

Poynton with Worth Parish Plan

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A vision of our community by the people of

Poynton with Worth.

Published by the Poynton Parish Plan sub committee supported by



and Macclesfield and Cheshire councils.

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Foreword

A Parish Plan gives the whole community an opportunity to consider, discuss and to set down their aspirations for the future. It can influence key decision makers and fund holders and provides a basis for local action.

The original idea behind a Parish Plan for Poynton with Worth followed the Council achieving Quality Council status. The Parish Council is often kept busy with day-to-day issues and its statutory responsibilities. However we need to plan actively for the future of the village. Developing the Parish Plan is an ideal opportunity to ensure that the future of our community is healthy, enjoyable and vibrant.

The Countryside Agency and Poynton with Worth Parish Council have funded this work. Both Cheshire and Macclesfield Councils have assisted in the process. We have consulted widely in developing this plan, and since February 2005 over 4000 individuals have contributed their views, along with groups and organisations that have particular insights into various aspects of our village life. All these have helped shape the plan that is now presented. Everyone involved has given their enthusiasm, time and expertise. We would like to thank all who have contributed to developing this plan.

Poynton is in a privileged position, with the ability to retain the best qualities of a village, on the edge of beautiful countryside and a National Park, whilst benefiting from the proximity to major economic and cultural centres, main line rail links and Manchester Airport.

Overwhelmingly people love to live in Poynton and there is far more right with the village than wrong. We therefore need to protect and maintain the good things, whilst addressing those areas that need improvement. At the same time, we must recognise that Poynton is not immune to any of the problems that face today's society.

Our work has enabled us to develop plans to do that focusing on six main streams where action is seen to be needed. A Safer Village; Youth Engagement; Transport and Traffic; The Village Aspect; Community and Family Life; Accommodation.

From developing this agenda for action we must now move to creating a framework for action that encourages and allows each and every one of us to play an active part to ensure that the good things we value about the village are preserved whilst working together to address areas of weakness, thus together we can engender an environment in which all can thrive.

The village has a rich history and heritage of which we are rightly proud. It has been a place that combined innovation with strong community heart. As we move forward into the 21st century, we can do so with confidence, embracing the challenges of the future, while retaining the best of the past.

Poynton with Worth Parish Council will champion the Plan and, where possible, seek support, funding and assistance from partners including Macclesfield Borough Council and Cheshire County Council.

We commend this Plan to you and now invite your participation by joining us to ensure that the plan is put into action.

Mike Beanland
Chairman,
Parish Plan Steering Group

Roger West
Chairman
Poynton Parish Council

Introduction to the Parish Plan

1 Background to Parish Plans

Parish Plans are a Government-supported initiative (delivered through the Countryside Agency's Vital Villages campaign) aiming to give those living in villages a way of deciding for themselves how they would like their village to develop over the next five years.

Specifically it:

- Reflects the views of all sections of the community;
- Identifies which features and local characteristics people value;
- Identifies local problems and opportunities;
- Spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future;
- Prepares a plan of action to achieve this vision.

In providing a vision of how they would like their village to be, a plan may be foundational for other applications or local action, but the plan cannot override adopted planning policy.

The Plan includes an Action Plan to address local needs and will contribute to:

- Local development plans;
- Community strategies developed by Local Strategic Partnerships;
- Market Town Health checks;
- Applications for grant aid.

The outcomes of our plan may be incorporated into Macclesfield Borough Council's Village Design Statement (VDS) for Poynton.

2 Development of the Poynton with Worth plan

Developing the plan began with a first discussion in February 2004. A Steering Group was formed shortly afterwards of people who were interested in helping lead the process. The available demographic information from the 2001 census has been analysed. We have consulted widely within the village via discussion groups, a questionnaire and through input from groups that have particular insights and interest in the community, including, amongst others the police, the Residents Association, the High School and the churches. We estimate that over 4,000 of the 15,000 people who live in Poynton with Worth have given their views and been involved in the development of the Plan. We are grateful to all who have contributed.

For details of the comprehensive consultation process please see Appendix 1.

3 Communication

We have kept people informed of our existence and activities with articles in the Poynton Post. The Minutes of every steering committee are reported to the Parish Council.

To save cost and paper we do not propose to print large numbers of the report and the consultation. For those who wish to see the results of the questionnaire these are available on the website www.poyntonweb.co.uk or from the Information Centre at the Civic Hall.

The detailed action plans to support the proposals will be living documents that evolve as we move forward, so we will also publish them on our website www.poyntonweb.co.uk rather than in this document.

4 The proposals

The proposals resulting from the research and consultation have been organised into six key streams and specific objectives for each of these areas together with actions needed to achieve them have been developed and are summarised below and detailed in appendices.

Some issues raised in the plan are easier to address than others and there are potential conflicts and trade-offs between different actions. This plan draws together a range of issues, some of which are already being handled by the local council and others which have been identified through the development process.

5 Achieving the Plan

The Parish Plan Steering Group believes all the proposals in this Plan are realistic but that they can only be achieved through concerted community effort. Some are clearly more complex or longer term than others.

Implementing solutions to the proposals will require coordinating new with existing initiatives or resources. Several potential sources of funding have been identified and we will be working to find others.

In some cases volunteers are required who are prepared to lead the necessary activities, working together with the Parish Council, other groups and individuals within the village to get things done.

We would also be delighted to hear from anyone prepared to help us with any of the proposals in the Plan – please get in touch with anyone on the Parish Plan Steering Group via the Parish Council office.

6 Times change

We recognise that the world does not stand still and nor do the population and needs of the village. Some elements of this Parish Plan will inevitably go out of date or will be overtaken by events. The Parish Council will champion the Plan, and monitor and respond to any significant developments that are assessed as necessary by members of the Parish Plan team. In the longer term, an informed and active Parish Council should provide the means for responding to the changing needs of the village community.

7 Parish Plan Monitoring Group

The role of the Parish Plan Steering Group will evolve into a Parish Plan Monitoring Group which will ensure that:

- 1) the recommendations in the Parish Plan are pursued;
- 2) the Plan is reviewed at appropriate intervals and modified, as necessary, in the light of changing circumstances;
- 3) consideration is given to extending its scope beyond five years.

Key findings about Poynton

Overwhelmingly we love Poynton and enjoy living here. There is far more that is right with Poynton than is wrong. We therefore need to protect and maintain the good things, whilst addressing those areas that need improvement. Proposals to do this are outlined on the following pages.

There are all kinds of activities in the Parish that flourish almost unnoticed. Success and stability in such areas is not accidental, but is generally attributable to the work of committed individuals and groups. They deserve to be congratulated, as do the volunteers who devote so much time and effort to helping the old, the young and many, many others within the Parish and beyond.

Key things we need to protect and maintain

- ❖ The village environment
- ❖ The amenities of a town in a village atmosphere
- ❖ The Green Belt
- ❖ Access to the surrounding environment, canal network and Peak District.
- ❖ The footpath network and Middlewood Way.
- ❖ The dynamics of a bustling community
- ❖ A mixed population with all age groups represented
- ❖ Low levels of crime
- ❖ Our existing facilities
- ❖ The shopping areas with a variety of outlets including two post offices
- ❖ Very good primary schools and the High School
- ❖ The pubs, play groups, play parks, Civic Hall & Churches
- ❖ Other amenities and activities that add to our enjoyment of the village
- ❖ Sporting, music, arts and other activities
- ❖ Location and transport links
- ❖ Free car parking at Civic Centre

Key things we would like to improve

- ❖ Speed control
- ❖ Management of volume of traffic
- ❖ Reduction of anti-social parking
- ❖ Environmental pollution
- ❖ Accommodation for young people and first time buyers
- ❖ Accommodation for older people including sheltered accommodation
- ❖ A greater visible police presence
- ❖ Greater community participation and sense of community
- ❖ Effective communication of activities for children and young people
- ❖ Reduction of litter, dog mess and graffiti
- ❖ Reduction of the sense of fear; increase in confidence to walk unaccompanied in all areas
- ❖ Recycling facilities
- ❖ Development of life skills for all members of the community
- ❖ Facilities for young people and an increase in their engagement in community life
- ❖ Quality and appearance of paths and pavements
- ❖ Variety of shops

Whilst this research has largely focused on those who reside in the parish it is important to recognise that those who make up the life of Poynton are drawn from a much wider constituency. For example, many Poynton club and society members live outside Poynton; children and staff travel in to school in Poynton.

People who live outside Poynton become a part of its life through: leisure, clubs and societies, restaurants, bars, sports, worship, education (adult and children), friends and relatives, work. The make up of the life of Poynton varies according to time of day; from day to day and season to season.

Poynton does not exist in isolation from the rest of the country or the world and is influenced and affected by issues, attitudes and trends that affect society as a whole. This is especially true in our global and multi-media age.

A vision for Poynton with Worth

A safe, thriving, and caring community, that values and respects all its residents regardless of their age or circumstances, and in which all are encouraged to play a part, large or small, in Poynton's continued well-being, evolution and success.

Guiding Principles

- celebrating and valuing all that is good about Poynton;
- listening and respecting others' views and opinions about the village, regardless of how they may differ from our own;
- striving hard to achieve a common purpose and direction, and create a sense of being proud of Poynton;
- encouraging a safer and more inclusive community, with less intimidation, real or perceived, and working to counteract anything that prevents this;
- working together to promote the well-being of our community and to address those issues that undermine or detract from this.

An Agenda for Action

Leading for change: many people are willing to contribute to village life if provided with leadership, encouragement and a framework that enables greater community participation.

A Safer Village: residents should feel safe in their own homes and free to come and go without fear, whether the cause is real or perceived. Anti-social behaviour detracts from all our lives and must be combated.

Youth Engagement: young people are often criticised for their behaviour but few viable solutions offered. We wish to work with them to give them a voice, celebrate their contribution to life and enable them to achieve their full potential.

Traffic and Transport: good traffic and transport infrastructures and consequent ease of access are vital to the future success of Poynton.

The Village Aspect: "You only have one chance to create a first impression" and effort is needed to improve the aesthetic quality of the village; maintaining the beauty of the environment, ensuring the cleanliness of our surroundings and improving physical features and amenities.

Community and Family Life: with a growing trend towards single living, lone parent families and a tendency to isolation, individualism and relationship breakdown, we need to work especially hard to create a sense of community and belonging, in which all are valued and encouraged to play a part.

Accommodation: young people often feel driven out of Poynton due to high property prices; other people have changing housing needs – more effort and innovation is needed to create and make available appropriate and affordable housing for local people, whilst preserving the Green Belt against development.

Summary of key proposals

- ◆ **Leading for change**, providing communication and coordination
 - Promote the vision for Poynton and the Plan so that all feel encouraged to contribute to achieving the aims.
 - Provide direction and coherence to various initiatives and efforts towards fulfilling the plan.
 - Establish a consultation with the Parish and District Councils to provide support services to individuals and organisations within Poynton, for instance:
 - To be a source of information and an active communicator about resources, services and activities of value to people in the village
 - To help co-ordinate activities involving more than one organisation
 - To help match volunteers to needs within the village (e.g. coordinating a pool of volunteers to promote cleanliness and protection of the environment)
 - To provide information about and encourage the use and protection of our footpath network and public open spaces such as the Poynton Pool, parks and the Green Belt area.
 - Celebrate the achievements of individuals, groups and the whole community in Poynton.
 - Take a lead in recognising, acknowledging and initiating responses to problems and difficulties faced by individuals and by the community.
 - Learn from and share good practice with other communities beyond Poynton.

