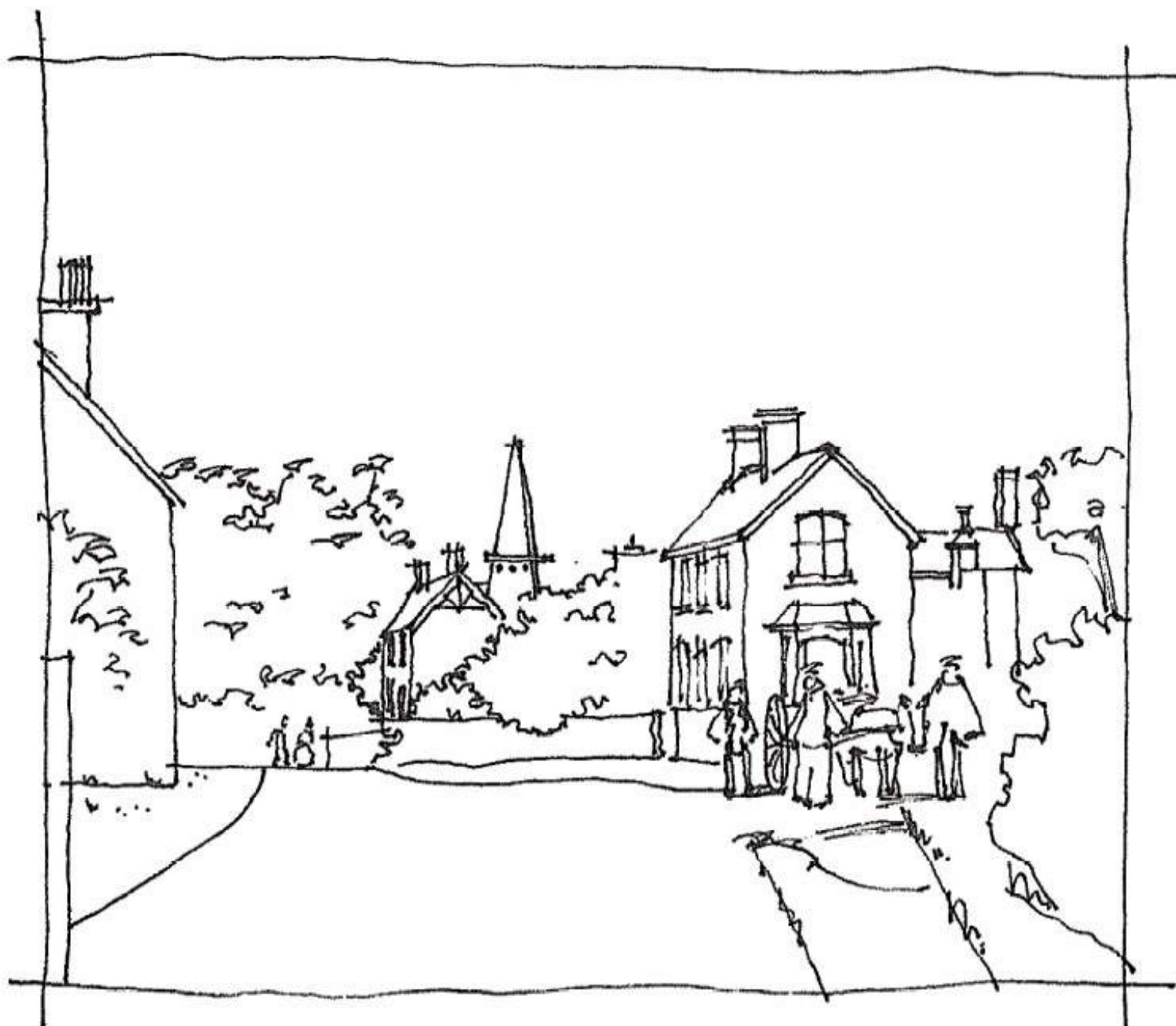


Developing

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN



P A R I S H P L A N

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Blakedown is a village in north Worcestershire, England. It is in the Wyre Forest District Council area. Its location with both road and rail links means that it is something of a dormitory village.

It was originally part of Hagley Parish, but was in 1888 transferred to the small adjacent parish of Churchill, which became Churchill and Blakedown.

Much of Blakedown was originally an area of common land, enclosed in the 19th century.

Harborough Hall, near Blakedown C.E. School, once belonged to the family of William Shenstone the poet. It is probably the successor of a house that goes back to Medieval times.

The main road running through Blakedown village is the A456 and was part of the turnpike road from Birmingham to Kidderminster. (The turnpike trust was established in 1753). Blakedown is 15 miles west of Birmingham, 5 miles south west of Stourbridge and 5 miles east of Kidderminster in the south west corner of the West Midlands conurbation



Hurcott Woods & Pool, Churchill

The Blakedown railway station was opened in 1852 (originally called Churchill station, becoming Churchill and Blakedown before adopting its current name).

The area is bisected by the railway line; Blakedown has a station offering a regular passenger service to Birmingham, Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Worcester, Hereford and many stops between.



Court Farm, Churchill

The parish of Churchill, containing 954 acres, of which 721 acres are arable land, 160³/₄ permanent grass, and 8 acres woodland, is on the Staffordshire border, about 3½ miles north-east of Kidderminster.

It is generally known as Churchill near Kidderminster or Churchill – in - Halfshire to distinguish it from Churchill near Worcester in the hundred of Oswaldslo. In 1306 it was referred to as 'Churchill in the forest of Kinver,' Some years later representatives from Churchill were summoned along with those from neighbouring townships for non – attendance at the Court of the Regarder of that forest.

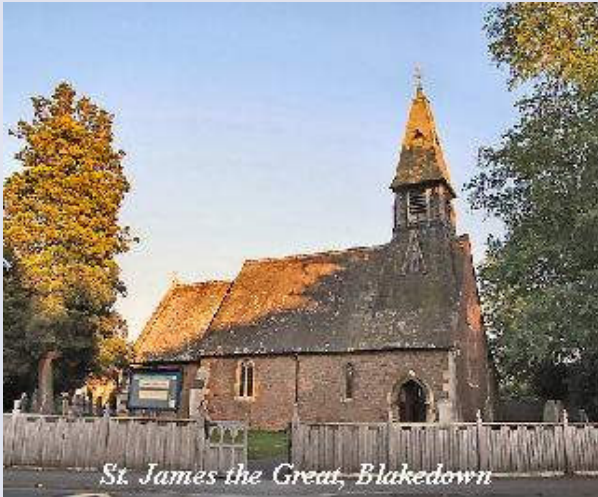
Churchill is a small village, just to the north of Blakedown and, to the north east, the hamlet of Stakenbridge, and to the north west Ismere.

To the West, the Parish takes in Hurcott Wood. Both villages nestle amongst gently rolling hills and are surrounded by beautiful countryside; the area is popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists (both road and off-road).



Village Hall Cottage, Churchill

A Brief History



Surrounding the villages there are open fields, brooks around the villages run down from the Clent Hills, feeding numerous pools in the area on their way, to the River Stour (at Kidderminster) There are also quiet woodlands, a large variety of wildlife and, from the brows of hills, fantastic views across Worcestershire (the Malvern Hills may be seen on a clear day to the South), the Clent Hills to the east,

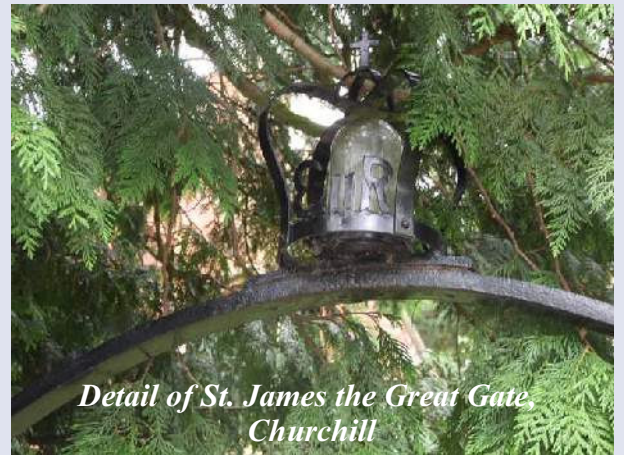


the South Staffordshire countryside to the north and west and, in the far distance, the Cleve Hills in Shropshire to the west.

