

Good Evening and welcome to this the Launch Meeting of the Community Projects Group. Thanks very much for coming. All the Parish Councillors are with us together with Jemma McLean from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and Laurent Martial, Community Development Officer, Rural Areas at South Beds.

Tonight I am going to spend about 20 minutes talking about:

- 1) How the idea for this Group was conceived**
- 2) What it is hoped the Group will achieve**
- 3) How it will be funded and run**
- 4) The way forward, and at this point, I will bring in Jemma who will speak about Parish Plans.**
- 5) Then we will have a break for some tea and coffee when you will have an opportunity to speak to any of the Councillors and complete a small questionnaire for us**
- 6) After around 20 minutes we will reconvene for any questions and see if this meeting wishes to adopt the Projects Group concept.**
- 7) Talk about the date for next meeting**
- 8) I am hoping that we will be finished by around 9.30.**



Village Day 2008



I suppose all this began last year when Janet, Nikki, and some others introduced the idea of a Village Day, we all know what a great time the whole Village had. The playing field had no sooner been cleared up and everything packed away when we heard people asking if there was going to be another one this year.

Village Day last year raised £4000 which was used to start the Youth Club. It now has 85 members. I remember at a Council meeting soon after that someone said, you have set up a very successful Youth Club what about something for our senior citizens. That was an interesting one because Lily at the Rising Sun had already approached us wanting to know what she could do to help the community, particularly the Senior Citizens and so at the end of the year the Chatty Club was set up and around 25 meet each Tuesday afternoon in the Rising Sun. The rumour about them being a rowdy lot needing the Police to talk to them about ASBOS is unfounded.



Over the last few months the Parish Council has been in a little bit of a dilemma. You will remember that in 2008 we raised the Parish Part of the Council tax quite substantially to do some work around the place. The projects in mind were thought to be popular but when it came to it either at the planning stage or when we informed residents local to where the work was taking place, guess what, it turned out not to be so popular.

We identified the problem was that the communication routes with residents were not so good and we feel there is a general, understandable lack of interest in people being prepared to sit through a Council Meeting. It was evident that our individual chats with residents and the odd bit of correspondence we get are not good enough communication routes. Perhaps there is a case for Parish News to be delivered free to every home in the Parish. That would cost approximately £1500.

Airparks	McDaid Screeding Services Ltd	St Andrews Church
Allotment Club	Mignonette	The Friendship Club
Archers	Model Aircraft Flying Club	The Frog & Rhubarb
Ayley Green Methodist Church	Plant People	The Half Moon
BADRA	Richard Gurney & Son Contracting Services	The Harrow Public House
Bowling Club	Slip End Brownies	The Plough
Browns Petfood Supplies	Slip End Cubs	The Rising Sun
Contract Gardeners	Slip End Chatty Club	The Small Job Company
D Hales Ltd	Slip End Football Club	Village Hall
Fantastic Fireworks	Slip End Garages Ltd	Woodside Animal Farm
Woodside Farm	Slip End Lower School	Youth Football Team
Prebendal Farm	Slip End Parish News	
Pepsal End Farm	Slip End Playgroup	
Firework Man in Crawley Close	Slip End shop	
Fleckbrook Construction	Slip End Social Club	
Inkerman Building & Roofing	Slip End Toddlers Group	
J&P Scaffolding	Slip End Veterans Football	
Line Dancing	Slip End Web Master	
	Slip End Youth Club	

We have in excess of 50 clubs, associations, youth groups and businesses in the Parish. Over the last few months I have been visiting some of them and a couple of things stand out. Most of us do not know who all these are and what they do. Some have been running for a while and are running out of ideas. Some organisations run trips for members but, because the numbers are relatively small, they can't take advantage of all the available discounts and it is also difficult for them to organise things trying to avoid clashes with other organisations.

I have spoken to people at home with a lot of time on their hands who would like to have an outside interest that is of some value, and we have people at home who can't go out because of cost or no one to look after children.