- ◆ **A Safer Village**
 - Promote sustained effort regarding the village's appearance, cleanliness and upkeep.
 - Work to reduce the antisocial and criminal behaviour and sense of fear within Poynton.
 - Maintain a visible police presence and promote community relationships with police and other authorities.
 - Co-ordinate and extend community actions such as Homewatch, Speedwatch etc.
 - Support initiatives to develop a greater sense of community across peer groups.
 - Improve communication to public regarding positive aspects and initiatives regarding crime and order issues.
 - Work to combat anti-social motoring through education and enforcement.
 - Support initiatives to raise awareness and to control drug and alcohol abuse.

- ◆ **Youth Engagement**
 - Develop a strategic approach and framework to engage with young people and their families in Poynton.
 - Re-establish and re-launch youth leaders and workers forum and support those working with young people.
 - Investigate the possibility of a youth forum.
 - Investigate the potential role and contribution of detached youth work and youth workers in the village.
 - Promote existing facilities for young people more effectively and investigate additional or alternative facilities more appropriate to requirements.
 - Develop plans for combating anti-social behaviour by involving family members, with help from and agencies and other members of the community.
 - Ensure that young people facing issues identified have ready and appropriate access to support and help to address difficulties.

◆ **Traffic and Transport**

- Work with the relevant authorities to improve safety in parts of the village by:
 - Enforcement of the existing speed limit,
 - Effective control of illegal parking,
 - Extension of the speed limited areas, particularly Park Lane, Chester Road and London Road and Middlewood Road,
 - Exploration of traffic calming measures.
- Increase Speedwatch initiative.
- Improve in Rail links and 191 Bus service to Manchester.
- Seek fare subsidies in line with other local arrangements
- Continue to liaise with everyone concerned with the implementation of the new By-Pass.

◆ **The Village Aspect**

- Work with relevant groups and individuals in the village to protect the beauty and rural nature of Poynton whilst responding to the changing needs of the village community over time.
- Support improvements to pavements, street furniture and lighting in all areas.
- Actively support and encourage the long-term success of our existing facilities, particularly the schools, play groups, shopping areas.
- Promote disability access provision.
- Increase recycling and other ecologically friendly measures in Poynton.
- Support initiatives such as Poynton in Bloom and other neighbourhood based programmes to encourage all to work together to enhance the aesthetic quality of Poynton.

◆ **Community and Family Life**

- Support initiatives to build community.
- Stimulate the recognition of having to work together.
- Nurture the achievement of excellence in the community both individually and corporately.
- Challenge complacency in our organisations and the village.
- Address issues regarding the feelings of isolation within the community.
- Support and promote provision of life skills training and mentoring.
- Ensure the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable in our community are recognised and addressed.
- Encourage a vision for Poynton to recognise its potential and to contribute to the wider world.

◆ **Accommodation**

- Work to achieve village support for some small, mixed housing development to provide affordable accommodation and small houses that might meet the needs of young people and families and older villagers wishing to move to a smaller more manageable home.
- Ensure there will be optimisation of land use and existing housing stock and further consultation with the village should the needs raised in the Housing Needs Survey by Macclesfield Council be confirmed.
- Defend the Green Belt against development and ensure that any new building is on previously used "brownfield" sites.
- Ensure that social housing and affordable housing is occupied by people who have a genuine and long standing link with Poynton.
- Promote on-going investigation and discussion of ways to address the tension between the desire to protect the Green Belt and requirements for affordable housing, for example, ensure development of brownfield sites in advance of other areas.
- Explore alternative funding and financial measures that may be adopted or promoted to address accessibility to affordable housing.
- Ensure implications of changing demographics are fully understood and addressed in future planning discussions.

A Safer Village

Background

1. The questionnaire probed several areas of potential concern in order to determine both the perception and reality of safety within Poynton. The conclusions drawn are therefore based both on objective measurement and the subjective responses. The results have also been compared to similar surveys performed by Cheshire Police and Macclesfield Borough Council.
2. All the surveys revealed a broadly similar set of results. Areas of concern can be summarised thus:
 - Personal safety
 - Visible policing
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Road safety
 - Visual and property crime (vandalism and theft)
3. The official statistics suggest that Poynton is one of the safest places to live in the County. However, there are many people who are impacted negatively by crime or the fear of crime; the reasons behind this apparent contradiction need to be examined.

Analyses

4. *Visible policing*
 - 4.1. Police effectiveness is, ultimately, measured against the absence of crime and not physical presence or responsiveness. However, the police statistics are based upon crime reported and logged. Nationally, according to the British Crime Survey, only about a third of low level 'nuisance' is reported. Locally Cheshire Police have also adopted policies to "damp down" the huge rise in demand that has occurred over the last 20 years. This increase is partly fuelled by the ease in reporting linked to the rise in mobile phone ownership. Police resources have not increased to the same extent and therefore need to be used more efficiently. For example: not responding to youth and property crime immediately, not logging incidents reported directly to a police officer, having an answer machine in order to contact your local officer, by splitting emergency reporting (999) from non urgent reporting. Cheshire Police have stated: "Non emergency reporting will be subject of incident reporting if it is required under the National Incident Recording Standards." They also claim (Dec 05) that: The reported crime figures are now more accurate than they ever have been."
 - 4.2. We believe that whilst such policies make sense for both the operational deployment of scarce resources and the management of police targets and measures, they impact negatively on both the statistics (under reporting) and public confidence. Thus, the contradiction of Poynton statistically being a safe place, but nearly 40% of the residents feeling that there are unsafe areas, particularly at night.
 - 4.3. The situation is exacerbated because the under reporting of crime in part justifies fewer police. Reporting crime therefore needs to be encouraged and the most significant encouragement is some form of response. When reporting only produces an incident number confidence will inevitably be eroded.
 - 4.4. The recent Cheshire Police reorganisation has resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of Police based in Poynton. Whilst on the face of things this may be regarded as detrimental, it has produced a greater focus on neighbourhood policing; not just responding and then withdrawing. (For example, Community Action Meetings; a dedicated village policeman; greater cooperation with the Parish Council).
 - 4.5. One of Poynton's many advantages is its favourable geographic location. However, this coupled with the absence of high crime statistics and the lack of police facilities has resulted in the rationalisation of the Police's administrative bases in other areas (Knutsford, Macclesfield, and Wilmslow). This has the effect of further reducing the numbers of police visible in the village. The responses to the

questionnaire strongly reinforced the demand for the presence of uniformed authority figures such as police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) or Wardens – even at additional cost. (c.f. Community Action Meeting, 4.4).

5. *Anti-social behaviour*

- 5.1. The fact that there is a large element (28%) of Poynton's population under the age of 24 years, and another element, nearly as large (24%) age 60 years and over, may militate against social interaction. Therefore cross generational engagement and positive control by the community may prove problematic. Some of the fear reported may be as a result of simply not knowing 'who is who'. Residents may feel that they have no control over a situation, such as tackling miscreant youths, because the youths are protected by anonymity and there will be a lack of response or support from the Police or neighbours. Young people may feel undervalued and disapproved of by a generation that does not understand their culture.
- 5.2. Much of the vandalism and youth gatherings happen during the hours of darkness. It is clear from the sites where these incidents generally occur that they often have either no lighting or are badly lit. Furthermore, they are usually in locations where members of the law abiding public are absent.
- 5.3. In readily identified hot spots it may be possible to improve the lighting. Ideas around peer policing and patrolling by the community and not just police presence have been tried and been found successful in other countries (e.g. Norway). Peer Policing can take several forms, for example: school children being encouraged to be responsible for the cleanliness of parts of the village; adults showing greater willingness to challenge anti-social behaviour rather than walking past and declaring it is all the responsibility of 'somebody'. Further consideration should be given to these forms of engagement and public participation as both a means of deterring crime and decreasing individuals' fear of crime. 'Evil will flourish when good men stand idly by' – after Burke.
- 5.4. It is both reassuring and acknowledged that the majority of Poynton's young people do behave not only in a responsible and considerate manner, but also contribute significantly in many aspects of community life. Despite this, there are overwhelming demands expressed in the parish plan questionnaire that "*the youth be taken off the streets*" and be given somewhere to 'hang out'.
- 5.5. Providing a location where young people can congregate and concentrate has not been proved to be beneficial. Preventing a concentration appears to have a greater impact on crime reduction (ODPM research; police use of dispersal orders). Should it be agreed to support proposals for a youth centric location then factors that need to be considered include: agreeing a suitable location given the possible detrimental effect on local house prices; determining ownership of potential locations; the location must be self policing (i.e. visible from at least one side to a road; needs to be illuminated; CCTV insurance; physical policing; cost of equipment; the legality of providing such a facility. (See Youth Engagement)

6. *Road safety*

- 6.1. High levels of car ownership combined with very limited space means that there will be a constant tension between the freedoms of the motorist and those of other road users and inhabitants. Managing the tensions is a sensitive issue and if handled badly can cause unwarranted conflict between the police and the public. Striking a balance yet applying the law consistently will be a challenge.
- 6.2. As a result of public consultation, particularly through the CAM process, speeding, anti-social driving and parking are already the focus of Parish and Police action. As a result of the questionnaire feedback it is clear that these initiatives need to be maintained.

7. *Visual crime*

- 7.1. It is well known that visual crime such as litter, graffiti and vandalism has a disproportionate effect on people's sense of safety and freedom.
- 7.2. Litter was ranked the 2nd most mentioned concern in the village questionnaire, and graffiti 4th. Paths and highway cleaning is performed by the Macclesfield Borough and County Councils. However,

across large parts of the village the cleaning regime is limited to a few times a year. The Parish Council employs a Lengthsman to perform emergency cleansing. Currently none of these operations seem capable of satisfying public demand; the public both cause the problem and demand that other agencies resolve it. Despite litter picks and education programmes this issue has not been resolved. Greater emphasis on enforcement is the next logical step.

- 7.3. Some of the graffiti has been in place for several years. In the past there has been no concerted effort to remove this criminal damage mainly because of issues of cost and ownership. Furthermore, some organisations ranging from local councils to private business have taken the view that removal is a wasted cost as the graffiti will return unless cleaning is accompanied by enforcement action.

8. *Drugs and alcohol*

- 8.1. Drug education was voted the 6th most desired improvement indicating that the anecdotal evidence of drug taking in Poynton is a well founded concern. This is a specialism and very much within the remit of the education authorities and other bodies with concern and expertise in this area. The policing of drug related crime is also a complex and specialist task. It is not proposed that the Parish Plan adopt either aspect as a target. We should focus on supporting in whatever way we can the groups that already exist to deal with these issues. (See Youth Engagement and Community and Family Life reports).
- 8.2. The legislation that liberalises the Licensing regime could impact the safety of Poynton. The new law in effect creates a night-time economy. Opinions vary as to the exact nature of the impact although the majority are agreed it is most likely to be a negative one. Given that the future state is not precisely known it would be unwise to commit to actions and the associated expenditure at this stage. It is better to await developments and deal with the particulars as they arise.

9. *Funding Crime Reduction*

- 9.1. During the last year there have been several local initiatives to address some of these issues e.g. PCSOs, graffiti removal. Sadly, with the exception of the PCSOs (1/3 funded by Cheshire Police) none of them have thus far received funding from other sources (e.g. MBC). The result is that monies have been raised from Poynton residents through the Council Tax, via the parish precept. This may not be a sustainable long term position. Therefore, in the majority of cases, future projects should be based on either low, or no, cost. Alternatively, funding must be secured from such sources as the Crime Reduction Partnership.

