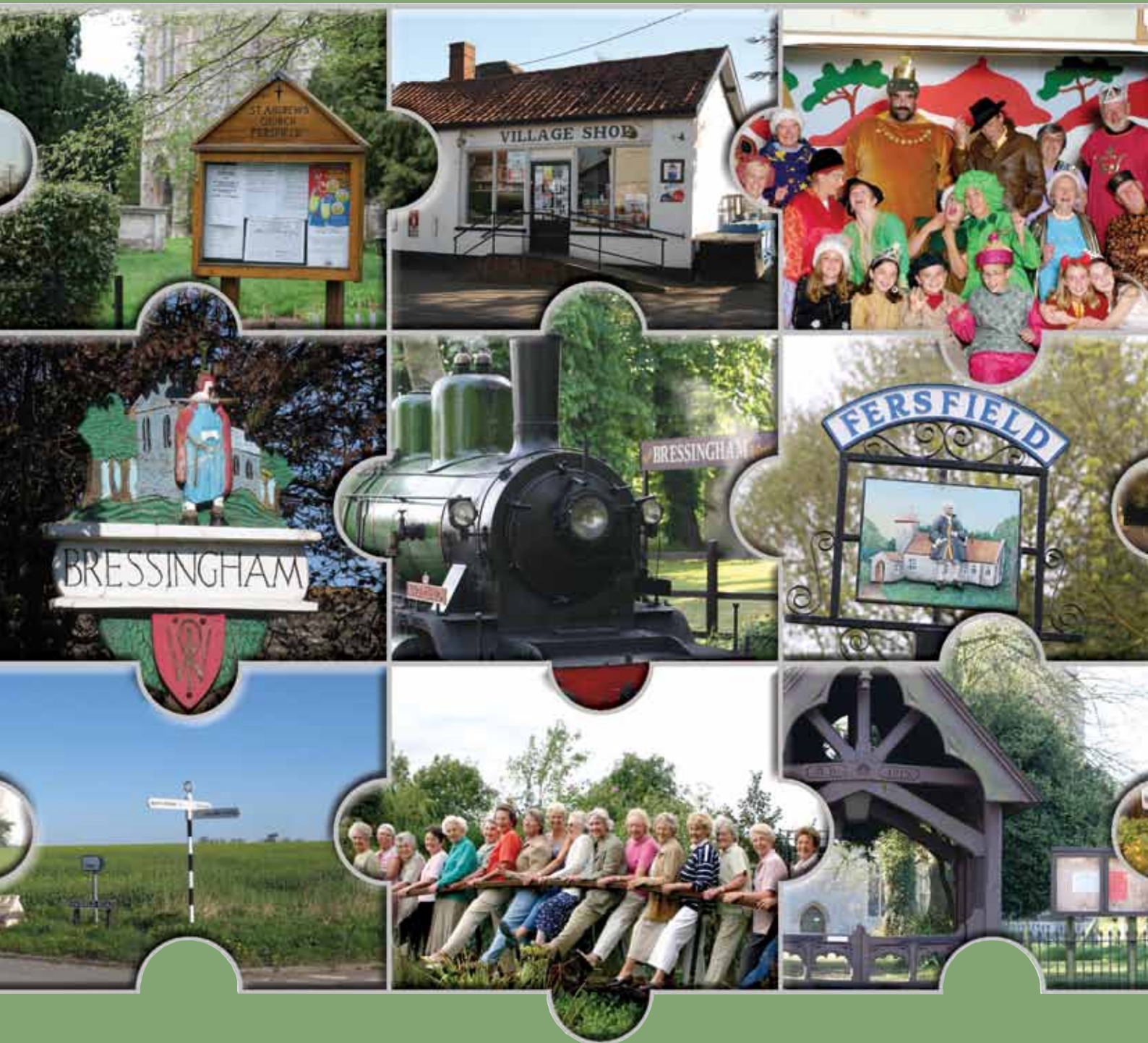


Bressingham & Fersfield

Parish Plan 2011



A Plan for the 21st Century



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Introduction



Your Parish Plan has finally arrived!

After two and a half years, a dream has become reality thanks to the hard work of a dedicated number of local people, not to mention all of your invaluable input.

Back in 2008, here in the Parish of Bressingham and Fersfield, we formed a Parish Plan Steering Committee to find out exactly what we – as villagers – think of our villages. But it wasn't just as easy as asking you. Instead we've fought a long, hard slog to get where we are today. We applied for grants, developed, distributed and collected a questionnaire, organised public events, recruited more people onto the committee and all the while, tried to keep people informed of the process. Thankfully we've been helped along the way by Peter Smith, our Community Development Officer at Norfolk Rural

Community Council.

Numerous meetings later, we're still speaking to each other (just!) Among the heated discussions, we've had some great laughs and now know what a 'she wee' is! Babies have been born and older children have left home. The pub has burned down, been rebuilt and is almost ready to open as we go to print.

