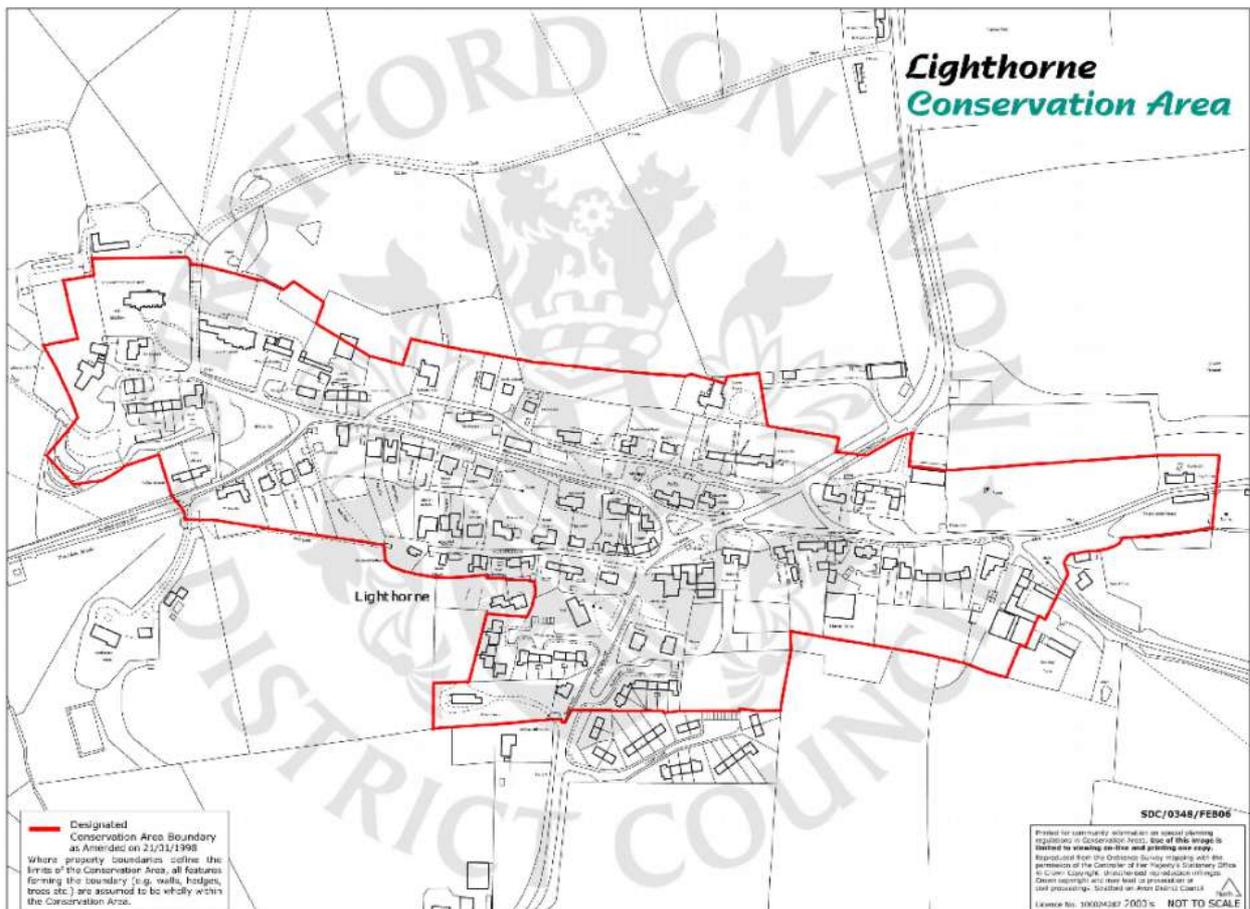
The Parish of Lighthorne



The Civil Parish of Lighthorne lies in the South Warwickshire countryside, about 8 miles from the towns of Stratford-upon-Avon (to the west) and from Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa (to the north). It includes an area roughly bounded by the Fosse Way, B4100 and C96 (Wellesbourne Road, Bishops Hill, Chesterton Road) with a further area to the east which includes Newbould Barn, Bishops Gorse Farm, Heath Farm, the eastern extent of the village, the sports ground and part of the old quarry land.