Conclusions

10. Lack of funding other than via the Precept limits the speed and ease by which future initiatives can be implemented. There is a high level of fear which is not commensurate with the actual level of reported crime. Individuals appear to be most influenced by the following:
 - 10.1. An absence of visible police officers or some other authority figure.
 - 10.2. Groups of youths and young adults 'hanging about' and causing noise and displaying other forms of anti social behaviour.
 - 10.3. Anti-social motoring.
 - 10.4. Visible crime or evidence of a lack of order and care: graffiti, litter, un-repaired damage.
 - 10.5. Local and national press dominated by police and judiciary failures rather than successes.

The way ahead

11. Subsequent action will be developed to support five broad aims that will collectively contribute towards our objective of reducing fear.

A Safer Village: Action Plan

Objective

To reduce the number of people who experience fear through living in Poynton by 50% over the next three years.

Aims

1. There is a clear and well articulated demand to have some form of visible policing or authority figures abroad in the village. Police enforcement needs to be both increased and complemented by education and example.
2. Response or reaction by policing and cleansing agencies needs to be improved. There needs to be a sustained effort regarding the village's appearance and upkeep.
3. Programmes aimed at developing a greater sense of one community where individuals are known beyond their peer group should be encouraged – See *Community and Family Life*.
4. Initiatives to moderate the behaviour of the small criminal element particularly within the young population need to be developed.
5. The public needs to be made aware of the positive aspects of crime and order issues affecting the village.
6. The Parish Council's role is that of a champion, and many of these ambitions could be coordinated through the Crime Order and Public Safety Committee.

Actions

1. The actions outlined below are presented in two categories differentiated by cost not by need or priority. However, all are believed to be important and necessary to address effectively the issues highlighted in this report.
2. Actions that can be maintained and enhanced, or introduced at little cost include:
 - 2.1. Endeavour to remove graffiti from parish property and a limited number of private (non organisation) properties within a seven day response time.
 - 2.2. Drive for a greater number of homes to be within the Homewatch Scheme – currently about 35%.
 - 2.3. Stimulate and encourage the correct reporting of crime. (correct phone number; incident numbers; photographic evidence)
 - 2.4. Consider a Volunteer Warden scheme to help vulnerable groups with home security and safety issues, and to patrol the Village.
 - 2.5. Continue to provide support and coordination for Speedwatch.
 - 2.6. Support village cleanliness plans – see *The Village Aspect*
 - 2.7. Apply for the introduction of Byelaws in all parks and open spaces.
 - 2.8. Encourage the publication of positive crime and order news: e.g. arrests and convictions.
 - 2.9. Support, and where possible facilitate, police visits and interaction with schools and youth groups.
 - 2.10. Support the granting of additional powers including Traffic Warden Powers to PCSOs.

- 2.11. Represent the views of those residents impacted negatively by the liberalisation of the drinking and entertainment laws.
 - 2.12. Promote greater community access to, and use of, areas currently perceived as unsafe at night.
 - 2.13. Continue to seek funding with which to support crime and order initiatives in order to prevent significant increases in the Precept.
 - 2.14. Support agencies and initiatives that promote Drug and Drink awareness and safety campaigns.
 - 2.15. Sponsor a cycle safety campaign and education programme; encourage greater use of cycles within the community.
3. The following may involve significant cost and need to be evaluated to determine their benefit. Furthermore, the majority will require multi agency ownership and support:
- 3.1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the village sponsored PCSOs with a view to renewing their contract with Cheshire Police (April 2006).
 - 3.2. Review the CCTV System in Poynton with a view to having the technical specification and coverage enhanced.
 - 3.3. Provide some support to non-council run youth facilities - See *Youth Engagement*.
 - 3.4. Promote the setting up of a Youth Council or Youth Forum and youth run activities and facilities, for example a youth notice board - See *Youth Engagement*.
 - 3.5. Consider the adoption of Peer Policing.
 - 3.6. Adopt and implement new legislation including the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005.
 - 3.7. Improve incident response by local Police.

Youth Engagement

Background

1. In Poynton we are fortunate to have a community that includes so many young people. As a village we should be proud of their achievements, their commitment, their energy and their enthusiasm. We recognise that there are problems too and that these do need to be addressed.
2. Although there has been some good preparatory work in this area there is currently no parish wide strategy or plan for engaging with the diverse group that make up our young people. This report is the start of that process. It is based upon a number of sources of information, including the parish plan questionnaire and a survey carried out at the High School. For further details of research methods and results see Appendices 2 and 5.
3. The main areas highlighted by this work are:
 - Young people as part of the community
 - Facilities
 - Perceptions, fear and anti-social behaviour
 - Pressures and issues faced by young people
4. This stream of the report is entitled *Youth Engagement*, which reflects the view that we are looking not to control or sideline our young people but to encourage and involve them.

Analyses

5. *Young people as a part of the community of Poynton*
 - 5.1. A function of Poynton is that of a commuter village with the economically active living in Poynton but working elsewhere. It should therefore be of no surprise that there are large numbers of young people making up a high percentage of the village population.
 - 5.2. The young people in the 0-17 age group constitute 22% of the total population and in the 0-24 age group 25%. Of this group there are more males than females- higher than the national average or borough averages for settlements of comparable size. In the 0-15 age group there are 500 more young people than in Knutsford.
 - 5.3. We must also be aware that not all young people in our village are educated at Poynton High School. There are significant numbers in the age group who are at other schools, private schools, Sixth Form Colleges or other educational establishments. When considering young people as those up to age 25 we must recognise that there will be people in employment rather than education or training, and there will be a final group of people who are not covered by any of these categories¹. Any effective survey would need to find ways to contact these people and get their responses.
6. *Facilities*
 - 6.1. The questionnaire probed several potential areas of concern with respect to young people in the village. One aim was to determine people's views on social facilities for children up to the age of 16 and for young people in the 17-25 age group. This was an attempt to gauge whether provision was adequate. The questionnaire also aimed to assess if there was a need to provide more activities for young people.
 - 6.2. A pilot survey carried out at the High School between September and December 2004 suggested that students aged 11-18 perceive a need for more activities for young people in the village. The results² also suggested there is a need for the considerable numbers of those activities that do exist to become more accessible, in terms of knowledge and awareness about what is available.

¹ See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/neet/

² For detailed results see Appendix 5

- 6.3. From responses to the parish plan questionnaire it is clear that Poynton residents feel strongly about improving facilities and providing activities for young people. Nearly 45% thought facilities for children are poor and 51% stated a similar opinion on those for young people. Individual comments included "more facilities for youth are needed" "activities for young people" "a youth club". It is, however, difficult to know what these statistics tell us as we do not know the basis of the opinions being expressed. Are they being made by young people, their parents or those merely responding to seeing groups of young people on a street corner in an evening?
- 6.4. A survey carried out in April 2005 shows that in fact Poynton does have many activities in which young people can become involved, from the more formal organisations such as brownies, cubs, guides, scouts, to many sporting and creative pursuits and local churches playing an active role in engaging young people in a variety of activities. This begs the question- is a more coordinated approach to marketing youth activities and raising awareness of the opportunities a key issue?

7. *Perceptions, fear and anti-social behaviour*

- 7.1. A second aim of the Parish questionnaire was to determine people's perceptions of Poynton as a safe place to live and what they perceived as being detrimental to the enjoyment of living in the village. An open ended question which allowed people to comment on other issues, not specifically stated such as litter and graffiti, raised issues about youth behaviour.
- 7.2. Police figures show that Poynton is one of the safest places to live in the county but residents do have serious concerns about youth nuisance and antisocial behaviour. The questionnaire produced comments on fear of "yobbish behaviour" "kids hanging about" "Park Lane on a Friday and Saturday night". There were comments about youth nuisance, gangs of youths and under age drinking. These comments do lead us to believe that there is a fear of young people.
- 7.3. These comments reflect and support the results of the Poynton Public Perception Survey carried out in May 2005 when, from the 173 people interviewed, there were 40 responses raising concern about youth nuisance, 26 about gangs of youths and 12 concerned about under age drinking. These are symptoms not causes and there needs to be further examination to understand the real cause of fear. We do need to be careful when talking about "Youth" not to demonise or stereotype all young people as trouble makers as this is very far from the true position.
- 7.4. The issues cited above could, and are, likely to be linked with issues such as graffiti and litter which ranked as the 5th and 2nd most important concerns in being detrimental to the enjoyment of living in the village.
- 7.5. In the school's pilot survey of young people a desire for a meeting place (58%) with facilities such as an internet café (52%), a games room (51%) and cinema (40%) and open on Friday and Saturday nights suggests perhaps there is some common ground between residents' perceptions of problem areas and what should be available for young people and what youngsters themselves would like.

8. *Issues for young people*³

- 8.1. All work with young people needs to take account of the varying issues that today's young people are facing, some of which are very different to those their parents' generation experienced. The following list is not exhaustive but it is included to give some insight into the need for the community to support their young people. (They are presented in alphabetical order)

- Bullying
- Community breakdown – no wider family around
- Constant assessment at school – pressure
- Disruptive behaviour in class
- Drugs and alcohol – fear of pressure or use and abuse
- Ethics and morality – attitudes towards sex education
- Family change/ breakdown
- Gang culture

³ from *Understanding Our Communities*

- Lack of, or poor, male role models
- Lack of teachers' time to listen to children due to curriculum, assessment and other pressures on time
- Nutrition/diet – in school and out
- Parents more willing to give money than time to their children
- Peer pressure to go beyond capabilities
- Peer pressure re fashion, money to spend, image
- Poor or inadequate careers advice
- Pressure on children to earn money
- Pressure to achieve – pass exams – go beyond capability
- Self esteem
- Travellers and their children ostracised

Conclusion

9. The needs and issues surrounding young people are currently not well defined or articulated and there is no cohesive or strategic plan for addressing the concerns or opportunities identified through this research.
- 9.1. Existing facilities and activities for children and young people are not well understood by many and need more effective promotion.
- 9.2. There is a need to canvass young people's opinions in the village and beyond and engage them in taking part in providing solutions to the problems identified.
- 9.3. The contribution that a central meeting place would have to village life needs further investigation.
- 9.4. Facilities for young people are thought to be poor overall but there is evidence many activities may not be widely publicised or accessed by young people and therefore this needs to be addressed.
- 9.5. There is a link between engagement with young people and the creation of a safe village. It is a very small percentage of youth who create fear and intimidation. However, groups of young people on the streets can also generate a climate of fear, and we need to work to change that.
- 9.6. Nuisance and antisocial behaviour, including graffiti and vandalism, are detrimental to some people's perception of Poynton as an environment in which residents can live safely and a coordinated response is needed to address these issues.
- 9.7. Central Poynton and Park Lane are areas where residents are most likely to feel threatened.
- 9.8. Students at Poynton High School in all year groups would welcome a 'meeting place' in the village.

The Way Ahead

10. Young people are often criticised for their behaviour but few viable solutions are offered to problems identified. We wish to work with them to give them a voice, celebrate their contribution to life and enable them to achieve their full potential.
11. We must develop means of engaging young people in playing an active role in shaping the community, both by understanding their requirements and by encouraging them to take responsibility for choices and actions, recognising that these affect not only their own lives but also those around them. In order to achieve this, a co-ordinated approach to address the diverse needs and aspirations of our young people will be needed.