There has also been a change of Government since this all began. Anyone who's heard of The Big Society and the Localism Bill going through parliament at the moment, will see just how current and important our Parish Plan really is, because evidence from it really does influence decision makers – such as the town, borough and county councils – about a community's aspirations for the future.

All in all, it's been incredibly hard work to get to this stage in the process, and yet this is just the start!!

Now we're armed with all this important information we need to put it to use to move forward into the future.

For change to happen, we need to make it happen!

To help, we've taken the information from all your questionnaires, listened to what you want and have come up with some action plans to get things started.



***BUT WE
STILL NEED
YOUR
HELP!***

We will be setting up action groups to take your Parish Plan to the next phase. However little or how much time you have, please volunteer to help our community grow. In the meantime, all that's left to say is a big thank you to all the members of the Committee both past and present who have given up so much of their valuable time in order to get the work done. The Parish of Bressingham and Fersfield is already a fantastic place to live – together let's make it even better!

Bressingham and Ferfield Parish Plan Committee

History of the Villages

Bressingham and Fersfield have existed for a very long time. The first recorded mention of them was in 963 but they had probably been around for some time before that. For the rest of the next nine hundred years they were owned by feudal landlords, mostly the Dukes of Norfolk, and, by and large, nothing much happened or changed.

In 1894 the Local Government Act established the Parish Councils. Bressingham and Fersfield each had their own, but in 1935 the County of Norfolk transferred the Fersfield Council to Bressingham, presumably for administrative convenience, although there was an historical precedent from 1799 when the church parishes of Bressingham and Fersfield were combined by the Bressingham and Fersfield Enclosure Act. Whether this later 1935 amalgamation was made with the agreement of



the residents of Fersfield we do not know. Interestingly, the Bressingham Council minutes of that year make no mention of their new companions.

At this time both villages were fully self-contained communities, each with a church and its rectory with their own rector, their pubs (three in Bressingham, two in Fersfield), village shop and post office, a mill and a forge, a village hall and school. Bressingham had 633 people living there in the 1931 census while Fersfield

had 194, giving a combined total of 827. All the people living in the villages at that time also worked there, mostly on the land.

Then things began to change, especially for Fersfield. First the school went (in 1935), then the village hall was sold in 1961. The mill and the forge had already stopped working, then the shop closed along with the pubs. Later the church and parish became part of the enlarged benefice of Bressingham, Fersfield and the Lophams. The rectory was sold and the rector gone. There are still working farms in Fersfield.

Fersfield later became known for its airfield which was the base for the secret project codenamed Aphrodite in 1944. This project attempted to launch robot planes against enemy targets in Europe in response to the V1 rockets. It was not a success and, sadly, one doomed flight resulted in the death over Walberswick of the pilot Joe Kennedy, the elder brother of President John Kennedy.

Bressingham fared better. The school took on the Fersfield pupils and still survives and thrives today. The Post Office went but the shop is still trading. The mill was sold to

is still the major employer in the village. There are also still seven farmers living and working in Bressingham, although most of them also have other sources of income.

negotiated the purchase of the playing field.

What has changed since then? Statistically, not much. In 1978 there were thought to be 737 residents, compared with 827 in 1931 and 777 today, in 2011. The villages have clearly not grown in population down the years, mainly because of planning restrictions on new developments. What has changed is the way those 777 residents live compared with their predecessors.

The majority of those living in both villages now have to find work outside the villages until they retire. When their work moves they often have to move with it. Work therefore is no longer what binds the community together. Nor are people likely to be so rooted in a community where they spend their nights rather than their working days. This means that the social groupings have to be responsible for most of the ties that bond us. Without such bonds the villages can become, in the words of one long-term resident, more like henhouses than communities.

That is the challenge which this Plan seeks to address.



an outside business but is still there. In the 1950s George Aves, a local farmer, donated his old threshing barn to the village, to use as the village hall. It was repaired by local volunteers.

The three pubs went, however, although the Chequers was later reconverted as a pub and will, one trusts, soon be in operation again. The old rectory was sold and a new more modern one purchased, so the group rector still lives in Bressingham but now looks after five parishes. In 1946 Alan Bloom bought Bressingham Hall and went on to make it and its gardens into Blooms of Bressingham, a successful business which

In 1981 the Parish Council commissioned a Village Appraisal, the forerunner of this Parish Plan. Two major complaints were the lack of a pub and of a playing field. As a result a campaign was launched to resurrect the Chequers pub which had been converted into a residential dwelling, and the Council



Our Households



In total 304 households responded to the questionnaire with 55 coming from Fersfield and 249 from Bressingham.

In terms of occupancy, there were 375 males and 402 females included on the respondents' questionnaires – a total of 777 people.