Churchill and Blakedown are mainly residential villages now, although there are a number of farms and other businesses in the area. Blakedown has a post office a few shops and school (Blakedown C.E. Primary School) a church (St. James the Great), several sports clubs and playing fields, 3 public houses, The Old House at Home, The Swan and in Ismere The Old Waggon and Horses.

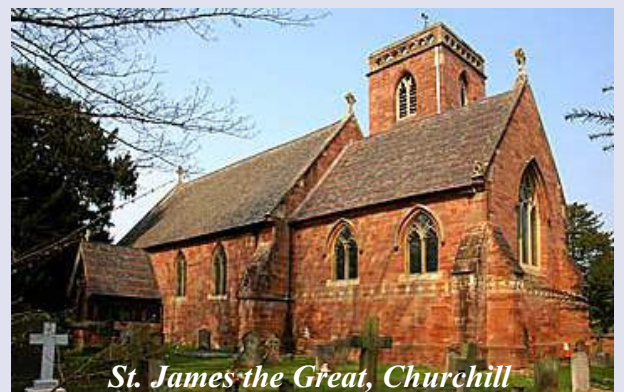
In Churchill, there is St. James the Great church, village hall and War Memorial.

Between the two villages there are the Churchill and Blakedown Golf Club and the old Churchill Forge Mill (which is open to the public on certain days of the year). Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council meets at the Blakedown Parish Rooms. Both areas also have a very active Neighbourhood Watch and are policed by West Mercia Constabulary.



The current local MP is Dr Richard Taylor who is an independent MP and has represented the Wyre Forest area in Parliament since 2001. The area is administered by Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Many local people travel to nearby Hagley and further afield to the nearby towns of Kidderminster, Stourbridge, Bromsgrove, the Black Country, or beyond Birmingham, for work, schools, colleges, shopping, entertainment and leisure. That is the beauty of the area - it has the best of all worlds within very easy reach.



The first meeting to discuss the Parish Plan took place on 12th September 2007 at the Old House at Home. It was attended mainly by volunteers, with a number of Parish Councillors also present. Over the following years there have been a number of in-depth consultations to find out the views of the community and its aspirations for the future. A public meeting was held, and questionnaires were sent out to all households and to children at Blakedown Primary School. There were also opportunities to attend any of the committee meetings, or to feed into the plan at any time via the web site. A blog was set up for young people to gather their input. All these methods together provided the information that now forms this plan.

The various forms of consultation produced a mass of information, aspirations and dissatisfaction's. These have been interpreted to draw up the plan which will provide evidence for policy decisions over the coming years.

The plan will be used by the Councils (Parish, District and County) and by organisations that can contribute to the life of our community (service providers etc) to give evidence and justification for changes, and to lead to better communication and understanding in respect of any changes to improve our villages.

As was expected, the feelings of the people of Ismere, Churchill and Blakedown covered a wide spectrum.. Certain sentiments appeared very frequently, and are common to all communities like ours all over Britain.

The project was funded by DEFRA, the Parish Council and Community Housing Group, and we are very grateful for their support. The Tenants' Consultative Committee and Community First have provided a lot of support and encouragement and have shared their invaluable experience in community practice.

Some of the needs highlighted by public debate have already been addressed, at least on a local and immediate level, and many volunteers in the community are to be congratulated for their response to the call for help.

The Background to Parish Plans

The Government's November 2000 Rural White Paper stated that Parish Plans should "identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved".

They should set out a vision for the community in the future and identify the action needed to tackle issues of concern in addition to including everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from employment needs to playgrounds.

The Parish Plan should consult everyone and give them a chance to say what they think about the social, economic and environmental issues affecting them and how they would like to have their community improved during the next 5, 10 or even 15 years. The whole community has to be involved, not just those who come along to Parish Council meetings.

Why Do a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans are written by local people and form a parish's business plan for up to the next twenty years. They are an opportunity for everyone in the community to have a voice in the forward planning of their village on topics ranging from road safety to leisure amenities, from education to local democracy and from health access to housing requirements.



The Old House at Home, Blakedown

Parish Plans:

- enable communities to engage meaningfully with the local planning process
- make known those issues that affect your community
- identify and prioritise Key Issues with your community
- produce an Action Plan to promote the changes that communities want to see at local, district and county levels.

Parish Plans are useful in influencing the maintenance and creation of community services and facilities such as;

- identifying new uses for the Village Hall or other community buildings
- encouraging the setting up of a parent and baby clinic
- providing after school child care and a holiday club for school children
- improving liaison with the police and establishing and maintaining neighbourhood watch scheme
- feeding into district and county strategies, through Local Strategic partnerships
- are useful in influencing the planning system by;
- identifying local needs for affordable housing or community facilities
- producing a design statement for new development
- identifying which open spaces are needed and valued for community use
- giving a local dimension to broader planning policies
- working with the planning process to deliver sustainable development

Parish Plans are useful in identifying and planning action that the local community can undertake itself, such as;

- re-opening a closed village shop
- producing a community newsletter
- providing a community transport scheme
- carrying out environmental improvements
- creating a new play area and place for young people to meet

Abandoned Cars (Wyre Forest D.C.)	01562 732928
Accident & Emergency Alexandra Hospital	01527 503030
Accident & Emergency Worcester Royal Hospital	01905 763333
Belbroughton Doctors	01562 730303
Birmingham Airport	08707 335511
Blakedown CE Primary School	01562 700243
Blakedown Cricket Club	01562 700623
Blakedown PTA	01562 700243
Blakedown Parish Hall	01562 639425
Blakedown Recreation Rooms (snooker)	01562 700818
Blakedown Tennis Club	01562 882763
Blakedown Women's Institute	
Blue Hoots	01562 701333
Bus Timetables	01905 765765
Churchill Village Hall	01562 700230
Churchill & Blakedown Golf Club	01562 700018
Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council	01905 830756
Citizens Advice Bureau	01562 60194
Crumbs	01562 700907
Doctor out of normal surgery hours	0300 123 3211
Electricity (Emergencies & loss of electricity)	0800 328 1111
Football (youths)	07786 545744
Football (adult)	07796 000357
Gas Leaks	0800 111999
Hagley Chemists	01562 882472
Hagley Doctors	01562 881700
Hagley RC High School	01562 883193
Haybridge High School	01562 886213
Minor Injury Unit (Kidderminster Hospital MIU)	01562 513039
Neighbourhood Watch	08457 444888 ext. 3253
Paint Park	0800 195 0638
Police – non emergency	0300 3333000
Post Office	01562 700401
Public Rights of Way	01905 768214
Dr. Richard Taylor MP	01562 753333
Rev. Paul Harrison	01562 700144
Rosemary Conley (Blakedown)	01299 828201
School Admissions & Transport	01905 765765
Short Mat Bowls	01562 700548
Slimming World (Blakedown)	01562 637090
Street Lighting ('Lights Out Line')	0800 137352
Trading Standards (Consumer Direct)	08454 040506
The Trainline	0871 010 1296
Water & Sewerage Service (inc. Leakline)	0800 783 4444
Worcestershire County Council – main enquiries	01905 763763
Wyre Forest District Council	01562 732928
Wyre Forest Hub	01562 732928

Survey Results

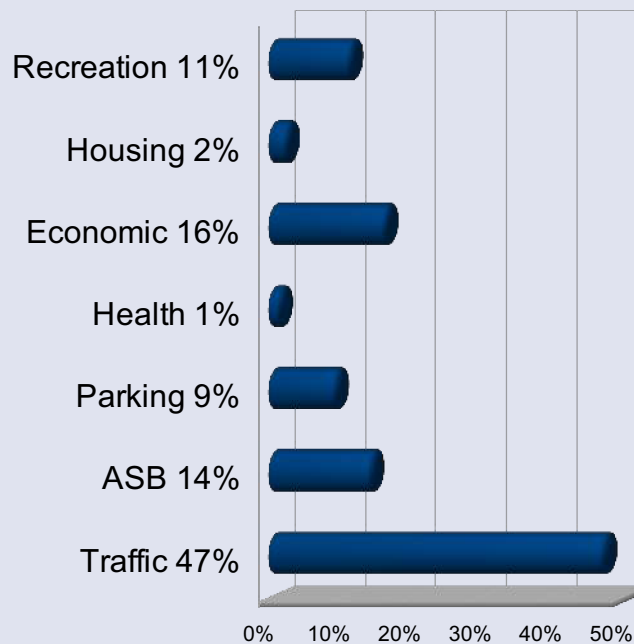
A questionnaire circulated to every household in the parish was returned by approx. 20%
Here follows the data gathered.

