

Kingston Seymour Parish Plan

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MIDDLE LANE

HAM LANE

2011

BACK LANE

SOMERSET

Table of contents

Summary

Introduction	page	3
A Brief History of Kingston Seymour	page	4
Kingston Seymour Today	page	5
What Happens Next	page	7

Kingston Seymour Parish Map	centrefold
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Findings and Proposals

Introduction	page	8
The Natural Environment		
Maintaining, enhancing and enjoying our heritage	page	9
Changing behaviour – a ‘greenprint’ for improvement	page	12
The Built Environment	page	14
Business and Employment	page	16
Communications	page	18
Facilities and Activities	page	20
Community Safety	page	23
Flood Risk and Development	page	24
Transport	page	27
Traffic and Road Safety	page	29
Children and Young People	page	32

The Parish Plan Process

Timeline	page	34
Methodology	page	35

Acknowledgements

Contributors	page	38
Acknowledgements	page	39

Summary: Introduction



The Parish Plan sets out the views of Kingston Seymour's residents on their village and its future. It is designed to be a "living document", regularly updated and rolled forward over the next 5-10 years. It contains a summary of the findings of the questionnaire survey conducted in late 2008; this built on earlier surveys in 1997 (for the Village Character Statement) and 2004. It also contains the Action Plan, which consists of recommendations derived from those findings. The comments made by residents at public meetings and the output of the various working groups have also fed into the process of drawing up the Action Plan.

The recommendations in the Action Plan reflect the views of the majority of residents across a wide range of topics and issues. Not everyone will feel able to support every proposed action, but we hope that there will be sufficient interest and practical support for all or most of these actions to be implemented over the next few years. The Parish Plan is for **everyone**.

THIS IS YOUR PLAN – MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU!

A Brief History of Kingston Seymour

It seems likely that there has been a settlement in this area since Saxon times or even earlier. The “Exeter” Domesday Book refers to the church at “Chingestone”, but nothing remains of the Norman building except the font. In the 12th century the Lordship of the Manor was granted to one Milo de Sancto Mauro. One of the tombs in the churchyard, thought to date from the fifteenth century, allegedly belongs to the Bulbeck family, but the oldest surviving houses are farmhouses of up to 500 years old.



All Saints Church

In 1607 there was a major flood encompassing much of the Severn Estuary – an inundation of seawater that is recorded on a plaque in the church porch. Many people were drowned and “much cattle and goods were lost: the water in the church was five feet high and the greatest part lay on the ground about ten days”. There were floods again in the 18th century and more recently in 1968 and 1981. The parish remains vulnerable to flooding and this sense of exposure to the elements is very

much part of the character of the area. Despite recent and projected improvements to the sea defences, the potential effects of climate change and rising sea levels may mean that the threat of inundation can never be entirely eradicated.



Saltmarsh near the mouth of the River Yeo

For centuries, the mainstay of the village economy was agriculture. Until the end of the 19th century most of the land was held by a few large landowners, including the Church. By the 1920s, however, these large landholdings had been broken up and sold to individual farmers. The arrival of the motorway in the early 70s eased commuting as well as long-distance travel and in this decade several groups of new houses were constructed on former farmland. However the village school had already closed (1968) and despite the new housing, the shop and original Post Office was soon to follow, although the *Community* Post Office opened a few years later. The 1990s saw further house building on former farmland, as two more farms ceased business, and it was at this time that most of the remaining land within the settlement boundary was developed. At the end of the decade the Village Hall, by then more than 25 years old, underwent major refurbishment, fitting it for the new Millennium.

Kingston Seymour Today

The Parish of Kingston Seymour is situated on the North Somerset Levels between the towns of Clevedon (approximately 4 miles to the north) and Weston-super-Mare (approximately 6 miles to the south). The M5 motorway lies immediately to the east and the shore of the Severn Estuary forms its western boundary.

Around half of its 380 residents live within the “settlement boundary” as currently defined for Local Plan purposes¹. The centre of the village is “the Triangle”, where four lanes meet and there is a small green on which the war memorial is situated.

The remaining dwellings are scattered less intensively throughout the parish and include both small clusters of houses and isolated farms. The land is low-lying and the entire parish is designated as floodplain by the Environment Agency. This, together with the relative isolation of the area – there are no through roads so Kingston Seymour is not “on the way” to anywhere – and the absence of all but the most basic services means that the village is unsuitable for major expansion. Although it has seen considerable alteration in recent decades, it has retained much of its character and charm. The challenge for the future is to continue to preserve and enhance its character whilst accommodating gradual social and environmental change.

Now into a new century, Kingston Seymour is in some ways little altered since the Second World War. The network of small lanes is almost exactly as it was. The population – which has fluctuated considerably during that period – has hardly grown since its post-war peak. In other ways, however, it is very different. The first decade of the new century was characterised by a significant expansion in the number of non-agricultural businesses,

as more farms have diversified wholly or partially into other activities and an increased number of people have found it practical to work from home. There are many fewer working farms and a much greater diversity of businesses, with 22% of respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire giving their employment status as self-employed (national average 13%). Added to this there is a significant element of out-commuting to jobs in Bristol, other local towns and even to London. Most children and young people go to school in Yatton (infant and junior) and Backwell (secondary), although a number travel elsewhere. The village has little in the way of services or facilities and is poorly served by public transport, but residents make good use of the Church and Village Hall, which are both very important venues for meetings and activities.



The War Memorial looking to Lampley Road

Ten years ago the village was the proud winner of the Village of the Year National Community Life Award; Secretary of State Michael Meacher, presenting the award, introduced it by referring to Kingston

¹ A settlement boundary defines the area within which development is permitted.

Seymour as “the village which has nothing, but everything. You could be out every night of the week!” Most adult residents would probably still agree. It has a wide variety of organisations and activities and there is no lack of opportunities for “getting involved”. Young people of school and college age are less well served, and depend to varying extents on larger villages or towns for their leisure time activities.



A popular class in our Village Show!

There has been a significant change in the demographic in recent years. Although nearly two-thirds of the population has lived here for 11 years or more, the last five years have seen an influx of young families as well as a home-grown baby boom. The total population has grown by an estimated

12% since the 2001 Census. Children and young people under the age of 18 now make up 18% of the population, numbering around 70 (almost 80 including Kingston Bridge), a significant increase on the position 10 years ago (12%). We believe that this bodes well for the future of the community; it also represents a challenge in terms of seeing if we can improve provision within the parish for children’s sport and play.

It was apparent from the many comments made in response to the questionnaire that, for most of us, Kingston Seymour is a wonderful place to live. We like the (relative) peace and quiet, the tranquil blend of earth, sea and sky, the animals in the fields and the wildlife. We value our friendly and caring community and want it to stay that way. But there *are* concerns, the most pressing of which is the long-term but drastic proposal to set back the sea defences, which could result in the loss of almost a quarter of the agricultural land area of the parish and of the livelihoods of several landowners. There are other, less high-profile matters also: it is to try to improve the quality of life for *all* residents that this Plan has been produced.

Just some of the beautiful floral displays created for the Village of The Year competition 2010 here seen against the backdrop of the Remembrance Day wreaths on the War Memorial



What Happens Next?

The Plan contains 42 actions, most of which we hope will be implemented over the next 5 years. However, from time to time the Plan will be reviewed and “rolled forward”, giving it a potential life of closer to 10 years.

The actions within this Plan will not implement themselves. For this to happen, a number of implementation groups will be formed under the auspices of the Parish Council. These will consist in part of the previous working group members who helped create this Plan and in part, we hope, of some new faces; it will be their task to take forward specific actions and recommendations.

The Parish Plan provides us with a very clear summary of residents’ views and expectations as we move forward into another decade. It indicates what we need to do to embrace today’s opportunities and challenges without compromising what makes Kingston Seymour a special place to live. Together with the Village Character Statement, it will inform decisions relating to Kingston Seymour reached by North Somerset Council, the Parish Council and other organisations.

Importantly, with organisation and effort, many things we can do for ourselves. A number of actions can be progressed fairly quickly and at little or no cost, others will require more time and/or significant funding. Some will require detailed consultation with other bodies followed by assessment of budgets and identification of funding streams to make them a reality. In some cases, where the proposed action is not within the remit of the Parish Council, it will be necessary to work with outside agencies. The Parish Council has demonstrated its commitment to the implementation phase by making provision in its 2010/11 budget for £700 to be spent. This may be only the tip of the iceberg but it will get us started.

In summary, we now know what needs to be done, and we have people already committed to making things happen and implementing many of the identified actions. As a village we now need to get behind the implementation of this Plan and make it a physical reality, helping to shape our village and assure its future for both current residents and generations to come.



Findings and Proposals: Introduction



A view of Ham Rhyne

The findings and proposals are grouped by subject and broadly follow the original questionnaire. However, some topics refused to be constrained and generated a lot of feedback either as answers or comments throughout the returned questionnaires. One such is the concern about Broadband and, as you'll see, this could easily have been included in our findings for Business, Communication or Facilities. Traffic and Road Safety is another topic which cropped up in several places throughout the questionnaire. For ease of reading we've left these topics in their original locations but have duplicated the action points where it made sense to do so.

The working parties hold master copies of the Parish Plan which include a greater level of detail than we show here. These include feasibility, implementation, further cost detail, sources of funds, information about our Partner Bodies, and more specific (and measurable) delivery dates. Each working party will keep this plan up to date. Paper copies will be available to view on request.