We have resources in the buildings of the Peter Edwards Hall and field and the Church, which incidentally needs a new roof, and to an extent the Village Hall which are all under used.

Then there are the businesses, the Pubs who like all rural pubs are finding it tough, the shop which has suffered with the loss of the Post Office. Most of the other businesses are sole traders and so isolated from access to specialist knowledge, networking, and have restricted funds for marketing, and training. We have many talented craftspeople in the Parish who are also working in isolation, there may be benefits in them joining up with like minded people.

The Parish comprises of Ayley Green, Pepperstock and Woodside, however, residents there often feel isolated and that any interest in the Parish is centred on the metropolis of Slip End.

So what can be done? Well quite a lot actually and this where the Projects Group comes in. As far as I am aware this has never been attempted before to the extent we have envisaged it. Sure there are community groups up and down the country but not like this.

Having seen the success of the existing projects which are: the Village Day, the Youth Club the Youth Shelter, the Chatty Club, grants to local groups by the Council, Christmas Presents for our senior citizens and seeing the number of people who have come forward to help, the Council feels the concept of a project group is proven and it believes it is now time to hand it over to the Community.

The Council sees the main jobs for the Group as being:

- a) To be a voice for the residents of this community regarding the future of their parish.**
- b) To enable all residents to take part in projects and activities that will enhance the quality of life through the provision of social, cultural and practical amenities, opportunities and events.**
- c) To promote opportunities for existing local business, charitable and interest groups to explore the benefits of working together and raising awareness of what they currently do.**
- d) To be a forum for ideas, discussions and suggestions that will lead to a vital and relevant Parish Plan for our area.**
- e) To be an “umbrella” group providing administrative and management support for the existing Slip End Youth Club, Slip End Chatty Club and Slip End Village Day Team and other such groups which may be formed in the future.**

- f) To receive funds from the Parish Council to distribute amongst local charitable and not-for-profit organisations as agreed by Committee members.**
- g) To take over from the Parish Council the distribution of Christmas gifts to residents of retirement age, with funds from the Parish Council augmented by donations from local businesses and groups.**
- h) To actively seek funding to ensure the long-term viability of this group. This may be via grants from the public or private sector. Funding will be used not only for projects but also for the employment of administrative staff and volunteers, to run the group, and to supply the resources they need.**

We see the Group being formed from all residents who want to be a member and representatives from every business club or association in the Parish. Being a member doesn't mean you will be automatically be roped in for all sorts of jobs. It means you will receive a regular newsletter, be invited to Group meetings and given an opportunity to comment on the work of the Group, make suggestions and come up with new ideas.

From that wider membership, there will be a central committee with a Chairman elected by the Committee and the Projects Manager will act as secretary and treasurer. Because the Council is putting funding into the project it will have two seats on the central committee and it is thought there will be say, eight or so other members.

To keep residents informed a new section has been set up within the Slip End Website for the use of the Projects Group and it is hoped we will be able to publish this presentation there next week.

At the moment The Council is in the process of setting up a bank account for the Group. It will transfer approximately £8500 into the account for running the existing Groups and beginning new ones, making grants to Parish Organisations and this year's Christmas presents to the elderly. It has approximately £25000 available to spend on projects. This £25000 will be retained by the Parish Council but it will be spent in line with the emerging Parish Plan* more about that later and It will continue to inject money to the Group each year. In addition the Group will be eligible for grants from all sorts of different organisations that the Council isn't eligible for, as well as the Group's own fundraising activities. It is hoped that things may develop well enough for the Group to become a registered charity in the future.

To give you an idea of what I mean about grants so far a total of £26413 has been received for the projects already undertaken from around 14 different sources and we are waiting the result of a £3000 application.

Each year the Council makes grants to a number of Parish organisations and gives Christmas presents to our senior citizens. It is proposed to hand over the making of these grants and presents to the Group.

Let's begin to turn our minds to what the Group could do, I suppose the best place to begin, is with the eyesores.

So let's look at some of them, the things that annoy us. You will have an opportunity of making up a list at the next meeting. But it is worth thinking about them so that you begin to get a feel for what the Group could do.

