

Shaping our future

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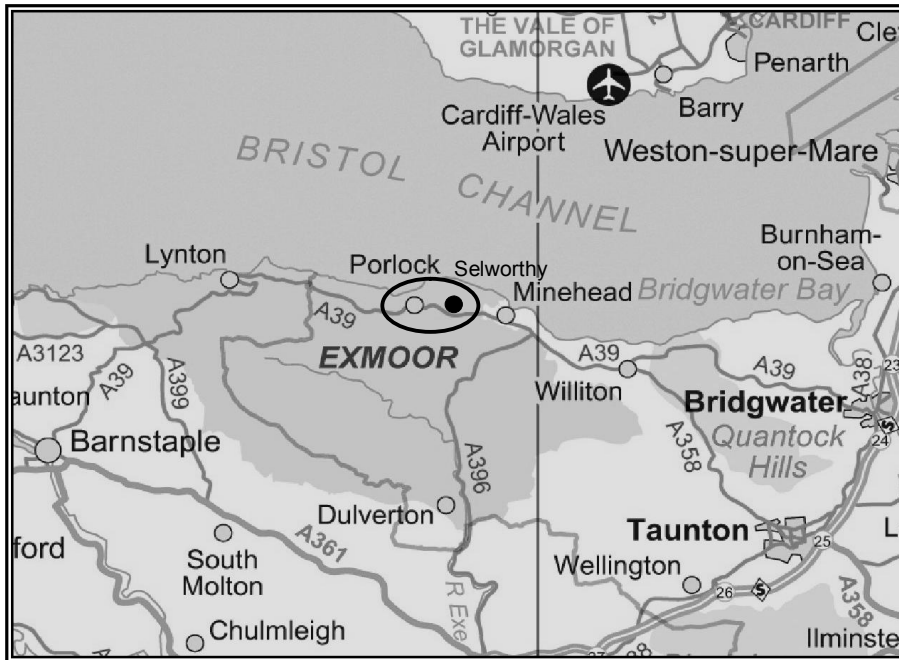
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1 Introduction

Porlock Vale covers the two Parishes of Porlock and Selworthy & Minehead Without. Situated within Exmoor National Park, it is surrounded on three sides by wooded or heather covered hills and on the fourth side by the Bristol Channel.

Its immediate neighbour is Minehead on which it depends for many services and facilities.

The nearest larger towns are Taunton and Barnstaple – both around 25-30 miles distant.



Porlock Vale is a rural environment, containing a number of picturesque villages - Bossington, Selworthy and Allerford - and the main settlement of Porlock with its harbour at Porlock Weir. The economy is largely based on the twin pillars of tourism and agriculture

The area is famous for its natural beauty and is home to the largest National Trust Estate in England - Holnicote. The coastal section through the Vale from Minehead is the start of the South West Coastal Path and Porlock also marks the end of the Coleridge Way.

Historically the A39 through the Vale was the main road to North Devon and beyond. Porlock is particularly famous for its hill, the longest and steepest main road hill in the UK.

Porlock Vale is an active, working community with a population of just over 2000. Because of its relative isolation it supports and depends on a good range of local shops, services, amenities and community activities.

2 Developing the Parish Plan

In early 2007 the Parishes of Porlock and Selworthy & Minehead Without (S&MW) decided to combine their efforts to produce a joint Porlock Vale Parish Plan. The rationale for working together was that the two communities are strongly linked and it was anticipated that issues and concerns would be the same in both Parishes.

A joint team (16) was formed and funding secured for development of the plan in June 2007. The team consisted of representatives from both Parishes, covering a range of areas of interest, supplemented by members of each Parish Council.

The detailed work on the plan was initiated in Autumn 2007 in order to avoid time conflicts during the busy summer period. Significant effort was put into communications in order to ensure that there was wide community understanding and support for the Parish Plan. This was considered critical as success could only be achieved with strong and active community participation. Publicity was achieved through a mix of approaches including use of The Porlock Vale Newsletter, local newspapers, attendance at various group meetings and a stall at the Porlock Village Fair.

The plan was developed in 4 stages:

- Stage 1:** A community wide questionnaire delivered to all households
- Stage 2:** A review of the results and findings using a public "Have Your Say Day" in order to validate conclusions and assess priorities
- Stage 3:** Development of an action plan
- Stage 4:** Implementation

The community questionnaire was the foundation of the Parish Plan – using the slogan 'Shaping Your Future'.

The team's view was that considerable effort should be made to make the questionnaire comprehensive but not daunting and to ensure it was an attractive, quality document. This was seen as key to getting a good response. A separate Youth questionnaire was also produced to make sure adequate attention was given to Youth issues.