Also available to view is the detailed results document from which the plan was developed. This is a large document, as you can imagine, so will not be stored online although extracts can easily be sent to you electronically or a copy made available for you to read.

We have made every effort to ensure your anonymity is preserved; please see more information under methodology on page 35. Whilst we have included *some* comments in this document, any that can be easily attributed to their author are excluded and will not be available for general viewing. They have however, informed the actions as you would expect.

The Natural Environment: Maintaining, enhancing and enjoying our heritage

- *Over half of questionnaire respondents would like to find out more about the local environment*
- *Almost three quarters of residents would like to see the completion of the coastal path – but most as a footpath only*
- *Only a quarter of residents use the footpaths regularly; 72% rarely or never use them*
- *There is strong support for protecting and enhancing orchards, hedgerows and open spaces*

The Parish of Kingston Seymour forms part of the North Somerset Levels and for the most part lies at or only slightly above sea level. Inland are the only slightly higher “Moors”. Together, these Levels and Moors, which are similar in character to the better-known Somerset Levels and Moors, constitute a nationally rare and fragile ecosystem.

Once regularly flooded, these reclaimed wetlands are rich in wildlife. This is a historic landscape, characterised by flat expanses of pasture, dissected by a network of grypes, ditches and rhynes of ancient origin. Some of these support flora and

fauna of considerable ecological interest, including the nationally scarce brackish water crowfoot, rootless duckweed, the variable damselfly and a number of species of water beetle. Present-day field patterns and boundaries still reflect changes in agricultural practice and land ownership dating back to medieval times. The ditches, rhynes and ancient hedgerows form important wildlife “corridors”. Fields vary between one and ten acres in area, most consisting of improved grassland, although there are a few examples of relict grassland (particularly near the Sea Wall) and these have a higher biological significance.



View of Kingston Seymour from the motorway bridge nr Yew Tree Farm

It was not always such an open landscape. Dutch elm disease claimed thousands of elms in the early 1970s. Many farmers and householders have planted trees to replace those lost and most of these are native species, with willow and thorns the most characteristic. There is no woodland as such, but there are a number of ancient orchards, as well as some of more recent origin, and these provide an important wildlife habitat, as do the coastal mudflats and areas of saltmarsh. The estuary margins – part of the Severn Estuary SSSI and a SPA/Ramsar site under EU law - are highly significant for their bird populations; here, large numbers of wading birds roost and breed and skylarks, currently in decline nationally, breed and overwinter near the Sea Wall. The area also supports a variety of migrating birds in the spring and autumn. The Blakes Pool Nature Reserve (see map) is managed by the local Wildlife Trust.



Orchards and fruit trees provide food for winter visitors such as this Fieldfare feeding on crab apples

The questionnaire results indicated a strong attachment to and interest in the local environment. The fact that the village is surrounded by open countryside with wide views, and the “peace and quiet”, were ranked as “important” or “very important” to them by 94% and 89% of residents respectively. More than 80% of residents actively encourage wildlife into their gardens and 60% do not regard any local wildlife as a nuisance. Many villagers would like to see more or enhanced conservation areas, and to know and understand more about the diversity of plants, birds and other animals on their doorstep. Yet few residents use the

footpaths regularly and almost three quarters use them rarely if at all. The Parish Plan therefore contains actions aimed at using local expertise to share knowledge and understanding and to help villagers become more familiar with our public rights of way through better maintenance, signage and a programme of illustrated talks and guided walks and practical projects.

I “believe there is expertise in the village – we should use it, to educate the rest of us”

The coastal access provision of the Marine Act 2009, includes the creation of a Tidal Trail along the entire length of the English coastline. As a result, this project, which has been on the local authority’s wish list for at least two decades, is now more likely to come to fruition. Almost three quarters of residents would like to see the completion of the coastal path between Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare, although many have reservations about the possible implications for the village in terms of a probable increase in traffic, damage to verges through inappropriate parking, risks to livestock and a general loss of tranquillity. However, for many the benefits outweigh the possible disadvantages. The proposal for a *footpath* along the coastline is viewed by affected landowners as relatively benign, but the local authority and other interest groups are keen to see this as a *multi-use right of way*, with “spreading room”, diverting inland to cross the Congresbury Yeo at Tutshill Sluice. Such aspirations would be more controversial and would require negotiation with landowners and consultation with the local community.

“Kingston Seymour has an abundance of wildlife. Not being managed has contributed to this as human intervention usually upsets nature’s balance”

“The existing habitat is natural, well-balanced and sufficient”

It is unclear at this stage what effect the Environment Agency’s controversial proposals to “set back” the sea defences in

our parish (see page 24) would have on the Tidal Trail proposals.

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Form an interest group to provide information to residents about wildlife and habitat of local area	Explore the ways in which the habitat for wildlife in the parish may be improved (including existing community wildlife conservation area) Support individuals and organisations who want to enhance the habitat for wildlife Engage local knowledge/people to educate and inform Deliver information via the magazine and village website	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil Spring 2011
Explore ways of facilitating use of footpaths by residents	Publicise routes and suggested walks– see information on village map	Priority: High Cost: Nil
Existing footpaths to be checked and maintained for signage, accessibility and ease of use	Liaise with farmers and landowners over access issues Link to environment/wildlife group – action could be managed by members Regularly report to Parish Council	Priority: High Cost: Nil Winter 2010
Arrange occasional guided walks to parts of the parish not normally accessible	Facilitate discussions with local landowners to provide guidance and expertise on key topics Discuss with local interest groups the possibility of including such walks and opening them to a wider audience	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil 2011
Maintain Ham Lane seating area	Interested local residents to meet and plan Concerns about safety must be addressed Discuss with Drainage Board and North Somerset Council Streets and Open Spaces as necessary	Priority: Medium Cost: Low 2011
Keep up to date with progress on The Tidal Trail	Kingston Seymour Parish Council to ensure that residents are notified about any and all consultations or decisions regarding the coastal path / Tidal Trail	Priority: High Cost: Nil Ongoing

“Could someone with knowledge of wildlife write an article in village magazine ...telling people how to ‘do their bit’ for wildlife to improve habitat and survival”

“The proposed coastal footpath is a particular threat to wildlife in the area”

“The Sea Wall walk needs to only be accessible by walkers, with stiles, kissing gates etc to prevent cars, motorbikes etc”

“I like to use the footpaths but they are overgrown and not maintained and sometimes I have no option but to turn back”

“I look forward to using them (footpaths) when I retire”

“Working parties would be a great way of getting to know folk, good exercise and a real help to the community”



A traditional double stile and plank bridge

The Natural Environment: Changing behaviour – a ‘greenprint’ for improvement

- *Litter, fly-tipping, unpleasant odours and dog fouling are problems for some residents, in specific areas*
- *61% of residents expressed interest in a community composting facility*
- *38 residents expressed interest in having an allotment*
- *48% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that their experience of living in Kingston Seymour is adversely affected by motorway noise*

Looking at the responses to our way of life more generally, it is striking that although over 80% of residents recycle paper, cans and glass, 30% of residents do not compost any garden or food waste, despite the fact that practically all homes in the village have gardens, many of a good size. However, although some were strongly opposed, over 60% of residents expressed an interest in a community composting facility and the Action Plan includes an intention that the feasibility of this should be investigated. This could be linked to the provision of allotments; residents are entitled to make a formal request to the Parish Council for suitable land to be sought for this purpose.

There is strong interest in recycling plastics and 59% of residents wished to investigate future plans for kerbside collection of plastic. However, since the questionnaire was completed, North Somerset Council, have introduced a more comprehensive recycling programme. This may significantly alter residents’ behaviour and it will be important to revisit the questionnaire findings in this new context.



Rubbish bins and green waste are now collected on alternate weeks

“It is our new year’s resolution to recycle more!”



Although many residents expressed an interest in renewable energy, actual usage rates are currently very low, except for wood. A recent presentation on the subject by the local authority’s Energy Manager was poorly attended, but there may be scope for greater take-up in the future². Easily accessible advice and information is key here and more use could be made of the Village Hall as an information point.

“The motorway was here when we moved in so an acceptable, and accepted, nuisance balanced by convenience of access”

Turning to another aspect of the environment, only one form of pollution or nuisance concerned a significant number of respondents. 48% of respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their experience of living in Kingston Seymour was adversely affected by motorway noise. Few of us are unlucky enough to experience this at high volume the whole time and for most, under favourable wind conditions the noise is barely perceptible. However, there cannot now be many places unaffected by the noise of traffic (or trains, or planes) and for most residents the motorway is also a considerable convenience, rendering Kingston Seymour at once both relatively remote and tranquil and highly accessible and well-connected.

