

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2000 a Community Consultation event was held in the Parish of Suckley. This is a rural Parish located between the main roads from Worcester to Hereford and Leominster.

The event was attended by 54 members of the community with most being young children and the late middle aged. The majority of attendees were male.

The results of the event are split into broad categories or themes. These relate to transport, the local environment, leisure, crime and safety, housing, work, training and the local environment, community facilities, health and provision for peoples own comments.

Key results are:

TRANSPORT	Concern over the speed, volume and safety of traffic passing through the Parish. Drainage was an issue and there were also concerns relating to the road bridge into Longley Green being an accident hot spot.
LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	Key points related to the provision of poop scoop bins at the local playing fields. The planting of trees in avenues along the entrances into Longley Green was also suggested.
LEISURE	The main issue raised was the formation and the provision of a cricket team for the Parish as well as cricket equipment. Beyond this there was also requests for the provision of various leisure activities such as badminton and yoga.
CRIME AND SAFETY	The majority of the requests were for presence of police footpatrols in the Parish. In addition to this there were requests for the formation of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and further requests for Traffic Calming.
HOUSING	Drainage was the most commonly occurring issue. There was also a wide range of issues relating to the quality of the current housing stock on the New Road Estate.
TRAINING, WORK AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY	No major issues were raised.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	The overwhelming number of cards related to keeping the Primary school open.
HEALTH	Two people requested a blood donor service.
OWN SUGGESTIONS	These tended to be by nature issues that related to individuals. However there was consensus over allowing wider usage of the Tennis Courts and concerns over the flooding in the parish.

In addition to the use of a Planning for Real model, the consultation event also used a series of pin board questionnaires. This helped with information on attendees and local service usage.

The key results are summarised below:

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE YOUR LOCAL FACILITIES	With the exception of the post office most people used their local facilities on an occasional basis. The Post Office was used regularly. Most people never used public transport or the mobile library.
DID YOU GROW UP IN SUCKLEY	Most people were not originally from the Parish.
EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS	The results indicated that the majority of people who attended were either self employed or retired.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE AREA	Most people lived in the area for over 10 years.
WHERE DO YOUR CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL	The majority of Primary school age children attended the Parish Primary School. The secondary school age children were spilt between Malvern and Worcester.
TRAVEL PATTERNS	A large proportion of people worked in the Parish itself whilst the other large group worked outside the local area. Malvern was the main centre for shopping.

The majority of people who attended the event came from the two main settlements of Longley Green and the Village of Suckley. There were people from elsewhere in the Parish but these were spread out, reflecting the nature of the Parish.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1999 Malvern Hills District Council made a decision to pilot community consultation and capacity building events in two of the Districts parishes as a method of engaging local people and agencies in rural regeneration. The method of consultation chosen was a 'Planning for Real' exercise. The purpose of using this type of consultation was to ensure that a wide range of local issues could be considered, across a wide range of age groups, and bringing in people who would not necessarily attend formal consultation exercises such as public meetings. One of the areas chosen for the pilot was the Parish of Suckley.

The process began with a general awareness-raising event that was held in the Parish Hall. This provided local people with information about the plans for the events and the processes that would begin to identify the local needs and issues.

It was anticipated at the time that this would be followed by a full consultation event in short order, however due to unforeseen circumstances the next stages in the event were not delivered until November 2000.

## CHARACTERISTICS

The parish itself is located 11 miles North North West of the town of Great Malvern. It lies between the two main Roads to Hereford and Leominster.

The area is characterised by a hilly landscape that follows on from the larger Malvern Hills to the South and the presence of Leigh Brook, which is fed by several smaller streams around the Parish and joins the river Teme at Leigh.

The land use is heavily agricultural with narrow drovers roads providing the main thoroughfares. There is one industrial site at the Bruff Business Park.

There is a strong affinity with the neighbouring Parish of Alfrick, which shares similar characteristics to Suckley.

The Suckley Hills are classified as an AONB.

The geography of the Parish means that the settlements have developed along the main north south road from Knightwick in a horse shoe shape to Alfrick that follows the line of the Suckley Hills in a ribbon development.

The population in 1997 of the Parish was 604.

In terms of funding eligibility, Suckley Parish is located within the newly designated Rural Regeneration Zone. This Zone comprises of the overlapping Objective 2 area and

the old Rural Development Area, that has been expanded to take account of newly identified need.

## SERVICES

The Parish has several key services. There is a primary school whose current pupils number 32, post office and shop, Parish Hall, Church, and playing fields.

## AIM

The aim of the work in the Parish of Suckley is for the people of the Parish to raise the issues that affect them. For those issues to be identified prioritised and then acted upon by a range of agencies and local people to improve the quality of people's lives.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the issues that affect the people of the Parish, extensive consultation needs to be undertaken with local people. Rural areas are not homogenous, local factors and personal circumstance will affect the quality of peoples lives. The broad band national trends that are an ongoing part of the evolution of rural areas will be present but may not be considered issues by people who have learned to adapt to their own personal situation.

If this work is to make a difference to real people it needs to be about them and by them not done to them.

The Planning for Real technique of community consultation and capacity building was developed in the 1970's in inner city areas of Scotland. It had been recently been successfully piloted in the Malvern Hills District in the Langlands Ward of the Town.

The application of the process in rural areas has been tried elsewhere in the Country with different challenges being presented and varying degrees of success. However the process has a high degree of anonymity and as such has distinct advantages in close knit rural communities.

A scale model is produced that allows people to place a series of issue cards where the issue affects the person in their locale.

The issue cards are pre-printed and cover broad themes such as Transport, Community, Environment and Crime. In addition to this blank cards are available for people to add anything that is not covered.

The event itself is only part of the process and a great deal of publicity is required to ensure that there is a representative turn out from the community to ensure all ages and genders are covered.

There were two Suckley Models made. One to a scale of 1:300 of the major villages or hamlets and one at a scale of 1:8000. This was designed to pick up more general issues and issues that fell outside the larger settlements. Two models were needed, as a single model of the Parish at a scale of 1:300 would have been too large for most Village or Parish Halls.

In addition to the actual Planning for Real process a series of other questions were asked to provide information on the composition of the people attending and other issues.

#### SKILLS AUDIT

Skill Audits are useful ways of identifying the skills and enthusiasm that a community holds within it's self. A sheet is completed to identify which skills people have and which they would be willing to share with others or use to support local projects. This is a key element in building the capacity of the community to help itself, and in identifying where there are skills gaps which need an input of training or resources if local people are to take a significant role in delivering the subsequent Action Plan.

#### PIN BOARD QUESTIONNAIRES

This provided the key information about the composition of those attending the event and information about access to services.

#### YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRE

This was an attempt to engage with young people and help identify their needs. The Youth Service 'Moby' a mobile youth centre was situated outside the Parish Hall for the duration of the event.

#### FOLLOW UP EVENTS

Provision was made for additional smaller scale events to overcome any problems of bias in the composition of those attending the event, specifically participation by young people.

#### PUBLICITY

This is key prior to the event and post the event in generating good attendance and disseminating information. Two leaflet drops were conducted to every house in the Parish. In addition to this Press releases were issued and there was coverage in the local papers of the event itself.



Another key piece of publicity was the use of the local Primary school children to make the scale models and the houses. This began to engage with the local community as well as raising awareness about the event with parents.

#### KEY PARTNERS

The People of Suckley Parish

Community Council of Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Elgar Housing Association

Malvern Hills District Council

Suckley Parish Council

Suckley Primary School

West Mercia Police

Worcestershire County Council Highways Partnership

Worcestershire Youth Service