

Parish Plan

Ridgewell 2002

April 2003

Ridgewell is a small rural village in north-west Essex. Its Parish Council is committed to addressing the views of residents through involvement of the community and with the support of relevant external organisations. The Parish Plan is central to setting the agenda for the Parish Council to work towards improving the quality of life for the benefit of all while still maintaining the existing character of the village.

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Section 1 – For those new to the village....

Ridgewell is a small, picturesque village located in a rural area in north west Essex near the Suffolk border, 15 miles north of Braintree and 6 miles south of Haverhill. The population is around 500, living in 250 or so houses and the village is surrounded by rich arable farm land.

A large tree-shaded green, surrounded by many listed buildings, is at the centre of the village. The green is bisected by the Colchester to Cambridge road that dates back to Roman times. A large proportion of the village is in a conservation area and in recent years the village has changed very little.

To the east of the green is St Laurence Church that has Norman origins. The nave was rebuilt during the 14th Century with much of the rest of the building renovated during the 15th Century. St Laurence Church has been used by the people of the parish for worship for at least 700 years. Adjacent to the Church is the C of E Primary School, which was founded in 1871.

The Congregational Church in Meetings Lane, to the north of the village, is the third to be built on the site. Records refer to gatherings in Meetings Lane as early as 1662. The current building was opened in October 1999.

At one time Ridgewell was a place of some importance with its own Trade Guild and was a fully self-supporting parish with many shops including a Butcher, Dairy, Baker, Cobbler, Tailor, Blacksmith, Coal Merchant etc. Clare and Pembroke Colleges, Cambridge originally owned much of the land. Today Ridgewell suffers with the usual malaise of village life and has lost its post office in the last 10 years. It has two Public Houses, the King's Head (15th or 16th Century) and the White Horse Inn (18th Century) and a small general store.

The main business in the parish is agriculture, which was once the largest employer. However, over the years many small farms have combined and with modern farming techniques this is no longer the case. Employment opportunities through other small businesses are very limited. Today most people work outside the village.

Ridgewell played a major role in the Second World War initially being a base for British Stirlings and from 1943 home to the American Air Force 381st Bomber Group. This has attracted a number of visitors to the village, particularly American families who had a relative serving here during the war.

The Village Hall, which was erected by public subscription to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953 and which has been extended and upgraded to mark the Millennium, serves as a focal point for many clubs and activities.

Section 2 – Summary of villagers’ views on the parish

When the Parish Council carried out a Parish Appraisal, followed by the Action Planning event, these were the main points raised by villagers:

- The 30 mph speed limit on the A1017 was regularly being broken by through traffic giving rise to concerns about the safety of villagers, particularly children.
- The lack of a speed limit and footpath in Stambourne Road again gives serious concerns regarding safety.
- Commercial vehicles parking on the A1017 outside the shop and vehicles dropping children off for school in Church Lane/Drury Lane area cause potential danger spots.
- Vehicles parked on the road in the village can have a calming effect on the speed of passing traffic.
- There are few employment opportunities in the parish, shown by the fact that 85% of Ridgewell’s working population go outside the village for a job.
- The public transport system is virtually non-existent and residents rely on their own transport to travel outside the village.
- The surface water flooding in the parish has created misery and caused damage to some properties.
- Surface water overloads the foul sewerage system during periods of high rainfall resulting in foul flooding.
- Apart from having two public houses in the parish the overall village amenities in respect of shops/post office are very limited.
- There are very limited facilities for teenagers in the parish and the playground equipment for the younger children is in very bad order and at the end of its life.
- The playgroup and primary school are seen as key in attracting and maintaining a younger element of population in the village who bring an important balance to community life in this rural area.
- The village greens, village hall, playing field and the clubs and organisations are all seen as essential in providing leisure and recreation and most importantly providing a community spirit.
- A large proportion of residents were influenced in moving to the parish by the attractiveness of the area. Indeed, the residents of the parish are extremely

keen to maintain the character and charm of the village and in general are opposed to any new developments. However, there is a concern regarding the lack of affordable housing for the younger generation and the subsequent loss of younger families from the parish.

- Street lighting is a sensitive issue – some residents want more, others believe there is already too much street lighting in the centre of village.
- ‘The Ridgewell News’ is seen as an excellent means of communication in the Parish and its continuation is essential.

Section 3 – How are local views included?

A questionnaire was delivered to each household in late September 1999. Completed forms were collected in mid October. The questionnaire was based upon the Cheltenham and Gloucester College Database with some minor modifications to the topic headings to meet local requirements.