² The Government introduced the Feed in Tariff (FiT) for renewable electricity in April 2010 and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is expected in April 2011

Other forms of environmental nuisance are less pervasive. Although Kingston Seymour appears clean and tidy compared with more urban areas, in some parts of the parish – mainly Lampley Road and in the lanes near to the fishing lakes – there are concerns about the amount of litter. Some villagers already pick up litter when out walking; many more have volunteered to do so and there are plans to make more organised use of volunteer effort. Fly-tipping is also sometimes evident, especially in Lampley Road and some of the quieter,

outlying areas, and some residents say that dog waste spoils their enjoyment of some parts of the village. A few residents complain of unpleasant odours either related to farming activities or from the Sewage Treatment Works; the latter seem to have persisted despite the covering-over of the open slurry tanks in 2009

“As a responsible dog owner it is disappointing to see dog fouling in the village. Owners should ensure that their dogs do not roam and all responsible owners should carry poo bags”

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Maintain existing volunteer litter collection	Encourage new volunteers to assist Identify problem areas for ‘extra’ attention Encourage all residents to be vigilant and pick up	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil Spring 2011
Monitor fly-tipping to identify the scale of problem	Advise residents what to do if they witness illegal tipping or find dump sites Publish reporting procedure and process	Priority: High Cost: Medium Winter 2010
Investigate provision of allotments	Confirm level of interest amongst residents Establish interest of landowners, if any, in giving or leasing land for this purpose Establish potential, if any, of a “garden-share” scheme If appropriate, approach Parish Council to request formal action as per statute; seek advice from other councils and relevant organisations as to allotment provision and management; consult with residents	Priority: High Cost: Unknown Summer 2011
Investigate options for a community composting facility	May be linked to provision of allotments as there is a natural fit for both generating and using output	Priority: Medium Cost: Low Spring 2011
Obtain feedback from residents as to their views of North Somerset Councils new recycling regime	Revisit questionnaire findings Solicit feedback via questionnaire to update views (could be distributed with Parish Plan)	Priority: High Cost: Nil Spring 2011
Inform residents of the opportunities available to make use of renewable energy	Review ways to educate and inform Approach relevant commercial and scientific organisations to help deliver information Consider the planning and amenity aspects of installation	Priority: Medium Cost: Low 2011
Explore ways to reduce noise from M5 that may be achieved at a local level	Solicit information from Highways Agency regarding the management of motorway noise Seek independent acoustic advice	Priority: Medium Cost: To be researched 2011
Reduce dog fouling near dwellings	Target dog owners for awareness message Review options to encourage owners to pick up Investigate possibility of dog waste disposal bins	Priority: Medium Cost: Spring 2011
Press for the reduction or elimination of residents’ experiences of unpleasant odours	Continue to monitor reports of unpleasant odours from Sewage Works Ensure as far as possible that Wessex Water maintain their efforts to eliminate the problem	Priority: High Cost: Nil Started 2010

The Built Environment

- *One third of questionnaire respondents did not want any further development at all*
- *There is strong support for resisting development creep*
- *40% would support a small number of low-cost houses to meet local needs*
- *A large majority of residents think it is “important” to “vital” to maintain the Village Character Statement policies on building design and character*

Although the historic core of the village grew up around the church, in geographical terms the focal point of the village is now “the Triangle”, where Lampley Road, Ham Lane, Middle Lane and Back Lane converge. The centre of the village is characterised by a mixture of buildings of widely differing ages, materials and styles. Even here densities are fairly low, with most houses well-spaced and having gardens of a reasonable size. Beyond the village centre, densities are lower still and gardens larger. In the parish as a whole, houses are larger than the national average, with a high proportion being family houses with 4 or more bedrooms.

“If I had wanted to live somewhere with lots of facilities I wouldn’t have chosen Kingston Seymour – I like it as it is!”

Although one-third of respondents did not want any further development at all, there is a perceived but as yet unproven local need for entry-level or “low-cost” housing and a significant minority would support the provision of a few houses of this type. One action to arise from this finding will be a request to the local authority to conduct a local housing needs survey to establish with more certainty whether a real demand exists.

Residents are very protective of the identity of the village and do not want to see it “swallowed up” by neighbouring settlements via development creep. The green spaces between Kingston Seymour and North End and Kingston Seymour and Clevedon have already been eroded by a

certain amount of development and the proposed large Business Park on the southern edge of Clevedon (which received outline permission in 2007) threatens to further compromise the setting of the village in the landscape. The existing views into and out of the village, as well as across open countryside to the Mendips, are highly valued. As a result any further development proposals affecting the setting of the village are likely to be strongly resisted.

*The Lych Gate:
All Saints Church*



New development is not normally permitted in the open countryside. As part of the current development of the North Somerset Core Strategy the future of settlement boundaries for small villages such as Kingston Seymour is under review. In those villages that retain their settlement boundaries, it is proposed that small-scale infill development will be permitted within the settlement boundary, as at present. Where settlement boundaries are abolished, those settlements will be treated as open countryside in their entirety. This means that whatever the outcome of the review, Kingston Seymour will be no more

vulnerable to development pressure than at present, and possibly less so.

“Some recent houses are poorly constructed and of little architectural merit”

Kingston Seymour’s buildings are of variable age and quality. All Saints Church (late 14th / early 15th century, restored 1865) is Grade 1 listed and there are nine Grade 2 listed farmhouses or former farmhouses, as well as the Old School, the Village Cross (war memorial), the Churchyard Cross and two chest tombs in the churchyard (all Grade 2). Aside from the farmhouses, which are mostly traditional cross-passage style Somerset farmhouses, other houses are characterised more by their variety – of scale, form and materials – than by any single architectural style. The Village Character Statement identified some distinctive features contributing to a local vernacular. These include simple, non-standard design; enclosed or semi-enclosed pitched roof porches; pitched roofs with red or brown clay tiles (roman styles or pantiles); use of cat-slide roofs; chimneys and native hedges or stone boundary walls. The aim should be to create a “cottage” rather than a suburban “executive” look.

This is not to say that more modern designs and materials will never be appropriate; planning and conservation officers are sometimes more supportive of an innovative design than a pastiche. Although ten years old, the Village Character Statement still has Supplementary Planning Guidance status³ and is well-supported by residents.

“Housing needs to reflect the fact that we live on a flood plain and needs to be ecologically sound, not PRETTY”

In due course it will be reviewed and updated; meanwhile a copy of the original full document can be supplied on request and gives more detailed guidance.

³ Documents adopted as supplementary planning guidance do not form part of the statutory Development Plan, but can be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Substantial weight is accorded to supplementary planning guidance which is formally approved by the local planning authority, as was the Village Character Statement.

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Request Parish Council to commission Housing Needs Survey from North Somerset Council	Monitor emerging Local Development Framework policy re housing in unsustainable locations Approach Churchill Parish Council regarding their experiences of providing affordable local needs housing	Priority: Low Cost: Nil 2011
Provide information to private individuals and businesses on the local planning process	Check with planning department on best methods for delivery Arrange event as appropriate Advise feedback, appeals and complaints procedure for private individuals and business applicants	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil Started 2010
Update Village Character Statement and provide design guidance for use by both applicants and architects	Check latest design guides Re-format document for paper and electronic versions	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil 2011

Business and Employment

- *62% of adult respondents are employed or self-employed on a full-time basis*
- *A further 11% work part-time*
- *There are an estimated 60-70 businesses in the village; 41 responded to the Business questionnaire*
- *Responding businesses employed 116 persons in total, half of whom were resident in the parish*
- *Two-thirds of both residents and businesses would find a business directory useful; 90% of businesses would welcome a village website but a much smaller proportion would be willing to pay to advertise on it*
- *75% of residents purchase farm products from farms within the village; the local garage, cafes and builders are also used by over half of all residents*
- *Half of all respondents consider a shop to be a medium to high priority, and 40% would like a pub. There is little or no support for other types of business development*

For many centuries agriculture was the mainstay of the local economy, and in the immediate post-war period there were still 26 working farms in the parish employing around 70 people. Mostly these were small mixed farms, keeping a variety of animals but with only a small arable acreage. All had at least one orchard, mostly for cider apples, and there were at least six cider presses. With mechanisation came a reduction in the number of farms, and in due course a variety of other businesses developed, often utilising redundant farm buildings. Farm diversification gathered pace in the last decade of the 20th century and has continued into the 21st.



Computerised milking parlour

Responses to the Business Questionnaire indicate that Kingston Seymour is an economically active community. It is thriving and far from being just a dormitory village. Farming is still the most important and visible business, and perceived by the community as integral to the character of the village. Dairy cattle, sheep and poultry are the most widely-kept livestock; the most important crop is grass (for hay and silage), although substantial acreages are under potatoes and forage maize. Three-quarters of all residents demonstrate their support for local farmers in a practical way through the purchase of produce directly from several farms. The questionnaire responses indicate that the three fishing lakes, the garage, the local builders, tree surgeon, contractors and plumbers are all well patronised by residents; other businesses such as those offering professional services, cleaning and tuition are less visible but mostly still well used locally. Despite this there is no real sense of a business community as such, but it is likely that initiatives such as a village map, a business directory and in particular the proposed village website would facilitate a greater exchange of goods, services and ideas amongst local businesses. Businesses will be given an opportunity to advertise on the village website if they wish.

Problems experienced by businesses include poor (or absent) Broadband facilities, occasional difficulty in being located by clients or delivery vehicles, and planning restrictions. The existence of public rights of way on farms and other business premises is perceived by most of those affected as a disadvantage.

Despite the difficult economic climate, the business outlook is fairly stable. Whilst few businesses have plans for any significant expansion, there have been more start-ups than shut-downs in recent years.

Residents' support for local businesses is tempered to a small degree by their concerns about increased traffic and other problems. Large vehicles were the subject of many adverse comments in the questionnaire responses, which also revealed a common perception that visitors to the village are largely responsible for an increase in littering in the lanes.



