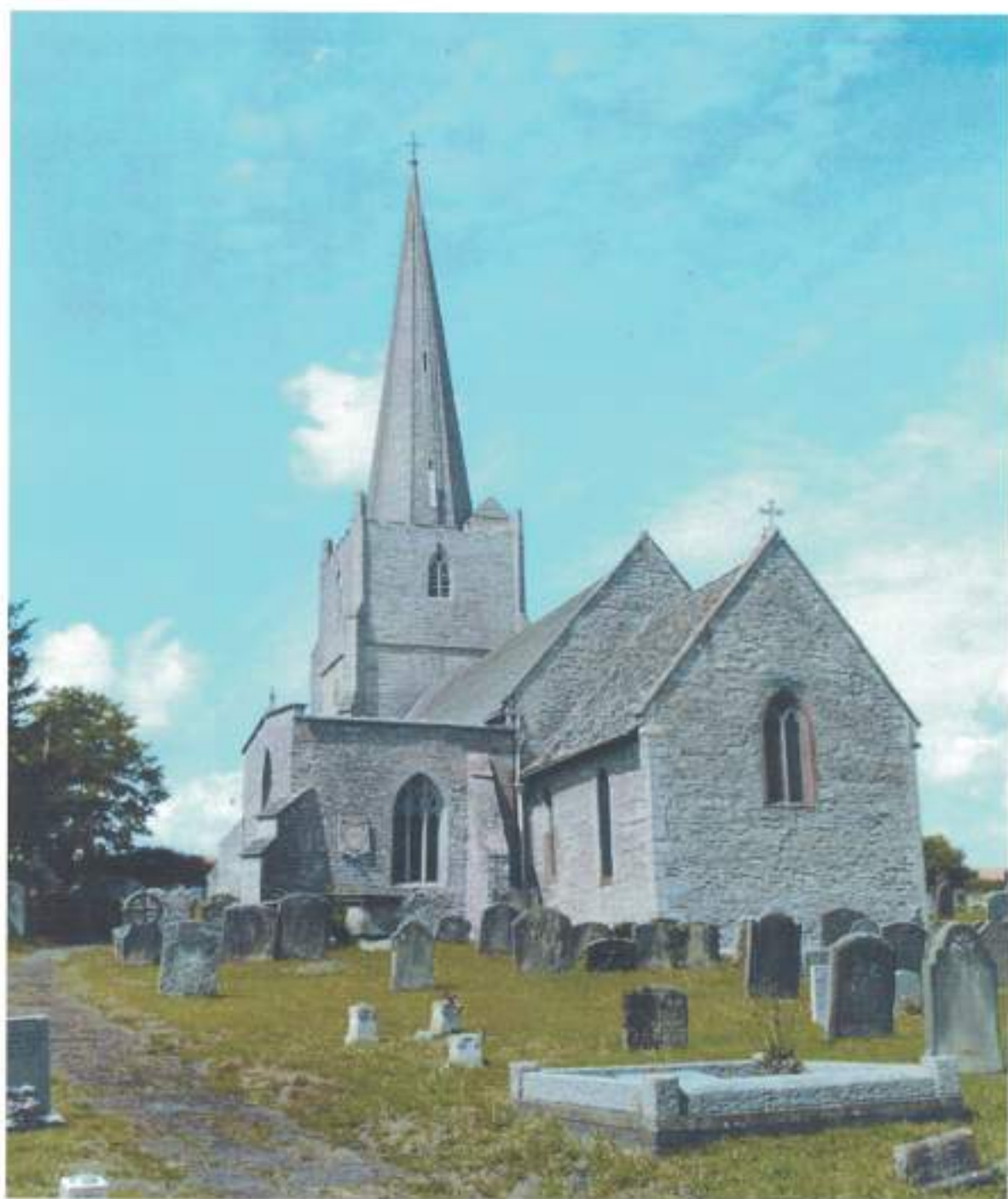


# Eldersfield Parish Plan



2003

# Eldersfield Parish Plan



Parish Church



Bird's foot Crocus



Great Burnet

Burley Dene Meadows

Woodcock



Green-winged orchid



Avenue Meadow



Corse Lawn House Hotel



Alder's Coppice

Coomshill Meadows



Cowslip

Corse Lawn

Poolhay Meadows

Meadow Thistle



Ragged Robin

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## **Forward by the Chairman of Eldersfield Parish Council**

The Government's Rural White Paper published in 2000 identified Parish Plans as a way for parishes to identify key facilities and services, set out problems and seek how distinctive character and features can be preserved; funding to be made available through support from the Countryside Agency.

Eldersfield Parish Council was keen to take advantage of the concept and has been supportive of the process throughout. The results provided give the Council information that may influence decisions to be taken in the future, and highlight areas where action needs to be taken now to improve parish life. Based upon this plan the Council will now prepare its own action plan to be revisited on an annual basis.

The Parish Council and the Working Party wish to thank all those who contributed towards the preparation of this plan and hope you will find it interesting and informative, and perhaps inspire you to take part in some parish activities.

Harold Davis  
Chairman of Eldersfield Parish Council

## **Eldersfield Parish Profile**

The parish of Eldersfield is the most southerly in Worcestershire. It is 6 miles from East to West and 3.5 miles North to South. We have a population of 546 living in 214 households, within two main settlements, Eldersfield and Corse Lawn. This rural community is sparsely populated being mainly agricultural. There is no daily bus service, shop or Post Office. 90% of the properties are owner-occupied, 25% are pensioner households and 18% of the residents are aged under 18.

There is an elegant Queen Anne hotel and a popular traditional village pub; Eldersfield Lawn Primary School has a healthy roll of 73 pupils attracting children from a wide cross-county area.

The survey on which this parish plan is based was carried out by volunteers during the Summer of 2003. It was publicised in the Parish Magazine, the Parish notice boards and was the subject of a BBC local radio feature.

Leading bodies such as the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council and the local women's group together with a number of residents suggested issues that needed to be investigated. Each household had the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and 146 replies were received, a 68% response.