Lighthorne itself is a picturesque village, the greater part of which is a Conservation Area (see map). The village of Lighthorne is nestled in a

valley with most houses hidden from view as the village is approached from the Wellesbourne and Chesterton Roads.



The Parish includes a range of different properties. The village properties include historic buildings made of local limestone and some more recently built buildings made from a variety of materials. Outside Lighthorne village the main settlement is Redlands Park, a community of mobile homes for older people, but as a rural area there are also established farms and some isolated houses. In total there are some 230 residential properties in the Parish.

As a relatively small rural community, Lighthorne Parish has a number of disadvantages compared to towns and larger villages in the area. There is no shop or health centre, public transport is limited (and effectively non-existent for most residents outside Lighthorne village) and the facilities for young people are poor. The broadband service suffers because of the distance from the Moreton Morrell telephone exchange.

An important issue for Lighthorne, and indeed for the whole country, is addressing the needs of the elderly who are no longer capable of looking after themselves without extra support. Around 180 of the 263 adult respondents to the survey are already over age 50 so these needs are likely to increase in the future. At the other end of the age scale we must also consider the needs of families with children (in total the respondents had 48 children under 17).

On the positive side, Lighthorne has a very strong community spirit with a large number of activities organised throughout the year. These activities are only possible because of the residents who volunteer to organise them. For these (or other) activities to continue in the future we will need new volunteers to get involved.

History of Lighthorne

As a settlement, Lighthorne has existed for more than four thousand years. Successive occupiers have left traces of their time here; burials and other remains from the Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman, Anglian and early Christian periods have been found within the parish. Lighthorne village is located in a steep-sided natural valley, where a stream has eroded its course through the limestone, exposing the clays of the Midland plain. The junction of the two rock types forms a natural spring line and this is the feature which attracted the early settlers to the secluded valley.



Baker's Hill Well.