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

Section 1	Household Profile
Section 2	Environment and Heritage
Section 3	Crime and Safety
Section 4	Housing
Section 5	Health and Care
Section 6	Transport and Parking
Section 7	Employment
Section 8	Community Activities
Section 9	Community Facilities and Services
Section 10	Business

This structure has been maintained throughout the process

The questionnaires were hand delivered to all households with a covering letter. This was accompanied by a high profile communications campaign urging everyone to complete and return their questionnaires. In order to maximise the return rate a variety of mechanisms were put in place to collect questionnaires including a number of drop off points in key community facilities e.g. shops, visitor centre, medical centre etc.

This stage was successfully completed in April 2008, with an excellent return rate of over 50%, which exceeded our best expectations. In addition to the high response rate we were encouraged by the volume and quality of written comments and suggestions and by the number of people who volunteered to help in subsequent stages of development of the plan.

Following the analysis of the questionnaire returns key results were summarised in the Porlock Vale Newsletter and in addition a public consultation event was organised for early July. Called a "Have Your Say Day" it consisted of stands under each theme showing the survey results manned by members of the Parish Plan team and representatives from the range of organisations on whom we depend for services including Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council, Exmoor National Park, Police, Primary Care Trust, Quantock Motors and Somerset Care.

The objective was to give people the opportunity to put their concerns and ideas directly to these organisations so that they would get a first hand feel for local issues and priorities.

The event was widely publicised and over 350 local residents attended – a number which again exceeded our expectations

Following this event the public feedback was analysed under each heading to identify and prioritise the issues of concern to the community. Further work was then undertaken by the Parish Plan team to identify and prioritise actions required and to identify the external organisations that would need to be involved. This stage was completed in September 2008.

The action plan will take a number of years to complete – some issues require short term actions, which are in hand. Others are more complex and highly dependent on support from outside organisations.



*'Have Your Say' Day July 4th 2008
Porlock Village Hall*

3 Questionnaire Findings

Returns

Total number of Questionnaires returned was 432, which represents 51% of occupied* households according to WSC records. In terms of population, returns covered 1083 residents or c.50% of the population from the last census. This means the data obtained should be highly valid.

* Assumes 15% of households are second/holiday homes as per WSC data

3.1 Household Profile/Attitudes

3.1.1 *How many people live in your household?*

3.1.2 *What is the age/sex mix?*

The age breakdown of the Parishes is:

Age	%
0 – 5	2.6
6 – 11	4.7
12 – 18	3.3
19 – 21	1.5
22 – 39	7.7
40 – 59	25.6
60 – 69	26.7
70 – 79	16.4
80+	11.5

This means we have in Porlock, approximately the following numbers of people in each category. The S&MW breakdown would be similar:

Age	
0 – 5	36
6 – 11	66
12 – 18	46
19 – 21	22
22 – 39	110
40 – 59	368
60 – 69	384
70 – 79	236
80+	164

Comparing our profile with averages for Somerset shows major variations, as expected:

	Age	Porlock %	Somerset %
NB Figures rounded	0 - 20	12	25
	21 – 39	8	24
	40 – 59	26	29
	60 – 69	27	11
	70 – 79	16	6
	80+	11	5

We are very high in terms of the retired and elderly, roughly 54% of our population against a Somerset norm of around 22%.

We have roughly the same proportion in the 40 to 59 category, but have significantly less people in two other categories:

- Children, roughly half the expected level;
- Young working age people, a third of what would be expected, showing many move out of the area when they reach working age

The other key finding is the very high proportion of elderly living alone - the data would suggest that we have approximately the following numbers by age range in single occupancy households:

Age	
40 – 59	24
60 – 69	40
70 – 79	58
80+	66

3.1.3 *If you have children under 18, how many attend the following:*

<i>Play Group</i>	<i>Special Needs School</i>
<i>Nursery School</i>	<i>Private School</i>
<i>Primary School – Porlock</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Senior School – Minehead</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>

The basic profile of school options is in line with expectations. Most attend either the Primary School in Porlock or senior schools in Minehead. Numbers using other options are very limited (3)

3.1.4 *If you are a working parent do you use after school facilities for any of your children?*

There is low reported use of after school facilities (4) and low reported demand for additional facilities

3.1.5 How long have you been living in Porlock Vale?

Figures suggest a very stable population:

Less than 1 year	4%
1 - 5 years	19%
6 – 10 years	18%
11 – 19 years	18%
20+ years	41%

3.1.6 Do you own or rent your home?

Housing is owner occupied dominated:

Owner occupied	75%
Private rental	6%
Housing Association/Local Authority	11%
National Trust/Porlock Manor Estate	4%
Second Home	* 3%
Other	1%

* This figure does not reflect numbers of second homes, only the proportion of replies from second homeowners. West Somerset Council estimates of second/holiday homes are c.15% of total households.