Of these, 21% are over-65, 45% are aged 31-65, 10% are aged 19-30, 9% are 13-18, 9% are aged 5-12 and 7% are 0-4. More than 70% of people questioned currently own their property while 22% are renting.

There is a good mix of types of property in both villages

with a large number of bungalows, semi-detached and detached houses. In terms of fuel, 67% of households use oil in their homes, while 40% use wood and 20% use coal. Bottled gas is used in 13% of homes while ground source is used by 4% and solar panels by 3%.

When asked about internet access, 63% of households have broadband while a further 12% have a dial-up connection. Overall, it was felt the quality of connection was variable and could be improved.

In terms of mobile phone reception, just 18% of people felt their quality of reception was good, 39% described it as bad and a further 33% found it variable.



Our Community

A joint community or separate villages?

Currently, there seems to be a divide between the two villages with only 33% of respondents viewing Bressingham and Fersfield as one community. Looking in more detail, 29% of Fersfield residents and 35% of Bressingham residents agreed they were one community.

When asked whether the two villages should be separate communities there was a split in opinion with 28% opting for separation and 29% believing they should stay as one community. Interestingly, 42% of Fersfield residents showed a preference to keeping the two villages separate, compared with 24% of Bressingham residents. Following on from



Survey Quotes:
TWO VILLAGES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN IS TOO GREAT TO BE ONE COMMUNITY."

"WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ONE COMMUNITY AND THERE IS NO NEED TO CHANGE. BRESSINGHAM NEEDS FERSFIELD AND VICE VERSA."

this, it became obvious feelings run high on this issue.

Some suggested the two villages are too far apart to be seen as one, with others wanting to make their own decisions for their particular village.

On the flip side, others believe the partnership to be mutually beneficial. As both villages are relatively small, it was felt it made sense to share resources and amenities. Some feared that Fersfield in particular, would be too small to exist on its own in the current climate.

Our Community

When asked whether Fersfield would benefit from its own community meeting facility, 26% agreed with the figure rising to 40% amongst Fersfield residents.

Some felt it would be nice for Fersfield to have somewhere to host things themselves instead of feeling they have to go to Bressingham all the time.

But this threw up other worries about whether it would be financially viable and whether the size of the village warrants one.

Suggestions included making

better use of existing facilities such as the Church and Church meadows.

Another idea was to develop

Survey Quote:
FOR PEOPLE WITH NO TRANSPORT, IT COULD BE QUITE BENEFICIAL. IT'S QUITE A WALK TO BRESSINGHAM.

the playing field to include a small building with basic facilities such as toilets and a kitchen for light refreshments.

It was felt the villages needed to be brought together, with 30% keen to see more joint community events. Suggestions included a Christmas Fayre, Easter Egg Hunt, Social Club, Church open day with fund-raising tea or BBQ, Quiz Night, Car Boot Sales, Dances and Inter-village sports events such as a cricket match.

Community Information

Although the majority of people (58%) were satisfied with the communication of community information, others felt there was a need to find new means of informing people.

One popular suggestion was to re-start the Parish Newsletter with others keen to set up a Parish plan website.

Having said that, 83% still felt the best way to find out what is happening in their village was via the Cock Crow.

Our Community

Parish Council

Overall, people are happy that Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Council fully represents the needs of their community. This did however include a slightly higher percentage of Bressingham residents (36%) than Fersfield residents (29%). People were asked whether they felt Fersfield should have its own Parish Council. 35% of respondents from Fersfield agreed with this idea, compared to 26% from Bressingham.

Speaking generally, overall 67% of people felt they understood the role of the Parish Council. Encouragingly, 13% of respondents expressed an interest in considering a role as a Parish Councillor. Others mentioned the need to get younger people involved in the Parish Council.



Recreation Ground / Playing Fields

Survey Quotes:
PERHAPS BETTER UPKEEP OF WHAT'S THERE WOULD BE BETTER THAN INTRODUCING MORE EQUIPMENT."

"IT WOULD BE AN ASSET FOR THE VILLAGE IF FACILITIES AND GAMES BUILDINGS COULD BE PROVIDED."

Moving on to other village facilities and amenities, 18% of respondents claimed to use the play equipment at Bressingham Recreation Ground regularly. 13% of people also expressed an interest in using the planned play facilities at Fersfield when they become available.

A large number of people were also keen to see more facilities on the village playing fields including keep fit equipment, a bowling green, resurfacing of the Bressingham tennis court, a fenced-off toddler play area and changing rooms. Others suggested providing somewhere for young children to learn to cycle in the absence of pavements in the villages.

There was a sense that better facilities would increase use of the playing field with some suggesting that improving current equipment and maintaining it regularly would have the same effect.



Our Community

The Churches



It's clear that people see the churches and chapel of the two villages as important with 75% of respondents citing their importance to community life. However, only 22% claim to use them regularly.