Youth Engagement: Action Plan

Objective

To create and implement a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to engaging with our young people in order to celebrate their achievements, nurture their development, tackle anti-social behaviour and enable them to play a full and active part in enhancing the life of our community.

Aims

1. Develop a strategy and framework for action that enables different groups to contribute to and achieve this objective.
2. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the needs and concerns of our young people
3. Seek ways to promote and celebrate the contributions that our young people make to community life, locally, nationally and internationally.
4. Engage young people in discussions and decision making about issues that affect their life and the life of the community.
5. Promote greater awareness and use of existing facilities and activities and work to make available additional facilities as required.
6. Develop plans for combating anti-social behaviour that involve family members and agencies and support the aims of *A Safer Village (See Community and Family Life)*
7. Identify all locally available resources, activities and other sources of support and funding.

Actions

1. In order to drive these aims forward set up a small steering group to provide direction and to research, plan and cost proposals.
2. Re-establish and re-launch a Youth Leaders Forum, ensuring that it is representative of all groups working with young people and liaising with other Parish Plan stream and community leaders.
3. Develop a strategy, plan and means of working that enable all concerned to contribute and co-ordinate their expertise and resources in a coherent manner towards achieving the aims.
4. Develop means and plans for raising awareness and celebrating the good work that many of our young people contribute towards the community. Run one event or programme in the next year that does this. This would contribute to the community feel-good factor and support the main findings of the report that Poynton is a good place to live.
5. Commission a comprehensive survey of the attitudes, needs and circumstances of all the young people of Poynton. This must include those who do not attend school in Poynton. It will be necessary to take the survey to other places where young people are in order to get their responses and input.
6. Work with all agencies and organisations involved with young people to develop a Youth Forum that can address the issues raised, beginning with those already identified in the survey and questionnaire.
7. Identify those issues which may be addressed with existing resources and explore methods of addressing the others, such as:

- 7.1. Short term – investigate activities which could use existing facilities and equipment and need only volunteer support and publicity to begin. For example, cinema in a hall using existing multimedia projection and sound facilities.
- 7.2. Medium term – research activities which could use existing premises but would need additional equipment and finance as well as volunteer or paid support to begin. For example, a room in a church building which has the necessary wiring to be used as an internet café. It would need computers and Internet Service provider to get up and running.
8. Identify a suitable property for a Youth Café or meeting place, taking into account planning permissions and local environment.
9. Approach local newspaper with a view to giving column space to providing a voice for young people, so that they may speak to the locality about their views and wishes and for advertising relevant events, activities and facilities. This could be an interactive column.
10. Promote activities already available in Poynton more effectively and ensure they are readily accessed by young people. This may be supported through a youth notice board, web site, information point in schools, a youth news letter and a youth directory.
11. Establish a coordinated approach to include police, youth workers, schools, churches and other interested parties, to work together with young people towards improving facilities for all age groups.
12. Research ways that may be relevant to Poynton, by which other communities have been proactive in engaging young people in positive activities, so that they have respect for themselves, other people and property
13. Seek to identify and promote good role models, especially men, for young people in Poynton, and investigate possibility of developing a mentoring scheme.
14. Research the potential role and contribution of detached youth work and the use of youth workers in the village. This would require support from facilities available in Macclesfield and Cheshire County Council Youth Services.

Transport and Traffic

Background

1. The determination of the people of Poynton to remain part of Cheshire demonstrated itself in the 1970s when over 98% of the village signed a petition to that effect. That enthusiasm for Cheshire seems not always to correlate to transport, employment, shopping or to entertainment where the affiliation is much more towards Stockport and Manchester. However the opening ten years ago of the Handforth Dean development has directed more traffic along Chester Road. The effect of all of this on the various aspects of traffic and transport is significant.
2. As with many other towns and villages Poynton's road network was simply not designed to cope with the heavy traffic loads, both private and commercial. This is largely traffic in transit through Poynton, although given the inadequacies and unreliability of public transport, there is an overwhelming reliance on private car travel by residents.
3. In addition to the sheer volume of traffic, the issue of congestion is exacerbated by illegal parking and commercial deliveries to Poynton's retailers. There is no excuse for illegal parking, given the large-scale free car parks at both the Civic Centre and at Queensway.
4. Although some might argue, without much justification, that the Civic Centre car park is not central there can be absolutely no justification for people to park on the road at the Queensway retail area – outside Somerfield supermarket in particular – when there is ample free parking directly opposite. Motorists parking on the road (or pavement!) outside fast food premises on Park Lane and elsewhere (e.g. School Lane), add to the problem.
5. A Poynton Bypass has been on the political agenda for many years now, and has been shelved by successive governments. Whilst there may be one or two detractors who fear that a bypass would be bad for local business, the majority would greatly welcome it.
6. Public transport poses a real quandary. The parish plan questionnaire revealed that very few use either buses or trains as their primary means of transport, with routeing and timetabling cited as reasons for not using the bus network. Those who do use trains often drive to other stations to take advantage of a better and subsidised service. With demand so low there is little pressure on the operators to improve, and demand will remain low until the service improves.

Analyses

7. *Traffic*

- 7.1. In Poynton there are 9004 cars in 5859 houses, an average of over 1.5 cars per household, and only 618 houses with no car. According to the questionnaire 73% state that the car is their primary mode of transport.
- 7.2. The major north-south road, only recently de-trunked, still carries large volumes of heavy vehicles and the cut through from the east with the major access to motorways and to Manchester Airport to the west generates traffic problems which make a compelling case for a bypass, an important element of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS) project.

8. *Congestion*

- 8.1. Due to the nature of the road network in Poynton, most of the traffic has to pass through one set of traffic lights in the centre of Poynton, at Fountain Place. There are regular tail-backs of varying length on all four sides of the lights. To an extent motorists have come to expect this and generally tolerate it with a surprising degree of patience and courtesy.
- 8.2. As stated earlier, the main retail centre, Park Lane, has particular problems made significantly worse by a mixture of deliveries and illegal parking.

9. Parking

- 9.1. Poynton is fortunate in being one of the few places where parking is free – a much valued asset. When a Macclesfield Borough Council report looking at parking was rumoured to be suggesting charges over 100 written complaints were received. One of the justifications put forward for not charging is that there is no requirement for rationing spaces because the parking spaces are never all full.
- 9.2. In answer to the question posed in the questionnaire 'What does Poynton suffer from' 102 of the 459 comments received cited 'parking'. Many see the solution coming through greater enforcement, and there are many anecdotes about the changes in behaviour when a traffic warden is seen in the neighbourhood. There are however doubts about the ability to finance such an operation.
- 9.3. There are already a limited number of disabled parking places on Park Lane but more are required. Improvements to disabled parking could be achieved by further provision of dedicated spaces behind shops. This would help alleviate the problems caused by disabled parking or waiting on Park Lane itself. These spaces are privately owned and any action could only be progressed in consultation with the owners.

10. Speeding

- 10.1. Many respondents to the questionnaire identified speeding as a serious problem. As an issue, this came 3rd, following 'More Police' and 'Litter' and was seen as more serious than 'Graffiti or 'Drug Prevention'. Noisy traffic was listed as 11th.
- 10.2. Delivery vans are, as in many other places, seen as a problem. The late evening / night-time racers through the various circuits of the village are irritating for those who can hear them and frightening for those who are near enough to see them.
- 10.3. Narrow foot paths, particularly in Park Lane and Chester Road, with large wagons passing, even at 30 mph. cause concern and risk to pedestrians, especially those in wheelchairs or pushing buggies or prams.

11. Buses

- 11.1. Only 4.4 % use the bus on a daily basis. 6.4 % said it was their primary mode of transport whilst over 70% say they never use the bus. The needs for improvements cited were for routes (21%) and timetabling (23.5%) exceeding those for cost reductions (11.5%).
- 11.2. The bus service to Macclesfield and the south is not commented on and is assumed to be reasonable, but major dissatisfaction is expressed about north bound services. Singled out for complaint was the 191 service. It does not run on Sundays, it is not reliable in either being on time or on turning up and it is seen as a service which should always run through to Manchester direct. This service is currently subsidised by Cheshire County Council tax payers at the level of £1,000 a week. This significant subsidy may be lost if insufficient use of the service is made.

12. Trains

- 12.1. Only 3% use the train as their primary mode of transport, while almost 10% use them weekly but again, as with buses, over 70% never use the train.
- 12.2. The local service both north and south is seen as even less reliable than the bus service with exactly the same problems, whilst the long distance service simply passes through Poynton station at high speed. Local trains are often delayed to allow the expresses to run on time. With the multi-million pound upgrade to the signalling and to the track it would seem reasonable to expect a better service.
- 12.3. An improvement to the local service, such as duplicating the half hourly service operating in Hazel Grove would be one example. In Congleton, where the station is a significant distance from the town, one fast train each day stops in each direction, the morning train to London and a return

service in the evening. A similar service to Poynton would be another improvement and reduce the number of people driving to other stations to start their rail journey.

13. GMPTE

- 13.1. The serious disparity in local fares aggravates all the problems with local transport services. A semicircle of lower fares surrounds the village. From Chapel-en-le-Frith in the south east, through Hazel Grove to Bramhall in the North West heavily subsidised fares exist which are not available in Poynton. The environmental case for the use of local transport rather than the heavy dependence on the car has been undermined by fares regime. It now makes economic sense, though environmentally unfriendly, to drive to Hazel Grove to catch a train to Manchester. The saving in the fare more than pays the cost of the car use with the additional benefit of a more frequent service.

14. SEMMMS

- 14.1. There is a great awareness of the benefits of the provision of a relief road associated with the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road. The plans are currently with ODPM and will be determined in 2006. The suggestion is that between a third and a fifth reduction of traffic will be achieved if the road is built. This will hopefully mean that although the village will remain a busy place there will be much less irritation because of delays.

Conclusions

15. There are significant transport problems in Poynton.
16. They are many and varied but to a large extent outside the control of the village itself.
17. The various authorities and agencies need to be aware of the deeply felt, widely held and unvarying frustration and dissatisfaction with the very low quality of both long term and short term public transport service provision.

The way ahead

18. The following broad aims and associated actions will contribute towards the objective of easing traffic congestion in Poynton, discouraging speeding in the village and encouraging greater use of public transport.

Transport and Traffic: Action Plan

Objective

To reduce congestion in Poynton to tolerable levels, thereby creating less frustration and making the village a safer and more pleasing environment. This can be helped by improving public transport provision, but to a large extent this objective can only be achieved if and when the Poynton bypass becomes a reality as part of the larger SEMMMS project.

Aims

1. There is generally a great deal of courtesy and good manners throughout the village in dealing with traffic problems, but there are two areas where we need even greater consideration to be shown. These concern parking and speeding.
2. We also need speeding, particularly on narrow roads, to be cut down if we are to reduce the number of people who feel that they are in danger of being injured.

