

BOXWELL WITH LEIGHTERTON PARISH COUNCIL PARISH/COMMUNITY PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND

Towards the end of 2023, village residents met in order to discuss the purpose and relevance of a Parish (or Community) Plan [the Plan] which resulted in a Questionnaire being made available to everyone on-line or in hard copy form. There were responses from 39 households in total, which represents 33% of the village, the input from whom has enabled the Parish Council [PC] to compare the demographic in Boxwell with Leighterton [BwL] to other parishes, villages and towns in the UK. The PC is able to report that the BwL demographic only differs significantly from the national average in just two age groups: under 19 (30% lower) and 60-64 (11.2% higher).

SUMMARY

There were a broad number of issues raised and those over which the PC can exert control will form part of an Action Plan. All the responses were anonymous and have been subject to analysis with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which has enabled the PC to prioritise certain subjects.

ISSUES OF NOTE

Based on the responses, set out below are issues which had either positive feedback, matters of concern which require resolving, some of which will form part of the Plan. However, it should be noted that there are also areas where the PC felt clarification might be helpful.

1. Positive feedback included the fact that respondents place a high value on the community's location in an active farming environment. There was also a desire to maintain this and to help ensure wildlife, flora and fauna are respected.
The importance of the school as part of the community was referred to. However, since there has been limited interaction in recent years, it is proposed that members of the PC will endeavour to remedy this.
2. A matter of concern, which was a recurring theme, related to the state of the roads. Whilst the PC can record dissatisfaction, unfortunately their powers are limited as road repairs are the responsibility of GCC Highways. Anyone is at liberty to post a request for repair and we would encourage you to use:
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>
3. Comments in relation to the speed at which cars drive through the village were also noted. The PC has already explored the possibility of imposing speed limits, however it is subject to evaluation by Highways and is likely to be very costly before any signs can be put up. The PC is actively engaged in exploring other options that research has shown can impact people's driving style. Comments were also received about the erosion of the verges and the PC has suggested planting wildflower banks in order to encourage greater care by drivers.
4. Some respondents referred to the fact that there was limited use of St Andrews. Besides the monthly Holy Communion, there are services to mark the various festivals during the year, including Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The Parochial Church Council [PCC] has tried to encourage additional attendance and also different uses of

the church by seeking advice from residents. The PC will support and help where it can with arrangements in order to establish other uses for the church.

Following a review of all the responses, the PC intends to concentrate on the following issues while also working to ensure greater engagement between the PC, the PCC and the Amenities Committee. We shall also work hard to broaden the relationship between the school, church and village.

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

- The preferred method of communication appears to be via the monthly BwL Newsletter and we shall explore ways in which to provide more information to residents.
- Volunteer groups for various projects are always welcome and the PC would encourage everyone to assist if they are able to do so. The Planting Party earlier this year was a great illustration of about 30 people coming together in order to plant the saplings in the Park and Cemetery. The Newsletter and PC Meeting Minutes (both of which are posted on the Notice Board by the old bus stop) contain details of proposed activities.
- Ideas for events at the pub and/or the church are always welcome - just let the PC or PCC know and we shall see what can be arranged.

HOUSING

- Comments received underline the fact that there is a desire for affordable housing for local young people or those connected to the village or farms. However, it was also emphasised that any new housing should not upset the character of the village. This subject will be included in The Plan, bearing in mind the recent changes to Planning introduced by the new government.

PUBLIC SPACES

- The Park/Playground is seen as more of the latter with limited use by residents without children. The PC intends to ensure that the Park is made more attractive so that all residents feel encouraged to use it and investigate the possibility of extending the availability of public spaces. The Pond is an attractive feature of the village and the PC with the help of some volunteers is in the process of tidying it up and exploring the introduction of a duck platform or house. The bench has already been restored.
- Ideas for the use of the bus shelter are always welcome.

AMENITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- The Royal Oak is a valued part of the village and appreciated as a core component of the village.
- In general residents are happy with the medical surgeries they use. Unfortunately, ambulances and other National Health matters commented upon are outside the PC's remit. However, should the opportunity arise, these concerns will be raised with Cotswold District Council (CDC) on your behalf.

NEXT STEPS

The PC will establish an Action Plan which will be shared with residents. In due course the PC would like to create a Local Plan which will be provided to the CDC for their approval; this is an extensive and detailed exercise so any volunteers are very welcome. In the event CDC approves the Plan, it will be put to a referendum in the community. It should be noted that this is an important document, since it would have implications for any future Planning Applications in the village.

In the meantime, any new notices will be posted on the Notice Board in the village and also on the website where we will also post some more of the summary findings from the questionnaire and comparisons between BwL and the UK national average.

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Co-Chairman of the Parish Council

Martin Weaver
Co-Chairman of the Parish Council