Following on from this, 50% of people felt the buildings could be used for things other than religious services and occasions. Suggestions included concerts, social events, flower shows, a Christmas Tree festival, art exhibitions, yoga and fitness classes, coffee

mornings, parent and toddler groups and fundraising events.

It was noted that people need to bear in mind the limits of the buildings and that it would be necessary to provide heating for these things to happen successfully.



Survey Quote:
EVENTS THAT DO NOT DAMAGE THE DIGNITY OF THE CHURCH AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR.

The School and Village Hall



Three-quarters of respondents considered the school to be a resource for the community.

Bressingham Village Hall appears to be well-visited with 45% of respondents attending events and a further 19% using it for private hire. The idea of a social club at the hall was well-received and is perhaps something to pursue in the future. It was mentioned that perhaps Bressingham could benefit from a new village hall that would be better equipped to accommodate weddings or social dances.

Traffic & Travel

Survey Quote:
A SATISFACTORY BUS SERVICE WOULD BE HELPFUL."

"WHEN YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH TRANSPORT IN FERSFIELD, YOU HAVE TO GET A TAXI. IT COSTS £10 EACH WAY TO DISS.



Overall, there is a sense that Bressingham and Fersfield are poorly serviced when it comes to public transport. People rely heavily on their car with 94% claiming to use one. But when asked whether lift-sharing would be of interest, only 11% expressed an interest.

People seem keen to use public transport but there is either no convenient service or they are lacking any information about what is available. Improvements include a more frequent scheduled bus service to Diss, Thetford and Norwich with the timetable more widely circulated, perhaps delivered with the Cock Crow. One suggestion was a Saturday

bus to Diss for shoppers and teenagers to benefit from.

Interestingly, one Fersfield resident noted that after a village appraisal back in 1981, one of the most important findings was the lack of public transport to and from the village. In the resident's words: 'Fersfield had no buses then – it still has none.' Of those who have bus passes, 55% fail to use it regularly mostly due to a lack of services.

It has become clear that many services operating from the Parish are not widely known about and have been greatly reduced. Only 4% are aware of the Voluntary Car Service

and only 3% had heard of Wheels In Motion for young people. People were more aware of the other services available including the Borderhoppa (50%), Flexi Bus (44%) and the scheduled bus service (51%).

Traffic & Travel Problems

Road maintenance appears to be the most pressing concern for the majority of residents with 64% claiming it's a problem. Concerns focus primarily on two things – the number of potholes in various locations in the parish and a lack of gritting in icy weather.

Survey Quote:
ROAD MAINTENANCE IS A MAJOR PROBLEM WITH POT HOLES AND BAD SURFACES ALL OVER THE PARISH.



Traffic & Travel

Speeding is also a major concern with 58% of respondents identifying it as a problem. Various locations including the A1066, Common Road and High Road were repeatedly mentioned. When asked whether we should consider implementing a Road Safety Speed Watch Scheme, 44% agreed it was a good idea, although only 15% would be willing to volunteer to help.

There was also a great deal of bad feeling towards HGVs and farm vehicles travelling through the villages. Overall, people felt the roads weren't wide enough to accommodate these vehicles, that they were noisy and damaged the verges. Suggestions included a ban on HGVs except for access or upgrading the roads to more adequately deal with them.

30% of people also identified parking as an area of concern, particularly outside the school. Numerous respondents felt parents were often forced to park in an unsafe or disrespectful manner when picking up or dropping off their children. One recommendation is to build a car park at the school to ease this problem.

Other concerns include pedestrian safety (34%), cycling safety (23%), congestion (22%), traffic noise (13%) traffic accidents (10%) and road layout (9%).

With regards to cycling it was felt there was a need for more provision for safe cycling, including more cycle paths. In particular, people would like to see a cycle path enabling children to ride their bikes to

school. On the other hand, some people felt the roads in the Parish were generally quiet enough to be safe for cyclists although there was some concern about the HGVs.

Where pedestrians are concerned, 42% felt there should be more pavements in the two villages. In particular, respondents want to see pavements on Common Road, High Road, School Road, and from Common Road to the shop.

Other traffic recommendations include a 20mph speed limit on High, Common and School Roads, speed bumps on Common Road and the need to clear ditches and for hedgerows and trees to be kept trimmed.

It is clear that the majority of respondents (72%) believe that people should have every opportunity to live in the village they were born in if that is their choice. This led on to a discussion of the type of additional housing and development that people would be happy to see in the next ten years.

The most popular type of housing was family accommodation, with 47% happy to see this developed in the Parish. 35% were keen to see more affordable rental housing, with 32% supporting affordable part-purchase housing such as starter homes.