The results of the survey follow in the first part of this plan, comments and consensus views are summarised in the second part, together with the results of an enlightening session with Class 4 of the school.

A number of respondents chose more than one reply to a number of questions and therefore a percentage cannot be shown for all questions, however the collective results and comments do show what is valued and where improvements can be made. The Action Plan which arises out of these results is for the Parish Council, the higher authorities and the residents at large to endorse and take forward.

Parish Plan Steering Group

Roger Manwaring MBE

Harold Davis

Ros Willder

Charlie Jeffes

David Griffiths

December 2003

## Historic Eldersfield

The history of Eldersfield can certainly be traced back to Saxon times. It is probable that the early Hwicce, the Saxons who settled this area, called the community of Britons who lived at Gadbury, the Eorlder or Elder folk and their lands the Eorlders' felde.

The long ditch, now mostly filled in and hardly visible, along Corse Lawn Common, marked the boundary of Hwicce, the edge of the kingdom of Mercia at one time. This boundary was used to delineate Edgar's grant of 972 to Pershore Abbey. Most of the houses on the north west side of the lawn are sited behind this ditch.

The early Saxons clearances in the parish, in what was mostly woodland, are the small moated sites: Lucas Farm, Pigeon House, Hardwick Court etc. Similarly there are Saxon strips still existing in the parish, for example at Cole's Orchard, Drinker's End. This is despite enclosure and cross ploughing. It was once thought that Castle Tump was a Bronze Age barrow, but recent expert opinion says that it was a small Norman motte.

The medieval village of Eldersfield centred on the church, evidence of cottages and a substantial house lie in the fields thereabout. Following the dreadful famine of 1308, 1312 and 1326, and the beginning of the Black Death in 1349, the centre of population shifted towards Corse Lawn, and an unusual settlement pattern of stint holding developed here at the edge of the County and Diocesan boundary. The Lay Subsidies survive for Worcestershire from a very early date, Eldersfield being mentioned from 1327 onwards; 46 households being listed.

Our parish church is dedicated to St John the Baptist, and there has been a church here since Norman times. The structure and contents are well documented; some of the original seats were made in the reign of Henry VII, and there is a Saxon coffin lid, still to be seen near the churchyard gate.

There is a tradition in the parish that Dick Whittington held land here at Rue Green, this is supported by the fact that the arms of the Whittington family can be found in the parish church, and he was born at Pauntley only 5 miles away.

During the Civil War the parish came into prominence, being the site of some activity. In 1646 a skirmish at Corse Lawn led to houses being burnt down. On another occasion Royalists lost their way from Worcester at Corse Lawn and ended up at Gadbury, missing their intended battle.

The population, which has through history been largely agricultural, has fluctuated from a high of 846 in 1841; today we have thriving 546.

## **Commons and Marsh**

The common fields and common meadows of the parish were enclosed in 1845, but no move was made to enclose the waste land of the manor until 1860, when a provisional order was made. However the lands were not enclosed and an Award was made in 1865 turning The Marsh and Corse Lawn (The Lawn) into regulated pasture. These two areas are believed to be the only two regulated pastures in the whole of Worcestershire.

The rights of pasturage are known as stints, and there are a number of stint holders with an interest in these lands, and under the Act these pasture owners must meet on the first Monday every February to elect reeves who regulate the conditions.

The Award of 1865 also parcelled out two acres of Corse Lawn to be used for exercise and recreation by the inhabitants of Eldersfield, and six acres for allotments for labouring poor. These two areas are held to this day by charitable trustees. One further acre was granted as a site for a Chapel of Ease and school. All these lands are in use as intended nearly 140 years later.

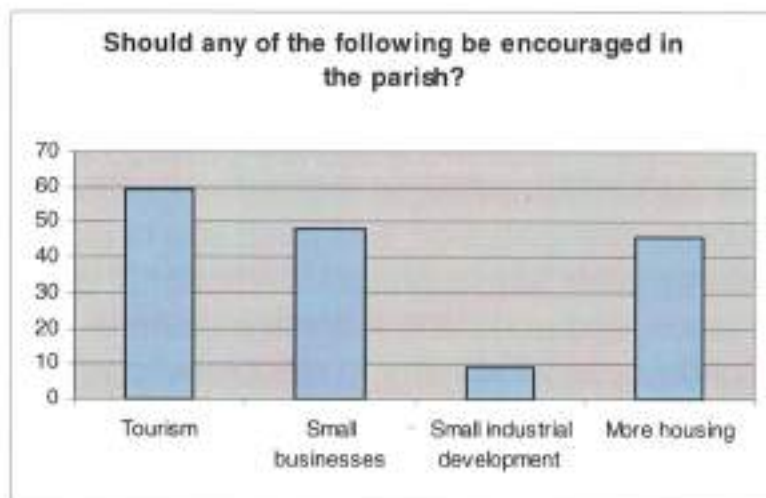
## **Protected Flora**

It is no wonder residents value our environment so highly. The parish is rich in notable and protected sites. We have four Sites of Special Scientific Interest, shown and named on the map, and numerous other Special Wildlife Areas.

The character of the wildlife is mainly dominated by ancient meadow grassland. In Poolhay Meadows there are several plant species that are scarce in the county; rushes, cuckoo flower and ragged robin grow in the wetter areas, and orchids, great burnet and adders tongue in the remainder. Corse Lawn too contains some areas of damp ground, with a number of black poplar pollards. To the south of the Lawn is Avenue Meadow, a rich unimproved grassland with orchids and cowslips.

Gadbury Bank Fort to the west is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with an abundance of box and unusual calcareous plants, including varieties of orchids and scabious. To the north of the parish Coombhill Meadow shows signs of ancient ridge and furrow pasture scattered with cowslips, adders tongue, common milkwort and yellow rattle.