85 Negative comments were made from the responses received.

47% were relating to traffic. Speed and volume of traffic were the main complaints.
Main A456 road where speed and volume were highlighted.
Belbroughton Road, where speed was highlighted.
Churchill crossroads was highlighted as being hazardous.
Minor reference to Forge Lane.

16% related to economic responses.
Concern over proposed Post Office closure (majority)
More services required e.g. Green grocers, butchers etc.

14% related to Anti Social Behaviour
Youths drinking on playing field.
Noise from public houses, parish rooms and trains.
Litter and dog fouling.
Vandalism on park and village amenities.
11% related to recreation.
Lack of information and coordination of village events.
Horse riders (horses) fouling the roads and lanes.
Lack of good eating facilities.
9% related to parking.
All related to around the train station.
2% related to health issues.
Lack of doctors surgery and chemist
1% related to housing issues
Eyesore on Belbroughton Road nursery site



Traffic	ASB	Parking	Health	Economic	Housing	Recreation
47%	14%	9%	1%	16%	2%	11%

The issues, priorities & action points were sourced from public consultation, questionnaires & public meetings

Issues	Priorities	Action
Community Safety	Create a safer community for residents & visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Re design traffic flow Churchill crossroads •Reduce speed in Belbroughton Road through application of traffic calming. •Restrict anti - social behaviour by restricting access to known hotspots •Review and maintain speed restrictions and update signage through the parish •Provide more pedestrian crossings on the main Birmingham road. •Provide parking for shoppers and visitors on the main Birmingham road. •Increase the cycle lane through the village •Restrict commuter parking around the village •Work with new development sites to maintain safe access and traffic calming •Provide more signage for safe zones (children playing) •Restrict the speed on the Birmingham road to 20 mph during school times. •Redesign traffic flow forge lane/shopper car park Belbroughton road junction on main Birmingham road.
Environment	Create a sustainable and environmental friendly community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Preserve the ancient tree scape •Provide nature walk/tourist signage and maps •Ensure recycling is a high priority •Maintain paths and bridle walks •Deliver litter picking and community action days (planting and weeding etc.)
Children & Young people	Maintain and enhance facilities for our children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enhance the playground to provide facilities for the under 5 age group •Provide a skate board park and shelter for young people •Promote existing youth clubs/ groups for our children •Develop a young persons parish council
Improving Health & Well Being	Increase local access and availability to health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work with PCT to survey local need •Outreach Clinics in local community •Promote existing services •Attract Chiropody, Physiotherapists to the area. •Extend transportation to outlying services
Economic Success	Enable an atmosphere which encourages more commercial enterprise and investment in Blakedown and Churchill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage public access to internet (wifi hotspots) •Work with potential investors to maximise the use of redundant property and land
Heritage	Preserve and restore local landmarks and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Restore the avenue to restricted pedestrian walkway. •Identify local listed properties •Widen the conservation area into parts of Blakedown •Maintain and restore road names and signage •Provide tourist finger-posts to landmarks

This section is concerned with the preservation of features that illustrate our community's heritage.

We should consider the:

- Architectural (outstanding or rare examples e.g. Park Hall)
- Historical (early example or related to a person or event or note e.g. Springbrook Forge)
- Contextual (landmark or series of buildings) e.g. the estate cottages along the Belbroughton Road)
- Environmental (the effect of that feature on the community identity) and its place in our natural world enhancing the biodiversity and natural beauty of our parish

There's a lot of history in Churchill and Blakedown, much of it in the form of old buildings. Residents may be proud that 5 buildings in Blakedown and 12 in Churchill are designated heritage properties. It's up to local residents to keep campaigning to preserve local heritage. Heritage needs to be used for more than just celebrating the past but to help us thrive in the future. In our post-industrial era, the knowledge economy becomes more and more important and Churchill and Blakedown will need to keep pace with this to maintain its prosperity.



Stakenbridge Lane, Notice Board

Throughout the consultation process, many villagers and visitors have commented that they 'didn't want to see these places get destroyed by developers'.

There are many opportunities within the village envelope for 'infill' developments and it is these developments which are of concern to village residents, and the Parish Council. The Parish Plan cannot make planning policies but this document will have to be referred to by planners and developers when making any applications within the villages.

The Parish Council can and does, take very seriously any applications which involve the demolition or alteration of land and property and will continue to do so.

Wyre Forest District Council are in the process of identifying buildings in the area for local listing. It is hoped when it is the turn of Churchill and Blakedown that residents, along with the Parish Council, will work with the local planning authority to secure the future of individual buildings and landmarks, and groups of buildings.

To further control infill development the Parish Plan would like to see developers actively encouraging public consultation to ensure that any proposals respond to the needs of the villages as well as preserving the built heritage.



Signal Box, Blakedown Station

Consultation revealed that the current housing stock is over provided with large family houses but there are insufficient smaller houses for younger people and the elderly. The latter group wish to stay in the area after the family have grown up but have to move to Hagley or Kidderminster.

Diversity of records is a fact of the world we inhabit now. Old paper records, log books, photographs, drawings and paintings are now added to with electronic data, the village web site has a record of the listed buildings in the parishes and will have an increasingly important role to play in the residents accessing information quickly and easily. A collection of photographs will accompany this list and any further additions bringing to life the reality of what is preserved, aiding recognition of buildings and trees and helping to preserve detail that may be destroyed by renovation or development. All this work will stimulate public interest in the issue and be a good starting point for any future generations becoming interested in their local heritage.

A regular snapshot (perhaps over a specified time scale say every year) will embellish the local archive allowing it to be a dynamic record of change as well as an archive for preservation of the main features.

Electronic archives should be maintained so some sort of back up of this data will be needed reflecting the incredible volume of records but providing a succinct document useful as a tool to preserve our heritage.

A community may be more creative in its continuing education and economic success if it makes a better world preserving its heritage and culture. Residents should feel more secure and satisfied living in a community that has a real influence on outcomes that affect the environment. A good environment transforms neighbourhoods and brings more positive economic development. A preserved cultural heritage can encourage a sustainable community where local people wish to stay or return to further benefit in the investment that the community has made in them. Allowing them to plough back skills and knowledge to develop the heritage in a positive way.



Village Green, Blakedown

We need to look into ways to protect the various pools and forges which run through the area, and are fundamental to the area's history :this can be achieved by working with the local authority, DEFRA and the Environment Agency.

More recent history should not be forgotten either; we have a number of older residents who are born and bred in the villages and it is important to record their knowledge of how Churchill and Blakedown have changed over the last 100 years. We could initiate an Oral History project similar to the book completed to celebrate the Blakedown C.E. School's 120th anniversary.

Ideas to take further from local consultation have been to:

- Extend the conservation area from Drybridge to rear of Glebe House in Churchill
- Bollards replaced in the Avenue and re-establishing the proper boundary of the Avenue
- Not to lose the Village Green by the Birmingham Road (not in any way devaluing the Millennium Green) or the Signal Box (this particularly is an important contextual feature and both attract a lot of support for preservation)
- Preserve the railway viaduct both old and new by The Swan over Churchill Lane in Blakedown and the Stakenbridge Lane Rail bridge.
- Support sympathetic development of older larger houses

Preserve and enhance the following:

- Recognise the significance of Haven Cottage (and the other estate cottages on Belbroughton Road, notice the regular spacing, now in filled with later housing).
- Jack's Cottage and its connection to the Post Office Stores
- The Churches. Both Churchill and Blakedown and their church yards, wall, fence, gates etc
- The Forge, Churchill and its setting.
- The Pound, Churchill, on the junction near the Village hall

To encourage sympathetic development in the future of any of the following:

Glebe House, Rectory View and Glebe View, The Old Model Farm, Florence Mary Cottages, Churchill House, Churchill Court and The Old School in Blakedown



- The Mill at Mill Lane with its setting, retaining the walls in its grounds and access steps nearly lost through attempts to tackle the traffic speed problem on that corner.
- Enlarge the village green
- More car parking for convenience in the village
- More planters around the village
- Reduce litter in the Avenue and generally on the village streets and green spaces
- Keep village's atmosphere in both centres
- The landscape setting generally should be respected to include looking after natural features such as hedges, trees and ponds.
- Trees with tree preservation orders are protected from removal or damage and there's a need to identify other areas which would be enhanced by the planting of trees and other trees which need protecting with TPOs



Churchill Forge, Churchill

- New or redevelopment of areas should include a planting obligation either within the development or if this is not suitable then within another village green space using native broad leaved trees and suitable hedges using a wide variation of plants.
- The historic footpath network should be better defined, well maintained and well publicised in the long term to remain a healthy and valued amenity for all sections of the community.