- 1) Speeding
- 2) Parking on verges churning them up
- 3) Inconsiderate parking generally
- 4) The grass cutting of the verges entering the Parish
- 5) Grass which encroaches onto narrow pavements
- 6) The width and condition of some pavements

To a greater or lesser extent the Group could ask the Council to deal with all of these issues through the Parish Plan, and place them in a ranking order to be completed within the next five years or so. The cost would need to be balanced with the amount of tax residents are prepared to pay.

Now, we promised the Group was not the Parish Council and will not be stuffy like them so no more mention.



We have seen some great visual improvement over the last couple of years: Coronation Gardens and the Plant boxes at the corner of Rossway. Would the folks of Ayley Green, Peperstock and Woodside like something similar and if so what and where.



This nicely brings me onto the skills and expertise we have in the Village. Some of us have seen the bulbs coming up through the verge opposite the Frog and the Bridal Shop which they and Rob Swetman planted, we have the Plant People who have grown and sold plants the profit going to the Community.



And again we have seen the displays at the Church and the gardens in front of the bungalows in Crawley Close and of course there is the bi annual Open Gardens. Both the Slip End pubs have raised money or done things for the benefit of the community. We have seen Felix, a relative new comer, transform the field at the back of Front Street and we recognise the support he and others gave at Village Day last year. All these things mentioned have been done by a mixture of volunteers and professionals and are very much appreciated. How can we best coordinate their efforts so that both they and the community can benefit even more. Do they want to be coordinated?

This is just one example but I know we have talented and enthusiastic people sitting at home who would love to have the opportunity to get out and do something. So let's think about harnessing that.

I mentioned earlier we have a number of Clubs and associations who could be better known and would welcome new members and we also have public buildings which are underused. I will give you a for instance to show how a body like the Community projects group can act as a coordinator to help a number of organisations in one go,

As you know plans are underway for this year's Village Day and it has been decided to invite all the youth groups to design a poster that will be used for the advertising. There

will be a prize for the winner of each of three groups and a prize for the organisation, the winning child belongs to. It has been decided that all the posters will be displayed in the three buildings we spoke of.

It is probable that there will be over 150 entries and if you remember your own children, that almost guarantees 150 families going round all three buildings to find the right poster plus many other people who will be coming. Within each building there could be a display from all the clubs and associations to help them recruit new members.

Here are some more examples of where the Group could help, they are only ideas and have not been discussed with anyone, they may be impractical for all sorts of reasons but I mention them as examples to show what can be done.

Take the Allotment Club for instance. It is one of the very few in this country where all the allotments have not been taken up let alone * have a queue of people wanting to have one. Some of our keen gardeners produce more than they need. Two of the Parish pubs and a number of residents have told me they would like to buy local fresh produce. A number of people would like an allotment but could not cope with a full one, could they be sectioned, the allotments I mean not the people. And what of those who would like one, but like me don't know where to start, we have local experts.

Is there not scope here for the Projects Group to coordinate and help the Allotment Club and what could we do to help the other clubs and associations?



Well, take the Cubs and the Peter Edwards Hall. At the moment for activity weekends the Cubs go to large camping grounds several miles away. As you know the Peter Edwards has a Hall including a kitchen, loos and showers. In addition to the playing field there are * woods. Could this facility be used in some way not just for our own Scouts but rented out to other Scout Groups in the surrounding area.