The profile for Selworthy & Minehead Without is similar but with a higher proportion in National Trust property.

3.1.7 What is the main form of heating in your home?

Breakdown of main form of heating varies by Parish:

	Porlock	S&MW
Oil	50%	22%
Electric	34%	35%
Solid fuel	11%	28%
LPG	5%	15%

3.1.8 What are your main reasons for living in Porlock Vale?

Always lived here	9%
To work	10%
To retire	22%
Quality of life	31%
Family	10%
Environment	18%

Note: most returns showed multiple rather than single entries for this question but retirement, quality of life and the environment dominate

3.1.9 Which statements best reflect your feelings to change?

The overall attitude to change is conservative, only 1% want major change but the majority would support changes that protect and enhance the key characteristics of Porlock Vale:

Porlock Vale should largely stay as it is	44%
Some change is necessary if our community is to thrive	55%
Major change is needed	1%

3.1.10 How do you keep aware of 'what's going on'?

Most people rely on multiple sources of information, breakdown is:

	Porlock	S&MW
Local newspapers	34%	38%
P V Newsletter	27%	40%
Public notices	23%	14%
Church newsletter	12%	7%
Porlock Web Site	4%	1%

The figure that stands out is the very low usage of the Web site by local residents.

3.1.11 What changes would you like to see, and what would you like conserved about Porlock Vale?

From the text comments the main priorities are to:

- maintain the atmosphere and environment of Porlock
- keep and if possible enhance local shops and services
- take steps to encourage and enable local families to remain in the village
- seek to improve pedestrian and road safety

People will support limited change provided it supports these objectives.

What people don't want is:

- significant development
- changes which are not in keeping with the current look and feel of the Vale

Environment and Heritage

3.2.1 Are there any aspects of our environment that need to be improved?

In general survey respondents were very satisfied with the environment. Areas of concern identified were:

	Porlock	S&MW
Dog fouling	29%	29%
Pavements	19%	8%
Recycling	16%	23%
Footpaths	11%	9%
Beaches	7%	7%
Signs	6%	7%
Lighting	6%	0
Street cleaning	3%	7%
Noise	2%	6%
Graffiti	1%	4%

The main issues are:

- High levels of concern on dog fouling, backed up by the strength of text comments received on this topic
- Pavements receive numerous comments particularly from those with children or with any mobility restrictions
- Footpaths, access for those with mobility issues is the main problem
- Recycling, issue is the lack of facilities for plastic, garden waste etc. both centrally and from home
- Beach problems are signs, ease of access and cleanliness plus lack of exploitation of marsh area

3.2.2 How many of your household have mobility and access needs?

Based on extrapolating the survey returns, we have a significant number of people with mobility problems:

Walking stick	174
Walking frame	42
Pram/Pushchair	25
Scooter	16
Wheelchair	18

This is to be expected given the age profile and suggests our environment should give higher than “normal” priority to access issues.

3.2.3 Do they have any particular access problems?

Pavements	35%	(higher in Porlock)
Public transport	21%	(higher in S&MW)
Village shops/services	13%	
Footpaths	11%	
Village facilities	6%	
Community activities	4%	

Public Transport issues relate to both getting to the bus stop and difficulties in getting in and out of the busses

3.2.4 How important is investment in renewable sources of energy?

3.2.5 Have you invested in any renewable energy resources?

3.2.6 Would you support in principle community renewable energy initiatives?

The majority believe that renewable energy is of high importance:

Low importance	9%
Medium	44%
High	47%

However current levels of household investment is low - 89% have not so far not invested

There is strong support for community initiatives – 92% of respondents, although given the above figure, it is not clear how much individuals would be prepared to spend i.e. how strong is the support?

Crime and Safety

3.3.1 Do you think Crime in Porlock Vale is increasing, about the same, decreasing?

Perceptions on crime levels are very different from figures provided by the Police, which suggest crime is falling:

Crime increasing	35%
Crime same	63%
Crime falling	2%

3.3.2 How concerned are you about Crime and Safety?

This is reflected in relatively high levels of concern in what is a low crime area:

	Porlock	S&MW
High concern	37%	23%
Medium	51%	47%
Low	12%	30%

3.3.3 Have any members of your household experienced the following over the last 3 years within Porlock Vale?

Over the last 3 years figures would suggest the following levels of crime experienced by households:

	Porlock	S&MW
Anti Social Behaviour	130	36
Vandalism - Private	70	16
Vandalism - Public	70	18
Car Crime	48	14
Drunken disorder	46	12
Theft	20	2
Burglary	16	10
Drug abuse	10	4
Mugging	4	0

This pattern is reflected in respondents' areas of concern. However it should be noted that the number of people concerned about an area of crime is between 3 and 4 times the number of households who have experienced the problem.

