

YARNSCOMBE PARISH PLAN



REPORT MARCH 2006

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The village of Yarnscombe lies 7 miles south of Barnstaple and 3 miles north-east of Great Torrington in the district of Torrington, Devon. It has a population of 321 living in 99 households (according to the 2001 census). The parish covers an area of 1,404 hectares and about half the households are outside the village centre.

There is no pub, school or shop in the parish but the Village Hall, which was newly built in 1995, is a thriving social facility and the church is well-attended for such a small community. There is no daily public transport and most households have at least one car. The roads into and through the village are narrow and many households remote from the village centre. Children, of whom there are more than one would expect, go to school in Torrington or college in Barnstaple in the main.



The area has historically been one of small family farms but due to the changes in the agricultural industry the parish now contains less than 10 working farms and is increasingly a community of commuters and retired people. Having said this, a refreshing number of young families are expressing an interest in living in Yarnscombe as it is considered a good place to bring up children.

There have been 2 main housing developments in the last 20 years of 10 houses in total with some limited infill. It is likely that the infrastructure of roads, drainage, etc will reach its limit soon.

In 2003 the Parish Council elections meant that a council consisting of almost all new members was elected with a new Chairman and Clerk. This seemed a good moment to seek the opinion of the people of the parish about the things they thought were important. It was hoped that this would lead to a list of actions for the new councillors to adopt. A previous plan had been drawn up in 1997 and much good had come from it, but, in the light of issues like affordable housing, agricultural changes, the growth in the Internet, etc., it needed to be revisited.

In late 2004 every household was given a questionnaire seeking their opinions on a variety of subjects and this has been used by the Parish Council to form an action plan. This document lays out the main issues raised and identifies the areas for action.

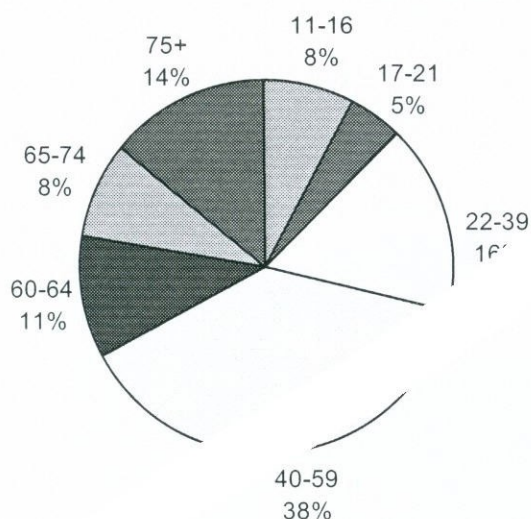
Further copies can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Council would like to thank the Countryside Agency (now SWAN) and Devon County Council for their help in putting the plan together. They would also like to thank, in particular, Dave Pike, John Haberfield, Pat Hammond and everyone else in Yarnscombe who helped to make things come together.

PROFILE

194 people in 86 households responded to the survey. This is an 87% return.

The age profile of those who responded was as follows :-



This shows that a third of the community are under 40, a third between 40 and 59 and a third 60 or over.

10 households said that someone living there had a special need, disability or infirmity.

There are 156 cars or vans, 38 tractors, 7 motorcycles and 6 other vehicles identified in the survey. That means there are more vehicles than people who responded to the survey, perhaps a reflection of our rural isolation?