Actions

- 1 Both speeding and illegal parking can be tackled by the authorities moving towards punitive penalties for both offences. In 2006 it is likely that the Parish Council will have the necessary authority to issue fixed penalty notices for various offences. Progress needs to be monitored on this.
- 2 We need the 191 service to Manchester to be maintained and improved whilst similar improvements to the local rail service are also required. This will require regular contact with the lobbying of the transport providers.
- 3 The provision of equitable subsidies on rail and bus fares is needed if we are to reduce the current heavy reliance on the car. This will also require regular contact with and lobbying of the transport providers.
- 4 Assess the likely level of support for a Poynton Transport Group.
- 5 If such a Group is formed, task them with producing a Poynton Transport Plan.
- 6 Investigate the use of traffic calming methods around Poynton to further reduce speeding.
- 7 Examine specifically the efficacy of the current traffic calming measures on Clifford Road and elsewhere ('speed bumps') and look at alternative means of achieving the same end.
- 8 Continue to monitor progress towards SEMMMS, and take every opportunity to press for the Poynton bypass to be constructed.

The Village Aspect

“You only have one opportunity to make a first impression” (Questionnaire feedback; 2005)

Background

1. The village is situated across the A523, a main Macclesfield access road. This has given rise to the growth of two main shopping districts, both of which are served by supermarkets alongside which operate many independent traders.
2. There are 118 retail outlets registered in Poynton and the range in variety of shops is important to maintain the vitality of the centre.
3. There are also several major shopping areas within easy access. A significant number (77%) of people use their cars to commute and so travel is an easy option for many. More than half the homes in Poynton have two cars.
4. We are waiting for the construction of the By-pass which will result in less traffic through the village.
5. We have a large free council car park that provides ample parking facilities for Park Lane and there is a second free car park at Queensway.
6. The appearance of the village is therefore important to make people wish to shop here. There are areas for seating along Park Lane. The attractiveness of the village has been enhanced by participation in Poynton in Bloom and raised flower beds are maintained where possible.
7. Community action has enhanced the disused garage to improve the appearance of the village. This has provided seating and a place, relatively central to the village, to congregate.
8. The village has proudly defended its independence from becoming subsumed by the Greater Manchester conurbation. It fought to remain within the County of Cheshire and rightly considers itself to be a major part of Macclesfield borough.
9. Poynton has bus and rail links giving access to local and national networks though use of these is sparse, due to an inadequate service, timetabling and inequitable subsidising of fares. *(See Traffic and Transport.)*
10. We are an access point for the Peak District and the Cheshire Ring canal network.
11. The protection of the Green Belt is a high priority for many residents of Poynton, many of whom have elected to live in Poynton due to the proximity of the open environment and countryside.
12. There are many footpaths within the area and we reside within a Green Belt area that must be protected. There is a current initiative to develop a circular footpath around the village bounds.
13. We are served with many good local primary schools and an effective High School and Performing Arts centre. Co-operation between the primary schools and the High School helps with a continuity of education that is of benefit to the children in the village.
14. Poynton has four children’s play areas, (Brecon, Hockley, Barnaby and Deva fields), five Council owned football areas, (Deva, Philip’s, Brecon, Barnaby and Higher Poynton), a skate board park (Deva), an MBC owned playing field at lower Park Crescent and the historic Poynton Park and Pool. Brecon and Hockley play areas are owned and maintained to a high standard by Poynton Parish Council. The remaining areas are owned by Macclesfield Borough Council. In addition there are High School pitches owned by Cheshire County Council and a number of private sports clubs.
15. Poynton contains six Sites of Biological Importance: Jackson’s Brickworks (Grade A, and designated a Local Nature Reserve), Norbury Brook, Princes Wood, Poynton Coppice (all Grade B) and Poynton Pool and Wigwam Wood (both Grade C).

16. There are many elements that contribute to making Poynton a successful community. However, there are also areas that we need to improve and control to ensure the quality of life for the future in the village. These are described below.

Analyses

17. *The Shopping Experience*

- 17.1. Many residents consider the face of the village to be Park Lane and a clear indication was given that the frontage and privately owned forecourts to the shops along here need to be revitalised. The pavement needs to be improved and standardised to give a more appealing aspect.
- 17.2. The variety of shops needs to be as comprehensive as possible. Steps should be made to prevent too many of a particular stream of shops being allowed where possible.
- 17.3. Poynton has the fourth highest concentration of shops in Macclesfield Borough.
- 17.4. Comments were made in the questionnaire concerning accessibility of the various outlets in the village. Access is good for most areas but consideration of better access for disabled users should be encouraged. This would also be improved if the pavement could be standardised.

18. *Street Furniture*

- 18.1. Street furniture needs to be modernised and attractive as well as cost effective. This helps considerably in promoting a prosperous atmosphere and inviting shopping experience. The number of seats needs to be increased. This comment was evident in several responses to the questionnaire particularly from older residents. There are no seating arrangements near Queensway for example. 57% consider that street furniture should be aesthetically pleasing.
- 18.2. In an MBC survey in 2003, 36.5% of respondents stated that the appearance of an area can make them worry about crime. Vandalism, whilst not peculiar to Poynton, is a cost that we have to rectify. A 5th of respondents believed that a clean, well maintained environment would make people feel safer. This has been addressed in *A Safer Village* report.

19. *Lighting*

- 19.1. The street lighting needs to be updated and improved in areas identified as requiring additional safety measures. The street lighting in Poynton is the responsibility of Cheshire County Council whilst the 400 footpath lights are owned and maintained by Poynton Parish Council at a cost of £40k and is raised through the Parish precept.

20. *Traffic control and the Bypass*

- 20.1. The Bypass is perceived as a possible answer to the need to reduce traffic hazards and pollution. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England's response to stage 2 on the A523 bypass suggests traffic modelling has shown that "*traffic on the A523 and A5149 through Poynton would be cut by between a fifth and a third following the opening of the SEMMMS relief road*"
- 20.2. Speeding was considered in the questionnaire as being the 3rd cause of concern with 1,784 responses. "*Racing drivers*" was a common complaint and this is not restricted to young drivers.
- 20.3. Inappropriate driving behaviour is responsible for several problems. Noisy traffic was 11th on the list with 1,277 responses.
- 20.4. Inconsiderate parking, particularly in front of the shopping areas was commented on by many people. Enforcement of parking controls should be implemented to prevent hazardous parking. Free parking is a self evident incentive for people to park off the main thoroughfare and should be maintained. The areas to the rear of the shops are not within the Parish Council's ability to alter but improved parking facilities will encourage people to park off the main thoroughfare.

21. *Public transport and communication*

- 21.1. Congestion is a significant problem in the village. Relief could be aided by the improvement in the service and reduction in cost of Bus and Rail services. An improvement in the rail service to Manchester could encourage more people to change from driving to work.
- 21.2. The detailed analysis of responses regarding use of rail and buses is included in *Traffic and Transport* but it is clear that the bus service is little used due to inadequacies of routeing, and timetabling and the train service was equally underused. Fares from Poynton are not subsidised to the extent of surrounding stations. Only 3% of respondents use them daily although there is more use on a monthly basis (15%) so there is obvious room for development.

22. *Graffiti*

- 22.1. Graffiti was ranked 4th as an identifier of why people feel unsafe in an area. The Parish Council has taken a strong stance against the offenders and prosecutions are continuing. The clean up campaign is supported by the Crime Reduction Partnership and Cheshire Police.

23. *Litter control and Dog Fouling*

- 23.1. Litter control was ranked 2nd most important. There are several areas where bins are located but they are often ignored by people. All village seating areas should have litter bins located nearby.
- 23.2. The need for more dog bins was cited as being the 8th most nominated concern. Dog fouling was ranked 10th. The Parish Council has established more dog bins, installed and emptied by MBC, in recognition of this concern. Sponsorship by local enterprises should be encouraged. Public awareness needs to be increased via more campaigns which advertise penalties for persistent offenders. Schools can play an important part in these programmes.

24. *Housing*

- 24.1. The people in Poynton are principally homeowners, with 92% of the people owning their own homes. Housing provision is thought to be sufficient by 17% of respondents and felt that further developments should not to infringe on the Green Belt. We are proud of the proximity of the Green Belt which distances the village from being part of a major conurbation.
- 24.2. Home owners should be encouraged to prevent hedgerows overgrowing onto the pathways and encouraged to participate in initiatives to maintain the neighbourhood environment.

25. *Recycling*

- 25.1. 53% feel that more should be done for recycling. This affects the collection of home refuse in particular.

26. *Conservation and the Green Belt*

- 26.1. 95% have responded that the Green Belt should be protected. The Green Belt and Recycling were considered 1st and 3rd in needing to be given more importance in Poynton. The importance of the Green Belt was emphasised in many open comment sections.
- 26.2. Footpaths are plentiful but comments were expressed considering the need for their improvement and development. We have important, easy links with Lyme Park, the Peak District and the Cheshire Ring Canal system.

27. *Play areas and Parks*

- 27.1. Responses from the questionnaire indicated that these need to be both maintained and improved.

Conclusions

28. The Parish Council has shown initiatives in tackling many areas of concern. The work is obviously continuing and notice is being taken of plans and concerns expressed by the residents of Poynton.
29. Protecting the Green Belt and improving the environment and appearance of Poynton will enhance perceptions of the village and benefit everyone.
30. Litter problems can be addressed by encouraging the people in the village to realise the importance of their respect for the environment.
31. The effective use of community groups in this work will be required.

The Way Ahead

32. All the issues identified are to be tackled. Some are beyond the remit of the Parish Council but they should seek to work with the prime motivators within the community and the Borough to make achievements.
33. The Poynton Pool area could be improved to allow greater access for all abilities.
34. There are many resources and abilities within the village that can be utilised to achieve improvements. The Parish Council is probably the best placed to instigate and organise these activities.

The Village Aspect: Action Plan

Objective

To improve the aesthetic quality of the village, ensuring the cleanliness of our surroundings and improving the physical features, engendering in all residents a sense of pride and encouraging the taking of responsibility for their neighbourhood and the village.

Aims

1. Improve pavement areas.
2. Smarten up the exterior and surrounds of retail premises.
3. Encourage a variety of shops and retail outlets commensurate with needs of residents and monitor their impact on the 'street scene'.
4. Promote disability access provision.
5. Reduce the litter nuisance within the village.
6. Bring all street lighting to meet highway standards especially in areas perceived to be unsafe.
7. Encourage better parking provision to the rear of the shops.
8. Increase recycling measures in Poynton.
9. Support the activities associated with development, maintenance and improvement of footpaths.
10. Communicate Parish Council initiatives more effectively.

Actions

1. Investigate funding of infrastructure improvements.
2. Persuade shop owners to improve parking arrangements to the rear of premises.
3. Monitor and work with Poynton Partnership to promote a quality and varied shopping environment.
4. Investigate the creation of neighbourhood environmental action group to monitor environmental issues, liaise with council officers and local residents to resolve identified issues.

Specific actions recommended to Macclesfield Borough Council

The proposals below relate to housing and related matters, but are not strictly issues of planning policy. Most can be carried out with immediate effect.

1 Lostock Hall Farm

Lostock Hall Farm is a Grade 2 listed building, but has been in a poor state of repair for many years. It is believed to be the oldest building in Poynton. We urge the Borough Council to use the full extent of its legal powers to protect this vital part of the village's heritage and restore it to residential use.

2 Cemetery

The village graveyard at St George's church will be full in a few years. A suitable site for a new cemetery for the village, ideally not bordering residential property, should be identified and secured. Cemeteries are recognised in policy GC1 as an acceptable use for Green Belt land.