3.3.4 *What areas are you most concerned about?*

Based on the same extrapolation, the numbers of households in Porlock concerned about a particular crime area are:

Anti Social	452
Vandalism - Public	236
Vandalism - Private	214
Drunken disorder	198
Burglary	172
Drug Abuse	168
Mugging	78
Theft	54
Shoplifting	26

These are high figures given the total number of inhabited households is 689.
Note – most respondents marked multiple categories.

3.3.5 *Are you a member of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?*

The high level of concern on crime is however not reflected in local support for Neighbourhood Watch – only 29% being members of a scheme.

3.3.6 *Have you called the police over the last 3 years regarding any incidents?*

3.3.7 *If so, were you satisfied with their response?*

3.3.8 *If no, what were you dissatisfied with?*

3.3.9 *Do you think we get adequate service from the Police?*

About 22% of households report that they have contacted the Police over the last 3 years. Of these the level of satisfaction with the Police response was disappointing – 40% were dissatisfied, which given the generally high levels of satisfaction reported throughout the survey stands out as a very high figure.

Of those that expressed a general view the following proportions are dissatisfied with our Police service:

	Porlock	S&MW
Presence	72%	59%
Response	61%	53%
Action	63%	48%

Many individual comments were received which give some indication of the reasons for the disappointing survey response. There is a clear desire for a stronger and more visible police presence, which is perceived as due to limited resources and the low priority given to our area. The central call centre is disliked; it is seen as remote and unresponsive with little understanding of our area. There are problems with slow response or a failure to respond and several respondents report poor attitude in some cases. Finally several replies reported poor or no communications after an event.

3.4 Housing

Housing Need

The data in this section is probably unreliable and understates housing need. As the survey was sent to households in the Parishes, it only captures need from those that wish to move or find separate accommodation. Those that have failed to find any housing here but want to live in Porlock are not captured by this survey.

3.4.1 *How many in your household are finding difficulty in obtaining suitable housing?*

3.4.1a *What type of housing are they seeking?*

Our data has identified that around 66 people have a housing need with the proportions looking for different types as follows:

Housing Association/Council rental properties	38%
Private sector rental	12%
Affordable 'Shared Ownership' housing	12%
Open Market housing	15%
Mix of the above	8%
Warden	15%

3.4.2 *Do you think more housing should be provided?*

3.4.2a *If yes, what type of housing should be the priority?*

3.4.3 *Where should it be provided?*

3.4.4 *What is your attitude to holiday/second homes?*

3.4.5 *Do you have any additional comments regarding this section?*

There is strong support for more housing:

More	33%
Limited	55%
None	12%

provided this is limited and targeted at enabling local families to move to or remain in the village

This is reflected in the type of housing people think should be provided:

Housing Association	33%
Shared Ownership	28%
Mix	28%
Warden	6%
Private Rental	3%
Open Market	2%

Strong preference is to provide through infill (50%) or conversion of industrial/agricultural buildings (42%) rather than Greenfield (8%)

A lot of negative comments were received regarding second homes – 42% against, 56% think they are a fact of life and only 2% are in favour. Comments show a widely held view that second homes should at a minimum pay full council tax.

3.5 Health & Care

3.5.1 *Do you have a health problem or disability that affects your everyday living?*

Extrapolating returns suggests we have over 280 people in the Parish with health problems or disabilities that impact their everyday life – around 14% of residents, a figure that would be higher than most communities.

Returns suggest that only 70 of this number are receiving full or part time care, whether at home or residential which seems low. Of those receiving care, 75% are satisfied with the support being provided.

The data on support services is hard to interpret as our questionnaire was not as clear as it could have been on this point – i.e. are these services people are receiving or services they would like to receive and don't currently.

3.5.2 *Do you need access to care services?*

3.5.3 *What aspects of care services that you receive could be improved?*

3.5.4 *Are there any support services which would enable you to retain your independence in your own home?*

3.5.5 *Are you providing care for a member of your household?*

3.5.6 *If you are a carer, are you getting the support you need?*

Based on our standard projection, numbers identifying a need for each service type are:

Personal care	38
Housework	62
Shopping	36
Gardening	72
Transport	43
Meals	26

(Note – many identified more than one service.)

Around 50 people report that they are providing care and 75% are satisfied with the level of support they are receiving.

Further work was undertaken to understand the level and nature of needs for support services and the extent to which they are currently met. This has not identified any significant unmet need.