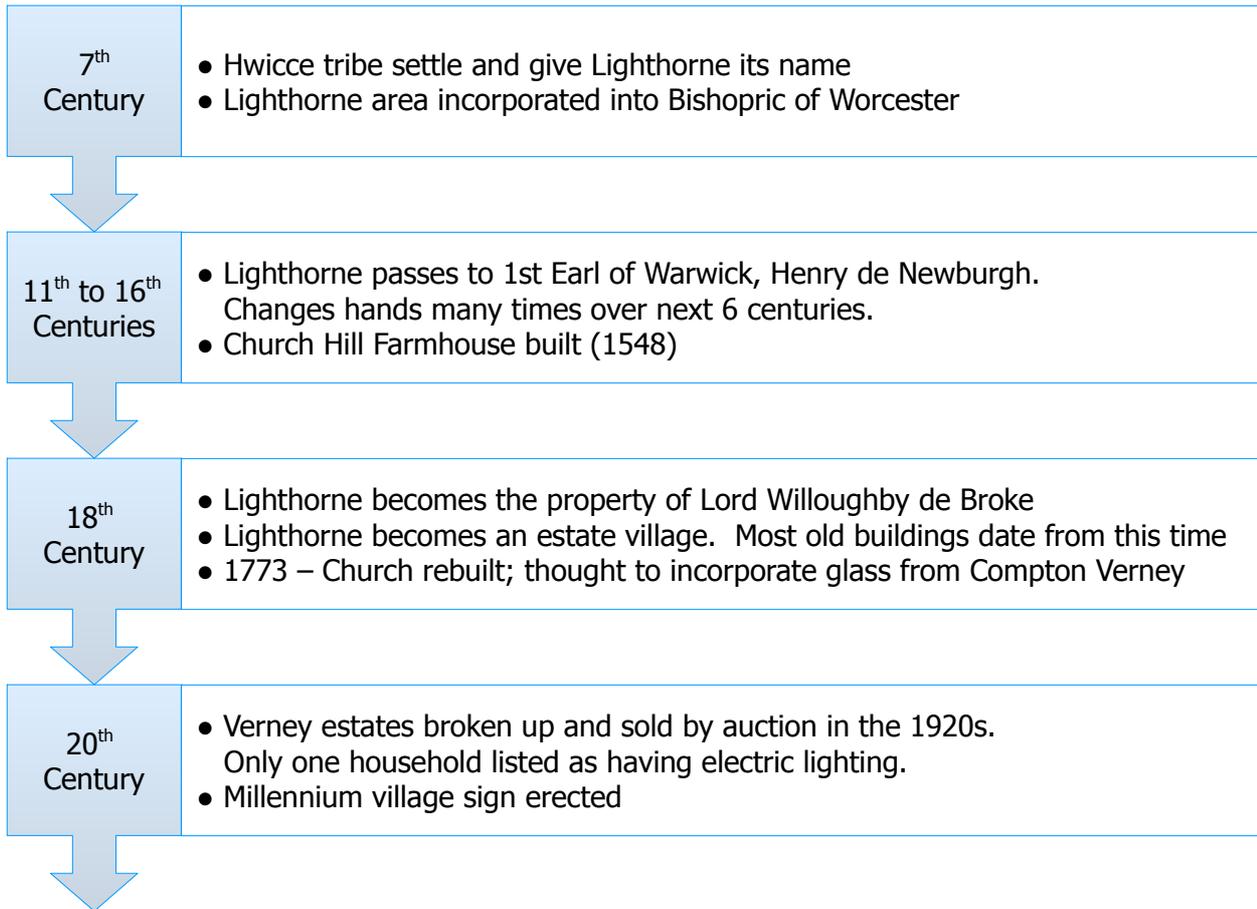


The Broadwell.



Smithy Cottage.

The historic heart of Lighthorne is a Conservation Area, broadly defined as the valley extending in a west-to-east direction from Church Hill Farm in the west, through the village green, to Curacy Farm in the east. Included in this are two important areas which characterise the village, namely the area around Church Hill Farm, the Church and the Old Rectory, and the village green area, including Smithy Cottage, the Antelope pub, Bishops Farmhouse and Dene Hollow.



A more detailed summary of the history of Lighthorne is set out in "Appendix 1 — History of Lighthorne" on page 23.



Millennium Village Sign.

Housing and development

A breakdown of property types for those who responded to this question is as follows:

Owner occupied	121
Rented – Housing Association	11
Rented – Private	8
Shared ownership	1
Provided by employment	1

Two attractive features of Lighthorne village are that the village houses are mainly built of matching local stone and nestled in the valley, obscured from view until visitors enter the village. First time visitors to Lighthorne are often surprised by the picturesque aspect as they drive into the village. There is a general view that it is important to retain these attractive features.



An example of sympathetic development.

Development in Lighthorne village has been restricted by the topography. The village is quite compact with gaps between houses having been "in-filled" over the years. 125 survey respondents said that Lighthorne could not accommodate further development and a further 58 respondents thought that Lighthorne could only accommodate single or small groups of houses. There were different views on the types of property that could be built:

Property type	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Affordable homes	37	14%
Retirement houses	29	11%
Family houses	28	11%
Social Housing	15	6%

Note: Some respondents ticked more than one property type.

The majority of respondents were concerned that any development should not damage the beauty of the village, as follows:

99% said the design should be sympathetic to nearby properties.

78% said new development should be within the village boundary. This probably reflects a desire to retain a key feature of Lighthorne as a village nestled in a valley.

89% said that some of the development profit should be used to improve the parish. As a fairly compact village any development is likely to impact on other residents.

Lighthorne Parish Council will be conducting a survey in 2013 to identify the housing needs of the local community (called a Housing Needs Survey).