Acknowledging the large retirement population in the two villages, 27% support the development of retirement homes or bungalows and 22% would like to see new sheltered housing. A further 22% were happy for more housing for single people to be built and



just 9% would support the building of executive homes. There were, however, 22% of respondents who'd wish to see no further development in the Parish at all.

As an aside, people were asked whether they'd found commenting on planning issues to South Norfolk District Council a straight-forward process. The vast majority agreed it had been an easy process.

Planning

Survey Quotes:
FERSFIELD COULD HAPPILY TAKE A DEVELOPMENT, BUT NOT AN ESTATE. THIS WOULD ENABLE A THRIVING COMMUNITY WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE VILLAGE SHOP AND PUB RETURNING. IT WOULD ALSO ENABLE OUR CHILDREN TO STAY IN THE VILLAGE."

"SHOULD FURTHER DEVELOPMENT BE NECESSARY, THERE ARE PLENTY OF SITES TO IN-FILL WITHOUT STRETCHING THE VILLAGES."

Quiet Lanes

Overall most people claim to be knowledgeable of the quiet lanes in the Parish with 63% saying they knew how to use them. But many were unhappy with the way in which the lanes are used. Complaints include speeding, playing loud music and tooting horns. Others thought putting signs on the lanes was a waste of money.

Survey Quote:
WE DON'T NEED A SIGN TO TELL US IT'S A QUIET LANE. THOSE WHO DON'T USE IT AS A QUIET LANE WOULD IGNORE THE SIGNS ANYWAY!



Footpaths, Countryside & Environment



Footpaths

Both Bressingham and Fersfield have an extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways. They seem to be well-used with 34% of people claiming to use the public footpaths more than once a week. The footpath network is used for a variety of past-times including leisure walking (41%), dog-walking (28%), cycling (13%) and riding (7%). Overall, opinion is divided on how well these footpaths are maintained and signposted with 37% happy and 25% unhappy with the current state of affairs. Generally speaking, the main problem appears to be a lack of clear signage although a few respondents commented on the lack of maintenance. It was widely felt that the Parish would benefit from a detailed updated footpath guide.

Countryside

Overall, people are satisfied that verges and hedges are being maintained to encourage bio-diversity in both villages. There was some concern however that hedgerows are being removed for the convenience of farming. People are also concerned about the presence of litter in many verges and ditches and would like to see the area cleaned up.

As Bressingham and Fersfield are situated within a large farming community, 68% of people felt it was important to understand farming methods and the way farming can shape our way of life. Having said that, opinion was strongly divided on whether there were aspects of farming that caused concern with 36% having worries.

Footpaths, Countryside & Environment

Countryside

Concerns included the use of insecticides and pesticides, shooting of wildlife, farm vehicles being driven too fast, mud on the roads, bird scarers going off regularly and early in the morning, too much crop-spraying and a lack of designated gateways onto fields, resulting in damage to verges. On the other hand, others noted that people should be tolerant if they've chosen to live in a farming community.



Environment

In terms of the environment, opinion again seems to be mixed on the best ways to move things forward. Nearly a third (28%) would be happy to support setting up a working group to consider ways of reducing the village's carbon footprint. Moving onto alternative energy supplies, 35% felt this should be encouraged within the Parish. Suggestions included wind turbines, solar panels and mains gas. It was felt by some that a community wind turbine would benefit both the environment and the community if it was geographically suitable. There could be a potential financial gain with excess profits ploughed back into the Parish.

With money in mind, 61% of respondents showed an interest in bulk purchasing of fuel such as oil, logs or coal to reduce costs. There was also a lot of interest in a communal



compost facility being made available within the Parish, with 32% in favour. Interest in the use of allotments as well as the formation of a group to swap and share produce were much less popular ideas.

It became clear that a lot of residents are concerned about litter and fly-tipping in the Parish particularly in locations such as Darrow Lane, Lodge Lane, Fersfield Road, Fersfield Airfield, the playing field, the

village hall car park, and the A1066 laybys.

Some residents (33%) also feel that dog fouling is a problem in various locations around the villages and would like to see the introduction of dog waste bins. When asked what additional communal facilities they'd like to see in the villages, people suggested more bottle banks, skips for garden rubbish, more general bins and a produce market.

Survey Quote:

THE SIGNAGE IS OK BUT ON SOME PATHS THERE IS LITTLE TO SHOW THE ACTUAL ROUTE – ESPECIALLY ACROSS ARABLE FIELDS.

Permissive Routes

At present, the Parish includes a number of permissive routes – agreements allowing access across farmland for which the landowner is paid – to benefit foot, horse or cycle travellers.

It was felt that the villages would benefit from more of these routes for walking, cycling and horse-riding. Suggestions include a route through to Diss for cyclists, a route between Bressingham and Fersfield and a route from Pillar Box Corner for children walking to school or to the high school bus pick-up point. Horse-riders also felt that they were currently often restricted to riding on the lanes and would prefer more off-road opportunities.