The purpose of the survey was to let the Parish Council know what villagers thought about the parish and to ask for suggestions about possible improvements. It was also to provide an historical record of the parish at the turn of the new Millennium and to assist in the future development of the village at both parish and district levels.

137 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response of 68% surveying a sample population of 340 people.

A full report was produced and copies offered to all residents in the parish. Copies were also sent to Braintree District Council, our Local District Councillor and the Rural Community Council of Essex.

Action planning workshop

Following completion of the Village Appraisal, the Parish Council were very keen to build on the output from the appraisal and to convert the aspirations of residents to producing a parish plan to influence decision makers and to take projects forward.

As a result, and with the assistance of the Rural Community Council of Essex, an Action Planning Event was organised by the Parish Council for Saturday, 20 April 2002. All residents of the parish were invited to attend. The process for the meeting was designed and facilitated by the Rural Community Council of Essex. 47 people attended the meeting, which included two Essex County Councillors and two representatives from the Rural Housing Trust. A number of representatives from the Primary School, Congregational Church and Playgroup who live outside the village also attended. A breakdown of the attendees is shown in Appendix 1.

The output from the Action Planning meeting formed the basis of a draft report. This was completed in October 2002 and a copy offered to all residents with an invitation to attend a consultative meeting.

Draft report and consultative process

The consultative meeting was on Saturday, 2 November 2002 at the village hall between 10.00am and 4.00pm. The purpose being twofold, one, to reality check the report to ensure it reflects the sentiment of the action planning meeting and two, to give individuals who could not be at the Action Planning meeting the opportunity to input their views. All comments and views were formally recorded. The consultative process was held open for two weeks and a form to make further comments was available.

Following a number of responses regarding parking in Drury Lane a further Action Planning event was held on 11 January 2003. Residents of Drury Lane only were invited. The meeting was facilitated by the Rural Community Council of Essex.

Final report

This final report brings together all the points and concerns raised by villagers during the Parish Appraisal and subsequent meetings, questionnaires and the consultative process and outlines the action proposed to meet those needs. Timescales for all actions are shown in Section 11: Summary of Actions. The process to develop parish plans is being encouraged and is happening across the country.

It should be noted that this plan has been developed by the parish as a whole and, as such, all members of the community have a role to play in taking ownership and responsibility for the actions. Successful delivery will require assistance and maybe additional resources from within the parish.

It is, however, acknowledged that new actions and projects will be identified as work progresses extending this plan beyond its initial scope. To ensure that the document remains valid, the Parish Council will undertake, as a minimum, an annual appraisal of the document and up-date accordingly.

In addition, regular reviews of progress will be undertaken at parish council meetings. Details of these meetings are published in advance on the parish council notice board adjacent to the bus stop.

Every household in the parish shall receive a copy of this plan on issue.

Section 4 - Schooling and Playgroup

Ridgewell has a **playgroup** and a **Church of England primary school** for children up to the age of 11. A school bus service runs from Ridgewell to the nearest secondary school at Sible Hedingham – approximately 5 miles away.

The current playgroup, which operates from the Village Hall, has been running since 1993, four mornings a week during school terms with an attendance of about 10-20 children, predominantly from Ridgewell, in the age range 2½ to rising 5s. The playgroup is funded by fees, grants and fund-raising and is controlled by Social Services and OFSTED. The Playgroup has just completed an outside play area/garden.

Ridgewell primary school was founded by the church in 1871 and moved to its present site in 1967. In 2002 there were 91 children on the school roll with only 25% living in Ridgewell. The school maintains close links with St Laurence Church, using the church to celebrate Christmas, Easter, Harvest festival etc. The school offers a number of extra curricular activities in the way of clubs, including football, netball, running, cooking craft and creations, cycling proficiency, gardening, French, drama and dance. The school also supports many different charities including the NSPCC, Romanian children's hospice, Help the Aged, Church of England Children's Society to name a few. In 2002 the school completed a hall extension to enable the school to fulfil the National Curriculum for physical education for their Keystage 2 children.

The school prides itself on providing an all round learning experience for all its children and has for the last two years won the government's DFES School Achievement Award.