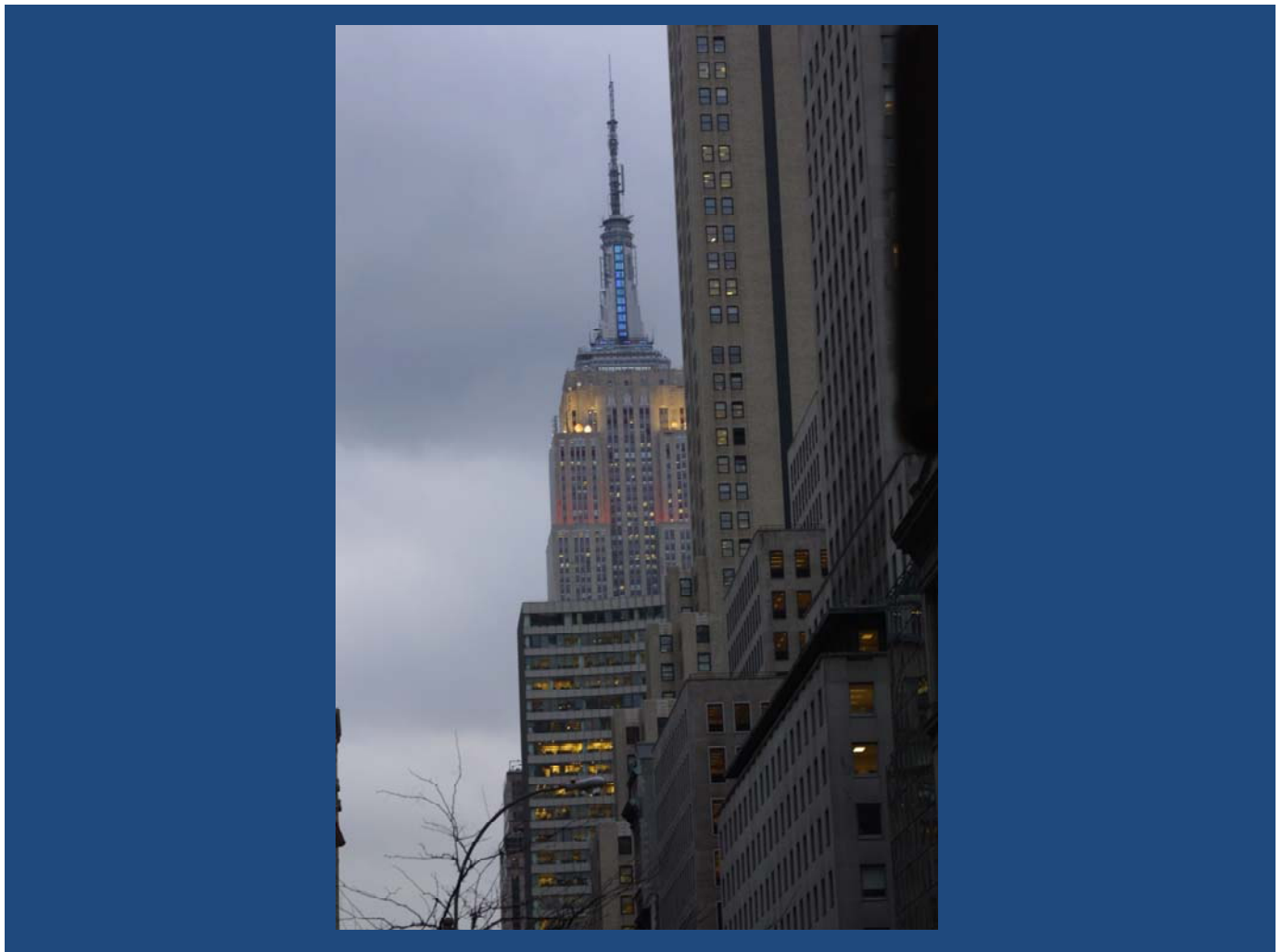
We have the Friendship Club, the Social Club, BADRA, SEADA (Slip End & District Association and the Chatty Club all organising outings for the elderly. I have heard it said that sometimes there is not enough to go on a trip to take advantage of large party bookings or enough to make it worthwhile for a coach. Could the Projects Group act as a coordinator to bring these organisations together on occasions to plan a larger trip and take advantage of the discounts which are around.

There are a large number of people in their thirties and forties with nothing in the Parish for them. We can understand them coming home from work with nothing much else to do but watch the TV. With young children money will be tight, and in any case, who will look after the children when they don't know many people in the Village?. What would they want us to do,, have we ever asked. Janet is now turning her attention to that group and although she has a couple of ideas in mind there, is still a lot to do for these folks.