Fishing is a popular activity in Kingston Seymour

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Design and deliver a Village Map to include a Business Directory, definitive map of footpaths and guidance to walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore design options Review alternatives for cost/benefit analysis Make available in paper form, on village website, and for public display in the village Consult businesses regarding problems caused by walkers 	Priority: High Cost: Medium Summer 2011

Many of our business owners live in Kingston Seymour so it's unsurprising that their views are also well represented in the residential questionnaire. As a consequence many of the recommendations in the Parish Plan also have benefits to the business groups. Please see details below:

Recommendation	Where in the Action Plan?	Page no
Provide information to private individuals and businesses on the local planning process	The Built Environment	Page 15
Design, deliver and implement a village website	Communications	Page 19
Review options to provide residents and businesses with access to a broadband service	Communications	Page 19
Provide information to homes and businesses on improving their security	Community Safety	Page 23

Communications

- *92% of respondents find out about things through the Village Magazine, with approximately 75% also depending on word of mouth and the roadside information boards*
- *The quantity and quality of roadside boards needs review*
- *Fewer than half of respondents look at the permanent notice boards*
- *79% use the internet and 50% would use a village website*
- *At the time of the survey, 16% had no access to Broadband*

The Village Magazine, produced bi-monthly, is funded by a grant from the Parish Council and by private donations. It is distributed free of charge to all households, is the most important channel of communication and is highly valued. The temporary roadside boards (advertising regular events such as the church services, the Village Market and cream teas, as well as fund-raising and other special events) are also highly valued for their “reminder” function. They do however, attract some criticism both on aesthetic and road safety grounds, and thought needs to be given to how to improve both these aspects of their use.

One of our roadside boards at the Triangle



“Gossip or ‘networking’ is an extremely quick and efficient means of communicating here”

In recent years the use of home computers in general and the internet in particular has grown exponentially. When the Village Character Statement was published in 1999, few Kingstonians were on-line and “IT facilities” received only a passing mention.

By the time of the follow-up survey in 2004, 80% of respondents had access to the internet, but mostly only via very slow dial-up. Since then, Broadband has reached most (but not all) of the parish but only at a slow speed, the problem being that most of the parish is at the extreme reach of the exchange. High-speed Broadband seems a distant prospect, especially to those in the more remote parts of the parish who have no service at all. It is unacceptable in this day and age that some businesses are unable to create their own websites (or access those created for them) – 30% of businesses currently have no Broadband connection – and the Parish Council will continue to press for an improvement in Broadband speeds and reliability. However, unless there is significant investment in the infrastructure, it is unlikely that the pledges made by the previous and current Governments – to deliver much better services even in remote rural areas – will be delivered here. Pressure needs to be exerted on BT, Internet Service Providers and on the Government if residents and businesses are not to be seriously disadvantaged.

“Would like a Broadband connection to all parts of village no matter how remote”

Broadband is “much better than previously – we do have the occasional problem which is a big problem when running one’s own business from home”

The possibility of a village website was first mooted in 2004 but until recently it was believed that the village was too small to justify the time and expense involved in

creating and maintaining one. However the level of interest, if not measurable demand, is now such that the Parish Plan Steering Group asked the Parish Council to consider funding the development costs of a village website. This was agreed and the village website is currently under construction. It will not replace the Village Magazine, or the roadside boards, but it will provide another means of communication as well as links to other useful sites and services.



The Parish Council notice board is sited at the bus shelter

“The roadside boards are great. But can the messages be big and brief? They can be a danger if motorists spend too much time concentrating on them rather than driving”

“I think the roadside boards in the Triangle are most useful as they are very noticeable reminder of events and are seen by everyone entering the village”

Village Hall noticeboard



A village website “Would be excellent”

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Use the village magazine to deliver some or all of the information and education action points	Working groups to liaise with editor	Priority: Medium Cost: Low Ongoing
Review positions, condition and content of Roadside Boards	Identify key locations for roadside boards Provide uniform style for easy identification and safe reading Seek funding to purchase new or change existing boards if necessary	Priority: Medium Cost: Low 2011
Review site, condition and content of existing Village Notice Boards	Accommodate village map Make improvements to structures as necessary Consider Perspex covers	Priority: Medium Cost: Medium 2011
Review options to provide residents and businesses with access to a broadband service	Campaign for better Broadband reception Investigate Wi-Fi options in the village Research options to put computer access in the village hall with internet connection	Priority: High Cost: Medium Winter 2010
Design, deliver and implement a village website www.kingstonseymour.org.uk	Identify village needs – business, personal and youth Secure funds, review business sponsorship/advertising Identify ‘supplier’ to create a village website – to brief and to budget Appoint someone to populate, manage and maintain the website Launch village website and supply training as required	Priority: High Cost: Medium Started Autumn 2010

Facilities and Activities

- *57% of respondents consider the Community Post Office “very important” to the village*
- *The level of awareness of activities based in the Village Hall is high, with over 60% aware of all regular activities*
- *A significant minority of respondents do not know who to contact to book the Village Hall*
- *Almost 20% think the Village Hall needs improvement, but it appears from the lack of volunteer sheets that only a few of these wish to get involved*
- *58% of respondents would like a timetable of village events*
- *51% of respondents attend church at least occasionally, 23% regularly*
- *30% would like to see the church used more frequently for community activities*
- *Well over half of respondents would like an outdoor children’s play area, and almost as many would like a shop, as a medium to high priority.*
- *40% would like a pub, as a medium to high priority*

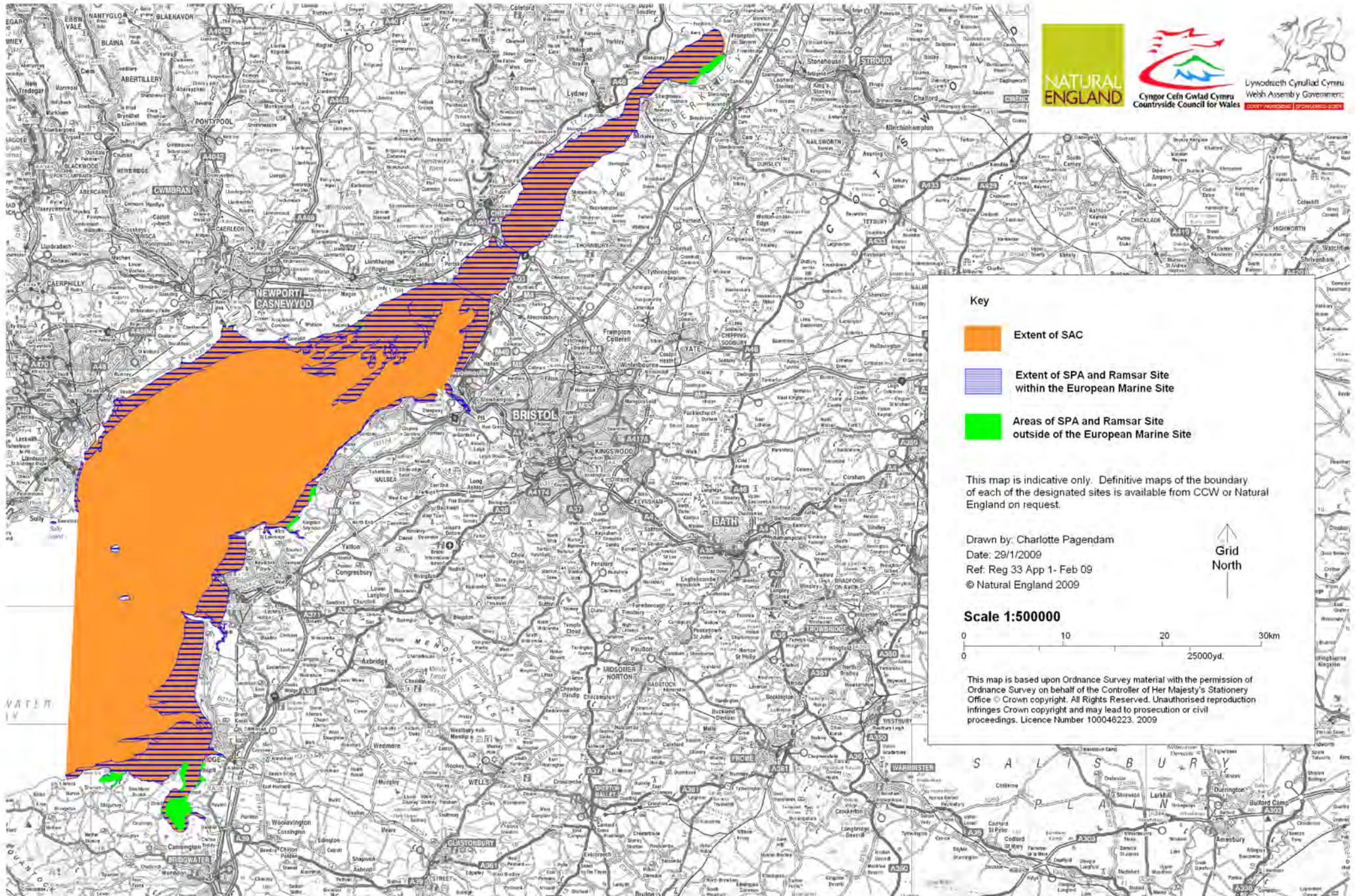


Kingston Seymour Village Hall

Kingston Seymour has no school, pub or shop; its two key amenities are the church and the Village Hall. The Hall was refurbished some 12 years ago and is a good facility for a village of this size, hosting a wide range of activities including skittles, badminton, dance classes, Bridge Club, the Parish Council, the Toddler Group, the weekly Community Post Office and the monthly Village Market, as well as a wide range of events, weddings, funerals and private parties. However, it is not as

well used as it might be, especially in the day-time, and suffers from a shortage of committed volunteers to fill committee and practical roles. Further updating, especially of the kitchen, is needed, together with a new marketing strategy aimed at increasing the number of outside bookings. Recently, a Third Party Review of the management of the Hall has been commissioned and it is hoped that this will lead to a rationalisation of structures and a streamlining of systems in order to create a