The natural resource base of plants and biodiversity locally would historically have been our survival safety net. Now more than ever, with our knowledge of global crisis in the natural world, we should be looking on our own doorstep to preserve the biodiversity of our natural inheritance for future generations and perhaps for our own health and welfare sooner than we would like to admit. Locally many trees have been planted in public areas; these are sometimes of interest and are old or rare varieties they are a legacy we should preserve before it is too late.

LISTED BUILDINGS IN CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH

BLAKEDOWN

Springbrook Forge	NW of Springbrook House
Harborough Hall	Birmingham Road
Park Hall	Birmingham Road
Milestone	Birmingham Road

CHURCHILL

St James the Great Church	Churchill
Myndtown (now Attlee House)	Churchill Lane (north side)
Court Cottage	Churchill Lane (north side)
Churchill Old Farm	Churchill Lane (north side)
North Mill Building	Churchill Spade & Shovel Works



Pound, Opposite Winston Court, Churchill

Hand Forge	5m NE of North Mill, Churchill Spade & Shovel Works (This is also a scheduled ancient monument)
South Mill building	Churchill Spade & Shovel Works
St James the Great	Churchill
Churchill Pound	Stakenbridge Lane
Ismere House	Stourbridge Road
Barn	20m west of Ismere House
Parr's Farmhouse	Stourbridge Road
Barn	15m south of Parr's Farmhouse

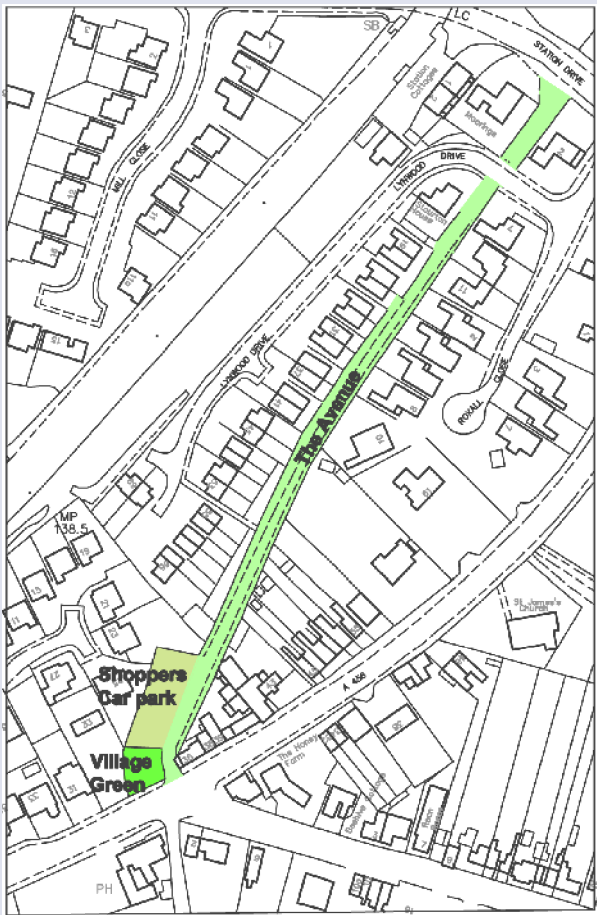
(Listing can include exteriors of buildings or street furniture or historic items e.g. the milestone Birmingham Road)

Educate with walking tours, notices, plaques, publishing brochures or leaflets, preparing displays (both permanent and temporary) including maps of the area, workshop events learning old local skills

Advising councils and planning departments about the community's wishes and features that are worthy of preservation and working with them.

Aim to **access grants** to help with the preservation of the features and buildings and to help with the education, notices etc and the overall presentation of some valued features.

Publicly advocating the preservation of our heritage



In order to preserve and develop the heritage of the area we should consider:

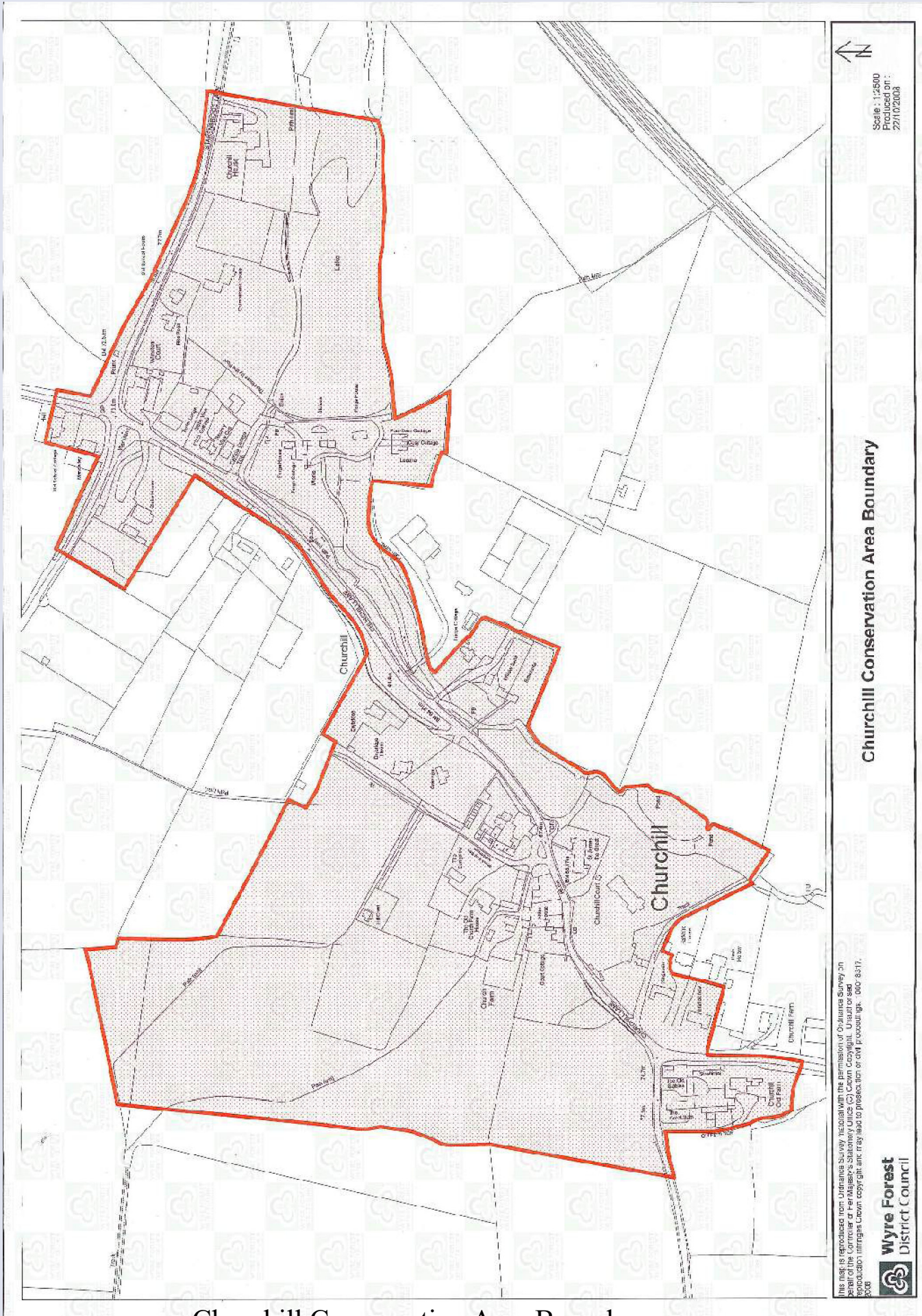
Developing a list of buildings and natural features preserved and those worthy of preservation but not yet listed and work with Wyre Forest District Council to create a local listing schedule.