# ENVIRONMENT



## ACTION POINTS

- \* Ensure Parish Council and District Council recognise that the residents value the present environment
- \* To note that a limited expansion of the housing stock could be accepted but of a size and style that respects the current environment
- \* Parish Council to pursue those responsible for drainage clearance and support and monitor any existing action

## CONCLUSIONS

- \* The environment and location of Eldersfield are by far the main reasons for settling in the parish
- \* 59 replies said tourism should be encouraged
- \* A significant number, 46, see a need for more housing, in most cases to a very limited degree
- \* 53 households consider they have a major flooding problem in their area
- \* Serious drainage problems exist in the Poolhay area

## QUOTES



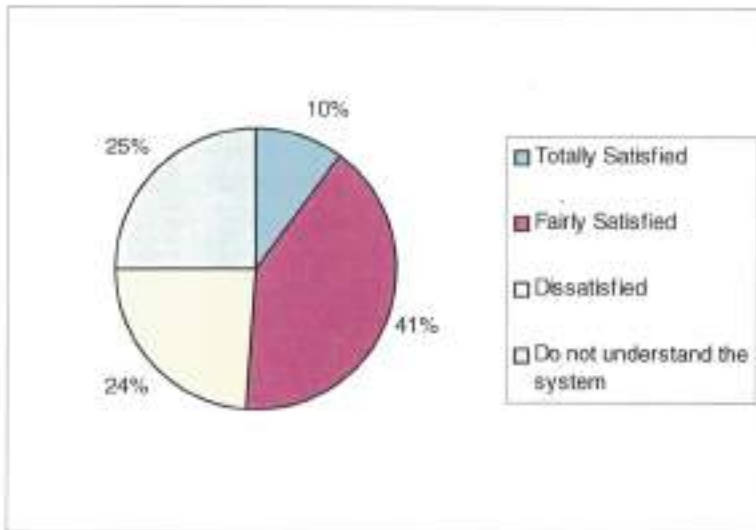
“ Perhaps 1 or 2 new houses every 1 or 2 years ”

“ Definitely no more houses ”

“ The ditches were last cleared by Italian prisoners of war ”



# PLANNING



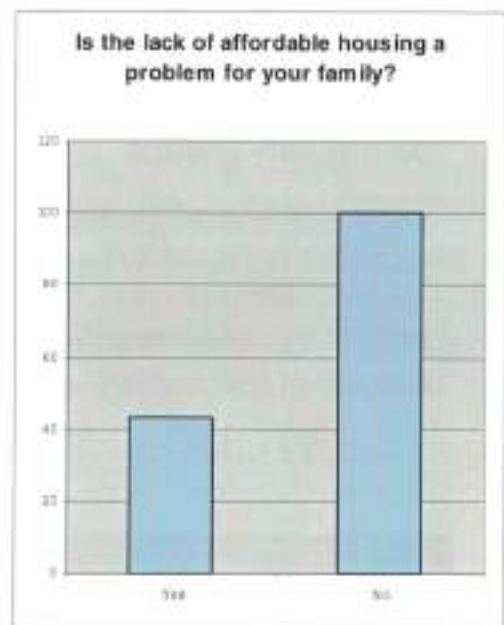
## ACTION POINTS

- Inform and guide residents on the planning system
- Ensure the system and process is understood by all Parish Councillors
- Consult with housing facilitators within Malvern Hills District Council to discuss affordable and retirement homes policy



## CONCLUSIONS

- Only 15 replies were totally satisfied with the Planning System
- Wider understanding of the planning process and principles is needed
- 43 households identified an affordable housing need within their family, either as a first time buyer or for retirement



## QUOTES

- "Planning decisions seem inconsistent"
- "Virtually every child has to leave the parish to get their own home"

# COMMUNITY & EDUCATION



## ACTION POINTS

- Investigate the provision of evening classes, after-school clubs and community groups
- Publicise the availability of the school hall and recreation field
- Inform the school governors of the results of the survey

## CONCLUSIONS

- Over 90% of respondents said that the school was essential for the community
- Further out of hours use of the school is needed to encourage links within the parish
- There is a lack of awareness of the school hall letting policy and availability of the recreation field

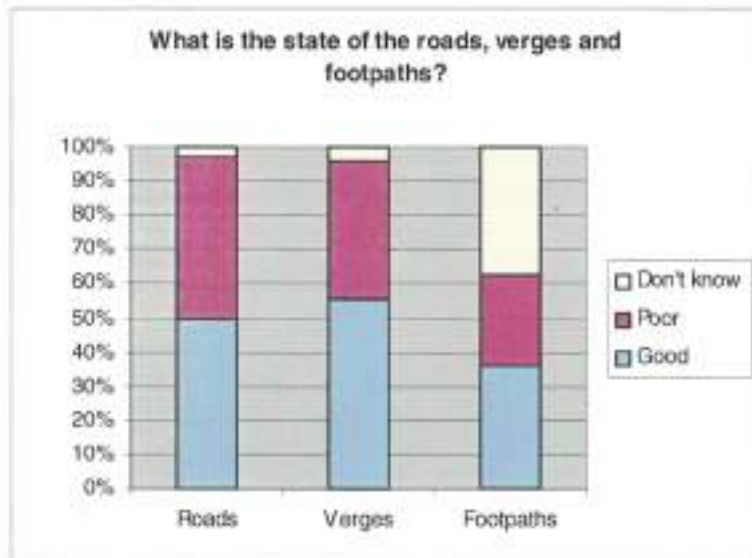
## QUOTES

“The Parish Council can subsidise the use of the school hall for parish use subject to conditions”

“The school is vital to the community”



# SERVICES



## ACTION POINTS

- Parish Council to support a doorstep recycling scheme
- The Parish Council needs to continue its practice of informing the highways department of unsatisfactory road conditions
- Publicise the mobile library and shop routes
- Inform the emergency services of these results

## CONCLUSIONS

- 98% of the respondents would welcome a doorstep recycling collection scheme
- A narrow majority consider the parish roads and verges are kept in a good condition
- Only 23 residents use the mobile shop and 27 use the library
- A higher visible Police presence would be welcomed
- Explanation of the Ambulance service as regards call-outs is needed