We spoke of the businesses earlier; we have a fair number of small sole traders ranging from the professions to skilled tradesmen. Running a small business is never easy, for apart from doing the work that pays there is all the admin to be done, keeping up with legislation the revenue and vat, resources for training and marketing themselves must be limiting, and of course there is a whole minefield if they take on paid help. While time is at a premium so too the cost implications.

So what could we do here, well again a business group could be formed which meets from time to time where we could invite speakers. For example in the Village do we not have Accountants, bankers, employment law specialists and a range of other skills? Course we do and then there are resources we can tap into, such as business link the old chamber of commerce in Luton.

We could set up a mini commerce centre



not only providing an admin HQ for the Community Projects Group but also providing a range of bookkeeping, typing, photocopying services for all our local sole traders and small business people - this in turn could provide part time employment opportunities for maybe new mums with office backgrounds who want to work somewhere very local - there are lots of empty properties up for rent around the Parish.

Again, while speaking to people throughout the Parish I have heard of transport problems. People in Pepperstock who said the bus service is so poor at weekends they can't get to the shops. Of people who have problems getting to the Doctor or Chemist because they have no car. Folks in the Grove Road Park as well as at Pepperstock who would like to get to the clubs but can't because it is too far to walk. In fact most of the youth groups have transport issues.

Could we do something like this

Milton Community Minibus

Owned and operated by Milton Parish Council

With the assistance of grants from:-

[The Countryside Agency](#)

[South Cambridgeshire District Council](#)

[Milton Parish Council](#)



So, we have looked at some fairly straight forward projects which would cost next to nothing and a more adventurous one, in the minibus.

But that doesn't mean we can't do something really adventurous. What about if we did some blue sky thinking, stuff that is out of the box in modern management speak and come up wiiiiiiith.

With a windfarm.



**St OSYTH PARISH COUNCIL
VISIT A WIND FARM
2006**

The meeting was so well attended that people were standing in the lobby of the Village Hall as there was no room either sitting or standing around the hall sides.



What if we had half a dozen or so wind turbines that would generate enough power to run the Parish and we sell the excess to the national grid the profits going into the Projects Group. Blue sky thinking I hear you saying, more like pie in the sky.

Well this lot didn't think so. After extensive research and consultation with residents they decided to go for it. It did eventually fall apart two years later but only because their District Council refused planning permission. Thinking about it, ours disappears in a couple of weeks.

So to conclude, our ability to improve and enhance our lives in this Parish, is limited only by our imaginations and our willingness to have a go.

Now, to go about some of this work we will need a Parish Plan may I introduce Jemma to you, who will speak about how we go about making our Parish Plan.



A Parish Plan for Slip End?



Introduction

- BRCC was established in 1953 and is an independent county wide charity delivering a wide range of community development services to the county's urban and rural communities
- BRCC is one of 38 county Rural Community Councils (RCC) in England working together under the national RCC umbrella body, ACRE, to ensure that the rural voice is heard at all levels of government
- We offer support and advice to Town and Parish Plan steering groups through officer attendance at individual meetings and events, email and telephone conversations



What is a Parish Plan

- The Parish Action Plan is an opportunity for the whole community to voice their opinion on what action they wish to see taken in their local area in the future
- A Parish Action Plan can cover any social, economic and environmental issues that are relevant to people who live or work in the town



What is a Parish Plan

- **The Parish Plan involves:**
 - Including everyone in the parish
 - Mapping out services and facilities already in the community, looking to see if they are meeting everyone's needs and if they are being used to their full potential
 - Identifying features and characteristics that people value and looking at how these can be safeguarded for the future
 - Discover what issues and opportunities people feel need addressing
- This information is then used to form a detailed action plan for the parish
- The action plan will set out which recommendations are a priority, how long they will take, what funding they will need and what assistance may be required



What is involved?