3.5.7 Are you satisfied with access to Health Facilities and Services?

There was a very positive response to medical services, with one big exception:

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	% Satisfied
Doctor Day	449	12	97%
Doctor Out of Hours	147	98	60%
Nurse Surgery	378	1	100%
Nurse Home	54	2	98%
Consultants	215	25	90% *
Hospitals	270	33	89% *
Dental	311	51	86%
Chiropody	120	20	86%
Opticians	333	9	97%
Pharmacy	443	1	100%

* The major issue is the access to Taunton etc. rather than quality of service received

3.5.8 Have you required out of hours medical services over the last 3 years?

3.5.9 Were you satisfied with speed/quality of response?

3.5.10 Have you required emergency medical assistance over the last 3 years?

3.5.11 Were you satisfied with speed/quality of response?

There is a high degree of dissatisfaction with out of hours services reflected as well in text comments received – major problems are remoteness, variable service and delays. The patient requirement is clear – out of hours access to local doctors.

Nearly 30% of those that had called out of hours services in the last 3 years (about 248 households) were dissatisfied with the service received – many now avoid its use and drive straight to hospital in order to bypass a service they don't trust.

This contrasts strongly with Emergency Cover – here about the same number of calls resulted in an 83% satisfaction rating which given our remoteness is exceptional.

3.5.12 How confidence are you in access to out of hours and emergency medical support?

The bias of confidence in out of hours and emergency services is negative:

Very confident	13%	Reasonably	64%	Not confident	23%
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Comments received give a picture of the reasons behind some of the satisfaction ratings. In particular:

- there is a very strong desire to return to out of hours provided by local doctors. The current system is disliked and not trusted, too remote, too slow, too bureaucratic and too impersonal
- many avoid out of hours services by driving direct to A&E
- strong desire to retain and where possible increase services in Minehead
- concerns at difficulty, time and cost of visits to Taunton
- strong support for Air Ambulance

3.6 Transport and Parking

3.6.1 What are your main modes of transport within the local area?

The popularity of different modes of transport is:

	Porlock	S&MW
Car	49%	58%
Walking	26%	20%
Bus	18%	15%
Bicycle	3%	6%
Slinky bus	2%	1%
Motorbike	1%	0%
Mobility scooter	1%	0%

The figure that stands out is the low use of the Slinky Bus – is that because it's not providing what people want or is not well enough understood?

3.6.2 How often do you use public transport?

Public transport is used by a high proportion of the population - nearly 60% but for most is not the main form of transport. Frequency breakdown shows:

	Porlock	S&MW
Daily	6%	14%
Weekly	13%	9%
Monthly	6%	6%
Occasionally	75%	71%

3.6.3 How do you rate public transport?

3.6.4 Are there any improvements you would like to see? (e.g. Routes/Timings/Connections)

Satisfaction levels vary by Parish:

	Porlock	S&MW
Good	22%	6%
Satisfied	66%	18%
Poor	12%	66%

The main causes of dissatisfaction from text comments are:

- lack of services to Allerford and Bossington
- lack of evening/weekend services to/from Minehead
- connections and lack of direct services to Taunton
- no train services from Minehead

3.6.5 *Where do you normally park your vehicle overnight?*

The pattern of residential parking is:

	Porlock	S&MW
Own property	66%	76%
Residents' car park	6%	8%
On the Road	13%	3%
Off Road	9%	6%
Public Car Park	6%	8%

3.6.6 *Do you have a daytime parking problem?*

3.6.7 *What improvements, if any, would you like to see for residents' parking?*

Relatively few problems are reported regarding day time parking:

	Porlock	S&MW
Frequently	6%	1%
Occasionally	30%	32%
Rarely	64%	67%

However written comments suggest pockets of problems in certain areas and a desire for more residents' parking in the Village – particularly to free space for visitors.

3.6.8 *What do you think of arrangements for visitor parking?*

3.6.9 *How important is visitor parking to the life of the village?*

Over 80% of respondents think that visitor parking is very important for the health of our community, because of our dependence on tourism and the need to keep our local shops and services.

Rating for our current arrangements is mixed:

	Porlock	S&MW
Excellent	2%	36%
Good	26%	6%
Reasonable	51%	16%
Poor	18%	26%
Very poor	3%	16%

This suggests that there is a need to review whether and how we can improve this key village facility, especially in Porlock.