## QUOTES

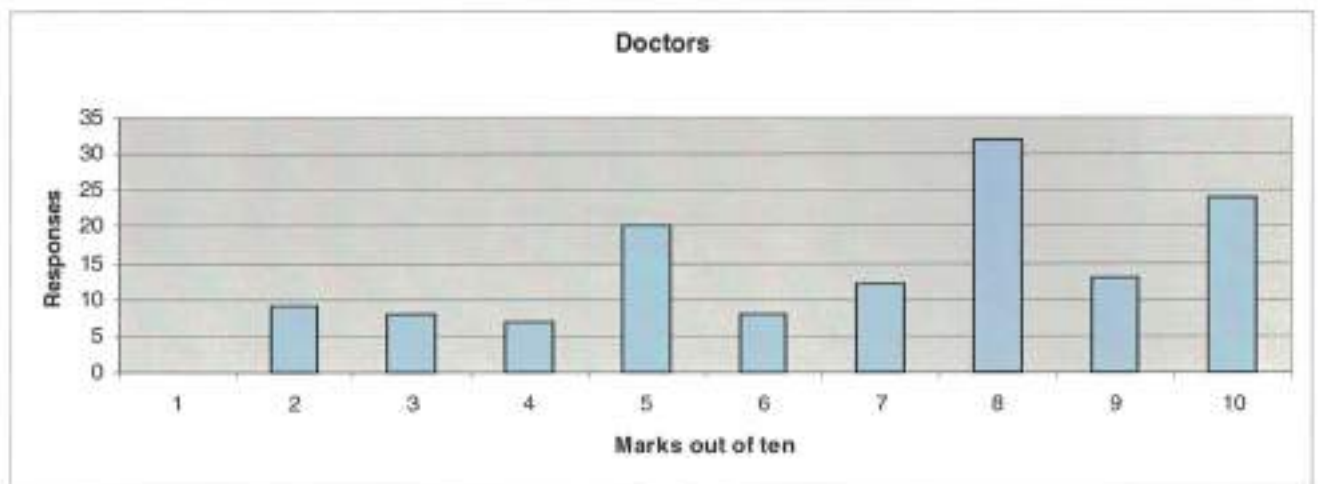
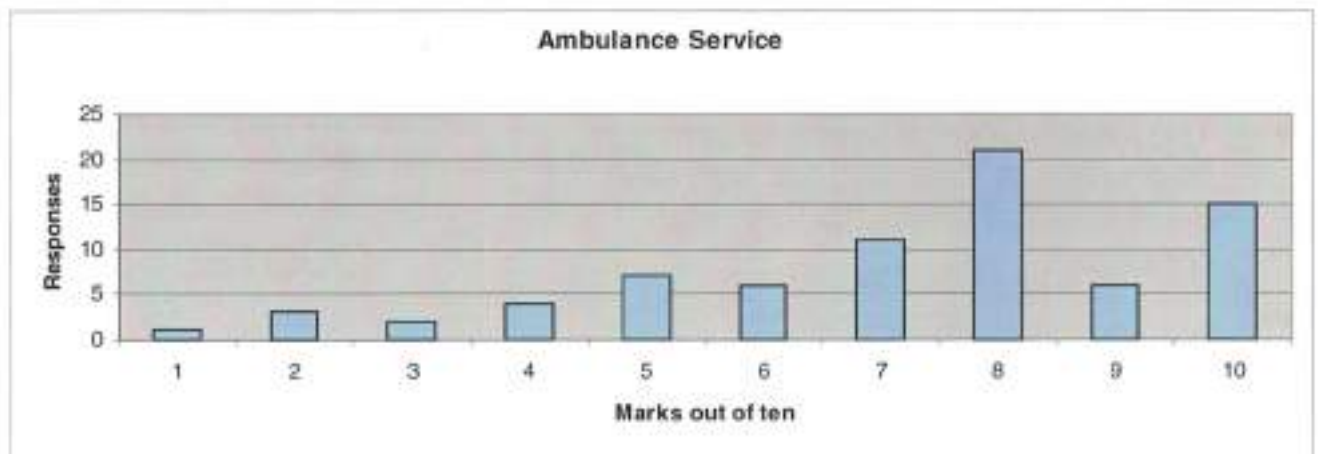
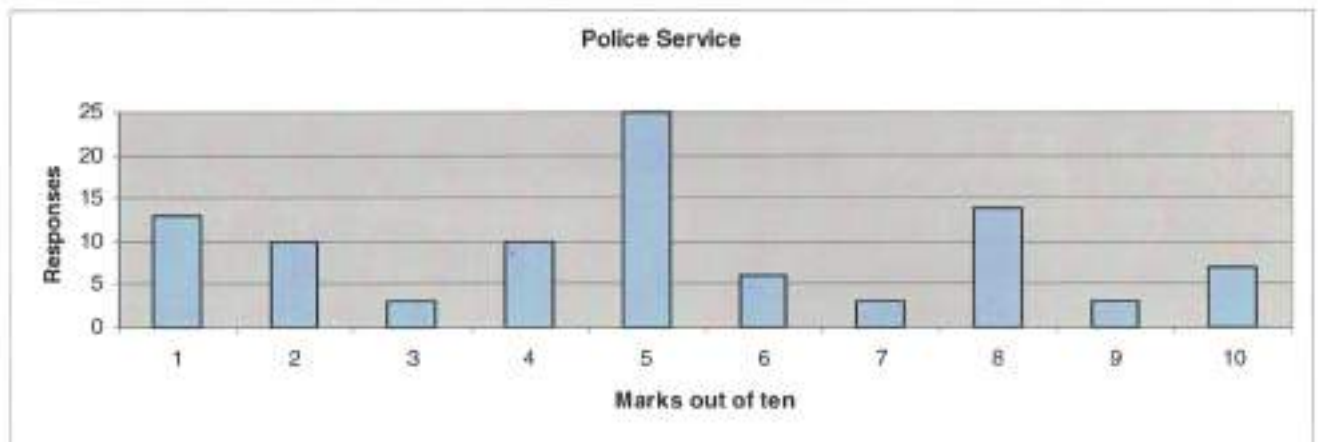
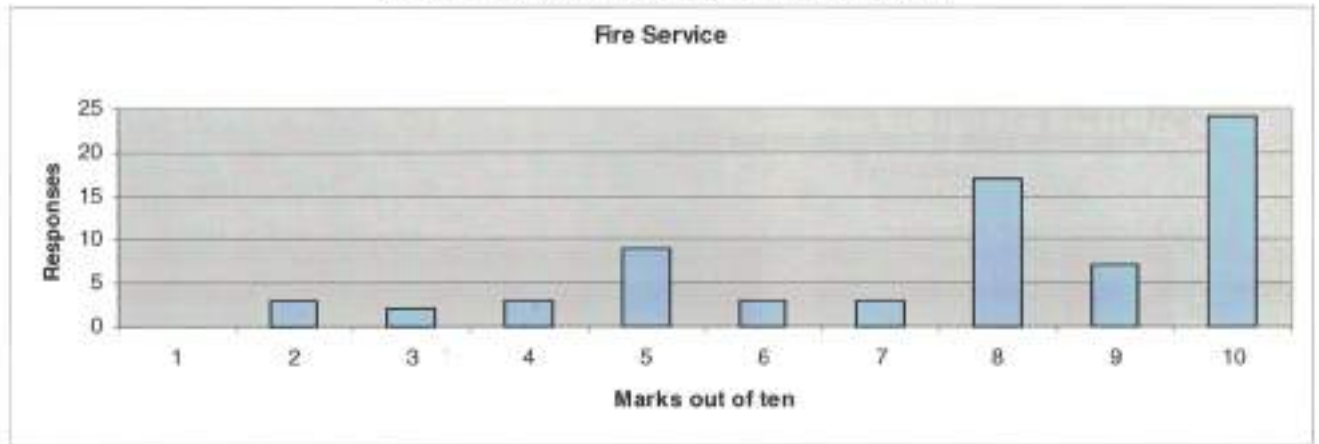
“We never see a policeman”