Your concerns

- School Council have concerns regarding the lack of street lighting in Church Lane.
- A large number of children are taken to school by car. Whilst the school has arranged for parking at the King's Head, a number of vehicles park in Church Lane and Drury Lane to make the drop-off. This causes congestion in Church Lane and at the bottom of Drury Lane close to the junction with the A1017. Children have to cross the busy A1017 (see below) and parking off the road on the village green also occurs causing damage to the green.
- School warning signs may be inadequate on the A1017. This matter is of particular concern as speeding through the village on the A1017 is an issue and there is a sharp bend in the road at the key crossing point. Children crossing the A1017 at this point include children from Drury Lane, Stambourne Road and children travelling to school by car, where the vehicle parks in Drury Lane to make the drop-off.
- There is no footpath in Stambourne Road. This causes concern for children walking to school from Stambourne Road until they reach Drury Lane where

the footpath starts. This concern is further aggravated in that there is no speed limit in Stambourne Road. This subject is also covered in Section 7.

- Security at the school is a problem with children skateboarding and roller-blading on the school playground areas after school hours and damaging school property.

Proposed actions

- The issue of **street lighting** in Church Lane to be considered in the review of other street lighting concerns in the village. See Section 6: Local Amenities – Proposed Actions.
- **Parking congestion in Drury Lane and school warning signs.** See Section 7: Traffic and Transportation – Proposed Actions.
- **Footway from Stambourne Road to Drury lane.** See Section 7: Traffic and Transportation – Proposed Actions.
- **Security issues** are being addressed by the School. Since the Action Planning Event in April 2002, further fencing has been put up in the School. The Governor's Premises Committee are organising gates to be erected in the car park. CCTV security is being investigated.

Section 5 - Development and Planning Process

The most recent housing developments have been Colne Springs (15 houses built in 1964): Orchard Close (9 houses in 1966): Rose Walk (6 houses in 1990) and Bridge Cottages (6 houses in 1997). House ownership is in the region of 82% with 15% renting. The majority of recent planning applications have been for extensions and improvements to existing properties, which in many cases are probably being facilitated by the high value growth of housing in the area. The net effect is that the village is losing a large proportion of its smaller properties. The village has little in the way of industrial and/or business premises. A permanent County Gypsy Site is located to the south on the border of the village off of the A1017. Children from the site attend Ridgewell primary school.

First Deposit Draft 2002 Local Plan was issued by Braintree District Council in the Spring 2002.

Your concerns

- Residents are generally opposed to any new developments.
- Lack of starter homes and affordable property for the younger generation and the impact this may have on maintaining a primary school in the parish.
- Surface water system is unable to cope with the existing development. Surface water flooding during high rainfall is a problem in some areas.
- Residents are particularly sensitive to any matters related to the Gypsy site. This stems from bad experiences with this site in the 1990s, which resulted in the site being closed for a period.
- Residents perceive that there is insufficient publicity given to planning applications.
- Residents' concerns over potential expansion of Stansted Airport and the impact on Ridgewell.

Proposed actions

- Parish Council should review the process by which they consider planning applications. This review shall consider the general concern regarding any **new developments** and the perception that insufficient **publicity is given to planning applications**. The review should also consider whether a Village Design Statement would be helpful. The Parish Council to keep residents apprised of progress and recommendations for change.
- Braintree District Council will be assisting Ridgewell Parish Council during 2003 to develop a **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** as an extension

and further development of this plan. Once completed the SPG would be issued as a supplement to this plan.

- The Parish Council shall be responsible for reviewing all planning applications in a professional manner and in ensuring that a response is always sent to Braintree District Council, including nil responses. In particular, the Parish Council will review all applications to ensure that any additional surface disposal will not contribute to **surface water drainage flooding problems**.
- **Affordable housing.** The Parish Council shall lead an investigation into a housing needs survey. The survey will be funded and undertaken by Rural Housing Trust or similar organisation. Results of the survey shall be published with recommendations.
- **Gypsy site.** Parish Council will liaise and maintain contact with Gypsy Services Manager, Essex County Council. The Parish Council shall meet once a year with the Gypsy Services Manager and the resident Warden at the site to review any issues. Individual Parish Councillors are encouraged to make regular visits to the site to develop a working relationship with the site warden.
- **Stansted Airport.** Residents objecting to the development of Stansted Airport should attend appropriate meetings and lobby the local Member of Parliament (Alan Haselhurst).

Section 6 - Local amenities

The parish has two public houses and there is a small general store, which offers fast food to passing custom. There is no post office in the parish. The nearest are in Great Yeldham, approximately 3 miles away, and Clare, approximately 6 miles away. Clare has a number of shops e.g. small supermarket, hardware shop, bakers, chemist, etc. The nearest large supermarket is located on the north side of Haverhill in Suffolk, which is approximately 8 miles away. Mobile shops selling fish and general groceries call in the village regularly.