Appendix 1 Map showing the extent and relationship of the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site



The Bristol Channel

Blake's Pools

Wharf Farm

Brookstone Lane

Ham Farm

Pool Farm

Mendip View Farm

Yeo Bank Lane

Nick St. Lawrence

Yeo Bank Farm

Congresbury Yeo

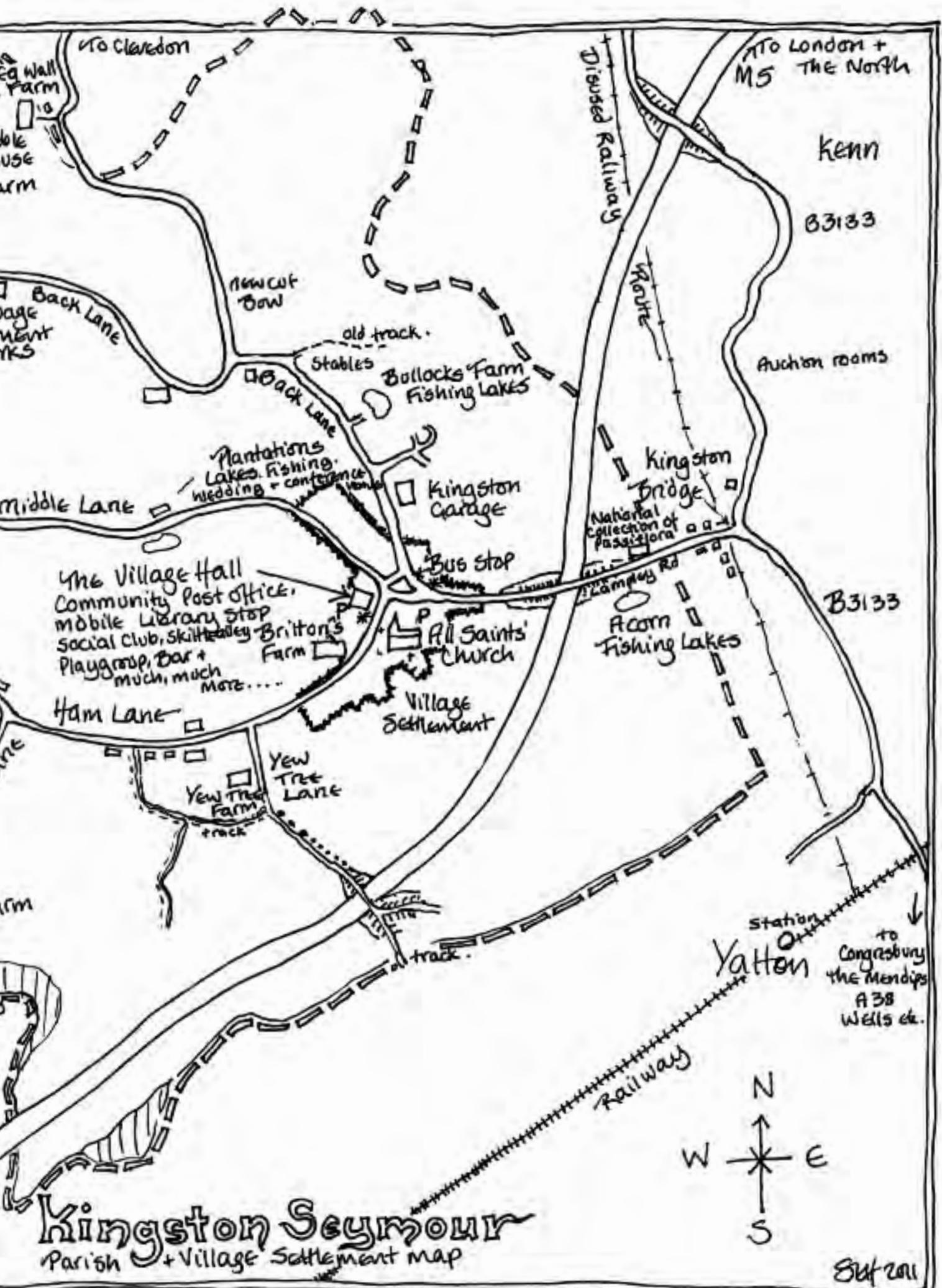
Key

-  County site of Nature Conservation Importance
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Village settlement boundary
-  Kingston Seymour Parish Boundary
- * Noticeboard
- The church, Village Hall + fishing lakes all have disabled access
- P parking
- The farms named on this map are all working farms

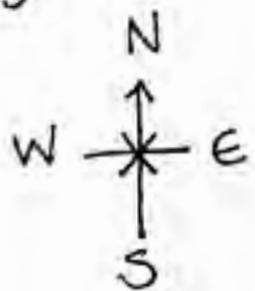
Scale: approximately 1:16,000
Note: the settlement boundary area has been expanded to clarify details

↳ Weston super Mare
Bridgewater Taunton
Devon + Cornwall

M5



Kingston Seymour
Parish + Village Settlement map



Sept 2011

TO London +
MS THE North

Kenn

B3133

Auction rooms

Kingston
Bridge

National
Collection of
Parasitology

B3133

Acorn
Fishing Lakes

Station
Yatton

to
Congresbury
the Mendips
A38
Wells etc.

to Clarendon

Newcut
Bow

old track.

Stables

Bollocks Farm
Fishing Lakes

Kingston
Garage

Bus stop

Plantations
Lakes. Fishing.
Wedding + conference

The Village Hall
Community Post Office,
mobile library stop
social club, skittle alley
Playgroup, Bar +
much, much
more.....

All Saints'
Church

Village
Settlement

Ham Lane

Yew Tree
Farm

Yew Tree
Lane

track.

Railway

eg Wall Farm
ble use
arm

Back Lane
age
ment
KS

Middle Lane

ine

arm

more flexible, efficient and user-friendly facility.

The Church is another focus of community activity, with choir, junior choir, bell-ringing, Sunday School, Mothers Union, the Flower Guild and a weekly Bible Study group. It is sometimes used for other events such as concerts and nearly a third of questionnaire respondents were keen to see the community use of the church extended. A small proportion however felt that this would be inappropriate and that its use should be confined to its primary function as a place of worship.

“Village amenities rely heavily on volunteer help. I believe community help would be much enhanced through a village pub, where (in particular) new residents would find it easier to enter into village life. Whilst this is undoubtedly a caring community, it can be difficult to join in if you are not a churchgoer or a long-standing Kingstonian”

A permanent village shop is now a distant memory, but this remains the facility residents would most like to see re-established. A pub runs it a close second but is arguably even less likely to materialise, there being no suitable land or premises. Both the Village Hall and the private facility at Plantations Lakes are licensed. Hence the shop is an aspiration which will be investigated further, but the pub is not.

Since the questionnaire was undertaken, the red telephone kiosk has been decommissioned by BT and “adopted” by the Parish Council. It is hoped that it will be possible to find a worthwhile way of using this tiny but visually prominent structure as some kind of amenity for the village.



One of our village landmarks – the Telephone Box

Although newcomers are welcomed to the village and there is a high degree of awareness amongst residents of the activities and events taking place, it was apparent from the questionnaire responses and in particular some of the comments that not everyone finds it easy to take those first steps and get involved. This needs to be addressed both formally and informally; the village website may help but in this instance it is more likely to be a question of friendly and sensitive encouragement.

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Publish village diary to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> village hall bookings church dates village events clubs and societies 	Produce paper version for notice board and magazine Create electronic version for email then later website To include joining information, contact details; and time sensitive notices	Priority: High Cost: Nil Winter 2010
Explore possibility of improvements to the village hall	Identify the specific needs of existing user groups Work with the hall management team to ensure the comments and results from the questionnaire are included in future planning (maintain confidentiality) Link to actions already planned or ongoing Ensure actions and changes are communicated to residents on a regular basis	Priority: Medium Cost: Varies Ongoing
Provide more opportunities for residents to use the village hall for education, sport and other recreational activities	Identify someone to identify demand and investigate opportunities Approach educational establishments regarding willingness and costs to run courses Approach local clubs to use the hall for their activities or to run courses Utilise existing skill base within the village	Priority: Medium Cost: Low 2011
Explore possibility of weekend "Pub" or social club facility	Further survey to gauge level of interest or commitment more accurately Discuss options with Hall Social Club and other possible venues or businesses in the village If promising, explore practical issues and funding requirements	Priority: Low Cost: 2011
Establish an alternative use for the Telephone Box	Gather suggestions from residents Liaise with other ex box users Put it to a vote!	Priority: Medium Cost: Low Summer 2011



All Saints Churchyard in spring

Community Safety

- 55% of respondents “sometimes” or “frequently” worry that they might become victims of crime in the village, only 7% “never” do
- People worry most about theft, either from their homes or outbuildings
- 59% have installed, or are planning to install, additional security measures to protect themselves and their property
- 60% would like further advice on improving security
- Although Neighbourhood Watch has been in place for many years and covers the whole parish, almost a third of respondents did not know who their local coordinator was



*June 2008: Kingston
Seymour Tudor
Weekend*

We are fortunate to live in a community where there is relatively little crime or disorder. Perception does not always reflect reality, however, and almost half of all questionnaire respondents worry “sometimes” that they might become a victim of crime in the village, although only a small proportion (8%) worry “frequently”. The most common type of crime is theft, whether from homes, cars or outbuildings – farm, garden and building equipment are all commonly targeted, as are riding stables.