Survey Quote:

MUCH MORE OFF-ROAD RIDING IS NEEDED THROUGH THE VILLAGE WHERE PRACTICAL AND WHERE LANDOWNERS WOULD ALLOW THIS.

Footpaths, Countryside & Environment

At present, 57% of respondents use the glass recycling facilities available in the Parish. That said, people feel there should be a much wider range of facilities available to include a garden waste facility and somewhere to recycle clothes and newspapers. It was felt this more comprehensive recycling area would be ideally located at the back of the village hall. There was also some concern that the current facilities are not emptied often enough. In particular the one at the shop is often full since there's no longer one at the pub.



an aside, some people seem unhappy with a fortnightly black bin collection – particularly in the summer months – and feel this should be addressed.

In terms of the South Norfolk household recycling collection, 65% of respondents were happy. Improvements suggested include collection of a wider range of items such as tetra paks and for glass to be collected too. As

Local Businesses

It's clear that people see the Bressingham village shop as an essential amenity with 84% claiming it to be important to the community. It's used widely to purchase specific items of shopping, to supplement the residents' main shopping and for the purchase

of newspapers and magazines. That said, a suggestion to create a social area with refreshments available inside the shop met with a mixed response. 23% of people showed an interest in using this, yet a further 39% claimed

they wouldn't use it.

Interestingly, 14% of respondents use home delivery for their food shopping. Services offered include a milkman, fishmonger, Ringtons tea delivery, organic fruit and veg and local supermarket delivery

In terms of other business in the Parish, 45 respondents run their own business locally. Of these, 29 felt it would be useful for them if Bressingham & Fersfield maintained a local business directory. Other suggestions to maintain and develop their businesses included a better broadband connection and improved mobile phone coverage.



Healthcare

Whilst most people had no difficulty accessing healthcare services there were others who found it difficult. Problems included the fact that it's hard to rely on public transport to get to the doctor, a lack of A & E nearby, difficulties in getting an appointment and unsuitable opening times.

Survey Quotes:
IT'S DIFFICULT TO GET TO THE DOCTOR'S OR THE HOSPITAL."
"THE PROVISION OF LOCAL DENTISTRY IS AWFUL. DISS HEALTH CENTRE ALSO SEEMS TO RATION APPOINTMENTS SO BY THE TIME YOU GET ONE, YOU ARE BETTER."

Young Children

Survey Quote:
WHEN WE MOVED HERE THE YEAR GROUP WAS FULL – WE WAITED A YEAR TO BE ADMITTED. I BELIEVE THIS YEAR'S RECEPTION CLASS HAS VERY FEW VILLAGE FAMILIES ATTENDING."

A free 'Stay and Play' for pre-school children was felt to be of benefit to the community with 28% supporting the idea. Other popular ideas were an after-school club (19%) a holiday club (17%) a playgroup (16%) and a toddler club (11%).

When it came to Bressingham primary school, 20 respondents had had problems getting their child or children into the school. There is some bad feeling that places are perhaps going to families from outside the village. One family waited a year for their child to be admitted, another waited 8 months.



Activities



the most widely recognised with 38% of people having heard of each one respectively. Next came the Ladies Club (37%), the Drama Group (34%) and Bell-Ringing (27%). 21% had heard of the Gardening Club, followed by the Church Choir (17%), Youth Club (16%), Book Club (11%), Art Club (5%) and Young Mothers Group (5%).

When asked whether they'd be interested in joining any of these groups or starting a new interest group, 21% appeared keen.

Many people expressed an interest in more village Social Activities taking place with concerts, festivals and carnivals all getting a very positive response. Other suggestions included a village fete, a Benefice Festival, Film Shows, a Street Market, Car Boot / Table Top Sales, talks on interesting subjects, Keep Fit, BBQs, and adult football team and Tai Chi lessons – plenty of scope for development in the future!

Bressingham & Fersfield offer a range of groups and societies for people to join. That said, it appears some of them are not widely known about.

The Flower Show and the Football Club were

Safety

The vast majority of people (73%) find Bressingham and Fersfield a very safe area to live in. Those who didn't feel quite so secure cited the lack of police, the dark streets, speeding cars and petty crimes such as arson on hedges as worrying factors.

Concentrating on local policing, 43% felt satisfied with the service they receive with 37% confident that they knew where to go for advice or help on anti-social behaviour. On the flip side, 30% of people did not know the best route to get help on anti-social behaviour and 58% had never heard of SNAPS (Safe Neighbourhood Action

Panels). Just over a third (36%) of households said they'd be prepared to participate in the Homewatch Scheme.

One respondent queried whether there is a PCO or Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator for the villages? In relation to council tax, 30% felt they received value for money whilst 45% disagreed.