There is no permanent police presence in Ridgewell and police visibility is low. The nearest police station in Essex is located in Halstead (approx 10 miles away), alternatively, Haverhill in Suffolk (6 miles away). Plans are in place to reinstate the police station at Great Yeldham. A Neighbourhood Watch process exists in the parish.

The nearest doctors' surgery is in Clare, Suffolk and the nearest dentist is in either Halstead or Haverhill. No health or personal care facilities exist in the Parish.

The centre of the village has a number of high level street lights (14 in total, i.e. 2 in Drury Lane, 2 in Stambourne Road, 4 in Ashen Road, 2 in Mill Road, 3 at Bridge Cottages and 1 in Chapel Road).

Braintree District Council empty litter bins on a regular basis, provide channel sweeping of the roads 4 times a year and, on request, the removal of rubbish from fly tipping. A bottle/can recycling bank is located at the Village Hall. Braintree District Council introduced a new recycling service in Ridgewell in December 2002. This service includes the fortnightly collection of newspapers and magazines, textiles, cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard.

The Parish Council provide an annual rubbish truck from Braintree District Council for one morning to enable residents to get rid of unwanted rubbish. All rubbish is accepted with the exception of liquids, including oil and/or hazardous materials.

The village greens are maintained to a high standard being cut on a regular basis throughout the growing season.

The mobile library calls in the village once a week stopping at Church Lane every Wednesday from 2.55 to 3.40pm.

Your concerns

- The village would like to see more amenities, particularly shops and a post office although this would need to be balanced against anticipated usage.
- Opposing views in respect of street lighting need to be reconciled. Some residents feel there is not enough, others feel there is too much and would not wish to see additional provision. The school, for instance, would like more lighting but Church Lane residents are opposed.

- Lack of visible policing is perceived as a problem.
- Neighbourhood Watch is too low profile.
- Fly tipping in the outlying areas of the parish.
- Wheely bins – more hygienic.
- Frequency of street cleaning.

Proposed actions

- **Shop and post office.** Working in conjunction with Rural Community Council of Essex, the Parish Council should lead a feasibility study into viability of improving access to local shop and post office services through either commercially or community run projects. If possibilities are identified then a project plan with time schedule should be developed with the view to obtaining resources to take any scheme forward.
- Working in 2003 with Braintree District Council and the Rural Community Council of Essex, a **District Community Strategy** is to be developed as an extension and further development of this plan. Once complete, the District Community Strategy would be issued as a supplement to this plan.
- **Street lighting.** The Parish Council should lead a review of street lighting. This review should fully involve residents in areas where any additional street lighting is being considered. As part of this review, Essex County Council should be consulted on types of lighting available and costs. See Section 4 - concerns regarding street lighting in Church Lane. The review together with recommendations and costing impact should be published together with an indicative programme for any changes.
- Occasional **police patrols** to be encouraged. This matter should be led by Essex Constabulary. Parish Council to make Essex Constabulary aware of residents' concerns.
- Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to work with police to raise the profile of **Neighbourhood Watch** scheme.
- Parish Council working with Braintree District Council should continue to monitor **street cleanliness** and action clean-up of any fly tipping. Street cleaning is undertaken in accordance with the Braintree District Council programme. Parish Council should publish the street cleaning programme on annual basis and encourage residents to report matters of concern. The Parish Council should continue to keep under review the merits of joining the Braintree District Council Street Cleansing Partnership scheme. The Parish Council made a conscious decision in September 2002 not to join this scheme due to a lack of available resources.

- Parish Council to arrange **annual rubbish truck** in support of Ridgewell maintaining a clean environment.

Section 7 - Traffic and Transportation

The A1017 is a busy road, particularly in the peak evening and morning times and carries about 5,000 traffic movements in a 24-hour period. There is a 30mph speed limit on this road but a traffic survey in 2001 found that 85% of vehicles using the road are travelling in excess of 37mph. A 30mph limit in Drury Lane does not extend into Stambourne Road.

Parking of private cars on the road-side has increased over the years and casual parking of vehicles (mainly vans and lorries) using the shop on the A1017 is seen as a potential hazard by some residents. However, passing trade supports the shop.