The entire parish is covered by Neighbourhood Watch and there are local coordinators responsible for communicating Neighbourhood Watch alerts and newsletters to the households in their patch.

However, 31% of respondents did not know who their local coordinator is, a situation which has already been remedied. It is also possible to receive the alerts by e-mail and around 40% of households have opted to do this. Following a spate of attempted thefts of horses, most of the many stables in the village have signed up to “Horsewatch”.

There is little enthusiasm for CCTV, with more people strongly opposed than in favour. However, 60% of respondents would definitely or possibly be interested in being provided with more information about securing their properties and possessions and this will be followed up with our local Beat Manager and Police Community Support Officers.

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Provide information to homes and businesses on improving their security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange community meeting with police and Neighbourhood Watch input Consider magazine and village website for additional advice 	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil Autumn 2010
Improve Neighbourhood Watch database and contact system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood Watch team to publicise area lists and coordinators names Include information on village website 	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil Started

Flood Risk and Development

- *Only 30% of respondents perceive flood risk to the village as high, and only 21% consider their homes at high risk*
- *The most probable cause of flooding is perceived by 63% of respondents to be by overtopping of the sea defences, but exceptionally heavy rainfall and poorly maintained ditches are also concerns*
- *55% of respondents keep the Environment Agency's Floodline telephone number to hand, but only 44% have signed up to receive automatic flood warnings*
- *The level of flood preparedness at household level is relatively low, with fewer than one third of households having taken any practical measures at all*



View of the Sea Wall at low tide looking toward Woodspring Bay with Worlebury Point in the distance

The entire parish is on the flood plain (Environment Agency Zone 3, the highest level of risk). The local Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and the Environment Agency work on a day-to-day basis to regulate water levels in the rhynes, an important component of flood risk management.

The maintenance of effective sea defences has always been a high priority. A few years ago leaks were identified in a section of the banks of the Congresbury Yeo outfall, the part of Kingston Seymour's "Sea Wall" most vulnerable to overtopping. This threatened not only Kingston Seymour's population, but that of Wick-St Lawrence and a large part of Weston-super-Mare and Worle.

Community pressure, including the formation of the North Somerset Flood Risk Action Group, helped to ensure that emergency piling work (autumn 2008) was followed by the construction of a new section of bank, set back from the original (summer 2009). This was the first phase of a project to strengthen our flood defences, recently outlined in the Environment Agency's consultation "Managing Flood Risk on the Severn Estuary"⁴. This will involve setting back further sections of the sea defences, a strategy aimed to "future-proof" them in the context of predicted sea level rise and the likelihood of an increase

⁴ This consultation brochure was received by the Parish Council in early February 2011, several months after the approval and adoption of the Parish Plan but before its publication

in extreme weather conditions. However, the proposals are far more drastic than had ever been envisaged, and could result in the loss to “inter-tidal habitat” of almost a quarter of the land area of the parish over the next 50 years. This would help to alleviate the Severn Estuary’s “habitat deficit” under the EU’s Compensatory Habitats Directive, but the proposals have prompted alarm and dismay⁵ not only amongst those landowners directly affected, but amongst residents generally. The Parish Council, working with the North Somerset Flood Risk Action Group (NSFRAG), will be seeking a more acceptable strategy. The preference of the Parish Council and NSFRAG would be the maintenance and improvement of most of the existing defences, with managed realignment kept to an essential minimum.

The questionnaire results indicated that most respondents’ perception of the risk of flooding, either to the village as a whole or to their own properties, was that it was low to medium. Few have taken any practical steps to reduce loss or damage; only 31% keep emergency supplies available and 25% store important documents upstairs. These figures are perhaps surprising given the Environment Agency’s official “high risk” designation, but it is important not to overplay the risk of flooding. The last serious “flood event” was in 1981, due to a rare combination of very high tides, a severe south westerly storm and a one metre tidal surge from the Atlantic. Much of the village was flooded as a result, RAF Locking playing a prominent role in rescuing people by boat in the dark. There were no casualties apart from a few

livestock, but farmers lost a good deal of stored hay in the flooding.” Today’s stronger and more effective sea defences, the ongoing vigilance of the Internal Drainage Board and the tight controls on development are all vital components in protecting the village from all but the most severe tides and storms.

However, the risk of flooding, together with the Severn estuary landscape and habitat designations, means that development is very tightly controlled and subject to a raft of statutory consultations. All applications for new development, including extensions to existing buildings, must be accompanied by Flood Risk Assessments. Recently approved dwellings (both new and conversions) have been required to raise entrances and floor levels to mitigate the risk of flooding.

“Improvements to sea defences are essential”

“Ensure ditches aren’t deliberately blocked”

Important actions in this Plan centre on maintaining pressure on the Environment Agency to improve the sea defences in a way acceptable to the community, ensuring that householders are given the information to enable them to take reasonable precautions to secure their homes and families in the event of a flood, and on updating the Community Emergency Manual so that the village can work with other agencies to put in place a coherent emergency strategy should a flood or other disaster occur.

⁵ The Environment Agency’s Project Manager for this strategy addressed a packed open meeting of the North Somerset Flood Risk Action Group on 7th March, at which many parishioners were present. The proposals were also discussed by the Parish Council on 16th March and the comments of the Council submitted to the EA. The recommendations and supporting text in this section of the Parish Plan and at other relevant points have been amended in line with the content of this submission.

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Improve understanding of flood risk and mitigation possibilities	Organise event with speaker Review and revise Community Emergency Manual Re-issue key information to all residents	Priority: High Cost: Nil Started 2010
Continue to work with the Environment Agency to develop a flood risk strategy which is acceptable to landowners and residents and builds on existing defences	Work with a sub-group of NSFRAG to liaise with the Environment Agency on modifications to the proposed scheme * Seek specialist academic and technical expertise as necessary Campaign and lobby (Government, press etc) as necessary	Priority: High Cost: Unknown Started Spring 2011

* For further details see www.environment-agency.gov.uk and the Kingston Seymour Village Website www.kingstonseymour.org.uk



View of the Sea Wall at high tide looking toward Clevedon

Transport

- *Almost all travel is by private vehicle*
- *Only 2% of respondents regularly use the bus service, 10% use it occasionally and 84% never use it, however 52% perceive it as “vital to the village”*
- *Respondent households own between them 172 bicycles*
- *There is a lack of safe and dedicated routes for cyclists and horse-riders*
- *The school bus services are well used and greatly valued*
- *Very few respondents have ever used any form of community transport and few knew it was available*
- *A significant number of respondents indicated that they might or would use the bus or community transport in the future*

Transport into, within and out of the village is almost entirely by private vehicle. The bus service is infrequent and poorly used; services do not run at times enabling it to be used for getting to school or work, there is no direct service to Bristol and there are no services in the evenings or at weekends. Only a handful of residents use the bus regularly, most never use it, although it is of interest that a quarter of those “expect to use it in the future”.

“We have a growing number of old people in this village and it is vital that we keep the bus – many more will be using it in the future, it also saves fuel and pollution”

“The public bus service provides a “very very good reliable service”

Cycling is a popular activity in Kingston Seymour and many of the visitors to the village come here to cycle. The scenery is attractive, and the lanes are level and perceived as safe. Local parents know that this is far from the truth and worry both about their own safety and that of their children. A significant proportion of residents would support the creation of safe and direct cycle routes to Clevedon and Yatton.

“More bridleways / circular route would be fantastic – keep us riders away from tractors etc”



Times have changed but this is still a popular mode of transport for the young

The school bus services to Yatton and Backwell are well used and highly valued by parents. Community transport is little used; the service provided by Yeo Valley Lions is not well publicised locally and consideration should be given to raising awareness of this facility.