Trees contribute significantly to the visual appeal of the village, especially the deciduous native species. The Horse Chestnut opposite the village sign is very large and forms an important part of the view on descending the hill into the village from the B4100, as do the trees on the village green. There are several Wellingtonias near the church which are about 100 years old. In recent years, Yews have been planted in the churchyard very effectively.

The central part of the village is a Conservation Area and most of the villagers are aware of this and welcome the restrictions and responsibilities imposed on them.

The two main access roads into Lighthorne village are the Chesterton Road (from the B4100) and the Wellesbourne Road. Access to Lighthorne via Moreton Morrell Lane is possible only by light vehicles travelling slowly. This lane is narrow, has blind corners, and is used extensively by dog walkers. In order to maintain the "sleepy hollow" nature of the village, it is essential that this lane is not enlarged for use by heavier traffic.

There is a severe shortage of off-road car parking in Lighthorne. The Village Hall car park only has a few spaces which is insufficient for many of the events held at the hall. Similarly, the Antelope pub car park is inadequate on busy nights. We wish to encourage more people to use the Village Hall and pub so the need to improve parking in Lighthorne should be a local development priority.

Recommended Actions

- 1) When considering planning applications, the District Council should be asked to bear in mind:
 - a) the desire to retain the existing character of Lighthorne village as a village nestled in a valley;
 - b) any new development in Lighthorne village should be sympathetic (in terms of design, appearance, scale and distinctiveness) to the existing character of the village;
 - c) any new development in Lighthorne village should have off-road parking as there is a severe shortage of on road parking. Options for providing additional off road parking for existing residents and visitors to Lighthorne should also be investigated;
 - d) the desire to retain Moreton Morrell Lane as a narrow road so as not to encourage more traffic to use this road to access Lighthorne.
- 2) A sign should be erected at the entrance to Moreton Morrell Lane from the Fosse Way to discourage excessive use of this lane to access Lighthorne.

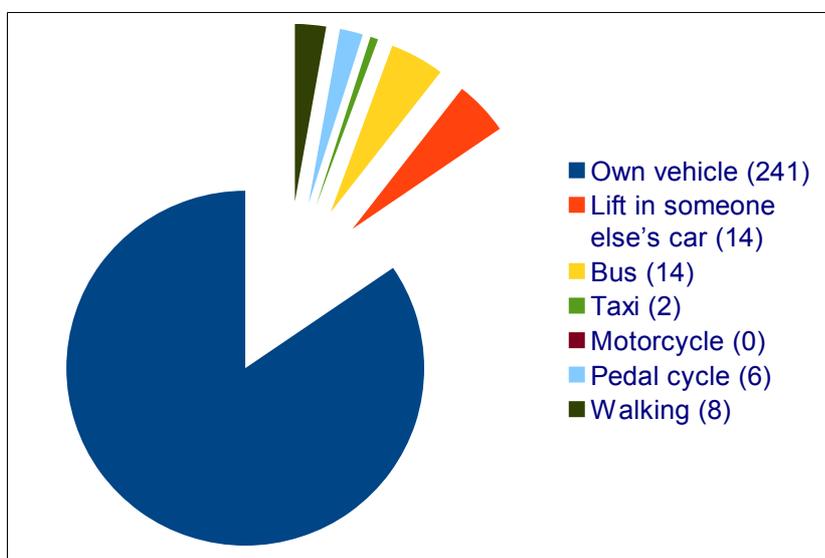
Traffic and Transport

There was a very clear message that something should be done to reduce the speed of traffic through the village which is increasingly being used by through traffic to avoid the traffic jams along the B4100 at peak times. 73% of respondents think speeding is a problem in Lighthorne. Redlands residents also expressed concern over the speed of some cars driving in and out of the Park.

There were different views on the control measures which could be used – the most popular being the use of speed activated signs.