Public transport services are extremely limited. In 2003 Ridgewell has three bus services. 89 – Saturdays, one service at 18.26 to Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham and one service at 07.57 to Haverhill. 89B – Monday to Friday, one service at 10.55 to Braintree, one service at 12.36 to Great Yeldham and one service at 18.33 to Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. 118 – school days only, at 07.43 to Saffron Walden and Newport Grammar School. Return to Ridgewell at 16.20.

Your concerns

- Traffic on the A1017 not adhering to speed limit.
- No speed limit in Stambourne Road.
- Limited public transport availability.
- Poor condition of the roads in Church Lane and Sparks Lane.
- Two way traffic in Sparks Lane.
- Parking – at school peak times and general parking congestion. Whilst it can be seen as a hazard it can also have a traffic calming effect.
- Damage to property close to kerbside and village green by large vehicles, e.g. Whisperwood Cottage in Drury Lane and street light in Ashen Road. Often caused by parked vehicles narrowing the available road space.
- Reservations about the proliferation of signs and street clutter and their effect on the rural character of the village.
- Ownership and condition of all footpaths crossing the village greens. Footpath adjacent to Moat House identified as an example.
- Condition of the two lay-bys off the A1017 towards Braintree.
- The lack of a footpath to Bridge Cottages.
- There is no footpath in Stambourne Road.

Proposed actions

- **A speed reduction scheme** for the A1017 is being considered by Essex County Council. Details of the proposed scheme and programme to be published once available.
- **Speed limit for Stambourne Road** Essex County Council are in the process of implementing a 40mph speed limit.
- **Re concern from Section 4 - Parking congestion in Drury Lane where it meets the A1017 and school warning sign** The Parish Council, working with Essex County Council Highways, to consider whether school warning signs should be improved on the A1017. Working with the school, educate parents to park safely and considerately at school pick-up and drop-off times.
- **Enforce speeding restriction along Drury Lane** – open consultation on specific proposals/options to be put forward by Essex County Council Highways and the police.
- **Ownership and condition of footpaths crossing the greens.** Parish Council to review and identify all footpaths on village green land and develop a maintenance programme.
- **Damage to Whisperwood Cottage in Drury Lane by large vehicles.** Essex County Council have recently provided a warning sign (overhanging building) in Drury Lane to assist in protecting the building. If the problem persists, other options/proposals to be put forward by Essex County Council for open consultation with residents.
- **Private vehicles parking on road.** No support for additional off-road car park (at Village Hall or elsewhere). Consider widening the area near the junction of the slip road across the green and Drury Lane by exploring the possibility of using ‘concrete grids’ (as used in Meetings Lane) without contravening the Village Green Act.
- **Condition of roads, highway footpaths and lay-bys.** Parish Council to advise Essex County Council of the poor condition of any roads, footpaths and/or lay-bys in the parish.
- **Lack of footpath to Bridge Cottages.** Proposal awaited from Essex County Council.
- **No footpath in Stambourne Road.** This work is currently on Essex County Council’s locally determined programme.

Section 8 - Water Systems and Drainage

There are no major rivers or watercourses in or passing through the parish. However, there is a stream to the west of the Parish in the area of Wash Farm, Three Chimneys Lane. This stream feeds to the River Colne and the stream is subject to occasional localised flooding around Three Chimneys Lane. There is a spring in the lay fields (behind the church) which also feeds into the Colne.

Most of the parish is on the main sewerage system first installed in the mid 1950s and there are separate surface water drainage systems. Surface water drainage in the centre of the village around Church Lane, Mill Road, Chapel Road, Ashen Road and Meetings Lane has been problematic for many years with surface and foul water flooding of private land and some properties being a regular occurrence during heavy and prolonged rainfall. A survey commissioned by the Parish Council in 2001 revealed a number of problems with the surface water system. The most significant being the lack of pipe capacity in Church Lane, flooding in Ashen Road and the significant amount of surface water being diverted to the foul sewerage system at the Congregational Church. The problem is further exacerbated due to the impervious nature of the local sub soil and rainwater soakaways on private properties which do not work well. As a result private properties are diverting their surface water to the foul sewerage system.

In December 2002 Essex County Council increased the surface water pipe capacity at the top of Church Lane by taking a new pipe down Hall Lane. Any modification/change to improve Ashen Road and the Congregational Church problems must be sensitive to further flooding problems that could be created at the school.

Your concerns

- Surface and foul water flooding of land and property within the parish.
- Complexity of the ownership of the problem associated with any form of flooding.
- The lack of ownership and responsibility of residents to protect their land and property against flooding.