“We had to wait for an ambulance to come from the other side of Worcester”

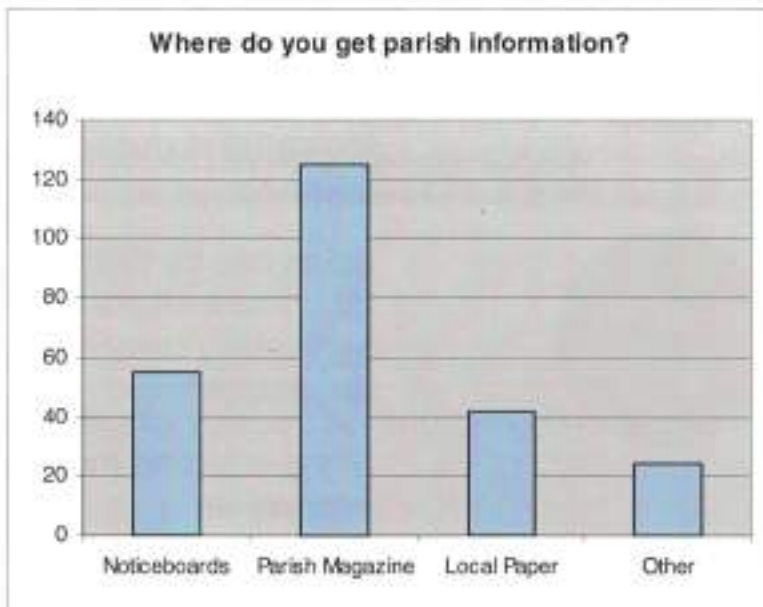
“Why can't the local Doctor's Surgery deal with minor emergencies like stitching cuts?”

SEE OVER FOR SATISFACTION RATING OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

# SATISFACTION RATINGS



# COMMUNICATION



## CONCLUSIONS

- Parish Magazine is the favoured media for local information
- Nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the population thought parish information needs improving
- 88% of the parish want the public telephone boxes retained
- There is no notice board near to Long Green residents

## ACTION POINTS

- Parish Council to note the overwhelming support to retain the traditional telephone boxes
- The Parish Council to investigate improved methods of communicating information within the parish

## QUOTES

“Information is good as long as I visit The Greyhound regularly”

“We find the Parish Magazine very useful”

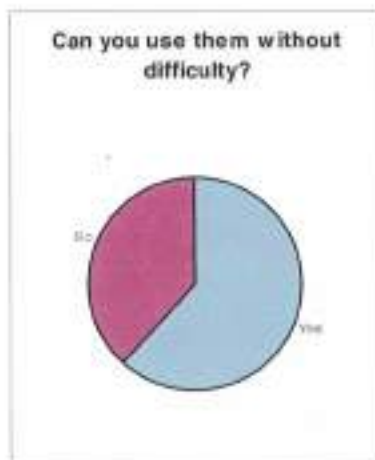
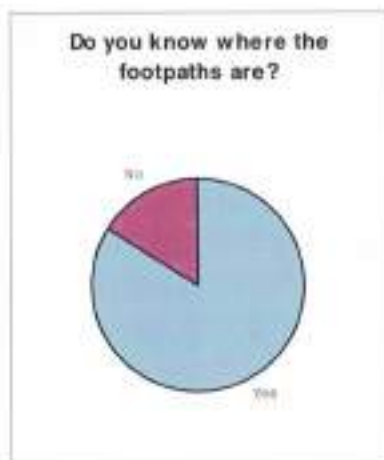
“Keep the phone boxes so long as they are the red ones”



# COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

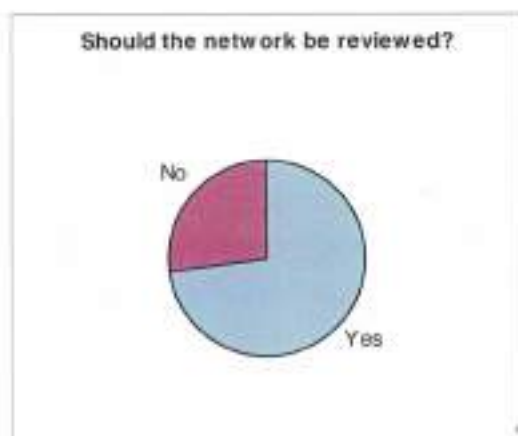
## CONCLUSIONS

- Awareness of footpaths is generally good
- Stiles can be difficult for some walkers and particularly owners of large dogs
- Signs could be more informative
- There is support for rationalisation of the footpath network



## ACTION POINTS

- Inform both the Parish and County Footpath Officers of these findings
- Request the provision of "dog gates" when maintenance is carried out to stiles
- Ask Worcestershire County Council to include the Eldersfield footpaths in any forthcoming review of rights of way networks



## QUOTES

- “Signage of footpaths could be improved to show distance and point of interest e.g. church 3 miles”
- “I have no difficulty climbing the stile but I can't lift my dog over”



# TRANSPORT & ROAD SAFETY

Do you have difficulty getting in or out of the parish?

20% say Yes

Would you use an improved bus service?

51% say Yes

Are there danger spots on parish roads?

73% say Yes

## CONCLUSIONS

- There are a significant number of people who have transport difficulties – The 2001 census shows 10 households without a car
- A notable proportion of the parish would use local public transport, however there is no consensus on times or destinations
- Despite major initiatives to improve road safety and reduce speed this is still a concern

## ACTION POINTS

- Parish Council to investigate and publish various transport facilities including voluntary providers
- Inform findings and discuss transport needs with County Council and adjacent parishes
- Parish Council to take note of specific concerns regarding speed limits and other hazards and discuss with highway authority

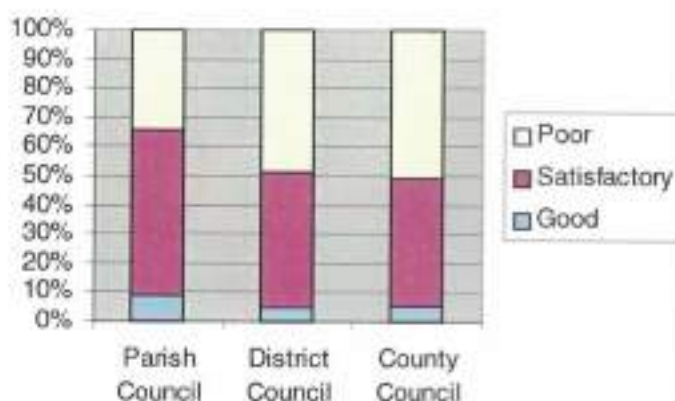
## QUOTES

“There aren't any dangerous roads only dangerous drivers”

“30 mph signs have increased the speed in inappropriate areas”

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**How well do councils publicise their decisions and activities?**



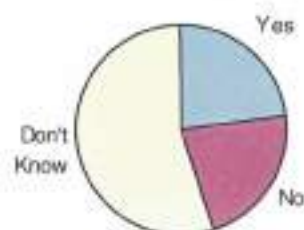
## CONCLUSIONS

- Current methods of communication do not seem to relate information to residents satisfactorily
- The majority of people are unaware of the distribution of public money at Parish level
- An improvement in 2-way communication between the electorate and the various councils is needed

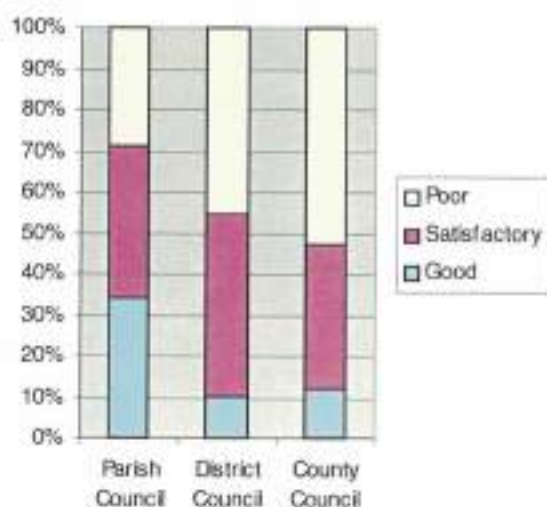
## ACTION POINTS

- Ensure the District and County Councils are aware of the views of inhabitants
- Increase communication of Parish Council matters through the Parish Magazine

**Are you satisfied with the way Parish Council money is spent?**



**How aware are councillors of concerns?**



## QUOTES

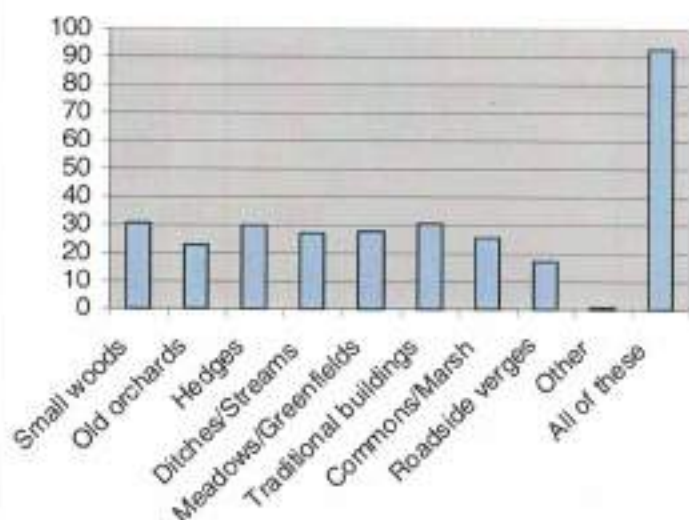
“We get very little for the money we pay”

“The District and County Councillors for this area are excellent at publicising their work”



# PARISH VISION

What features need to be preserved?