“Given the rural location, the availability of bridleways to allow riding away from the roads is very poor. The provision of more bridleways would not only delight horse riders, it would improve road safety”

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost &
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		Start Date
Encourage more use of public bus service to help build case for its retention	Improve publicity via magazine and village website Give information re Diamond Travelcard for over 60's – could publicise on Post Office days Target the children (age appropriate)	Priority: High Cost: Nil Summer 2011
Increase awareness of community transport facilities	Improve publicity via magazine and village website Can publicise on Post Office days	Priority: High Cost: Nil Summer 2011
Explore opportunities for extending the public rights of way network, including the possibility of a new route to connect Kingston Seymour with Yatton and Clevedon	Liaise with neighbouring Parishes Ask Parish Council to investigate possibilities	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil 2011
Explore the possibility of creating a bridleway	Ask Parish Council to investigate possibilities	Priority: Medium Cost: Nil 2011



Walkers, cyclists and horse riders are a common sight in our village lanes

Traffic and Road Safety

- *Twice as many respondents “always feel safe from traffic” as “always feel threatened by traffic”*
- *46% “sometimes feel threatened by traffic” in the centre of the village, 39% in other parts*
- *The main concerns are the speed of farm vehicles (54%), of large vehicles (49%) and of traffic generally (47%)*
- *44% consider potholes / road subsidence to be a hazard*
- *51% are generally in favour of speed controls being implemented (48% excluding Kingston Bridge residents)*
- *28% are against speed controls being implemented (30% excluding Kingston Bridge residents)*
- *A speed limit of 30mph in the centre of the village would be supported by 53% of respondents; 43% would support a 30mph limit in Ham Lane and other parts of the village*
- *44% of parishioners would support a speed limit of 40mph or less in Lampley Road , 8% would support 50mph and 33% want no change*
- *Almost two thirds of respondents oppose the introduction of any other form of traffic calming*
- *Other well-supported suggestions to improve road safety include better maintenance of roads, more attention to hedge cutting to improve sightlines, use of high-visibility clothing by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, and driver education*

This was the topic that, from the questionnaire responses, provoked the most impassioned views and by far the largest volume of comments. Although village residents are fortunate in that there is no through traffic, passing traffic generated by homes and businesses has increased steadily over the last decade. By far the largest proportion of traffic is generated by residents in the form of private cars: as long ago as 2001 car ownership was well above the national average (97%, compared with 73% nationally) and the proportion of households with 2 or more cars / vans was, at 76%, twice the national average. (ONCS: Census, 2001). We can be fairly certain that the 2011 Census will show even higher percentages

“Sometimes feel unsafe when walking our small children”



A well positioned reminder!

The number of large vehicles on the lanes has also increased. The decline in the number of working farms has taken some heavy vehicles off the roads, but at the same time some new businesses have generated HGV traffic, and the growing use of the internet for shopping has greatly increased the number of delivery vehicles to private homes. There were many comments, from both adults and young people, about the speed at which farm vehicles and other HGVs travel. Some do appear to travel at

unreasonable speeds. Because these vehicles are so large, and the lanes so narrow, they are perceived to be travelling at high speed even when, perhaps, they are not and many find this frightening. It is suggested that farmers and other businesses creating substantial amounts of HGV traffic should be invited to review the questionnaire findings and consider what, if any, action would be possible or appropriate to mitigate residents' concerns.

“Our lanes are undoubtedly hazardous for all road users, including car drivers. Great care is needed and one needs to be alert at all times”

Following the updating of the Sewage Treatment plant some years ago, the number of sewage tanker journeys has halved. The tanker drivers are very courteous and Wessex Water has agreed to avoid tanker journeys at those times of the day when there are children waiting for or being collected from the school buses at the Triangle. As a result complaints about the tanker traffic have significantly reduced in recent years but 29% of adult respondents still identified the tankers as a road safety hazard.

There has been much discussion, over many years, around the question of road safety, and the views of the local authority and the

police have been sought on several occasions in the last 20 years. However, many residents are now aware that in other parts of the country there is a default speed limit of 30mph in all villages, and even in North Somerset there are very few villages without a speed limit of some kind. The majority in favour of introducing speed limits is very small, but it is a much higher proportion than those who are definitely opposed. It is therefore proposed that the Parish Council should ask North Somerset Council to investigate the feasibility of introducing speed controls. The latter will require liaison with Yatton Parish Council regarding the stretch of Lampley Road which falls within its parish.

Although there is little support for other engineered forms of traffic calming, it is generally considered that a number of other measures, including better road maintenance, more attention to maintaining sightlines through regular hedge-trimming and the use of high-visibility clothing by other road users would all help to improve road safety. Driver education may also have a part to play.

“If everyone adhered to a sensible speed, the village would be a nicer environment to live”



Lampley Road toward the Triangle

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Ask North Somerset Council to commission a study to assess options for enhancing road safety including the feasibility of introducing speed controls specifically the introduction of speed limits of 30mph in the centre of the village and 40 mph in Lampley Road	<p>Discuss justification, priority and funding with North Somerset Council Road Safety Officer</p> <p>Liaise with Yatton Parish Council regarding Lampley Road</p> <p>If appropriate, discuss enforcement with Beat Manager and consider a Community Speed Watch scheme (see below)</p>	Priority: High Cost: Summer 2011
Explore the possibility of a reciprocal Community Speed Watch scheme with another village	<p>Make contact with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team</p> <p>Obtain information from Beat Manager</p> <p>Discuss with Parish Council</p>	Priority: High Cost: Summer 2011
Encourage safer driving and consider other means of driver education	<p>Liaise with neighbouring Parishes</p> <p>Research effective education options</p> <p>Commission articles for Village Magazine</p>	Priority: High Cost: Nil Summer 2011
Encourage cyclists, walkers and horse riders to improve their own road safety	<p>Explore ways of improving safety on our roads for adults and children and provide them with practical advice and information on sensible safety measures</p> <p>Consider a Young Persons training session for cyclists</p> <p>Access local initiatives run by North Somerset Council</p>	Priority: High Cost: Low Summer 2011
Involve local farmers and businesses in understanding the significant concerns of residents about the driving of commercial and agricultural vehicles in the parish	<p>Encourage them to take effective measures to ensure that all such vehicles are driven safely</p> <p>Ask for feedback on anything residents can do to help Parish Council to discuss appropriate action</p>	Priority: High Cost: Nil Spring 2011
Consider whether any change to the road configuration at the Triangle might improve road safety	<p>Discuss with police and North Somerset Council Highways</p> <p>If changes advised, cost, commission and programme work</p>	Priority: Medium Cost: 2011
Strive for better maintenance of our roads and verges to improve safety	<p>Encourage residents to be more proactive in reporting problems and advise reporting procedure and process</p> <p>Parish Council to continue regular meetings with Highways Liaison officer</p>	Priority: High Cost: Nil Winter 2010
Encourage residents and landowners to maintain hedges in order to assist in improving road safety	<p>Identify problem locations</p> <p>Encourage residents to be more proactive in reporting problems and advise reporting procedure and process</p> <p>Regular seasonal reminders in Village Magazine</p>	Priority: High Cost: Nil Winter 2010
Repair, renew and repaint all roadside safety railings in village	<p>Meet with Highways Liaison Officer</p> <p>Parish Council to discuss and budget if necessary</p> <p>Carry out any agreed work</p>	Priority: High Cost: Low Started 2010

Children and Young People

- *At the time of the questionnaire there were an estimated 69 children and young people aged under 18 living in the parish, and 9 at Kingston Bridge*
- *The proportion of children and young people under 16 is significantly above the national average*
- *The number of pre-school-age children has doubled since 2001*
- *Amongst respondent children and young people (44), the favourite activities were watching TV (70%), meeting with friends (68%), playing computer games (57%) and cycling (55%)*
- *A quarter do not feel safe when walking / cycling, because of speeding tractors, lorries and cars*
- *Two thirds of children and young people (and 50% of respondents to the adult questionnaire) would like a play area and one third would like a tennis court*
- *There is no particular pressure for more organised activities such as a youth club*
- *Young people like the friendliness, peace, freedom and relative safety of the village; they do not like the lack of things to do, the speeding traffic, relying on parents for transport and the lack of a shop*

At the time of the questionnaire in 2008 it was estimated that there were 69 children and young people under the age of 18 living in the parish attending 10 different schools, with the majority at Yatton or Backwell. Since then, that number has increased by at least 9, and there has been a particularly marked increase in the number of pre-school children. This is a very healthy development and reverses recent trends in the village demographic. The Kingston Seymour Toddler Group is thriving, with over 30 children on the books and a weekly attendance now averaging about 20, over half of whom are from within the parish or Kingston Bridge. The lack of an outdoor play area is keenly felt and even before the recent “baby boom” this was top of the children’s wish list of facilities they would like to have. Although there is of course no certainty that the young families living here now will remain in the longer term, it is hoped that the village will continue to attract younger residents.

Some of the older children attend a youth club in Yatton and many of the younger

ones go to Sunday School. Although it is perhaps a cause for concern that the three most frequently pursued leisure activities are sedentary ones, and sports do not feature highly, there is no real pressure for more organised activities, even were there the capacity. The village is unlikely ever to have sufficient children and young people to justify any sort of purpose-built youth facility, but there is certainly scope for greater use of the Village Hall for activities such as badminton, drama and dance.

Father Christmas visits the Toddler Group



Aside from the lack of outdoor play space beyond their gardens, one factor which may inhibit children’s willingness to spend

more time outside is the busy-ness of the roads. It was striking that a significant proportion (25%) of children and young people claimed to feel unsafe when walking or cycling round the village. Along with many of their parents, children would like a shop. They do use the café at Plantations as a proxy for a shop, and for many of the older teenagers a stint in the restaurant or helping with events in the holidays or at weekends is fast becoming a rite of passage.

Due to the numbers of pre-school children and young people in the village this is a population whose needs will change well within the 5 year plan. Some actions considered borderline at this stage may be strongly desired in the near future.