Proposed actions

- Discussions are ongoing between the Parish Council and Anglian Water with a view to recommending a solution to diverting the surface water from the foul system at the **Congregational Church**. Anglian Water have had initial discussions with Braintree District Council. Solution to the problem still to be identified, with care given to any diversion of this surface water to ensure that flooding is not created elsewhere.
- Flooding in Ashen Road. Ditch at rear of 14 Ashen Road and outlet ditch on agricultural land behind Ashen Road need to be surveyed to check levels for

positive flow and subsequently dug out/cleaned accordingly. Once complete, pipe under Ashen Road to be cleaned by Essex County Council.

- Once the work has been completed in Church Lane and a scheme and programme are available for the Congregational Church, the Parish Council shall develop a programme and action plan to resolve the other surface water drainage issues and problems identified by the survey completed in 2001. A summary list of these issues and problems is shown in Appendix 2.
- Residents to take a greater responsibility in protecting their land and property against flooding, e.g. holding sandbags, purchase of proprietary equipment to protect homes against flooding, advising appropriate authorities if flooding occurs.

Section 9 - Leisure and Recreation

Village leisure amenities include a Village Hall with a large playing field with a football pitch used by Ridgewell United, who play in the Sudbury Sunday League, and a children's play area. As well as two public houses there are a number of active clubs and organisations, including a Carpet Bowls club, a Friendship Club, a Quilting Club, Garden Society and Women's Institute plus regular whist drives, all of which provide a good community spirit within the parish. Social events are also organised by the Church and the School. In 2002 membership to the clubs and organisations mentioned was as follows:

Garden Society	100
Women's Institute	17
Carpet Bowls Club	16
Friendship Club	15*
Quilting Club	6
Whist Drives	40

*In January 2003, new chairman required in order to survive.

The Village Appraisal in 2000 reported the Garden Society to be the most popular club with 66% of the population attending Garden Society events. Each year the Society stages two horticulture shows, has a number of guest speakers on gardening-related subjects, a plant sale, outings and runs social events such as quiz evenings, children's Halloween party etc.

The Women's Institute meet on a monthly basis and enjoy visiting guest speakers and outings.

The Bowls Club meet weekly in the Village Hall and have regular friendly matches with local villages.

The Friendship Club meet twice a month during the summer and arrange regular outings. The future of this club is dependant upon finding a new chairman.

Whist Drives are held in the Village Hall twice a month and are well supported from within the village and the surrounding area.

All the above organisations and societies take advantage of the facilities offered by the Village Hall, which is situated in Drury Lane. The Village Hall, which was upgraded and extended in 2000, is approximately 190 metres square. On the grounds of the Village Hall there is a set of swings, slide and climbing frame. These are all at the end of their life and need replacing.

There is a network of public footpaths in and surrounding the village.

St Laurence C of E church is part of a benefice that includes churches at Birdbrook, Ashen and Sturmer. Regular Sunday services of worship are still held in church. The Rector for all the churches resides in Ridgewell. The Congregational Church holds a

service of worship on the first Sunday in each month. Congregations at both churches are very small.

Your concerns

- Children's play facilities (swings, climbing frame and slide) are inadequate and in very poor condition.
- There is a lack of community facilities for teenagers.
- The danger associated with children using the road in Colne Springs as a skateboard park.
- Resources for Village Hall maintenance and improvements are limited, in particular the need to improve car parking area, provide disabled access and adequate secure doors.
- St Laurence Church is highly important heritage site for the parish. Resources for its maintenance are limited.
- Greater utilisation of the Village Hall would assist with funding for its improvement and up keep. Currently only 50% of its available time is used.
- Maintenance of public footpaths is minimal, hence the standard is poor.
- Vandalism, e.g. church windows, car scratched, school.

Proposed actions

- New and improved children's **playground equipment** is urgently required. A Playground Improvement Project has been formed and the team is actively working on delivering new facilities. The team is made-up of representatives from the community, Village Hall and Parish Council. Fund raising is underway and the project is planning to deliver in two phases.
- Playground Improvement Project is to consider equipment and facilities for **teenagers** as well as the younger ones. Proposed facilities and costing have been obtained with the intention of any installation being included in the overall scheme.
- **Village Hall.** Prepare costing to re-lay the village hall car park; replace all external doors; repair and re-paint outside of buildings and provide 5-bar gate and fencing for access to the playing field.
- **Maintenance of footpaths.** Parish Council have recently considered the Parish Paths Partnership (3 Ps) Scheme run by Essex County Council. Parish

Council to investigate whether additional resources would be forthcoming from the parish to assist the Parish Council in running this scheme.