Phone boxes to be preserved in Sculthorpe, Ismere, and Churchill

Post boxes to be preserved.

Attlee House, Wannerton Road, Post Office, Belbroughton Road, New Wood Lane, Ismere and on Sculthorpe Road.

Notice boards should be maintained well and will enable some of the proposals in terms of public information etc. and enhance the street scene. Parish Rooms, Crumbs, Sculthorpe (x 3 T.C.C owned), Churchill, Stakenbridge.



Scale: 1:2500
Produced on: 22/10/2008

Churchill Conservation Area Boundary

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Churchill Conservation Area Boundary

Across the county, the main concern for most communities that are safe and strong is traffic. It attracts a huge amount of comment in any Parish Plan questionnaire, and Blakedown, Churchill and Ismere have proved no exception. However, it seems that if an issue is raised by a pedestrian, then one set of outcomes is desired, but if it's raised by a driver a completely different set of outcomes is prioritised.

Ismere:

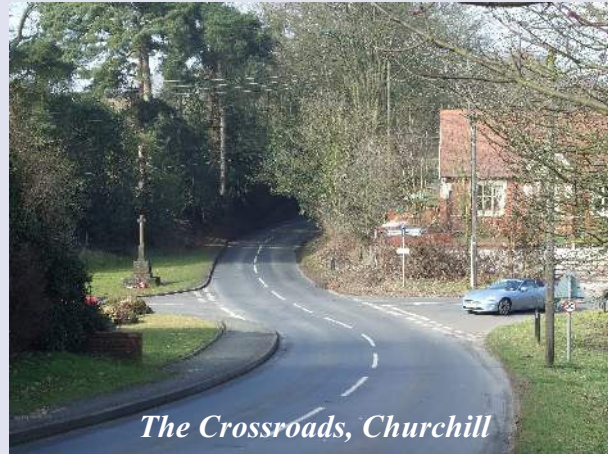
According to some locals, Five Ways at Ismere is vastly improved compared with how it used to be but there is still a very high accident rate here, with continual near misses being seen. Cars waiting to cross or turn at the junction are put in danger by the high speed of traffic on the main road. The quality of the road surface is very poor; old road markings and cat's eyes are prominent in the surface and this can unbalance motorcycles and affect the stability of other vehicles. The open nature of the crossroads looks 'safe' but promotes high speed, and drivers sometimes overtake around the bollard islands. Some respondents have suggested a roundabout, yet another group feel this would make the Kidderminster to Stourbridge road too slow. There have been many fatalities here so it is hoped changes will be made.

Churchill:

- Many respondents want signs at both ends of Stakenbridge Lane/Rocky Lane prohibiting HGV's, and for the road to be taken off satellite navigation routes for lorries which use



Churchill Crossroads Existing Arrangement



this lane as a short cut between the Wolverhampton Road, Stourbridge Road, Birmingham Road and Worcester roads. Worcestershire Highways are carrying out surveys to establish the type and speed of traffic along this road.

- Visibility is very poor at the war memorial junction in Churchill. Options suggested by residents include mirrors, a change of priorities, a mini roundabout so all drivers have to stop and give way, or put a bollard in the centre of Iverley Lane to push cars towards Hagley which gives better visibility towards traffic from Five Ways or realign the junction altogether. Traffic is felt to come too fast along Stakenbridge Lane, putting drivers who wish to cross over in danger. This is a 30 zone and there have been requests for more markings to emphasise this there is a danger of losing the rural setting. One resident at a public meeting observed 'Changing priorities at the Churchill Crossroads would be a disaster but the speed of the traffic on as they travel between Ismere and Stakenbridge is a real problem'. The blind corners, low bridge in Stakenbridge Lane would all be less of an issue if speed was reduced by drivers everywhere.

- The mobile speed cameras have reduced speed along the Birmingham Road.

- Speed bumps in residential areas can be noisy.

- Lights warning about speed are popular with some people, but not wanted by others. (There are studies that maintain the warning lights only work for a short time after installation).

- The chicane of corners at the bottom of Mill Lane is an attractive rural feature. However the speed of vehicles using it, and the fact it's on a bus route, causes householders in this area to raise concerns.

Communities which are strong, and feel safe

This section mainly deals with the traffic issues identified through the public consultation. This was a very sensitive area and there are many solutions to all the issues. We have listed the most common suggestions but there may be others it should be noted that solving one problem may have an impact on one of the other issues.

- As it seems unlikely that a by-pass will be built, one option is signage could re direct traffic (especially HGV's) to use the Stone and Worcester road to get to junction 3 on the M5, thereby discouraging through traffic for Blakedown but this would need to be negotiated



- Road signs are required to help protect the elderly and children, and notices at the footpaths feeding the playing field and near the school ('Children playing' signs) might help to inform motorists.
- The pavement on the Birmingham Road is prepared for crossing points in several places but they are not effective because there is no bollard island in the middle.
- Residents have asked that islands and crossing signs are installed near Swan Close and by the Swan, where the pavement kerb is already lowered with dimpled slabs set into the pavement.
- The school crossing should be a Pelican or Zebra crossing to encourage children who walk to school to cross safely.
- Any dissatisfaction over the state of the pavements should be reported to the Parish Council; they can only work with the information with which they are provided.



- The current practice of parking on long stretches of Belbroughton Road allows residents and visitors a useful facility and creates a chicane system which slows traffic. This practice could be extended to Sculthorpe Road.
- The idea of a traffic-controlled junction at the bottom of Belbroughton Road was widely supported in the public meetings. This would provide safe crossing for pedestrians in the centre of the village at all angles on both roads. There is a lot of congestion in this area in the morning and evening sometimes meaning that cars are backing up right out of the village. If the junction at the bottom of Belbroughton Road were changed to a traffic light controlled one with a pedestrian crossing, then the current crossing near the shops could be moved further up to aid the Primary School, Blue Hoots, the sports field and the Church. Forge Lane and the Village Car Park could be included in the system with sensors to predict vehicles wishing to exit these areas and thereby allowing them movement. The slower and more deliberate movement of traffic in this area will accommodate the exit of vehicles into the Car Park and Forge Lane in a safer manner than at present.



Communities which are strong, and feel safe

- Altering the Belbroughton Road junction would allow limited parking space outside the shop where currently there is no legal parking (although many drivers choose to park here illegally and dangerously).
- Pavements need to be maintained and to be clear, and respondents are particularly concerned about overhanging hedges because they restrict the available space. It is the responsibility of the landowner to keep hedges trimmed.



- Parking should always be as safe as possible and is the responsibility of all drivers.
- Residents' cars should not be parked on pavements. This frequently happens on Birmingham Road and pedestrians (especially those with pushchairs) are forced out onto the road.
- Illegally parked cars should be reported to the local police. Many members of our community do already use the **0300 333 3000** non emergency police number. We all need to be vigilant and report mini motorbikes, vandalism, or any sort of antisocial behaviour or dangerous behaviour to our local police officer.
- The 30 mph signs on Belbroughton Road are too small, and could be supplemented by signs warning that children and young families are in the area.

- More grit bins kept filled to guard against slippery pavements or roads especially at vulnerable places like the bottom of Mill Lane and round Sculthorpe. Local residents could then take responsibility for a danger spot.
- The public meeting showed several requests for the Birmingham Road to have a lower speed limit, (20 is plenty) especially round the area of the Blakedown C.E. School and Blue Hoots. This is now being investigated by the Parish Council.