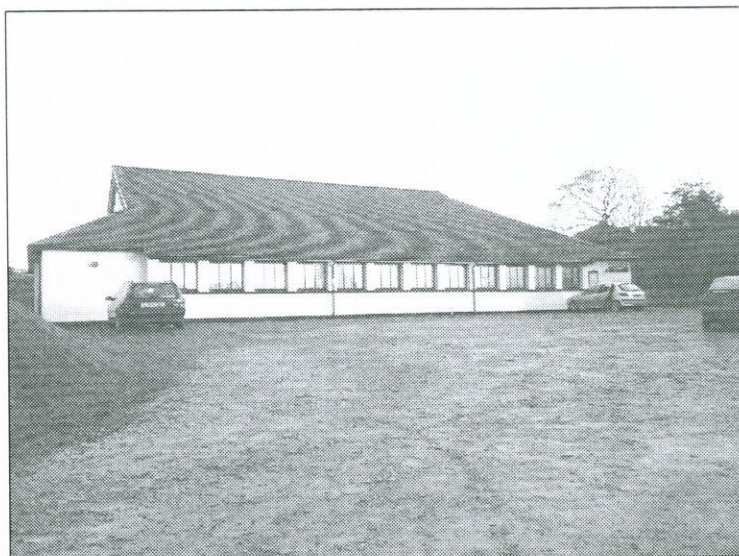
20 households identified a need for alternative accommodation in the next 10 years, almost all of these required starter homes to buy or let. Most did not expect this to be in Yarnscombe itself but wanted it to be in the local area.

ISSUES - We need to address issues relevant to all the age groups. We need to be aware of the far-flung nature of the parish and ensure we address issues equally for those who do not live within the main village centre. We seem to have a high number of vehicles for such a small community so we need to be aware of the issues this raises in the state of the roads, speed, etc. We need to be aware of the potential need for local starter homes, but not necessarily within the parish.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Only 40% of respondents wanted adult education to be available within the village. Of those languages, IT, alternative therapies and crafts and hobbies were the most popular suggestions for courses.

ISSUES - Explore the possibility of providing some courses at the Village Hall?



COMMUNITY

A common complaint was that we were not welcoming to newcomers.

ISSUE - Should we consider a welcome pack for newcomers?



HOUSING

60% were prepared to see additional affordable housing development in the village as long as it was available to locals. Most of those who were not prepared to see further development stated that they did not consider that there was sufficient infrastructure to support growth.

ISSUE - Perhaps support growth in affordable housing but be aware of the impact on infrastructure.

TRANSPORT

Few people use the bus on Fridays to Barnstaple or the Ring & Ride services to Torrington and Barnstaple but most people recognise the importance of the services to those who do use them. It seems that the young people in the village would support a Saturday service to Torrington or Barnstaple.

ISSUES - Support the current services and ensure their continuation. Perhaps investigate the return of a service on Saturdays.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Speed - 70% were in favour of a speed limit through the village.

Neighbourhood Watch - 65% were in favour of a Neighbourhood Watch, Farm Watch or Horse Watch scheme.

Roads - 40% said that the state of the roads was good or fair but 60% thought they were poor. There were more comments about the lack of maintenance in our lanes than any other issue.

ISSUES - Urgently pursue the issue of a speed limit with Devon County Council. Ask our Community Police Officer to help us set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Continue to lobby Devon County Council to maintain our roads to a higher standard.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

Play area - 77% of respondents thought that the play area was adequate or good. Some suggested that they would like to see more equipment and a rain shelter.

Playing field - Nearly half of those who responded were in favour of leaving the playing field alone but there were requests for a walk & seats to enjoy the excellent views and some sports equipment. Most people wanted to preserve a space suitable for games and for village events like the Church Fete.

ISSUES - Support the purchase of some more play equipment and/or a rain shelter in the play area. Address the issue of grass cutting for the playing field and consider a walkway, seats and the purchase of some sports equipment.



YOUNG PEOPLE

The responses from the young people were mainly about wanting more to do in the village and better ways of getting to Barnstaple or Torrington.

ISSUES - Support youth activities in the village, in particular the Youth Club.

THE ACTION PLAN

- Support the introduction of a speed limit in the village
 - Deal with the poor maintenance of the lanes
- Support the purchase of equipment for the play area
 - Address the long term future of the playing field
 - Set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme
- Support the Youth Club and activities for young people
 - Create a welcome pack for newcomers
- Support existing local transport links and ensure they continue. Look at introducing public transport at weekends
 - Investigate adult education activity at the Village Hall
- Support reasonable affordable housing development while being aware of the impact on infrastructure