- **Additional bulbs and Jubilee tree.** Garden Society to plant additional daffodils in the existing bulb drifts on the village green where there are gaps. They are also planting a red chestnut tree to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee.
- **Best kept village.** Ridgewell should consider an entry in the future.

Section 10 - Communications and Information

The most popular communication in the parish is 'The Ridgewell News' which up until Spring 2002 was issued six times a year. The editor resigned pending a move to another village and a new editorial team was formed in late 2002 to enable its continuation. Other local papers read in the parish include 'Haverhill Echo', 'Halstead Gazette' and 'East Anglian Daily Times'.

Parish Council feed monthly newsletter from Essex County Councillor to 'Ridgewell News' for inclusion as appropriate.

The Parish Council have their own notice board for Parish Council business. There is a general notice board in the centre of village at the bus stop plus another at the Village Hall. Both boards are well utilised by the various societies and organisations in the parish.

Your concerns

- Poor level of information from Braintree District Council who tend to use the 'East Anglian Daily Times' and 'Halstead Gazette' and do not tend to have input into the 'Haverhill Echo' which is the more popular paper in the parish.
- Insufficient publicity is given to planning applications which affect the parish.

Proposed actions

- Parish Council to contact Braintree District Council and explore the opportunities for wider coverage of **District Council press releases** in local papers read in the parish.
- **Insufficient publicity is given to planning applications.** To be addressed as part of the above action with Braintree District Council and also as part of the process review of how the Parish Council handles planning applications. (Section 5: Development and Planning Process refers).

Section 11 – Summary of actions

Section 4 – Schooling and Playgroup

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Security issues	School	Police Neighbourhood Watch	School	To be determined by School

Section 5 – Development and Planning Process

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Review of Parish Council's process for handling planning applications	Parish Council	Residents Braintree District Council	Parish Council	Start by October 2003. Review and recommendations by end April 2004
Develop Supplementary Planning Guidance for Ridgewell	Parish Council	Braintree District Council	No cost	By end March 2004.
Review impact of planning applications on surface water drainage	Parish Council	Braintree District Council Essex County Council	Landowners	Ongoing
Housing needs survey (affordable housing)	Parish Council	Rural Housing Trust or similar Residents	Housing Trust conducting survey	Start December 2003. Survey completed by end April and results published with recommendations by end July 2004
Gypsy site	Parish Council	Gypsy Services Manager, Essex County Council Site Warden	County Parish Council	Ongoing. Minimum of annual meeting with ECC and resident site warden.
Proposed development of Stansted airport	Residents	Local MP and pressure groups	N/A	Ongoing

Section 6 – Local amenities

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Feasibility study into improving local shop and post office services	Parish Council	Rural Community Council of Essex Countryside Agency Residents	Commercial organisation and/or grants	Start by June 2003. Develop project plan with recommendation and publish by end November 2003.
Develop District Community Strategy	Parish Council	Braintree District Council	No cost	Complete by end March 2004.
Review of street lighting	Parish Council	Essex County Council Residents	Any new lighting and running costs from council tax.	Start by March 2004. Recommendations published by November 2004.
Police patrols to be encouraged	Parish Council	Essex Constabulary	County	End June 2003
Raise profile of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator	Essex Constabulary	Neighbourhood Watch	December 2003 and ongoing
Monitor street cleanliness	Parish Council	Braintree District Council Residents	Braintree District Council	Ongoing
Annual rubbish truck	Parish Council	Braintree District Council	Parish Council	Annually

Section 7 – Traffic and Transportation

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Speed reduction scheme for A1017	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	Review ongoing – completion date for implementation awaited from Essex County Council

Section 7 - Traffic and Transportation (continued)

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Speed limit for Stambourne Road	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	Completion date for full implementation awaited from Essex County Council
School warning signs on A1017	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	Develop proposal for any change by October 2003.
Educate parents to park safely and considerately at school pick-up and drop-off times.	School	Parish Council Residents	School	Ongoing.
Speed restrictions in Drury Lane	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	Develop proposal for any change by end September 2004.
Ownership and condition of footpaths on village greens	Parish Council	Essex County Council	Parish Council County	Start by May 2003. Maintenance programme complete by end December 2003
Damage to Whisperwood Cottage by large vehicles. Consider other options.	Parish Council	Parish Council Essex County Council Residents	County	Review in October 2003 to establish whether problem has been solved by new sign.
Widening of area near junction of slip road and Drury Lane	Parish Council	Essex County Council	Essex County Council	Review possibility by September 2004.
Condition of roads, highway footpaths and lay-bys	Parish Council	Essex County Council Residents	County	Ongoing
Lack of footpath to Bridge Cottages	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	Proposal from Essex County Council awaited

Section 7 – Traffic and Transportation (continued)

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Footpath from Stambourne Road to Drury Lane	Parish Council	Essex County Council	County	On locally determined programme and date for completion awaited from Essex County Council.