Community and Family Life

Background

1. A review of the information gathered from the various research sources has enabled an understanding of the nature and quality of our lives together as a community, as individuals and as families. Each source both supported and amplified the picture being revealed and together have highlighted strengths, opportunities for development and some serious issues that face members and groups within Poynton.
2. There is clearly a great deal to value about life in Poynton as is evident by the positive comments received about what we like about Poynton, but there is also more that could be achieved by building on the strengths that we have and by recognising and addressing the areas of concern that have been identified.
3. The key areas of opportunity or concern are:
 - Community and identity
 - Culture and sports
 - Family and life issues and skills
4. In analysing these areas and developing responses particular attention has been paid to the issues raised in the *Safer Village*, *Youth Engagement* and *The Village Aspect* streams and the aims and actions generated here should complement these.

Analysis

5. *Community and identity*
 - 5.1. Poynton has experienced significant population growth in the last generation, trebling in the last fifty years. As a community that reflects the full range of ages, with significant proportions of people either under 25 or over 60 years of age. This influx and mix of generations has led to a shift in the experience and expectations of people.
 - 5.2. There are probably as many different views about Poynton as there are residents. A brief review of the make-up and the life of Poynton will quickly reveal that it is in fact made up of a number of very different communities. Some seem to exist in splendid isolation, others intercept and interact with each other; sometimes harmoniously, at other times less so.
 - 5.3. Physically too it is not easy to identify a village centre and Poynton is divided by busy roads, a railway line and into distinct housing estates. Notably the most affluent area (according to government statistics), of Poynton, sits next to the most deprived. The size of the village also militates against the building of a sense of overall community or common identity. It is not possible to know or be known by 15,000 people.
 - 5.4. Many people travel regularly, either on business or pleasure; we enjoy high levels of education and academic achievement; are apparently affluent and self-sufficient and have ready access to the internet, world wide web and every form of technology and multi media. Information and communication technology both connects people with a greater number of others and can separate them from their neighbours.
 - 5.5. People in Poynton are busy for many reasons: work, DIY, gardening, travel and tourism, leisure, sports, societies, caring for family members – young and old. However, amidst all the business and activity in Poynton there are still many who feel lonely and isolated and who are struggling to cope.
 - 5.6. Whilst these divisions, the size of population and pressures of modern life can make a sense of overall cohesion difficult to achieve, these distinct areas also offer the opportunity to build a community based more on local neighbourhoods and interests, especially if coupled with

looking at the various Green spaces and primary schools located around the village. Looking beyond the village, Poynton is twinned with Erd in Hungary, schools have links overseas and many groups and individuals support and contribute to cultural and charitable projects in less fortunate communities.

6. *Culture and sports*

- 6.1. Only a brief look at the local papers and the directory of Poynton societies and organisations shows that there is a great deal of sporting, performing and creative arts activity going on in and through Poynton. Sports participation and achievement is high, both through schools, clubs and by individuals. The High School has performing arts status and there are a number of professional musicians, teachers and writers living in Poynton. There are also professional artists and art teachers and many others gifted in these and other creative areas. Yet Poynton does not seem to have a reputation or image that reflects this level of gifting and ability.
- 6.2. There is a lack of identity and cohesion that could transform a village with a collection of individual achievements, clubs and societies into something that has more of a sense of a centre of excellence in which we can all take pride and which can stimulate and encourage other members of our community to take part in and achieve in these activities.
- 6.3. This is also reflected in the quality of the facilities available. Again there are many disparate facilities but, as other areas of the report have made clear, many of these are not well known or used. Whilst it is a strength to have a range of venues available that allow for a variety of different activities to take place, many of these do have a rather tired feel about them. Poynton lacks a good quality or sized performance venue that reflects the talents of its members, or a significant place for displaying creative art work.
- 6.4. This lack of vision and cohesion and pride in the appearance and cleanliness is reflected also in issues raised in *A Safer Village* and *The Village Aspect* report. Addressing some of these opportunities from a positive, uplifting direction should also counteract the negative impact experienced.

7. *Family and life issues and skills*

- 7.1. Poynton is not immune to any of the problems that face today's society. Some of these issues are reflected elsewhere in this report, either directly or as symptoms of other underlying causes. The report from the churches in particular highlighted a number of fundamental and urgent issues, which are also pointed to in other parts of the research.

7.2. *Finance*

- i. Perhaps one of the more surprising findings was the revelation by a GP that a significant amount of surgery time is taken up by people who have become ill due to the stress of financial problems, and of marriage breakdown. In a community that is apparently affluent then, as with drugs, those having financial difficulties can feel even more isolated.
- ii. Debt counselling and support as well as financial training and money management skills were requested. Training is needed for young people, students, those moving to independent living, those marrying and others.

7.3. *Healthcare issues*

- i. Management of chronic illness issues is top of the pile for all local healthcare workers. A support network that GPs can refer patients to for very practical, mundane help would be useful.
- ii. Marriage breakdown and financial problems (cited by GPs as considerable issues) place huge loads indirectly on the health services as these circumstances lead to loss of health and further impact on family life. This is an indicator of the level of these problems for people in Poynton.

- iii. Life expectancy has risen, but so have the number of years that we can expect to live in poor health or disability. There is a stark difference between those who are older and suffering long term illness who can still get about, and those who cannot. The latter group are people who “disappear” from society, unless someone actively provides attention and support. They may re-appear later when the time comes for residential care. Fear, isolation and loneliness are frequently reported.
- iv. Younger housebound also need help along the lines of the elderly and both groups are desperate for affordable transport for both those who can walk and those needing wheelchairs. Younger housebound have particular needs in addition to elderly and may feel more isolated and lonely because their peers are not experiencing the same life style.
- v. 15% (2,250) of the population of Poynton reported a limiting long term illness. Of these 800 are of working age. (This figure needs treating with caution as the term is self-defining and includes older age-related limitations).

7.4. *Alcohol and drugs*

- i. It has long been recognised that there is a problem with under age and increasingly binge drinking amongst younger people in Poynton. Indeed in August 2005 Poynton made the national news in a report about binge drinking. Use and abuse of drugs would seem to be on the increase but is often a hidden or unacknowledged problem partly because children and young people in Poynton have sufficient pocket money or jobs not to need to steal to fund drug use.
- ii. However, as this is a more hidden problem this can also mean that parents who believe or know their children are involved feel more isolated than in other communities where it is more openly acknowledged.
- iii. A confidential helpline for parents is thought to be something that would be valued. A co-ordinated and concerted response from churches, parents, schools and others to raise and address this issue would be valuable. Use and availability of drugs is reported to have shifted and increased significantly in the last 5 years.

iv. N.B. It must not be assumed that either of these issues are confined to young people.

7.5. *Carers*

- i. 11% of the population, 1600 people, are providing unpaid care, of which 200 are providing in excess of 50 hours per week. We have no data concerning young carers. Further work would be required to identify if carers of any age are receiving adequate support in our village.

7.6. *Domestic partnership and relationship breakdown.*

- i. Again cited as a cause of health problems by GP's and disruptive therefore an issue in Poynton. It would be helpful to know how many people and families this was affecting, to be able to quantify this. Teachers also cited this as a cause of difficulties for children at school.
- ii. In cases of family breakdown or bereavement, support for family members, especially children, is needed. An access centre for children to be met, dropped off and collected by parents going through particularly difficult marriage breakdown and separation may be helpful but would need researching.

7.7. *Relationship preparation, training and support*

- i. The need for preparation, training, help in difficulties and mentoring was evidenced through discussions with health care workers, school teachers and governors and others working in pastoral and counselling roles in the community. Much of the support given may be on a voluntary or partly funded basis but needs to be consistently available and must be sustainable.

7.8. *Parenting*

- i. The need for parenting training and support for parents; from antenatal through infancy, pre-school, primary, secondary school was reported. This need is not confined to those with children in education and indeed continues on a long term basis. Teachers have cited lack of parenting skills as contributing to problems in the class room. Police have also cited this same issue as contributing to problems with young people on the streets. Increased mobility has led to lack of a wider and closer family network; for example, grandparents not living near grandchildren. This trend also contributes to a sense of community breakdown.
- ii. Much of what has been designated the youth nuisance is understood to stem from parenting issues and other pressures. Some of the findings through the recent Parish Council actions in engaging with young people would support this. Having said this, it is important not to demonise parents any more than young people. Constructive intervention needs to be available and accessible.

7.9. *Demographic and Age-related issues*

- i. A quarter of the population of Poynton is age 60 or over. This compares with a national average of 20.9%. This group clearly constitutes a significant proportion of the population, and according to analysis of national trends, is set to grow. According to the government statistics, within 10 years from March 2005, there will be more people aged 65 and over than children under 16.
- ii. In Poynton there are already a number of initiatives and services aimed at addressing the needs of this age group, provided by local government, Social Services and voluntary bodies. However, there was a call for greater communication, information and co-ordination between available services.
- iii. In addition, a number of older people are reluctant to involve social services and seek help to which they are entitled for fear of losing control of their circumstances. Both Parklands and Woodlands Care homes would welcome further input in terms of visitors and churches running worship services.
- iv. There are 240 single parent families in Poynton: - 215 lone mothers and 25 lone fathers. We do not have exact figures but can estimate that between 8 – 15% (240 – 450) of Poynton’s children live in single parent families (whether through death of a parent or family breakdown).
- v. Children and youth (0-17 years) make up 22% (3,134) of the population of Poynton. Young People (under 25 years) represent 28% of the population, totalling 4,019. In addition other children travel in for school.

19% (2,703) are aged 0-5 (national average 20.2%)
 3% (431) are aged 16-17
 6% (885) are aged 18-24

Further information in this section is incorporated into the *Youth Engagement* report.

Conclusion

- 8. There is much that can be built upon in Poynton to enhance the life experience of its residents and also to tackle positively and constructively the issues identified in this report.
- 9. Initiatives to build community will need to recognise the barriers and restrictions posed by geography, size of population and variety of lifestyles and interests. Localised, neighbourhood initiatives may be appropriate to stimulate greater participation and address issues of loneliness and isolation.
- 10. Responding to crises or having the opportunity to make a difference are things that often inspire people to get involved and work together in ways that they may not normally choose to do. These may be local or otherwise but must be of significant magnitude to stimulate recognition of having to work together and small enough for people to feel that they can make a genuine impact.

11. The village is rich in resources and talents in the areas of culture and sports. More could be made of these to the benefit of the whole community and beyond and to nurture the achievement of excellence.
12. There is much good work going on, in and through many groups and organisations that serve our communities in the areas of family life. However, the magnitude of many of the issues, concerns and desperate needs in people's lives have also been highlighted. There is an urgent need to respond more effectively and constructively to these needs and to challenge complacency in our organisations and village.
13. Addressing these issues directly will also result not only in providing support to those who are struggling but also lead us to engage with members of our community who are amongst those who feel isolated or fearful and in doing so aim to address one of the major expressed concerns of the village (See *A Safer Village*).

The Way Ahead

14. The village has a highly educated, skilled and articulate set of people who can achieve a great deal more by working together than individually. This requires a clear articulation of vision and direction, a realistic acknowledgement of problems to be solved and encouragement of these people to contribute creatively so to do.
15. A key issue for any action will be mobilising people and engendering a willingness to work together with a generosity of spirit and commitment. Some of these issues are long standing and will take time to address and will require commitment over time. Others can be addressed more quickly and any planned response must show some short term benefits to continue to encourage participation.
16. Addressing any of these issues will only be achieved successfully by a number of groups or agencies working together. This in itself should help build community.