The blind corner near the Antelope pub is potentially dangerous as a number of cars drive too fast round this corner, crossing the centre line as they exit the corner past the pub on the left. This is a particular risk for elderly or young residents crossing the road to the village hall and for cars leaving the Antelope car park. A further consideration is the fact that the road through the village is part of the Feldon Cycle Route, promoted by Warwickshire County Council and Sustrans. Cyclists, including children, are regularly seen using the route.

55% of respondents say that parking is a problem in Lighthorne village, and 86% of those think that we need a code of conduct/guidelines for parking in the village.



The chart shows that the vast majority of residents use their own car for getting out of the parish, but a range of other modes of transport are also used. An important minority rely on the bus service but their ability to leave the village is restricted by the frequency and timing of the bus service. Over 150 respondents mentioned this aspect of the bus service as something they would like to see improved.

Redlands residents and others living outside the village live too far away from the bus stop in Lighthorne for the bus service to be a practical mode of transport. Many of these residents are elderly.

Recommended Actions

- 3) Consider introducing a community lift share scheme.
- 4) The Parish Council to liaise with the appropriate authorities to introduce an effective means of reducing the speed of cars through the village and to liaise with residents of Redlands to consider what can be done to achieve the same in Redlands Park.
- 5) Seek volunteers to prepare a parking code of conduct and to consider how best to encourage compliance.
- 6) Ask transport partners about possibilities to improve the frequency of bus services, additional bus stops for Redlands, and routes to Wellesbourne.

Neighbourhood and Environment

The vast majority of respondents were aware of the responsibilities of living in a conservation area, although 33 people were not aware.

There were very mixed views on whether streets should have name signs. This varied from street to street.

There was also a mixed response on the question of street lighting with some people wanting street lighting turned off at night or removed and others wanting more lighting. However, those who were satisfied with the current street lighting outnumbered those who are dissatisfied by a 2:1 ratio.

Almost 200 respondents use the local network of footpaths and bridleways. The majority think they are well maintained but there was a fairly even split on the question of whether they are well signposted.

During periods of very heavy rainfall there is a risk that some properties could suffer flooding as water runs off the surrounding hills into the valley. The drainage system has sometimes proved inadequate for removing the water from the roads.

A "Welcome Pack" is currently distributed to new residents to Lighthorne village by one of our residents who set this up some years ago. This is an excellent initiative which introduces new residents to information about life in Lighthorne.

Recommended Actions

- 7) Continue supporting the "Welcome Pack" and consider whether any other information should be added to the pack for new residents.
- 8) Consider including a guidance note to all residents in the conservation area to help them understand their responsibilities.
- 9) Set up a working party to consider how to make it easier for residents to follow the local footpaths (for example, by improving the signposting of paths that are not clearly marked and/or preparing a more detailed map of local footpaths).

Community and local facilities

Lighthorne enjoys a strong sense of community and our survey showed that residents generally feel safe in the village. There are, however, occasional acts of anti-social behaviour.

Respondents were asked about their use of local facilities and community groups. The numbers below refer to the numbers who use them "frequently" or "occasionally".

Village Hall



A wide range of activities takes place in the village hall. 146 respondents said they use the hall. Since conducting the Parish Plan survey a village parent and toddler group now meets regularly in the hall. Other suggestions for using the hall included:

- selling local produce;
- a community shop; and
- a farmers' market.

Post Office

141 people use the post office which opens in the village hall on 3 afternoons a week. 85% of all respondents said it is important to retain this service.

Sports ground

61 respondents use the sports ground. However, 27 respondents were concerned about the potentially dangerous walk from the village to the sports ground which includes a 200 yard section where the only option is to walk on the road as there is no footpath or grass verge.

St Laurence's Church



77 respondents use the church.

Other facilities



At the time of the survey the Antelope pub had been closed for a few months. 218 respondents said it is important to have a pub in the village so it was pleasing to see the pub re-open under new management. Many comments were made on the subject of the pub. These were passed on to the new pub management.

35 respondents use the mobile library service.