Section 8 – Water Systems and Drainage

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Flooding in Ashen Road	Parish Council	Braintree District Council Essex County Council Landowners	Braintree District Council County Landowners	Undertake survey by July 2003. Completion of any cleaning/clearing work is subject to access to agricultural land once crops harvested.
Surface water drainage at Congregational Church	Parish Council	Anglian Water Braintree District Council Essex County Council Landowners	Anglian Water Braintree District Council Landowners	Project programme to be developed once solution identified.
Other surface water drainage issues	Parish Council	Braintree District Council Essex County Council Landowners	Braintree District Council County Landowners	Programme to be developed once the work is complete in Church Lane and solution identified at Congregational Church
Protection of land and property against flooding	Residents	Anglian Water Braintree District Council	Residents/Landowners	Ongoing

Section 9 – Leisure and Recreation

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Provision of new playground equipment	Playground Improvement Project (PIP)	Residents Village Hall Management Committee	Fund-raising, grants and donations	1 st phase Summer 2003. 2 nd phase Summer 2004.
Facilities for teenagers	Playground Improvement Project (PIP)	Residents Village Hall Management Committee	Fund-raising, grants and donations	By summer 2004
Village Hall: costing to re-lay car park, replace doors, paint exterior, gate and fencing	Village Hall Management Committee		Village Hall	By September 2003
Maintenance of footpaths: identify additional resources to implement 3Ps scheme.	Parish Council	Essex County Council Residents	County	Identify resources by end June 2003; if available implement in 2003
Additional bulbs and Jubilee tree	Garden Society	Residents	Garden Society	By January 2003
Best kept village	Residents			

Section 10 – Communications and Information

WHAT ACTION?	WHO LEADING?	WHO ELSE INVOLVED?	HOW FUNDED?	WHEN?
Encourage Braintree District Council to extend press releases to popular local papers read in the parish	Parish Council	Braintree District Council	Braintree District Council	By end November 2003

Appendix 1

Breakdown of attendees at Action Planning Event

Total of 47 participants

Male	22
Female	25

Under 18	3
18-24	0
25-44	10
45-59	22
60-74	10
Over 74	2

Live outside Ridgewell	10
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Lived in Ridgewell	< 1 year	7
	1-5 years	11
	6-10 years	10
	11-25 years	8
	> 25 years	1

Appendix 2

Ridgewell Surface Water

Problem areas identified by J&J Consultants - 2001

Meetings Lane

- Debris in ditch 100 higher than pipe invert adjacent to 'Omega'.
- 100 to foul sewer in Congregational Church area.

Ashen Road

- Gully blocked between Nos. 14 and 1.
- Outfall submerged due to gravel in water course at rear of houses between Nos. 14 and 1. (Work complete)
- Root ingress at the Chapel Road end (150VC pipe).

Chapel Road

- Shaft fully silted – near Stanmar (225CO pipe).

Church Lane

- Blocked gully at bottom of Church Lane.
- Blocked headwall near school.
- Debris in water course adjacent to school playing area.
- Reduced pipe diameter at entrance to Church Lane (300VC to 225P pipe).

Sparks Lane

- Pipe 50% silted adjacent to 'Molly Cottage' (150CO pipe).

Drury Lane

- 50% standing water adjacent to 'Old Cedar Gables' (100VC pipe).
- Pipe 50% silted adjacent to sports ground/village hall (150VC pipe).
- Filled in ditch behind village hall, 'Laurel Cottage' and 'Morvine House'?
- Pipe 30% silted adjacent to 'Rafters' (100VC pipe).
- 30% standing water adjacent to 'Dawes' (100VC pipe).

Mill Road

- Root ingress adjacent to 'Madura Cottage' (225VC pipe).
- 30% standing water on green adjacent to Mill Road (300VC pipe).
- Pipe blocked on green adjacent to slip road (150CO pipe).
- Broken cover opposite 'Stantons' (150VC pipe).
- Silted ditch at rear of Orchard Close.
- Broken pipe at rear of Town Farm.