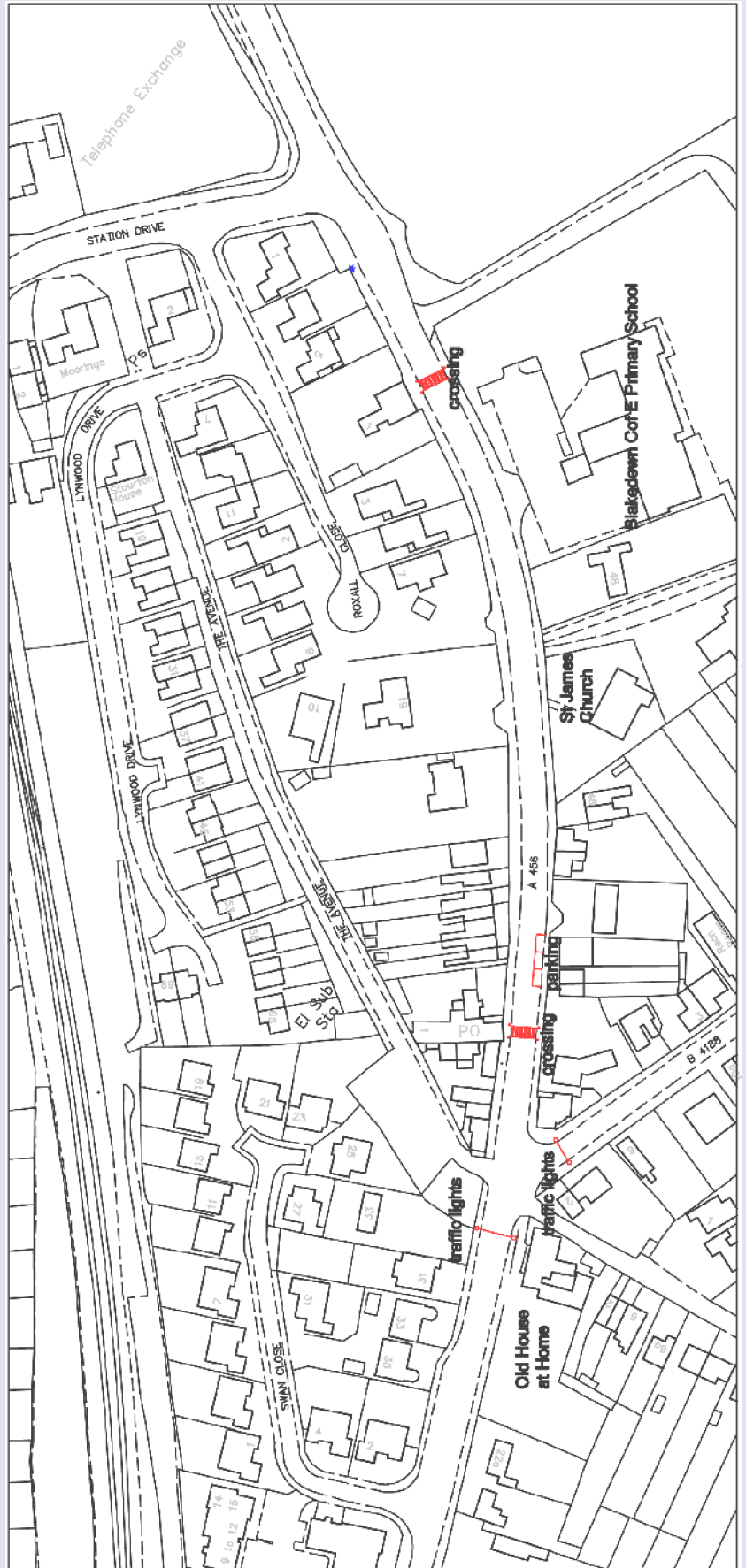


The cycle lane has big gaps in it and cannot be included in cycle maps for the area. Finding some way to 'pinch an inch' from the current road design to make a continuous cycle route from Hagley through to Kidderminster would do our environmental credentials good and provide a good public service for safer transport. Cycle paths should be encouraged where possible. Roads should be as narrow as possible to encourage lower speeds, with wide footpaths and cycle paths provided.





Possible Alterations to Belbroughton Road



Possible Alterations to Birmingham Road

Meeting the needs of children and young people

To meet the needs of children and young people Churchill and Blakedown should have inclusive, accessible, and safe play spaces that allow all young villagers to engage in fun, positive and healthy recreation in their own community and throughout the local area e.g. access to other local facilities where it is not practical to provide them in the parish.

These needs should be identified to the County Council, Wyre Forest District Council, and housing developers, Housing associations and play providers, who may be able to help. Churchill and Blakedown has scope for more improvised play and also for structured guided play and activities. Well-planned and sensibly organised space allows all ages access together and at different times and enables development of social networks and a sense of community.

Long-term maintenance of any facility needs to be secured to maintain sustainability.

The current environment attractiveness and character is appreciated by the young people, and needs to be preserved while providing facilities that are flexible and responsive to changing needs, this is a dynamic dimension of the community. Children also expressed the wish to increase the biodiversity of the parish and have an environmentally responsible attitude to how improvements are achieved.

Children's needs are totally bound to, and linked with, the needs of the rest of the community and especially the parents and carers of the young people. Facilities need to be well designed, and secure, to encourage use by the whole age range of young people. Sadly bullying has been identified and needs to be acknowledged in the provision. Good facilities may encourage better health, a more positive attitude to education and less crime and disorder. Positive play policies are linked inextricably to sport, education, after school care and organised activities some of which already exist and need to be positively encouraged.

There needs to be diversity to accommodate the different needs of boys, girls and young people with disabilities. We need to compare our facilities with other local areas that are similar demographically and with outstanding facilities in areas that may have very different demographics but which provide excellent facilities we could emulate.

Current provision for young people

School:

Blakedown has a C. of E. Primary School set in a lovely location with good accommodation. Any observer needs to look no further than the 'good' OFSTED reports and to visit the children there to see the work going on to produce scholars and citizens of which we can be proud. Much of the intake for the school is from the villages of Churchill and Blakedown but the wider community of Kidderminster often gain places here.



Blakedown C.E. Primary School

Paintball

This is a privately operated firm located in Bissell Wood. Children from age 12 can take part in paint ball games at a cost. This is a very popular facility for young people from outside the parish as well.



Paintball

Mothers and Toddlers

Meet regularly and is organised on a voluntary basis by the mothers who are using it.

Theatre 282

This is a theatre group, which meets in Blakedown Parish Room and has a mixed age group. They regularly stage plays and an annual pantomime.



Meeting the needs of children and young people

Playground

Included in the main Sports Centre is a free access playground. This was refurbished in 2007 with state of the art play equipment. A committee raised funds from environmental grants and lottery funding. Some original equipment was retained, as was the original fencing. Benches are near the equipment for parents to watch youngsters. The teenagers often gather here in the evening. There have been some examples of anti social behaviour; this is sometimes local children and sometimes young people visiting by train or their own cars (The car problem has been reduced by a vehicle barrier being erected in the access road and locked at 6pm). Many children use the playground daily in term time as it is at the rear of the school. Parents while picking up and dropping off their children use the car park here. This is an enormous asset to the school and much safer for the children than being dropped off road side at the front of the school causing the type of congestion found in other nearby villages at the start and finish of the school day.



Sports Centre

All sections of the Sports Centre have junior membership. There is a strong football club for all ages up to teens. The Tennis Club has a reduced fee for juniors and a family membership. They have a resident coach who runs sessions for non members (at a nominal fee) and members. The Cricket section does not have a junior side but youngsters play alongside the adult players who currently field a non-league side.

Scouting

The Scout group has been in the village since 1954. In 1978 they moved to the new Scout Hut on the Millennium Green. There is convenient parking here and ample space for them to store things and have a large indoor space for meetings, in conjunction with the large outdoor area of the Millennium Green itself. There is a mix of village and out of area children making up the large numbers of Scouts. They have recently had to start a second group on another night to accommodate demand. Children attend scouts here over the full scouting age range.



Pre School Children

are accommodated in Blue Hoots private nursery school. Many children from here feed to Blakedown Primary School. The building Blue Hoots occupies was formally owned by the church and must be used for educational purposes. (The current Blue Hoots building previously housed the school, even when the new site was developed the older children still used the old building) There is a car park for the collection and drop off of children and a limited fenced outdoor play area. Time spent here is paid for by the parents or through government voucher schemes. Before and after school care is offered for parents unable to drop their children off at school. The parents pay on an hourly basis.

Parish Games

Blakedown has been very successful in winning various aspects of the Parish Games. These are contested with other local parishes. There is not currently a large junior section in this organisation.