Main criticisms from written responses are:

- lack of visitor parking
- lack of clear signs/direction e.g. central car park is hidden if you don't know where it is
- cost of parking
- lack of enough free shoppers' parking
- if it's difficult to stop or unclear then people will drive on

- 3.6.10 How do you rate pedestrian access and safety in Porlock Vale?**
- 3.6.11 Given the layout of the village, are there any actions that would improve the situation?**
- 3.6.12 How concerned are you with road safety in the area?**
- 3.6.13 What are your main areas of concern?**
- 3.6.14 What should be done to improve safety?**
- 3.6.15 Are there any particular roads/locations where you would like to see action taken?**

There are significant levels of concern regarding pedestrian access and safety. This is reflected in the large number of comments and suggestions on this topic. Ratings are:

	Porlock	S&MW
Good	13%	1%
Acceptable	64%	33%
Poor	23%	66%

The acceptable figure is inflated by those that think there isn't much we can do about it given the layout of the village.

Safety is a significant concern, with proportions being: Areas of concern are relatively evenly split:

	Porlock	S&MW
Very concerned	20%	19%
Concerned	38%	27%
Slightly	32%	38%
Not concerned	10%	16%

In villages	38%	14%
Country lanes	32%	33%
Main roads	30%	53%

Suggested actions are:

Speed reductions	47%	Warning signs	27%	Road improvements	26%
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With respect to speed reductions, many comments say that although the current limits are broadly OK, the problem is lack of enforcement.

In the written comments there are pages of specific suggestions on how to improve pedestrian and road safety particularly within Porlock and on the A39. These require careful analysis to identify what can be done, bearing in mind that high priority needs to be given to this area given our demographics ie high proportion of elderly and residents with mobility constraints.

The main areas of concern are:

- A39 Porlock to Minehead
- Redway
- Villes Lane to High Street
- Wider pavements in Porlock
- Porlock High Street
- Sharp bend in West Porlock
- Road to Porlock Weir
- Hawkcombe/Parsons Street
- Dunster Steep
- Villes Lane junction
- Ship to Post Office
- Pedestrian safety Porlock Hill

3.7 Employment and Business

Business and employment is a key area of community concern. It was decided therefore to set up a Parish Plan sub group to look at this area in more detail. The key concern is that maintaining and enhancing our commercial 'core' is essential to the overall health and vitality of the community. Without it the danger is that we will continue to drift towards being a retirement zone with consequent impact on a host of local facilities and the overall atmosphere of the Vale. There is a strong desire to remain a vibrant, working community. An additional concern is that if local facilities are lost then this will have a significant impact on the elderly and those with mobility problems who would find it difficult to access the services they need.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that our tourist business is at best flat and we have over the last few years seen around 25% of local shops close including key facilities like the bakery that had been in business since the 19th century.

Whilst many actions can and will be taken locally, many aspects of business and employment are positively or negatively influenced by other organisations i.e. Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park. There is a strong local view that in this regard there is significant room for improvement. It is not clear that these organisations give adequate priority to economic well being, the efforts and investment in promoting Exmoor as a tourist destination is seen as weak, fragmented and under funded. In addition the area suffers from 'Transport Poverty' which is a significant disincentive to both tourism and business. We have very poor, slow and dangerous road connections, no rail links and no ferry services to South Wales all of which would contribute to our business and economic success.

Transport poverty has two impacts on employment. It is a disincentive for businesses to base themselves in West Somerset and in addition it restricts the ability of local people to access employment opportunities in surrounding areas e.g. Taunton where many of the higher skill/higher wage opportunities exist.

Unless the fundamental constraints to our economy are addressed efforts at economic regeneration through skills improvement, increased facilities etc are likely to have only minor impact and investment in activities identified as 'sustainable' or 'carbon neutral' will again have little effect on real employment opportunities.

3.7.1 Which category do you or any family members come into?

The overall pattern of employment is as follows:

Seeking employment	2%
In full-time employment	14%
In part-time employment	11%
Self employed	12%
In a training scheme	1%
Not seeking employment	7%
Retired	52%
Long term illness/disabled	1%

3.7.2 *Where is your place of work?*

Within the active categories work locations are:

Porlock Vale	36%
National Park	15%
Home	15%
Minehead	18%
Outside area	16%

3.7.3 *If you are looking for a job - What are the main constraints to finding appropriate work opportunities?*

Data obtained on issues for those looking for work was limited and therefore of questionable value. It did not identify any particular barriers that we need to address other than generally increasing all categories of employment opportunities.

3.7.4 *Employment opportunities*

The general feeling from survey returns is that it is key to our future to provide a good range of employment opportunities:

Very important	65%	Important	33%	Not important	2%
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The fear otherwise is that we will continue to lose young families and increasingly become a retirement community with consequent impact on facilities and services.