Community and Family Life: Action Plan

Objective:

To create a sense of community and belonging in which all are encouraged to play a part, large or small, in the life of Poynton.

Aims

1. Engender a culture of good citizenship, care and concern for other members of the community.
2. Promote a greater awareness of local community issues and opportunities to engage and make a difference.
3. Encourage vision for Poynton to recognise its potential and to contribute to the wider world.
4. Build upon the opportunities afforded by the community's cultural and sporting abilities and talents to create a greater sense of identity and pride.
5. Ensure that facilities for culture and sport available, match the potential of people to benefit from them and are accessible.
6. Create an environment where those struggling feel empowered to seek support and ensure there is appropriate support available.
7. Ensure access to family and life skills support and training to address issues identified in this report.
8. Enhance and make more effective use of existing forms of local communication and develop others as required.
9. Work in way to support aims of other streams to provide coherence, direction and make the best use of good will and resources.
10. Provide framework and support to allow individuals and groups to work creatively together to enhance life of the community.

Actions

1. Stimulate local action to address issues of concern, based upon and building on neighbourhoods and existing links, for example, residential areas, Green spaces, schools, Homewatch.
2. Support and encourage individuals and groups to develop creative ways of tackling problems identified.
3. Investigate possibility of creating neighbourhood champions who will draw local people together to build community and promote positive cross-generational interaction.
4. Investigate possibility of village-wide participation with major project to build relationships and enable Poynton people to make a difference elsewhere, locally and globally.
5. Investigate developing a concept of a centre of excellence in culture and sports.
6. Investigate possibility of provision of high quality (performing) arts and sporting venues.
7. Support local organisations, groups and individuals addressing problems identified in this report by providing guidance, information and help in securing necessary resources, including funding.

8. Support and promote provision of life skills training and mentoring, specifically in the areas of: finance (debt advice and support; money management); relationship support and skills e.g. marriage, parenting, family breakdown and bereavement.
9. Improve communications across different groups working in similar areas to encourage sharing of experience, information and resources.

Accommodation

Background

1. Poynton is situated in the north east of Cheshire, near to the major conurbation of Greater Manchester. There has been significant growth in the past four decades from a relatively small village to a popular residential area with nearly 15,000 residents. The central and west wards of Poynton are the most densely populated whilst Higher Poynton largely retains its predominantly rural aspect. Major issues affecting Poynton today include a lack of affordable housing and environmental issues both in terms of development control and the pressure on Green Belt surrounding Poynton. (*Source: Vital Villages Parish Plans 2, Cheshire Community Council*).
2. The 2001 census records 5,983 dwellings of which 184 were unoccupied. Of the 5,799 occupied dwellings the vast majority, 89.4% (5,189) were owner occupied. The remaining 10.6% properties were rented from, 4.8% (282) local authority, 2.5% (147) private landlords, 1.7% (99) Housing Association or Registered Social Landlord and 1.4% (82) others.
3. The majority of social housing within the village is currently owned and allocated by Macclesfield Borough Council (MBC). Other social housing includes that owned and administered by Johnnie Johnson Housing, Templar Housing and the Church Commissioners. The MBC stock will soon be transferred to the Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Association. Allocation of council houses has been based upon a points system which reflects factors such as a link with Poynton, homelessness, family size and so on. The Borough Council has traditionally allocated council houses to people from Poynton and latterly other areas of the Borough.
4. Affordable housing questions formed an integral part of the questionnaire with the objective of assessing the needs of the local community for affordable and special needs housing. 57% of respondents felt that affordable housing had become a key issue in Poynton. However, there was also overwhelming support (95%) for preserving the Green Belt against development. Thus whilst, 62% of respondents had no objection to a housing development that would suit the needs of local people, there is a requirement to balance the need for affordable housing with the necessity of preserving and protecting the Green Belt.

Analyses

5. *Housing needs*
 - 5.1. The level and range of housing available will naturally impact the demographics of the village, which in turn will affect many other aspects of community life. For example, high housing costs prevent many younger families setting up home or moving into the area, thus impacting the numbers of school children in Poynton; young people leaving home are often unable to stay in Poynton thus reducing the number of young adults living here and participating in village life and economy; people with elderly relatives may find it impossible to have them living close by; those experiencing relationship breakdowns may be forced to move out of the locality thus increasing the impact of family breakdown on those concerned. All these factors place further strain upon and increase fragmentation of family units and support networks. Some of the consequences of this are reflected elsewhere in this report.
 - 5.2. The results of the questionnaire indicate that there are three main areas of housing need that should be addressed future planning and action.
 - i. Affordable housing for young formative households, for example young people leaving home and newly established domestic households.
 - ii. Housing needs for people in relationship breakdowns.

- iii. Better quality housing for older people or those with changing health conditions. Many older people are living in accommodation no longer suitable for their needs. Bed-sits in sheltered accommodation schemes, such as Vernon Lodge, are not popular and have become hard to let. There is also a demand amongst older people for two bedroom bungalows.
- 5.3. These priorities, particularly the first two listed, are supported by the report, *Macclesfield Borough Supply/Demand Analysis 2004* based upon the 2004 Macclesfield Borough Housing Needs Survey, which includes projections into 2007.
- 5.4. In respect of Poynton the report notes that there is an overall shortfall of 320 affordable units, mostly relating to 1 and 2 bed roomed properties. The largest shortfall within this is the one bedroom category with a perceived shortfall of 140. There is a significant shortfall in social stock in this category. 94% of all new forming households are looking to occupy 1 and 2 bed roomed units, but 1 and 2 bed roomed units represent only 38% of all housing stock in the borough.
- 5.5. This research also identified that the income threshold for a two bed roomed flat in Poynton has been assessed at £36,800 based on a 95% mortgage availability on a three times gross income lending ratio.
- 5.6. In Poynton in the private sector there is a shortfall of 3 bed roomed houses and an excess of 4 bed roomed houses. The shortfall of affordable 3 bed roomed properties is considered “*significant*” and it is noted that “*It may be necessary to maintain a supply of larger affordable properties for low income families especially in ... Poynton*”.
6. *Preservation and protection of Green Belt*
- 6.1. There are a number of specific policies in the Macclesfield Local Plan that determine the way in which planning applications will be decided and it is essential that future recommendations take account of this. The Local Plan policies have in turn to comply with Government policy. The broad thrust of these documents is to achieve higher densities on sites without compromising the environment and encouraging the development of brownfield sites in preference to Greenfield sites. The bringing back into use of empty properties (“redfield” sites) is also encouraged. New housing should be in sustainable locations with good access to public transport and local facilities. The Green Belt around Poynton must be protected against housing and other development.
7. *Opportunities for accommodation.*
- 7.1. When looking at the capacity source for Affordable Housing Developments it is clear that there is an apparent lack of vacant land and derelict buildings in the village. Flats above shops and the intensification of existing sites would need to be looked at. Such developments would need to be carefully managed as access and conservation issues would inevitably be raised. Any sites that do become available should be earmarked for affordable housing.
- 7.2. The recent moratorium on new house building up to 2011 will only permit new building as replacement or as affordable housing. This will impact on the future supply of housing for all households, including older people, and makes it essential that best use is made of resources.
- 7.3. The MBC Empty Homes Strategy 2004-2009 aims to bring empty homes back into use in order to: “*Improve the existing built environment, minimise pressure on Greenfield development, maintain area regeneration, ensure housing need is met across all tenures, provide good quality affordable housing and re-vitalise village centres by encouraging ‘living over the shop’ schemes.*”
- 7.4. MBC aims to eliminate bed-sitter accommodation from its housing stock by 2010 and specifically to target renovation grants for older people living in unfit private sector housing. (Source: *MBC Older People’s Housing Strategy*.)

Conclusions

8. The availability of a range of type and cost of housing has an impact on village life beyond the immediate effect on those occupying, or not, properties in Poynton.
9. It is clear that, in common with much of the country, there is a need for greater provision of low cost and affordable housing in Poynton.
10. Priority of access to low cost housing should be given to those groups identified above, that is, formative households, those experiencing relationship breakdown and changing needs due to age or health.
11. The changing housing needs of the population of Poynton must be monitored regularly to ensure that they are properly understood and inform future development and planning decisions.
12. There is a tension between the provision of appropriate housing and the protection of the Green Belt that must be recognised and addressed constructively. The Planning process is the main tool by which these two needs may be addressed.
13. Other areas of the country where the cost of housing has been problematic have introduced alternative forms of financing, including shared ownership. These may be relevant to Poynton.

The way ahead

14. There must be an on-going discussion and dialogue amongst the various groups, authorities and agencies within Poynton to help define accommodation outcomes that benefit all the people of Poynton. Such discussions must be based upon a proper understanding of the changing accommodation requirements of residents.
15. In seeking to limit the negative impact upon the Green Belt and our environment consideration should also be given to ways of encouraging the use of ecologically and environmentally friendly building design, processes and techniques.
16. In order to ensure that the views and requirements of Poynton residents are reflected and supported in the planning policies and strategies, they must be regularly communicated via the Parish Council to Macclesfield Borough Centre.

Accommodation: Action Plan

Objective:

To support the future life and viability of the community of Poynton through ensuring that people have access to a range and type of housing that best suits their needs, now and in the future whilst protecting the Green Belt, the village environment, shopping and recreation opportunities.

Aims

1. Ensure that the groups and issues identified in this report are effectively represented and prioritised in local and borough accommodation planning and provision to create an appropriate mix in size and type of dwelling available.
2. Improve the condition of housing in the village.
3. Ensure that community needs for affordable housing and special needs housing are accurately understood and recorded.
4. Enable the provision of new affordable housing while protecting the Green Belt and environment.
5. Assist households with special needs.
6. Ensure that optimal use is made of available land and existing housing.
7. Promote awareness of alternative funding and financing options.
8. Increase use of ecologically friendly building technologies and processes.

Actions

1. The Parish Council should liaise with the MBC Housing Strategy Team to enable future housing developments in Poynton to target the views and requirements of local residents, and to ensure that all residents have access to a range and type of housing that best suits their needs.
2. Use the Borough Local Plan and Housing Strategy to optimise the use of available land and existing housing.
3. Work with Macclesfield Borough Council and the Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Association to ensure that people from Poynton have priority for all social and affordable housing within the village.
4. Ensure that where necessary Macclesfield Borough Council fulfil their responsibility to improve the condition of housing in the village. The Borough Council should seek to develop a strategic approach to Supporting People to assisting households with special needs.
5. Work to improve the quality and availability of appropriate housing for older people.
6. Maintain and review information concerning changing needs and requirements for accommodation in Poynton and assess impact upon community life.
7. Monitor MBC Planning policies and local Plan and ensure that current views and needs of Poynton residents are adequately represented and reflected in future policies and planning.
8. Research alternative funding and financing arrangements that have been introduced elsewhere in the country may be relevant to Poynton and disseminate information to those who may benefit.
9. Publicise information concerning ecologically sound building processes or enhancements and encourage uptake in Poynton.

Annexe 1 Comments on the existing MBC Planning Policies for Poynton.

The current Local Plan is the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which was adopted formally in January 2004.

Macclesfield Borough Council imposed a moratorium on most new housing developments in 2003, as the number of approved planning applications for housing in the Borough had reached the limit permitted by the County Structure Plan. Early in 2005 the Borough Council reviewed and confirmed this policy. The following section comments on existing policy, followed by several recommendations for changes in planning policy.