*“Well done to Toddlers and Sunday School!!!
Our kids love them. We would love a
playground (and tennis court).”*

Recommendation	Supporting Actions	Priority, Cost & Start Date
Explore possibility of purchasing or leasing land to be used for recreational activities	<p>If site can be found:</p> <p>Further survey to establish what is wanted</p> <p>Link to Village Hall requirements for extension to their space or use of space</p> <p>Visit facilities provided by other local councils – discuss management etc</p>	Priority: High Cost: Unknown 2011
Conduct a review of the children and young people in 2 years time	<p>Check borderline actions</p> <p>Question this group again</p> <p>Use village website as appropriate</p>	Priority: Low Cost: Low 2012

As expected, many parents also expressed views and opinions relating to the needs of their children. As a consequence a number of the general recommendations in the Parish Plan also have specific benefits to the children and young people of Kingston Seymour. Please see details below:

Recommendation	Where in the Action Plan?	Page no
Design, deliver and implement a village website	Communications	Page 19
Review options to provide residents and businesses with access to a broadband service	Communications	Page 19
Encourage more use of public bus service to help build case for its retention	Transport	Page 28
Encourage cyclists, walkers and horse riders to improve their own road safety	Traffic and Road Safety	Page 31

Timeline

Kingston Seymour was one of the first parish councils in North Somerset to draw up a Village Character Statement, a document which not only contained recommendations directed at both the community and the local authority, but also a great deal of supporting and background information about the village. Perhaps because of this – and not least in recognition of the work involved – the Parish Council was slow to embrace the idea of a Parish Plan. Almost three quarters of North Somerset’s parishes have already completed their Parish Plans. The decision to produce a Parish Plan was made in late 2007 and work has proceeded as follows:

Oct 2007	Article in Village Magazine to invite expressions of interest
Nov 2007	Parish Council Vice-Chairman and Clerk attend training day
Feb 2008	Open Meeting to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present on process • identify issues and topics • identify of volunteers for steering group and working groups Form Steering Group
Mar 2008	Steering Group approves Constitution, elects officers, agrees process and time schedule Forms Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Environment • Housing and Development • Business • Transport • Facilities and Amenities
April 2008	Preliminary report to Annual Parish Meeting
May – Sept 2008	Steering groups and Working groups explore issues and topics and draft sections of Questionnaires
July 2008	Participate in meeting to discuss cross-boundary issues in local Parish Plans
Oct 2008	Pilot draft questionnaire, amend and approve final version for issue
Nov 2008	Issue questionnaire survey to all adults, separate questionnaires for children and young people and local businesses
Jan – July 2009	Data processing; analyse results and comments Working Groups to begin work on emerging actions – feasibility, partnerships, costing, funding etc
April 2009	Present headline results of survey to Annual Parish Meeting
Sept 2009	Parish Council gives go-ahead for Steering Group to conduct feasibility study for creating village website (Sept) Steering Group sets up village website working group
Nov 2009	Parish Council approve Draft Action Plan Circulate Draft Action Plan to all households for consultation
Jan 2010	Open meeting to discuss Draft Action Plan
Sept 2009 – Feb 2010	Working Groups continue work on emerging actions
Mar 2010	Submit village website proposals to Parish Council
Summer 2010	Prepare text and produce final draft of Parish Plan
Sept 2010	Parish Council adopts Parish Plan
Nov 2010	Finalise design and format Plan for production
April 2011	LAUNCH PARISH PLAN

Methodology

As long ago as 2007 Kingston Seymour Parish Council discussed the potential benefits of producing a plan and agreed to initiate the project if it could identify sufficient community support. With the help of Community Action's Parish Plan Officer, the Parish Council applied for a grant from the Quartet Community Foundation and was successful in being awarded the maximum £2500. The Council itself pledged a contribution of £200 in order to secure this grant.

For most of us, however, the process of creating a Parish Plan appeared to begin in October 2007 with an article in the Parish Magazine. An open meeting in February 2008 followed, and became the first real opportunity to ask questions and get involved. The Parish Plan Steering Group was formed later that month, their objective: to produce a plan "which details how Kingston Seymour would like to move forward over the next 5 - 10 years."



A view of Back Lane as seen from the motorway bridge on Lampley Road

The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on in March 2008. The group adopted a constitution, appointed officers, agreed a flexible timetable and, using information gathered at the open meeting, discussed broad issues and topics to form a basis for future work. The second meeting in April adopted terms of reference for the working groups and identified lead steering group members to help initiate the groups and provide feedback.

The issues and topics were divided into themes, a working group to address each theme, and the 6 groups started discussions. Their first priority was to assess the issues

and topics within their subject headings and identify areas of crossover with other groups. Some groups also used material from the previous survey/questionnaire. It was felt that there was much here of value and that this should form the start point for any actions. The Village Character Statement, for example, contains initiatives and recommendations started in 1999 and these were considered worthy of review before further new actions be discussed.

During the summer of 2008, working groups continued to sift and distil their topics and began to frame draft questions. The Steering Group supported this process

and began work on designing the questionnaire, making contact with, and taking advice from other Parishes. A one-day conference on 26th June organised by Community Action on issues facing rural communities was particularly helpful in providing real examples for good and effective Parish Plans.

“The character of Kingston Seymour hinges on it being a village of people... It is a place where people make friends and support their neighbours...”

In recognition that a Parish Plan is a document produced by and for local communities, it was decided to include Kingston Bridge in the questionnaire. Residents at Kingston Bridge form an important part of our community and possess valuable knowledge of the village. They are uniquely positioned at the ‘gateway’ to Kingston Seymour and are affected by many of the same issues and concerns. Although they sit in the constituency of Yatton, residents of Kingston Bridge will benefit from many of the actions we undertake, and in many cases are the very people working toward these common goals!

After a lot of hard work, and group consultations the final versions of the questionnaire were agreed, tested, printed and then distributed in November 2008.

Each household was given, as applicable:

- One householder question sheet
- A Questionnaire for each member of the household over 18 years of age
- A Contact Sheet for each member of the household over 18 years of age
- One hand drawn Village Map showing Footpaths and Settlement Boundary
- A Young Persons questionnaire for each member of the household aged 17 or under

Approximately 10 volunteers batched up the packs and distributed the questionnaires to 155 households. Collection of completed questionnaires began early the next month

with the majority being returned within 1 week. A few houses required several visits to get replies but the overall response rate was 89% and compares favourably with previous returns.



The ‘individual’ Questionnaire

In January 2009 we began the task of counting and collating our data. As a relatively small village we could not afford the type of reporting system that some larger towns and villages used so the questionnaires were processed by hand. Each questionnaire was coded by collection area, the responses counted on reporting sheets, and these batch totals transferred to a spreadsheet for later analysis. The geographical coding allowed us to identify patterns and problem areas whilst maintaining anonymity for the respondents.

Exceptional care was taken to guard against loss or corruption of data. The counting teams were briefed on how to handle anomalies, and the relatively small numbers within the geographical coding meant that questionnaires could be recounted if necessary. The method of input, by a single person, also meant that rules were applied

consistently and that numbers could be checked again during processing. It was time consuming but worth it.



Some of our four legged residents

“The farms are a great part of the character of Kingston Seymour. They are under pressure to disappear forever and the village should encourage anything that helps them keep going in the present economic climate”



Cranmore Rhyne

The raw data was given to the Steering Group in March so that the results could be compared with those of previous questionnaires, and a decision made as to exactly what calculations would be the most useful this time. Once complete – a process which took until the autumn - the results were passed to the working groups for more detailed analysis. A draft Action Plan was drawn up and last November was submitted to the Parish Council for approval before being circulated to all households for comment.

The early part of this year has been taken up with drafting (and re-drafting!) the text accompanying the Action Plan and ensuring

that it both reflects and support the actions, as well as giving a flavour of Kingston Seymour village life at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

The published Parish Plan is a summary of the work done and the data gathered. It is anticipated that the working groups will use more comprehensive project files and detailed action plans for their topics. Many of these documents will be available for display on the village website or as computer files on CD's. Paper copies can be made available for review if required. A full archive will be kept in paper and electronic form. All confidential information will be destroyed.

The Parish Plan, with supplementary data, will be given to our neighbouring Parishes to help in addressing cross border issues and specifically to Yatton Parish Council on behalf of Kingston Bridge residents. It will also be given to North Somerset Council and in due course will appear on their Parish Plans web-page. We will continue to liaise with their Parish Plans Officer. The North Somerset Council Town and Parish Council Charter recognises the importance of parish plans to aid policy development and future service planning.

“Change is unavoidable. It just needs care and management. It would be a huge loss if the essential ‘small village’ quality were destroyed”



Silage Making

Contributors

Kingston Seymour Parish Plan Steering Group

John Allday
Paul Cox
John Hilliard

Mike Sewell
Rebecca Stockwell
Sylvia Stokes
Chris Walton

Chair: Cathy Cooke
Treasurer: Leonie Allday

Many thanks to the Working Group members: those dedicated people assembled variously under these headings but who also helped with each others' groups, and cross-over topics

Natural Environment

Graham Dennis
Marty Hale
Angus Norrish
Rebecca Stockwell

Housing and Development

Leonie Allday
John Allday
Mike Sewell

Facilities and Amenities

John Hilliard
Hugh Simpson
Sylvia Stokes
Chris Walton

Business Activity

Paul Cox
John Harris
Tim Harris
Hugh Simpson
Janice Weitz

Transport

John Allday
Paul Cox
Richard Gaunt
Anthony Hawks
Jane Lumkin
Mike Sewell

Children and Young People

John Hilliard
Hugh Simpson
Sylvia Stokes
Chris Walton

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Photographs taken by: Leonie Allday; Peter Harris; John Hilliard; Lily, Jack and Rebecca Stockwell, and used with kind permission

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Notes

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