Meeting the needs of children and young people

The Parish Fête

This is an annual event with many child centred activities, competitions and opportunities for children and young people to be involved (many children's charities and voluntary groups benefit from the funds raised



Litter Collection

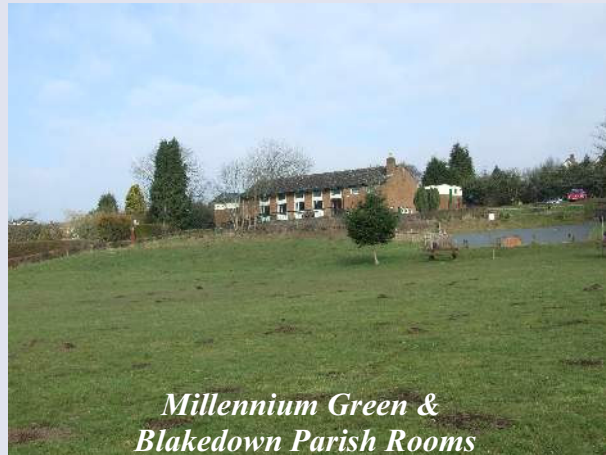
Local children have organised themselves into a litter collecting group. They approached the Parish Council at a Public Meeting for funds for litter pickers and fluorescent jackets and they headed up the annual '*Big Tidy Up*'. During the year they focus on different areas of the parish where they are safe to work and have noticed a need to clean up.



Millennium Green

This is an open space that offers good informal play opportunities and potential for multi functional use even though it does not include formal play provision. It is a well-maintained and very attractive natural environment conveniently near footpath networks that surround the area. Plenty of benches are provided for picnics and relaxation. The local school uses this green area as an occasional outing for a picnic and to play games in an area alternative to the school, extending the children's appreciation of their environment. The Scout Hut is in this area and the Scout organisation makes very good use of the green area for activities and games.

Practising tent pitching, archery etc. There is ample parking and access by foot. There is not much lighting as is in character for a country village.



Ismere

Does not have any facilities for children or young people but does have a family - friendly public house The Waggon and Horses, with a garden and play equipment. Footpaths from both Churchill and Blakedown easily access the Waggon and Horses. It has a large car park.



Stables

There are many private horse businesses in the parish. These are used by a wide intake of people of all ages including some young people.



Meeting the needs of children and young people



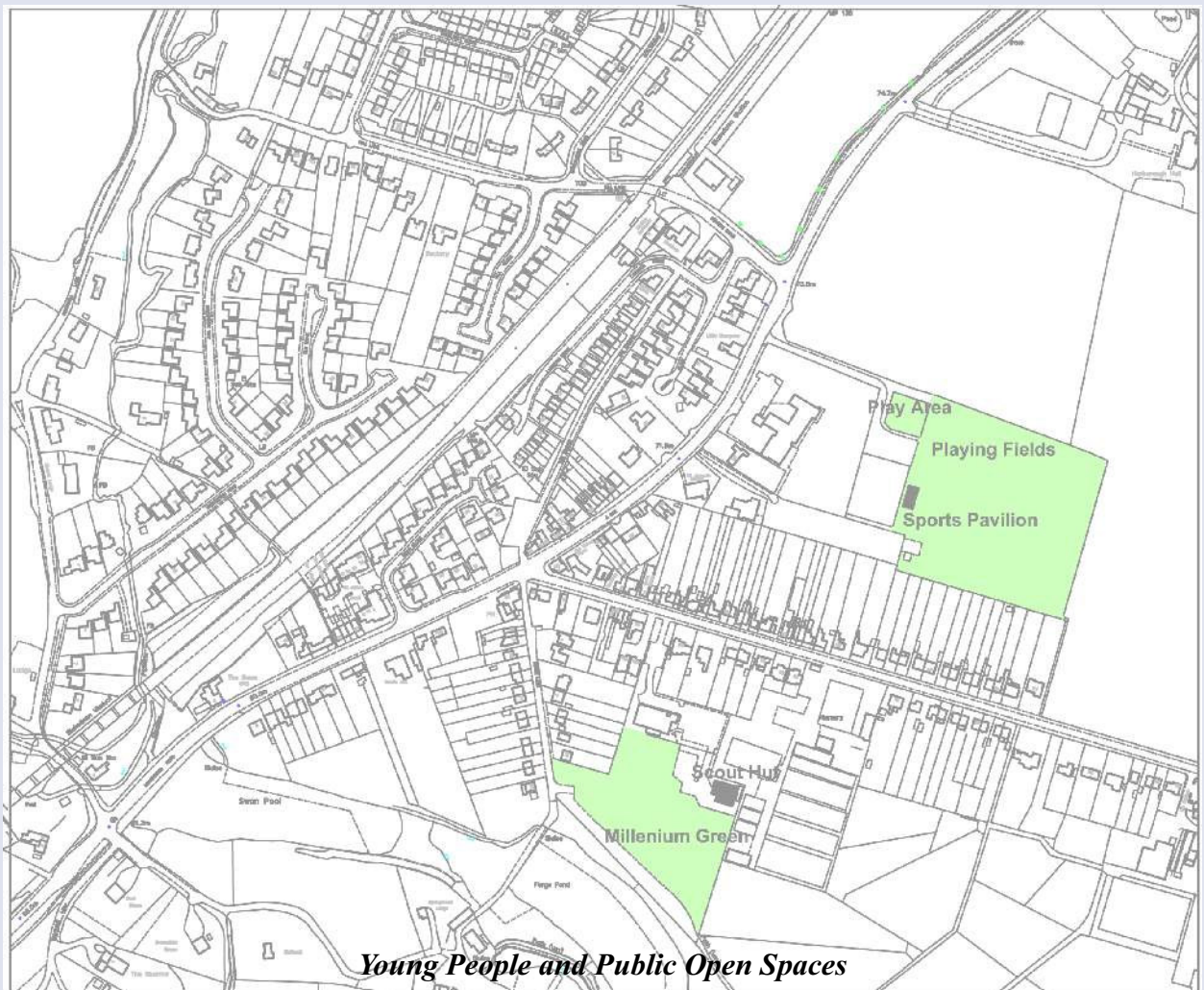
Blakedown Signal Box

Railway Station

The local railway connection in the centre of the village and fairly accessible for Churchill is a real bonus for young people from the area. The line accesses Kidderminster and Hagley and the stations beyond. Many school children use it daily for their commute to schools and colleges in Hagley, Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Worcester. This transport provides for recreation outside the village and access to employment.

Further development for children and young people identified at the public meetings.

- Play facilities for early years, maybe near current ones in Blakedown or some where in central Churchill. The current playground, though brilliant does not have much for the youngest children unless they are thoroughly monitored by their carer.
- More clubs for young people run by professional leaders. The Scouts is hugely successful but term time only. This request would presumably result in facilities available all holiday and structure how and where children meet.
- We need an anonymous reporting system for gang mentality bullying, (Child line and the 030033300 Police number. Schoolchildren may report antisocial activity to school seeking advice from teachers.) Vulnerable areas like the station need to be regularly monitored.
- Somewhere to go, a positive environment, a new pavilion, more sports, a shelter.



Young People and Public Open Spaces

Health Care

During the consultation process one of the main priorities was for people to have access to a full range of health services within the community by encouraging use of public buildings such as the school, parish rooms and the church by the health providers. It has indicated that people would like to see the following in the community even if only on a temporary basis. Such as monthly clinics: Doctor, Pharmacy, Health Visitors.

Realistically the Churchill and Blakedown Community does have access to all NHS Services in Kidderminster, Hagley and Belbroughton it is possible to ask your GP for treatments at a specific hospital if it is easier to get to rather than go to the hospital associated to your GP. Individual health care including regular visits and care assistance can be arranged through your GP

Help is available to families in times of crisis through the new national 'Every Child Matters' scheme. It aims to prevent young people slipping through the net because of poor health or low expectations. The Blakedown, Churchill and Ismere area may be considered relatively affluent yet vulnerable people and families do live here. Sometimes this sort of care is provided through the local school, but children educated privately or in out of catchment schools should not be neglected.



Tennis Courts at Sports & Recreation Centre

Sheltered Housing

The subject of housing came up quite frequently during the consultation process, with people asking about both sheltered housing and affordable housing within the community.



The Avenue, Blakedown

The Parish Plan questionnaire showed a need for new, low-price homes not only for young families but also for older people. Many older residents wish to stay in the community in which they have invested their life but find their current home and garden too large. Local downsizing could free up more properties suitable for families.

In response to this the Parish Council have arranged a Housing Needs Survey, which went out in February 2010, to ascertain the true demand; the results are still pending.