## CONCLUSIONS

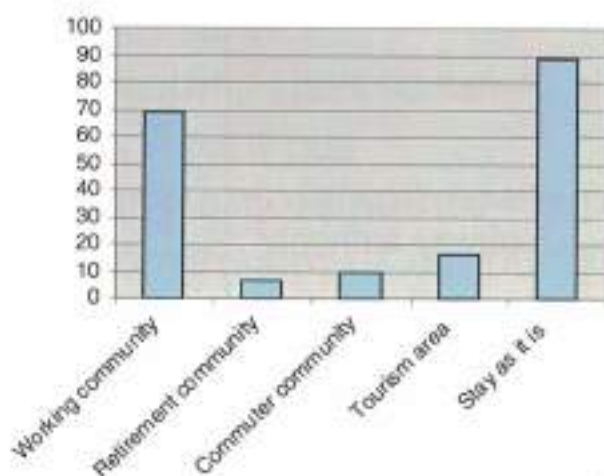
- The tranquillity and openness of the parish are the two most valued elements
- An overwhelming majority of residents want Eldersfield to stay as it is in the future
- Hedges, small woods and traditional farm buildings are landscape features that rate highest for conservation

## ACTION POINTS

- The Parish Council to note what residents most value and work towards the conservation of these features
- The Parish Council to strive to retain the character of the community whilst allowing it to thrive



How would you like Eldersfield in the future



## QUOTES

“This place needs a point of contact – a village hall would be ideal”

“It needs a balance to be a “dynamic” area not a “fossilised” one”

# ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME
Parish Council to work with planning authority regarding new build policy	Parish Council & District council	On-going
Pursue those responsible for drainage clearance	Parish Council	On-going
Consult with housing facilitators term to investigate affordable housing provision	Parish Council	Medium
Publicise the school hall letting policy and availability of the recreation field	Parish Council & School	Immediate
Investigate the provision of clubs and education in the evenings	Parish Council & School	Medium term
Publicise the mobile library and shop dates and times	Parish Council & service providers	Short term
Inform the emergency services of results and seek improvements	Parish Council & service providers	Immediate
Investigate and discuss improved methods of communicating information within the parish	Parish, District & County Councils, magazine editors & parishioners	On-going
Inform local and county footpath officers of the findings and suggestions for improvements	Parish Council & footpath officers	Medium term
Investigate alternative and improved transport links	Parish Council	Medium term
Inform highways authority of reported road safety concerns	Parish Council & highway authority	On-going
Embrace findings of this plan and retain the character of the community whilst allowing it to thrive	Parish Council & residents	On-going

# ELDERSFIELD LAWN SCHOOL

## A SUMMARY OF A SEMINAR WITH CLASS 4



### What we like about our parish



- ◊ Wildlife – birds
- ◊ Footpaths and places to walk
- ◊ No factories
- ◊ Near to cities but not too close
- ◊ It is quiet
- ◊ Low crime rate
- ◊ Trees
- ◊ The school
- ◊ There is lots of open space
- ◊ There is good communication
- ◊ The hotel and it's helipad
- ◊ It is not built up
- ◊ It is clean and tidy



### What we don't like about the parish



- ◊ The road is too fast
- ◊ Too few buses
- ◊ Not enough cheaper houses for families and retirement (just a few more needed) so country people can stay in the country



### What we need in the parish



- ◊ Shops
- ◊ Clubs
- ◊ Adventure playground
- ◊ Bus service
- ◊ Landing field for small aircraft
- ◊ A Parish bus
- ◊ A few more houses – especially renovations and conversions of old buildings
- ◊ Village meeting room
- ◊ To avoid pollution

## 2003 Questionnaire

## Replies

1 What is important to you about Eldersfield ?	- The community	57
	- The environment	104
	- The location	96
2 Should any of the following be encouraged?	- Tourism	59
	- Small businesses	48
	- Small scale industry	3
	- More housing	46
3 Is the lack of affordable housing a problem ?	- Yes	43
	- No	100
4 Do you have a major flooding problem?	- Yes	53
	- No	88
5 Do you experience transport difficulties?	- Yes	28
	- No	113
6 Would you use an improved bus service ?	- Yes	69
	- No	65
7 Are there any major 'danger spots' on the parish roads ?	- Yes	87
	- No	32
8 Is the School important and essential to the community?	- Yes	133
	- No	0
	- No view	10
9 Would any of the following increase links within the community ?		
After school clubs		42
Evening classes		69
Community Groups		51
10 (i) What new clubs / activities would you be interested in ?	<b>See comments page</b>	
(ii) Would you be prepared to help organise / run such activities ?		
11 Are you aware of the school hall letting policy ?	Yes / No	49 / 96
Are you aware of the availability of the adjacent recreation field ?	Yes / No	41 / 104
12 Would you be prepared to keep items for recycling?	- Yes	143
	- No	4
13 What do you think of the state of the following ?		
Roads	Good / Poor / Don't know	72 / 68 / 4
Verges	Good / Poor / Don't know	80 / 58 / 6
Public Footpaths	Good / Poor / Don't know	49 / 36 / 51
14 Do you use the Mobile shop?	Yes / No	23 / 121
Mobile library?	Yes / No	27 / 118
15 How do you rate the standard of the emergency services?	<b>See main report</b>	