3.8 Community Activities

3.8.1 Are you satisfied with the range of local sports/leisure/social activities?

3.8.2 Which community sports/leisure/social activities do you participate in?

3.8.3 What new community sports/leisure/social activities would you like to see established?

3.8.4 Are you able to participate in those that interest you?

A high proportion of households appear to participate in local activities and overall levels of satisfaction are:

	Porlock	S&MW
Very satisfied	35%	13%
Moderately	49%	55%
Dissatisfied	16%	32%

The major reason for dissatisfaction is the recent decision by West Somerset Council to close Aquasplash. There has been a very strong and broad 'backlash' against West Somerset Council. A Swimming Pool is seen not as an optional leisure facility but as a core service, particularly given where we live. It is seen as essential to ensure children learn to swim and as a key exercise facility for the elderly to help them preserve fitness and mobility.

Most respondents (75%) report that they are able to participate in activities of their choice but there are concerns regarding timing of events for those who need evening/weekend activity

3.8.5 Are you satisfied with available opportunities for pre-school children?

3.8.6 If you are dissatisfied, what would you like to see established?

Usage of Pre School facilities was relatively limited, with satisfaction being:

Very Satisfied	36%	Satisfied	56%	Dissatisfied	8%
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3.8.7 Do you think sufficient youth activities are available?

3.8.8 If not, what specific activities would you like to see established?

3.8.9 What priority should be given to youth activities?

There is a strong view that we do not do enough for Youth within the Parish – 71% think we do not offer sufficient facilities/activities.

In terms of investment, 45% would give greater priority to this group than other age groups with 55% believing they should receive the same focus as others.

Written comments also strongly suggest that this is a key area of need that the community needs to address, although suggestions are varied e.g. youth club, drop in centre, organised activities etc etc.

3.9 Community Facilities & Services

3.9.1 Which community facilities do you use and how satisfied are you with these facilities?

3.9.2 How could any of these facilities be improved? Are there any additional facilities which you think are needed?

The following table shows the relative use of and satisfaction with each Community facility:

	No. of Responses	Dissatisfied%	Satisfied%	Very Satisfied%
Visitor Centre	314	0	35	65
Village Hall	312	1	46	53
Library	239	6	58	36
Porlock Rec	224	6	66	28
Museum	209	1	62	37
Lovelace	64	12	65	23
Healeys	36	2	48	51
Allerford Hall	38	15	61	24
Allerford Rec	20	10	65	25

This shows both high usage and high satisfaction with most local facilities.

The data and comments received suggest that action is needed with respect to the Lovelace facility. Usage is relatively low and satisfaction, although good, lags other facilities. Comments suggest the facility is not well understood, there are queries over when it is open, hours, equipment etc.

There are also some suggestions to improve the library service and to encourage greater use to ensure the facility is maintained.

3.9.3 Dogs in recreation grounds

Most questionnaire respondents had a view on this issue, 340 replies. About a third of respondents were dog owners.

The overall balance of views is:

	Porlock	S&MW
No dogs	34%	32%
On leads	25%	20%
Limited areas	28%	35%
Unlimited	4%	0%
Special events only	9%	13%

The No Dogs figure understates the proportion of replies supporting this option as people were allowed to pick more than one option e.g. limited areas and on leads. However even with this caveat the majority are not in favour of a total dog ban but are clearly in favour of keeping dogs out of the key areas where children play and sports facilities.

The current option of allowing dogs in limited areas only appears to fit with the views expressed in this survey.

3.9.4 How satisfied with you with local community services?

Feedback on Community Services was as follows:

Porlock

	No. Responses	Dissatisfied%	Satisfied%	V Satisfied%
Refuse	325	5	70	25
Recycling	323	19	59	22
Street cleaning	316	3	51	46
Toilets	190	32	61	7
Fire/Co Responders	187	1	62	37
Coastguard	116	0	72	28
Adult Education	67	25	66	9
Primary School	44	2	16	82
Senior School	31	19	65	16

Selworthy & Minehead Without

	No. Responses	Dissatisfied%	Satisfied%	V Satisfied%
Refuse	21	0	43	57
Recycling	30	7	30	63
Street cleaning	28	0	36	64
Toilets	28	7	36	57
Fire/Co Responders	24	38	8	54
Coastguard	19	16	16	68
Adult Education	6	16	84	0
Primary School	7	0	28	72
Senior School	6	0	67	33

Particular concerns and suggestions raised in written comments include:

- Refuse, the need to take refuse to roadside particularly for the elderly
- Recycling, issues strongly felt are lack of central and home recycling facilities for plastics, garden waste etc
- Street cleaning, issues are away from High Street
- Toilets, strong feedback on cost, loss of Parsons Street, no easily accessible central facility. This includes suggestion to open toilets at the Recreation Ground during the day
- Adult Education concerns are: lack of facilities in Porlock + range/access/timing problems in Minehead
- Senior School, some references to poor management/communication

In general satisfaction levels are very good, with the Primary School being outstanding.