1. Getting started

Inform everyone about the Town/Parish Action Plan & ask for volunteers.

2. Set up the steering group

The groups role will be to plan & undertake the project and to keep the community involved & informed.

3. Consider how you are going to go about it

Set a timescale, consider the costs involved & decide what methods will be used to gather people's views.



4. Getting everybody involved – discover the issues

It is important to find out the views of as many people as possible.

5. Gather opinions

Set up working groups to concentrate on topics that have been identified & gather further information.

6. Bring things together

Collate all the findings from your research, consultations & discussions & identify the key issues that could lead to action.



7. Action Planning

Determine what actions are a priority, how long they will take, what funding they will need & what assistance may be required.

3 types of actions tend to emerge:

- Those the community can do for themselves (e.g. setting up a community website or newsletter)
- Those that can be done with help from someone else or some funding (e.g. provision or updating of play equipment)
- Those that can be used to influence the local authority and other statutory bodies (e.g. traffic issues)



8. Final report and action plan and the launch!

Finalise the report & action plan & distribute a summary to every household & the relevant agencies/organisations.

9. Put the plan into action!



Why do a Parish Plan

- Opportunity to look forward for the next 5 -10 years rather than just responding to tasks that require immediate action
- Provides a collective view of what people in the town would like to see happen in the future
- Provides a stronger voice for the community and adds credibility to representations made by the Parish Council
- Provides evidence of need and commitment, which may be used to influence local authorities, service providers and funders
- Can provide the basis for successful dialogue between communities and statutory agencies in the shaping of public resources and service delivery



Why do a Parish Plan Cont.

- It can test of encourage backing for a community project that has already been identified
- It is an opportunity to bring everyone in the parish together, strengthening community spirit and involvement
- It is an opportunity to attract new volunteers from the community, who do not get involved with traditional community activities or events
- Parish Plans provide valuable information that can inform the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy, local planning decisions and Section 106 negotiations



Quote from Stotfold Town Plan group

“Producing a Town Plan in Stotfold gives everyone in the community the chance to have some say on how the community develops. The town has grown significantly in recent years and is continuing to do so. It is a great pity that we did not produce a Town Plan much earlier. This would have given vision for the future of Stotfold Town that has a structure and facilities meeting the aspirations and needs of the residents.

A Town Plan can only be beneficial, the workload is demanding, but we are encouraged, for example, that Mid Beds District Council took on board the key issues from already completed Town and Parish Plans in the county to inform the LDF Core Strategy and the Community Action Plans. It is very positive to feel we have a voice”



Progress in the County

- **31 completed Parish and Town Action Plans**
- **28 parishes progressing with a Parish and Town Action Plans**
- **7 looking into starting a Parish and Town Action Plans**





Community Consultation

- It would take approximately 15 – 18 months to produce a Parish Plan
- The aim is to give everyone the opportunity to have a say and encourage as many people as possible to participate
- Use a range of consultation methods to achieve a high level of involvement
- Reach out to people in ways which are interesting, entertaining and most importantly in ways which suit their lifestyles



Funding & Support

- The ITV Community Planning Grant £500 – the grant aims to provide community groups with a small up front sum to support and encourage groups during the initial stages of formation.
- South Beds District Council Rural Flagship Fund £500 – towards the costs of producing the Parish Plan
- BRCC are able to offer advice and support at all stages of the Parish Plan process



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I think this would be a good moment for us to have a break for some tea and coffee. On your chair are some questionnaires which I would be grateful if you will complete them and we shall collect them at the end of the evening. Shall we meet again in about twenty minutes and then Jemma and I will take any questions you may have.

Questions

Vote to agree the concept of a projects Group. This was adopted.

Vote to agree progressing with a Parish Plan. This was agreed.

The next meeting will be on 30th March to begin work on the Parish Plan. This is where we will start to form ideas of what we want, both the Group and the Council to do. During the meeting we will set up working groups to look at different aspects of the plan and elect a Management Committee for the Group. This meeting will also be open to other residents who were unable to come along tonight.

Meeting closed.