		Replies
16	Where do you usually get parish information? - Notice boards	55
	Parish magazine	125
	Local paper	42
	Other	24
17	Do you think the quality of information is – Good?	38
	- Reasonable?	58
	- Needs improving?	45
18	Do you use the local public telephone boxes ? Yes / No	19 / 127
	Should they be retained ? Yes / No	128 / 18
19	How well do the local councils publicise their decisions and activities ?	
	Parish Council            Good / Satisfactory / Poor	14 / 91 / 54
	District Council            Good / Satisfactory / Poor	6 / 62 / 64
	County Council            Good / Satisfactory / Poor	7 / 58 / 67
20	Are you satisfied with the way Parish Council money is spent? - Yes	33
	- No	31
	- Don't know	79
21	How well do you feel councillors are aware of local concerns and feelings :-	
	Parish Council            Good / Satisfactory / Poor	43 / 47 / 36
	District Council            Good / Satisfactory / Poor	13 / 55 / 56
	County Council            Good / satisfactory / Poor	15 / 44 / 66
22	Are you satisfied with the planning system? - Totally satisfied	15
	- Fairly satisfied	59
	- Dissatisfied	35
	- Do not understand the system	35
23	Which elements of the countryside do you value? - Local identity	53
	- Tranquillity	119
	- Openness	109
	- Other	2
24	What features in particular need to be preserved in Eldersfield ? <b>See main report</b>	
25	What can be done to improve the parish environment? <b>See comments page</b>	
26	Would you be prepared to help in any parish initiative? ( Please specify)	
27	Public footpaths and bridleways: <b>See main report</b>	
28	How should the results of this survey be made known? - By a public report	126
	- By a public meeting	35
	- Other	9
29	How would you like to see Eldersfield in the future? <b>See main report</b>	

## Summary of comments received in relation to questionnaire

- Q1 It is within easy reach of other town centres
- Q2 More housing to enable more people to enjoy a rural lifestyle, and improve community spirit  
Smaller / cheaper properties needed otherwise this is becoming a commuter / retirement village  
More housing to support the local facilities e.g. school & pub
- Q3 It is a huge problem for the young people who have to move away  
Youngsters are not able to afford a home here
- Q4 Many residents cause the Council great expense by filling in ditches and ponds etc. without authority
- Q6 When we can no longer drive we will have to sell our house
- Q7 The bend in the road near the car sales garage is dangerous  
There should be a 30mph limit outside the school  
Note: the following areas were cited as 'danger spots' on local roads  
Hoggs Pitch, Bridge End, Moorend Road, Gadfield Elm, North end of Corse Lawn, South end of Corse Lawn, School, Link End, Long Green.
- Q8 Lose your school and you lose a major social contact
- Q10 The following activities were listed as suggestions for out of hours use of the school or recreation field (number of suggestions in brackets)  
Badminton (3), Computers (9), Languages (5), Something for teenagers (6), Sport (3), Crafts (6), Tennis (10), Amateur Dramatics (2), Gardening (2), Keep Fit (7).
- Q12 What about wheelie bins – they are safer than black bags
- Q25 Make use of biodiversity action plans  
Have a village party twice a year  
Make more of a community by having a 'centre'  
Remove ugly road signs  
Create a lake or large pond  
Hold an annual fete and 'plant a tree a year'  
Return a Post Office / shop to the parish  
Reduce litter in the parish  
Can we have Preservation Orders on old orchards
- Q29 Can we have a road sign for Swinley Lane  
Eldersfield - why fix what's not broken – it's lovely as it is!

## PARISH DIRECTORY 2004

The Parish Council meet at Eldersfield Lawn School on the second Thursday in January, March, May, July, September and November.

The annual Parish meeting is held in March. Members of the public are invited to attend each meeting with an opportunity to speak.

Parish Clerk – Joseph Gabbott - tel:- 01452 780129

email:- eldersfieldpc@onetel.com

St John the Baptist Parish Church –

Church Wardens – Mary Williams - tel:- 01452 780320

Glyn Smart - tel:- 01452 780303

Parish magazine editors – Leta and Brian Woodcock – tel:- 01452 780688

County Councillor – Tom Wells – tel:- 01905 831752

email:- tomwells@globalnet.co.uk

District Councillor – Julia Wildin – tel:- 01684 311322

email:- julia.wildin@btinternet.com

School Secretary and School Hall letting contact – tel:- 01452 780309

Recreation field charity – Judy Hibbert – tel:- 01452780770

Labouring poor charity – Judy Hibbert – tel:- 01452 780770

Mobile library – Second Friday each month – tel:- 01684 561223

Visiting Pool Hay at 1200, School 1235, The Birches Corse Lawn 1325, The Cotch Corse Lawn 1355, Lime Street 1415, Bridge End 1445, Gadfield Elm 1510

Mobile shop – David Dudley – Friday afternoons tel:- 01684 297737

Police Beat Manager – P C Mark Taylor – tel:- 08457 444 888 ext. 4917

Citizens Advice Bureau – tel:- 01684 563611

Bus Services - Currently subject to review.

Contact – Malvern Hills Rural Transport Partnership Officer tel:- 01905 768417

Parish Footpaths Officer – Mary Williams – tel:- 01452 780320

## Eldersfield Local Clubs & Organisations

Cricket Club – Peter Francis tel:- 01452 531076

Corse Lawn Women's Group – Irene Collins tel:- 01452 780635

Eldersfield Ladies Club – Mrs Jill Taylor – tel:- 01452 840317

Mothers Union – Marie Booth – tel:- 01452 780663

Corse Lawn Riding for the Disabled – Heather Parker – tel:- 01452 780382

Ledbury Hunt Pony Club – Audrey Brewer tel:- 01452 700232

Tirley Play Group – tel:- 01684 291146 or 01684 297028

The Reeves (administrators of the Common) –

Secretary – Mrs Pat Crockett - tel:- 01452 780257

## Local village shops with Post Offices are in:

Pendock – tel:- 01531 650034    Staunton – tel:- 01452 840220

Ashleworth – tel:- 01452 700215    Forthampton – tel:- 01684 293135

## Doctor's Surgeries are in:

Staunton – tel:- 01452 840228

Barton Road Tewkesbury – tel:- 01684 293278

Church Road Tewkesbury – tel:- 01684 292343

Chance Street Tewkesbury – tel:- 01684 296710

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