The South Norfolk Community Strategy supports those who are elderly, vulnerable and carers of those groups. Of those who felt they belonged to one of these groups, most did not feel disadvantaged by living in Bressingham or Fersfield.



Young People

Overall, the level of response to the youth questionnaire was disappointing although the comments that did come in were very useful. In total, 31 people responded made up of 15 boys and 16 girls.

When asked how they spend their spare time in Bressingham and Fersfield, 65% spend it with their friends. 32% use the Recreation Ground in Bressingham, 10% use Church Meadows in Fersfield, 39% go cycling, 13% go horse-riding, 26% do sport and 39% play PC games. Other past-times mentioned include walking the dog and off-roading.

There was a general sense that more is needed in both villages to keep young people amused. Suggestions include a swimming pool, an after-school club, a basketball court, an off-road course, a skate park, a youth club, badminton court, a tennis club, more equipment on the playing field, a community centre and a social club.

Current village facilities are well-used by the young people with a vast majority using both the shop and the playing field. It was noted that a village shop in Fersfield would be very

useful. While 26% of young people said they'd used the village hall, perhaps more things to appeal to youths would increase this figure? The churches and chapel were only used by 2 out of the 31 respondents.

Improvements suggested to increase use of the above facilities include better park and sports facilities on the playing field, resurfacing the



tennis court, tidying up the playing field and a wider range of stock in the shop.

When asked whether they'd be interested in joining a young person's council to support future development of services for young people in Bressingham and Fersfield, 23% said yes with 45% saying no. 16% said they would like more information about youth councils.

Village concerns among young people focus mainly on roads and traffic. In particular, they

mentioned pedestrian and cycling safety, the speed and amount of traffic and potholes. There was also mention of some anti-social behaviour and a lack of things for teenagers to do in both villages. The idea of a place for young people to meet and gather was met with enthusiasm with support from 61% of those responding.

In terms of feeling lonely and vulnerable, only 4 out of 31 said yes. One made the point that she only felt lonely because she couldn't get to see her friends in Diss.

The suggestion of the addition of skate board ramps on the recreation ground met with a mixed

response with 26% in favour and 23% against. It was felt by some that the facility wouldn't be widely used whereas others thought it was a great idea that would stop them having to travel into Diss to skateboard.

Finally, a number of young people said they were concerned about the environment. Local concerns seem to centre around the problem of litter in the villages, the need for more hedgerows and the suggestion of a fenced-off area just for nature and wildlife.

What Characteristics of the Parish do you want to see Maintained?



There seems to be an overriding desire to maintain Bressingham and Fersfield as tranquil villages, complete with a real community spirit. In practical terms people want to see the village hall, the shop, the school and the church maintained and for the pub to be up and running again as soon as possible. There were many mentions of the 'sense of community' that the villages have and the need to preserve rural life and neighbourliness.

With all this in mind, people were keen to keep a close eye on housing development in order to preserve the identity of the villages.

One quote sums up what a lot of people seem to believe...

PEACEFUL, OPEN ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE AND A FRIENDLY AND CARING ETHOS OF THE RESIDENTS.

Survey Quotes:
WE LIKE THE RURAL FEEL, DESPITE THE CLOSE PROXIMITY TO DISS.
"BRESSINGHAM IS A LOVELY VILLAGE WITH A GOOD MIX OF PRIVATE, RENTED AND COUNCIL PROPERTY THAT SEEMS TO WORK VERY WELL..."



Action Plan

Our Households - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To improve communication from the home and for local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign for better mobile phone coverage • Campaign to improve broadband provision and speed

Our Community - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To encourage community spirit between the two villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise more joint community events • Establish a community meeting facility in Fersfield to share community events
To enhance communication in the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the possibility of re-starting the Parish Newsletter • Consider the setting-up of a Parish Plan website and Fersfield website
To promote participation and interest in the Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to those respondents who expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council • Reach out to younger people to encourage involvement • Discuss further the necessity and viability of Fersfield having its own Parish Council
To update / improve facilities on the playing fields and recreation ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the possibility of new facilities such as keep-fit equipment, a bowling green, resurfacing the tennis court, a toddler play area and the erection of changing rooms • Improve existing equipment with a regular maintenance programme
To increase usage of the churches and chapel for non-religious events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the viability of hosting events such as concerts, shows, exhibitions and toddler groups.
To increase usage of the village hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider setting up a Social Club at the village hall • Discuss what improvements would improve potential use of the hall

Traffic & Travel - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To improve transport facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign for a more regular scheduled bus service in both villages • Ensure a wider circulation of current timetables • Publicise schemes such as the Voluntary Car Service, Border Hopper and Flexibus
To improve road maintenance in the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign to repair all sub-standard road surfaces • Campaign for more widespread gritting in icy conditions