Communications

Respondents enjoy the current communication methods of the parish magazine and leaflets. Many residents would like more communication of events by e-mail and use of a village website. After the Parish Plan residents' survey we were very pleased when one resident set up a village diary of events which is published monthly and distributed via e-mail to anyone who would like to receive it. This is a very useful way of both publicising events and finding out what's going on in Lighthorne. To be added to the email distribution list residents should send an e-mail request to lighthorne.events@btinternet.com.

Recommended Actions

- 10) Parish Council to investigate options for providing safe access to the sports ground as a priority.
- 11) Investigate the needs of the elderly people in the Parish and consider whether changes could be made to improve the facilities or services for elderly residents.
- 12) Continue to support current methods of communication as well as developing the e-mailing list and a village website.

Youth and children's issues

The questionnaire respondents have 48 children aged 16 and under living in the Parish. Of these, 44 responded to the "Youth" section, split nearly equally between the age groups 0 – 11 and 12 – 16.



The most commonly used village facility was the children's playground (56% of youth respondents). However, 80% of the households with children felt that the playground was not of an adequate standard. The little equipment which there is is worn and no longer works as intended, and the surrounding walls have been subject to offensive graffiti. Comments included wanting an upgraded playground with better safety matting and deterrence of vandalism to create a much needed communal area.

The sports-ground and tennis court are well used by children from the parish (41% of youth respondents). There were many suggestions for improving facilities at the sports-ground but the overwhelming comments were regarding the lack of a safe walking route to the sports-ground. Regarding the facilities at the sports-ground, there were suggestions for adding facilities such as a skate park.

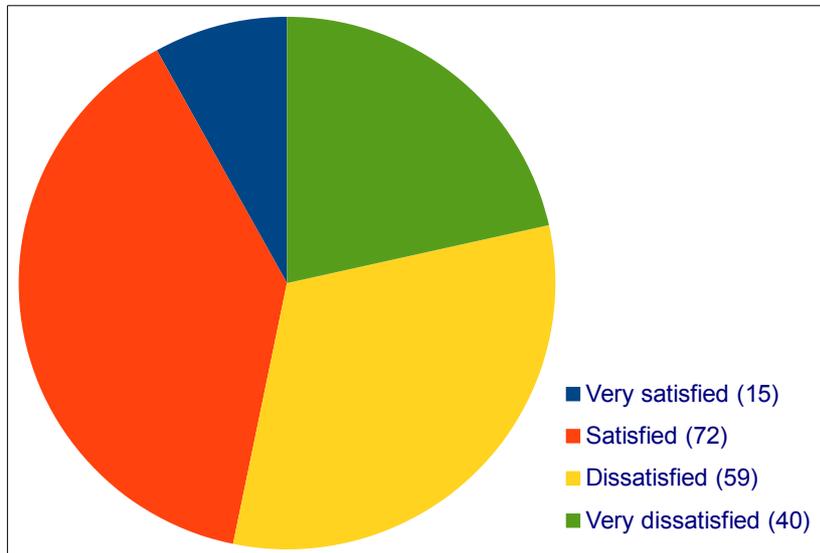
There was a positive response from both the youth and adult sections for more family- and youth-friendly activities within the parish. This included suggestions of a youth club, toddler/music group, children's drama group and martial arts. The village hall is the most appropriate location for many of these activities, which could be publicised via the notice board, e-mailing lists and a website.

Recommended Actions

- 13) Prepare a proposal to redevelop the children's playground with improved equipment, safe surfacing, and to deter vandalism. Investigate how to obtain support and funding to achieve this aim.
- 14) Investigate ways of maintaining the current facilities at the sports-ground and parish council to consider addition of a skate park.
- 15) Encourage volunteers to organise more youth- and family-friendly events in the Village Hall.
- 16) Establish improved communication with youth and families via website and/or e-mailing list.

Utilities

Broadband internet service



There was a range of replies to the question about this service, with slightly more dissatisfied households than satisfied ones. However, there was a significant number of very dissatisfied households.

Unless there is an improvement in the service, it is likely that the number of very dissatisfied customers will increase as more people become aware of the much faster services

available to less rural populations. A faster internet service would help people in rural communities to establish rural businesses.