If a need is identified it may be assumed that land will be purchased within the village envelope to provide such housing through a Housing Association. Potential occupants will have to prove a link with Churchill and Blakedown villages.

Whilst Churchill and Blakedown are affluent, there are vulnerable people within the community who may benefit from the provision of such housing and also extended school hours, linking in the National Child Matters Scheme.



Myndtown now Atlee House

A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow

Blakedown, Churchill and Ismere are small rural communities on the periphery of other larger communities, ie Hagley and the town of Kidderminster. They have within their boundaries many different environmental habitats ranging from arable and grazing farm land, woodland, fresh water pools and the attendant streams and marshy areas, small housing estates, some commercial properties and a wide range of private housing with a variety of garden sizes. Criss-crossing all of this are many roads (major and minor), lanes, bridle paths, footpaths and railway.



Millennium Green Plaque

There are many varied species of wildlife, flowers and plants, some of which are fostered by the management of the environment (for instance the protected fishing rights at Ladies Pool gives privacy to waterfowl; their nests are protected from disturbance by the public and dogs, and vermin are controlled in the interests of country sports) Few places in the Midlands are entirely wild but much of the diversity of our environment is due to careful management. The rail track side is occasionally cut and is free from the disturbance of people and animals.

Hurcott Woods are managed by WFDC rangers and as a result an increasingly wide range of plants and animals are found here. Local landowners manage their properties usually for financial gain but in the process create habitat for wildlife. All this management also creates attractive vistas for locals and visitors.

A result of the area being developed by people over hundreds of years is that there is also a legacy of human input that local people have expressed a desire to preserve. Fruiting trees are evident about the village in public areas and are often old varieties. There are local and national initiatives to preserve both new and ancient trees as well as fruit trees either singly or in groups. This should be pursued by local groups and individuals. The Parish Council is registering the 'village green' (the small area beside the village car park at the bottom of the Belbroughton Road) to create a centrepiece for the village. The Parish Council employ the village lengthsman, who is also responsible for keeping the villages and lanes clean and tidy. There are kerbside recycling and rubbish collections. Following this consultation process, the Parish Council is looking to improve and extend all litter bins, dog litter bins. Information for walkers (tourists and locals) is available on some local notice boards. It was suggested that increasing the number of these boards, and providing information about routes, with the biological and historical context of what can be seen on the walk would be useful.

The general aims identified by consultation for the future are to preserve all aspects that are currently enjoyed (such as the village green, Millennium Green the footpaths and bridleways with their natural wildlife habitat), enhancing all of these where possible. It was also hoped that we can try to improve cleanliness, reduce the effects of traffic, provide more information about the local area, and make sure that recycling remains a priority and improving routes for bicycle users for leisure and as transport.



*View From Behind Converted Barn,
Churchill*

This section looks at how we can encourage new trade and businesses and encourage existing businesses to stay.

The pattern of migration of business away from Britain's towns means opportunities for villages and rural areas to attract economic opportunities and support it using well-planned housing, broadband and business support programmes.

The residents have made it clear that this must be managed in such a way that as much green space as possible survives, and the character of both village centres are preserved.



Blakedown Golf Club

Blakedown and Churchill have changed constantly over the centuries embracing new industry and accommodating housing, and must continue to do so. The internet is becoming more part of our lives, internet providers are being encouraged to look at village schools, pubs and other public buildings. The church is experimenting with contacting their congregations via the internet so the church online could combine with increased public area usage. Public houses are encouraged to take on extra roles as shops, post offices and small business centres under the "Pub is the Hub" scheme. Some competitions have been run to place WiFi in public areas thereby increasing the access for rural areas.



Boudica Clothes Shop

Village Shops:

Much comment was collected about the need for shops in the village, with long term residents remembering when four or more shops traded in Blakedown, and Churchill had its own post office.

Currently within our community there are two farm shops, Stanley's and Hodge Hill Nurseries, Barnett Hill Nursery and in the heart of the village Crumbs, a post office and gift shop and a women's fashion shop. There are also a few private businesses, based at New Farm and above a hairdressers and the women's fashion shop, a private nursery a hairdressers and three public houses.

The benefit of having small local independent businesses and shops is that they are local organic and seasonal and that they can respond quickly to the communities needs.

It is vital for economic success in the local community that these facilities are used regularly by local people. The Parish Plan questionnaire showed that we value the current shops and would like to see more in the village. We can only encourage more businesses by helping to make the existing businesses thrive. There is a danger that making small firms suffer if only used infrequently, especially in times of recession which will open up the opportunity for larger multiples to come in with all the advantages of purchasing discounts.

Local business people are part of the community so have an active desire to maintain a dialogue with the community – through personal contact, newsletters and online communications using the local 'Broadcast' Magazine and Village Website as well as their own marketing websites and local advertisements. An idea that might be adopted from other communities is to form a Village Shop Association. The best hope of keeping the existing shops and businesses is for residents to maximise their usage of them thus ensuring their profitability, and to encourage the maintenance of free parking and keeping the station open.

Mobile Library:

More access to the Mobile library was requested in the questionnaires; for more information look at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries Visits vary according to reviews in local areas. Blakedown and Churchill are served by Stourport Library on a three week Tuesday rota. For further information phone 01299 822722. Stops are currently made at the Old House at Home at 9.40 - 9.55 Wheatmill Close at 10.00 - 10.15 and Manderlay in Churchill at 10.20 - 10.35. Further stops can be made if enough local people express a need.

Train Services:

An improvement in the frequency and reliability of train services would help maintain the service. There is an ongoing need to improve the parking round the station, ideally providing a car park for commuters so they don't have to park on the streets. Recently kerbstones have been set alongside the road in Station Drive. Yellow lines do not fit in with the rural setting and can sometimes simply drive the problem further along the roads and into even more dangerous situations for residents. Yellow lines can cause problems for residents who may occasionally wish to use their local street for parking for guests etc. Also policing of any proposal has to be considered. SLUG (Stourbridge Line Users Group) actively works with the railway companies to improve services.

Parish Magazine:

Churchill and Blakedown already have an established Parish magazine that is well respected entitled 'Broadcast'. The survey showed that people wanted this retained.

Moves have been made to make it more universal with delivery to more homes, which will in turn generate news from a wider field as people contribute to it. In order to enlarge its circulation and to update it some funding may need to be found. The current magazine is funded by advertising revenue and a cover charge for each issue.

Allotments:

Allotments are requested in the survey, but the Parish Council need to receive a number of applications to be obliged to provide allotments. They would need to purchase or rent suitable land. For further support or information there are several links on the Internet, eg The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Limited. In some areas, residents with unused larger gardens lend them to people to use as allotments. This leads to increased security for properties (due to regular visiting by a known person), increased community spirit and awareness. Payment for use of the space can be a share of the harvest of the land or the standard payment for that locality for allotments. Many landowners choose to donate this payment to a local charity.

There are several areas round the village of derelict, near derelict or underused land. Careful consideration of the community's needs should be taken into account regarding the development of these sites.

Leisure Facilities:

In the villages we are lucky to have thriving clubs for golf (Churchill and Blakedown Golf Club), snooker (The Blakedown Recreation Room) and tennis, football, cricket etc. (The Churchill and Blakedown Sports and Recreation Club).



Hairdressers



Crumbs and Post Office

Tenants Consultative Committee:

The strong Tenants Consultative Committee in Blakedown supports local business and voluntary organisations. Its enthusiasm and tenacity are widely felt throughout the community. The elected leaders of this are often to be found supporting the many community initiatives and share generously their organisation's events and facilities with the community for the benefit of all.



Waggon Lane Junction

Signage:

A suggestion from the public consultation was for more signs at Hagley Roundabout and Kidderminster to point to Blakedown so that people know where we are. Signage in general in and around the village is cited as poor.

There is a lack of signage directing traffic to Blakedown. Kidderminster and Harvington are signed in Hagley, and Birmingham and Hagley are signed in Kidderminster – it's as if Blakedown doesn't exist in between. Ismere is not signed or labelled at all.

Within the villages the signs are a varied mix. The village green beside the carpark at the bottom of Belbroughton Road is blighted with big ugly signs. There is a distinct lack of signage pointing out useful assets of the village such as the Millennium Green and the Sports Centre.

Choice of design for signs is important to maintain the rural nature of the village.



Areas of Economic Success



CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN VILLAGE PLAN