Aim:	Action:
To tackle the issue of speeding in both villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider implementation of a Road Safety Speed Watch Scheme • Look into the possibility of a 20mph speed limit on High, Common and School Roads in Bressingham and The Street, Fersfield • Consider the need for speed bumps on Common Road and The Street, Fersfield
Aim:	Actions:
To reduce problems concerning HGVs and Farm Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider upgrading certain roads to deal with HGV traffic • Discuss the possibility of a ban on HGVs except for access
Aim:	Actions:
To improve pedestrian and cyclist safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the provision of more pavements in both villages, in particular on Common Road, High Road and School Road • Discuss the provision of more cycle paths in both villages, in particular one leading to the school
Aim:	Actions:
To ease the parking situation outside Bressingham School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the possibility of alternative car parking issues

Planning - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To encourage people of all ages to be able to stay in the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the building of affordable family homes and starter homes within both villages, bearing in mind people's concerns about too much development • Look into the need for more retirement property or sheltered housing schemes

Footpaths, Countryside & Environment - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To maintain a well-signed, well-maintained footpath network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a programme of maintenance • Publication of a detailed updated footpath guide
Aim:	Actions:
The development of more permissive routes in the villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate the possibility of a route through to Diss for cyclists, a route between Bressingham and Fersfield and a route from Pillar Box Corner for children walking to school. • To look into the possibility of more off-road horse-riding routes around both villages.
Aim:	Actions:
To preserve and maintain hedgerows and ditches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage litter in the verges and ditches around both villages. • Improve farming access to fields without having to remove existing hedges or damaging verges.
Aim:	Actions:
To improve existing relations between the farming community and villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address local concerns such as crop-spraying and speeding farm vehicles
Aim:	Actions:
To improve our environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a working group to reduce the villages' carbon footprints. • Investigate the possibility of alternative energy supplies • Investigate possibility of a community wind turbine • Encourage bulk purchasing of fuel • Establish a communal compost facility • Place more dog litter bins in both villages

Aim:	Actions:
To improve recycling facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a wider range of recycling facilities to include one for garden waste, one for newspapers and one for clothes. • Ensure more frequent emptying of the existing recycling facilities. • Enquire into the possibility of the South Norfolk Recycling Collection taking a wider range of items

Business - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To support and encourage local business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the village shop as an essential amenity • To consider the possibility of opening a small shop in Fersfield • Support the establishment of a local business directory

Young Children - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To provide useful services to parents of young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To look into the possibility of setting up an after-school club, a playgroup and a holiday club • To investigate whether local families are missing out on school places in the village

Activities - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To increase awareness of the activities available to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each club/group increase attendance by publicity, etc
Aim:	Actions:
To hold more village social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get together an action group to discuss suggestions made in the plan

Young People - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To create more for young people to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the idea of a place for young people to meet • Seek support for a young person's council • Discuss the possibility of the additional facilities mentioned in the plan

General - Recommendations

Aim:	Actions:
To improve awareness of local policing and safety schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Homewatch Scheme and other Policing safety schemes • Look into whether there is a local nominated PCSO or Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator

What Next?

All the recommendations, aims and resulting actions shown overleaf, have come from the information **you** have given us in the questionnaires and from the comments you have made.

We have been stunned by your response, and the number of comments people have made on the questionnaires has been quite amazing! We cannot include them all here due to lack of room but hope to put them and other information about current parish activities on the new website which is being developed for both villages *at the moment*.

www.Bressingham.org.uk

www.Fersfield.org.uk

Information will also be posted on the two village notice boards (located at Fersfield meadow and outside the Bressingham & Fersfield Village Hall opposite the shop). It will also be posted in the Bressingham Village Shop window.

You have shown us how passionate you are about the parish. Now we need you to help us make the action plan a reality.



How can you get involved?

We really want to hear about what you think about the Parish Plan *and* which part of the action plan you can help with. Every contribution counts, however small! For example, can you help us produce a footpath guide or do you have ideas about options for a community facility in Fersfield?

We have set up an email address bress_fersfield_pp@yahoo.co.uk so you can contact us, and we *will* respond to everyone - we promise. You can also write to us – the Parish Plan - via the shop, and Ray has very kindly agreed to act as a postmaster.

We are also holding a Cream Tea and Music Afternoon and photography exhibition of parish life on the 18th June from 2 - 5pm at Fersfield Church and we invite you all to come along and talk to us about how you can help, and make the parish even better than it is now.

Once we have received all your comments and have a better idea of how the action groups will work, we will let everyone know

We look forward to hearing all your views!
[Bressingham and Fersfield Parish Plan Committee](#)

Acknowledgements

Current Committee:

Debbie Gosman - Chair
Michelle Lanchester – Treasurer
Sue Craggs – Secretary
Pam Dowling – Funding Organiser
Leo Pearce
Liz Handy
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