3.9.6 How important is it to preserve local shopping facilities and services?

3.9.7 Do you regularly use local shops and services?

96% of respondents believe that our range of local shops is very important to the health of the village.

Usage of all shops/services is claimed to be very high. Actual figures are:

Post Office	96%
Pharmacy	96%
Hardware	91%
Supermarkets	86%
Butcher	75%
Other Shops	75%
Bakery (now closed)	68%
Pubs	57%
Restaurants	48%
Garage	41%
Cafes	39%

These figures are much higher than reported by traders and therefore probably reflect 'occasional' rather than regular use. Few reasons were given for not using – main ones being perceived relative cost and parking.

In terms of new facilities required there were many suggestions – the main ones, not in priority order being:

- Hairdressers (now open)
- Green grocers
- Fish shop
- Bank
- Dry cleaners
- Shoe repairs

From comments received and from the work of the Business and Employment Group, the following needs/ideas were identified:

- need for better signage on entry to Porlock 'selling' what we have to offer
- need for better and more visible visitor parking
- costs of parking e.g. compared to Minehead or Tesco
- more active promotion of Porlock as a tourist destination, both locally and via ENP
- improved shoppers car parking
- investing in facilities and support for new businesses e.g. craft/light industrial
- farmers market
- create an Exmoor Outdoor Activity Centre
- provide facilities for/attract businesses where our location could be an asset e.g. Internet, Call Centre
- a local business directory to show-case what we have to offer

4 Action Plan

The issues identified during steps 1 and 2 were reviewed by the Parish Plan Team in order to identify the actions required and priorities.

Priorities were identified as either:

Priority 1: action required as soon as practical

Priority 2: action required but will, in general, be deferred until top priority actions are addressed

4.1 Priority 1 Actions

Key	PC	=	Parish Council
	WSC	=	West Somerset Council
	ENP	=	Exmoor National Park
	SCC	=	Somerset County Council
	PCT	=	Primary Care Trust

The following actions were defined as priority 1.
There is no significance in the order within this category.

To be progressed with

1. Recycling of plastics/garden waste	WSC
2. Improved access to beach - including signs	ENP
3. Launch an anti dog fouling campaign	PPC
4. More affordable homes for local families	ENP/SCC/WSC
5. Improve Out of Hours Medical services	PCT
6. Maximise services at Minehead hospital	PCT
7. Investigate care needs of elderly	PPC
8. Provide bus services for Allerford/Bossington	SCC
9. Improve residents' parking	PPC/WSC
10. Improve visitor/shoppers' parking – including costs	PPC/WSC
11. Ensure High St parking is used for quick turn round	Police
12. Improve safety A39 Minehead/Porlock	SCC/ENP
13. Improve pedestrian access/safety to/in Porlock/Weir	WSC
14. Continue funding of current facilities (Visitor Centre, Library etc)	PPC
15. Re-launch Lovelace Centre	PPC
16. Set up Youth Liaison Group	PPC
17. Campaign for lower business rates	PPC
18. Set up a local business directory	PPC
19. Set up a summer event/late shopping	PPC

Priority 2 Actions

20. Improve footpath access for those with mobility problems	ENP
21. Open cycle route Allerford, Bossington, Porlock	ENP
22. Improve Police visibility/presence	Police
23. Get more accurate data on long term housing needs	ENP
24. Support Air Ambulance	PPC
25. Alleviate travel problems with Musgrove	PCT
26. Weekend/evening bus services	SCC
27. Re-launch Slinky Bus	SCC
28. Public Transport access problems (mobility constraints)	SCC
29. Better coordination of bus timetables	SCC
30. Better bus connections to Taunton	SCC

31. Improve Porlock toilet facilities	WSC
32. Investigate alternative swimming facilities	PPC
33. Renovate Allerford Village Hall	PC
34. Investigate use of school minibus for Youth outings	Youth Group
35. Review Porlock Web Site	PC
36. Marsh area as a nature reserve	ENP
37. Feasibility study for Renewable energy	PC
38. Re-launch Neighbourhood Watch	Police
39. Improve Police response to calls	Police
40. Better communication of actual crime statistics	Police
41. Reopen train services from Minehead to Taunton	SCC
42. Better marking of Exmoor	WSC/ENP
43. More, better marketing of Porlock	PC
44. More, better entry and direction signs	PC
45. Improve transport connections	SCC
46. Promote cycling/cycling trails	PC/ENP

Acknowledgements

Parish Plan Team:

Chairman: Alan Wright
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Chris Bulpin	Jenny Jones	Denise Sage
Tina Chiswell	Malcolm McCoy	Malcolm Sage
Jackie Cox	Christine Miles	Penny Webber
Jane Dyer	Ann Piper	Roger Webber
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