Policies expressed in the Macclesfield Local Plan that are currently relevant to Poynton include those described below. The reference numbers quoted are those in the Local Plan. The Parish Plan's comments and observations are included in **bold type**.

Green Belt and Nature Conservation

a) The village of Poynton is inset in the Green Belt. Within the Green Belt, planning policies seek to keep land open and keep levels of activity to a minimum. It is the intention that the Green Belt should have a rural character and there are strict restrictions on building (GC1 and GC2).

The Parish Plan questionnaire confirmed the very strong agreement of the people of Poynton with this policy. Some 95 per cent supported the protection of the existing Green Belt. All open land outside the built up areas of the village is within the Green Belt, and the Parish Plan strongly supports the view that the whole of this area should be maintained as open space. Little or no support was revealed through the questionnaire for the removal of any of this area from the Green Belt.

b) A large part of Higher Poynton falls within an Area of Special County Value for Landscape (GC6). Virtually all land east of the Middlewood Way falls within this designation. Within this area the Borough Council seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development that is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance.

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. This land forms an essential backdrop to the Cheshire plain. The Green line of hills is visible from a wide area and its pristine nature must be protected.

c) The Local Plan (NE5) identifies Poynton Park as a Historic Landscape, Parkland and Garden. The Borough Council promotes the conservation and enhancement of such sites. Developments that would adversely affect them will not normally be allowed.

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. We note that Macclesfield Borough Council owns Poynton Park and Pool. Therefore the majority of funding for the necessary conservation and enhancement projects must be provided by Macclesfield Borough Council.

d) Poynton Brook is identified in the Local Plan as a Nature Conservation Priority Area (NE16) where the Borough Council will seek to implement management plans.

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. Any improvement and management planning must be done at the Borough Council's expense.

e) Poynton contains six Sites of Biological Importance: Jackson's Brickworks (Grade A), Norbury Brook, Princes Wood, Poynton Coppice (all Grade B) and Poynton Pool and Wigwam Wood (both Grade C). Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect Grade A sites (NE12), and will not normally be permitted on Grade B and C sites (NE13). Since the Local Plan was approved, the Borough Council has recognised Jackson's Brickworks as a Local Nature Reserve.

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy.

f) Parts of Poynton and Adlington adjoining Poynton Brook are identified as Flood Risk Areas and the boundaries of these are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

The Parish Plan agrees with these areas being identified clearly. All building on such areas should be prevented.

Recreation and Tourism

g) A number of areas of recreational land and open space are identified in the Local Plan (see Appendix 6 and the Proposals Map), and these will be protected from development (RT1). Incidental open spaces and amenity areas in residential areas will normally be protected from development (RT2).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy.

h) Green Belt land (6 hectares) bordering London Road North and Glastonbury Drive is allocated for new playing fields (RT6(7)).

The Parish Plan endorses this policy, but expresses strong opposition to the financing of these playing fields by allowing development of existing recreational land within Poynton for retail or industrial purposes. Any buildings should be compatible with the Green Belt (such as changing rooms). Large clubhouses and similar structures should not be permitted.

Housing and Employment

i) Part of the Poynton Park area, including part of Towers Road, is identified as a low density housing area (H12).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy, but calls for several similar areas to be designated within Poynton (see below).

j) There are no existing employment areas identified in the Local Plan and Proposals Map within the Parish of Poynton. However, the Poynton Industrial Estate and Adlington Industrial Estate (both in Adlington parish) border the village and employ a significant number of local residents (E3 and E4).

The Parish Plan recognises the importance of local employment to the economy in Poynton and supports the retention of these employment areas. We note that residents finding employment locally reduces the volume of traffic commuting into Manchester which is identified elsewhere in the Local Plan as a major issue.

k) "Special Industries" defined as "open storage and bad neighbour uses" will be permitted in specific areas, including Adlington Industrial Estate (E5). This is to make provision for "bad neighbour" uses.

The Parish Plan opposes this policy. We note that this site borders Poynton and is less than 300 metres from housing and employment areas. It is south west of the village and prevailing winds would increase the detrimental impact of bad neighbour industries. This site is therefore quite unsuitable for "bad neighbour" uses.

Highways

l) Land along various road schemes will be safeguarded from development. These include the A523 Poynton Bypass and Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road Eastern section and the A6(M) Stockport bypass (T7).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. We also urge the Borough Council to take all possible actions to expedite the building of the Poynton Bypass. See *Traffic and Transport and The Village Aspect reports.*)

Shopping

m) Proposals for new developments that attract many trips, including shopping, commercial and public offices, entertainment, leisure and other uses, should normally be located in Poynton village centre and be on a scale appropriate to the character and function of the centre (S1).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. We further note that most commercial buildings in Poynton are only two storeys high, and urge that any replacement buildings should not exceed this height. Adequate car parking should be provided. (See *The Village Aspect*.)

n) The Borough Council will seek to maintain a level of shopping provision at local shopping centres, commensurate with the role the centre serves in the Community. Improvements to Local Centres will be carried out where appropriate (S4). A Local Shopping Centre is identified at School Lane, Poynton.

The Parish Plan expresses concern about possible loss of local shopping facilities.

o) In Poynton village centre, the function of the prime shopping area will be consolidated and enhanced (PDC1). (The prime shopping area covers much of Park Lane and Fountain Place and Queensway. Secondary shopping areas include part of London Road South and Fountain Place. See the Local Plan Proposals Map for an exact definition).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy.

p) In the prime shopping area, change of use from class A1 to classes A2, A3 and other non shopping use will not normally be permitted (PDC2).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy.

q) In secondary shopping areas, planning permission for classes A2 and A3 will normally be permitted (PDC3).

The Parish Plan expresses qualified agreement with this policy.

Please see Annex 2 the Proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance below for our comments regarding planning applications for pubs, restaurants, takeaway food shops and similar uses.

r) Within shopping areas, the use of upper floors will be encouraged for housing, small scale offices and other appropriate uses (PDC4). Existing housing and community uses in the village centre will be retained (PDC5). Large scale office developments (over 300 m²) will not normally be permitted (PDC6).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with these policies. The use of upper floors above shops as small flats will help address local housing needs. The calculated shortfall of affordable housing stock in Poynton up to 2007 is 320. The largest shortfall within this is the 1 bedroom category with a perceived shortfall of 140 (Source: *MBC Supply/Demand Analysis*).

s) The existing car parks will be retained for car parking (PDC7).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy. We urge that parking in Poynton will remain free of charge.

t) The Borough Council will seek to encourage rationalisation and improvement of the car parking at the rear of the properties on Park Lane (PDC8).

The Parish Plan expresses full agreement with this policy, and look forward to the Borough Council taking action to implement it.

Annexe 2 Proposed supplementary planning guidance

The following draft Supplementary Planning Guidance has been prepared within the context of the existing Local Plan.

Objective

Reflecting the wishes of the people of Poynton, a key objective is to retain the character and separate identity of the village by preserving intact both the Green Belt and the remaining existing open spaces within the village.

The Housing Moratorium agreed for Macclesfield Borough in September 2003 has helped stem the number of Planning Applications for new developments witnessed in recent years. However recent Government Planning guidance tends towards policies which do not suit the character of Poynton and the village's infrastructure. The density suggestions of between 30-50 dwellings per hectare and a reduction of the parking requirements per unit according to size, have led towards an increase in three storey developments and apartment blocks. Very few such properties have traditionally been built in Poynton.

Guidelines have been developed for proper consideration of any future development in Poynton, including windfall sites, taking account of the factors outlined above with the aim of maintaining and developing the village's environment and community.

These guidelines are as follows:

1. Where an existing site is Green Belt or Open Space no building development will be permitted. Use for recreational and leisure purposes compatible with the Green Belt may be considered in special circumstances.
2. Where new development is proposed, the original and current use of the site should be taken into account.
3. Where the existing site is industrial or commercial, the priorities for re-use shall be industrial or commercial, and only if there is no demand for these shall housing use be considered. Existing shopping and employment uses in the Poynton area should be safeguarded.
4. Any housing or other new development permitted on such a site shall be in keeping with the immediate surrounding area and shall include sufficient off road parking arrangements for the total number of residents and visitors.
5. Where an existing site is housing, the density of any replacement housing shall not exceed the average for the existing surrounding area, within the constraints of Government Policy PPG3.
6. Developments higher than those already existing on a housing or commercial site will not normally be appropriate in a village comprising mainly one and two storey buildings.
7. Where an existing site arises from redundant community use such as former schools or public buildings, the priority for re-use shall be for the benefit of the community.
8. On windfall sites, housing shall only be permitted if the Local Plan and restrictive housing policy criteria are also satisfied. Such developments should be limited to those that meet the local need for affordable housing, and preference given to people with a long standing connection with Poynton.
9. Such housing developments must reflect the need for affordable housing as specified in the priority categories of the Parish Plan (*See Accommodation Report*). The income threshold for a 2 bedroom flat in Poynton has been assessed at £36,800 based on a 95% mortgage availability on a 3 x gross income lending ratio (*Source: MBC Housing Needs Survey 2004*).
10. The windfall site at the Telephone Exchange on London Road South and Vicarage Lane should be used for affordable housing in line with the above policies.

11. Listed buildings should be retained in good repair. Appropriate action will be taken when owners fail to maintain such properties.
12. Development should only be permitted so as to maintain and enhance the nature of the area where development is taking place.
13. Planning permission for pubs, restaurants, takeaway food shops and similar uses will be granted with caution. In all such cases, a planning condition will be imposed in consideration of neighbouring properties and/or residents. (Note: such a planning condition is separate from any licence conditions imposed under the Licensing Act (2003)).

Parish Plan recommendations for changes to current planning policies in the next stage Local Development Framework.

1. The Green Belt should remain as currently constituted.
2. Additional low density housing areas should be identified, to protect against demolition and high density replacement. Possible candidates include:
 - Chester Road between Fountain Place and Poynton Station.
 - Arlington Drive, Glenfield Drive, Grosvenor Drive and the southern ends of Clifford Road and Brookfield Avenue.
 - Hockley and Hepley Roads – the early 20th Century large semi-detached houses.
 - Lostock Hall Road.
3. All new housing, including windfall sites, should normally be used for affordable housing. Such housing should be built to a decent standard and with adequate off road car parking for residents and visitors.
4. Additional Sites of Nature Conservation Importance be designated, for example Mill Hill Hollow and the former Park Pit.
5. Consideration should be given to the creation of a Conservation Area comprising the stone cottages on Coppice Road in Hockley.
6. The pavements in the centre of Poynton to be improved.
7. Heritage features in the rural area should be identified, protected and restored. These include ancient byways and paths, milestones, boundary markers, stone walls, coal pits and tramways.
8. Listed buildings should be actively protected.
9. Telecommunications masts must not be sited close to houses, schools or nursing homes.
10. Should Woodford Aerodrome no longer be used for the manufacture or maintenance of aircraft, any new aviation related use should not increase the average number of flights over Poynton. If the site is not used for aviation purposes, the runway and other aerodrome land within Poynton should remain open and be used for agricultural or community purposes. Any new uses for the factories and other parts of the site (located within Stockport MBC) should not impact adversely on Poynton.
11. As recommended by the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS), the construction of the Poynton bypass should not lead to any change in Green Belt boundaries or development on land between the bypass and existing built up area. There should be no access or egress onto the bypass between Chester Road (A5149) and the A523, adjacent to the Little Chef and Adlington industrial Estate.