Energy

Most households heat their houses using oil, although significant numbers use solid fuel, gas (not mains) and electricity. A few also use other energy sources such as solar power. When asked about preferred forms of heating, the most popular responses were gas (probably mains gas) and solar power, with a number mentioning heat pump systems.

127 respondents said they would be interested in a group fuel purchase scheme.

Street lighting

142 respondents were satisfied with the current street lighting in Lighthorne village; 68 were not satisfied. The reasons given by those who are dissatisfied varied from those who feel there is too much lighting to those who feel there is not enough. The "too much" responses tended to come from those living in the centre of the village; the "not enough" responses tended to come from the edge of the village. This suggests that any proposed changes in a particular area of the village should take most account of the views of those most affected by the change.

Recommended Actions

- 17) Ask the district council what support they can provide to help parishes like Lighthorne obtain a faster internet service.
- 18) Find a volunteer to raise the issue with BT
- 19) Seek a volunteer to investigate the viability of a group fuel purchase scheme and, if appropriate, set up such a scheme.

Redlands Park

There are 59 residential homes designed for the over 55s in Redlands Park. It is a community of mobile home properties two miles (by road) from Lighthorne village. The Park is managed by Avon Estates Limited.

36 Redlands households responded to the parish plan survey. The most frequently raised issues were:

- A majority of respondents felt that people drive too fast through the park, particularly bearing in mind that most residents are pensioners;
- Requests for bus stops on the B4100 at the entrance to the park;
- Some residents would like more street lighting in the park;
- The road into Redlands is narrow so it would be useful to have some passing places and mirrors on the bend.

Recommended Actions

- 20) Discuss with the Redlands Park site owner the issues of speeding and whether the entrance/exit road could be improved to address the issues raised above.
- 21) Ask transport partners about introducing bus stops for Redlands residents on the B4100.

Appendix 1 — History of Lighthorne

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire a Germanic tribe, the Hwicce, lived in the area and gave the settlement its name. A pair of bronze cauldron escutcheons from this period has been found in Lighthorne. It is not known precisely when Christianity was introduced to the area, but the village was incorporated in the Bishopric of Worcester in 688 AD. The remains of a preaching cross, probably dating to the 10th or 11th century, can be seen in the churchyard.

After the Norman invasion Lighthorne passed to Henry de Newburgh, the first Norman Earl of Warwick. The Lordship of the Manor changed hands several times in the following six centuries, the Earls of Warwick often being the owners. King Henry V returned the Manor to them on his accession in 1413. A panel of stained glass in one of the windows in the church and the tenor bell both commemorate the accession. The Pope family held the Manor in 1548 and they constructed Church Hill farmhouse, adjacent to the church. This is the oldest domestic building in Lighthorne.

In 1715 Lighthorne became the property of Lord Willoughby de Broke and it was the first village in Warwickshire to have its common fields enclosed by act of parliament, in 1721. Lighthorne became an estate village and most of Lighthorne's old buildings date from this period, including the church tower, the old rectory, the pub and the old schoolhouse.

In 1773-4 the church was rebuilt of local limestone. The old chapel at Compton Verney had been demolished in 1772 when Capability Brown was redesigning the parkland and it is thought that some of the stained glass from the chapel was used at Lighthorne. One window in particular, featuring St. Sebastian, from the nationally important early sixteenth century workshop of the King's glazier, Barnard Flower, is thought to have been brought to Lighthorne from Compton Verney. The nave and chancel of the church were rebuilt in 1875-6 and incorporated the earlier tower. Stained glass from the earlier church was incorporated in contemporary frames by local glaziers.

The Verney estates in Warwickshire were broken up and sold in a series of auctions in the late 1920s, the majority of properties in Lighthorne being acquired by their sitting tenants. Only one house in the village was described as possessing electric lighting.

Residents who are interested in the history of Lighthorne should access the Lighthorne History Society website, lighthornehistory.org.uk.