

Mortehoe and Woolacombe

Parish Plan

March 2007

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Parish Council were approached to take part in a survey to ascertain the views of local inhabitants on their views of their community, issues of concern and suggestions to improve village life in the future.

In March 2006, 1,028 questionnaires were distributed to households in the community inviting the views of every person over the age 11 on a variety of subjects.

211 questionnaires were returned, recording the answers of 420 individuals. It should therefore be borne in mind that the following analysis in no way represents a consensus of opinion. Several reasons could account for the disappointing numbers of returns. In recent years a number of surveys and questionnaires have been sent out including a Housing Needs Survey in 2002, a major Traffic and Parking survey in 2003. The Parish also has a high number of second and holiday homes.

However, the returned surveys and issues raised in all the other surveys have given a clear idea of how many people view the Parish and how they would like to see it develop in future years.

The plan is a beginning - not an end. It is up to everyone to ensure that the hopes and ambitions contained herein, and the quality of life we strive for is not only maintained, but improved. The Parish Council and other groups will be able to take these suggestions forward, with the help and support of the local community
The resulting document can be used to lobby other authorities that affect the Parish and should assist with grant applications for funding.

We thank everyone for the contributions made to help create this plan.

Elisabeth Ressel (Chair of the Parish Council)

MORTEHOE PARISH

Background

Location:

The coastal Parish of Mortehoe in North Devon is predominately rural and contains some of the most outstanding countryside and coastal scenery in Britain. The Parish covers the villages of Mortehoe and Woolacombe, the hamlets of Spreacombe and extends to the east to the edge of Lee Village. It lies 15 miles to the north of Barnstaple.

Much of the land in the village and coast is owned by the National Trust having previously formed part of the Chichester estate at Arlington.

A large part of the Parish is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and also classed as a Coastal Preservation Area and part of the Heritage Coast. The village centre of Mortehoe and parts of Woolacombe are designated Conservation Areas.

Population:

There are 1,340 on the electoral register. The population however, in the summer months rises to between 10,000 and 15,000 boosted by the many visitors to the hotels, holiday accommodation and holiday camps in the Parish.

The Parish

Tourism forms the bedrock of the local economy. The Blue Flag beach at Woolacombe is a major tourist attraction and popular surfing location. Many of the local businesses serve the needs of the holiday trade with public houses, holiday shops, surf shops, restaurants and other food outlets. The small museum in Mortehoe charts the history of the Parish and its people from isolated rural hamlet to the present busy holiday centre.

The community has numerous active sports clubs, societies and organisations. The local playing fields are well used by two football clubs, the local school and play-groups. The local primary school at Woolacombe has a roll of 149 pupils and is one of the largest all year round employers within the Parish.

The Parish has three community halls, a health centre, a chemist, Tourist Information centre and two Post Offices. The community is served by the Anglican Churches at Mortehoe and Woolacombe and also by the Methodist Church and the Calvary Chapel in Woolacombe.

Regular bus services connect to Ilfracombe, Croyde and Barnstaple.

People and Household Results

Personal 420 individuals responded to the Parish questionnaire sent out in April 2006. By far the biggest response rate was from the 40 –59 age group. 53% were female. Of the respondents, 88% listed their property as their main residence. 63% were from Woolacombe, 34% Mortehoe and 3% elsewhere in the parish.

Employment

41% were either employed in either full or part time work. 10% were in full time education and 35% wholly retired. The rest of respondents were either unemployed, sick or disabled or an unwaged spouse or partner.

39% of respondents worked within the Parish with 15 % working in Barnstaple and 15% working in either Braunton or Ilfracombe. 23% worked outside the North Devon area.

The Issues to be Pursued

- **Facilities and provision for the unemployed, permanently sick or disabled retired and elderly.**
- **Transport needs for people working outside the Parish**

Housing

25% of respondents indicated that they would be, or were, looking for alternative accommodation. These included:

Starter home to buy	27
Starter home to rent	13
Family home to buy	12
Family home to rent	5
Residential Care	6
Home adapted for disability	6

Reasons given for lack of success included: price; lack of rented accommodation; lack of local authority housing and lack of suitable stock to buy.

There were numerous comments in the replies regarding the large numbers of second and holiday homes in the Parish and the effect that this trend had had on the housing market and availability of suitable properties for younger local people.

Issues to be Pursued

- **Affordable housing – look at suitable ways for the provision of low cost affordable housing for local people.**
- **Investigate the availability of plots of land suitable for housing.**
- **Liaise with planning authorities regarding planning policies and monitoring and enforcement of present planning policy.**
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Council Services





The provision of litterbins and levels of street cleanliness caused concern in a high number of returns. There were calls for an increase in the numbers of larger bins and in the frequency of emptying in the peak season.

Rubbish Collection and Recycling

91% of households had black wheelie bins and 68% had both black and green bins. There was overall general satisfaction with the scheme but calls for recycling provision in all areas of the Parish. There was also widespread regret at the loss of the recycling pavilion and calls for the provision of community recycling facilities for holidaymakers. A high number of respondents requested a weekly collection of rubbish in the summer.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Liaison with the N.D.D.C. and County Council about possible improvements to the existing services.**
- **Pressure for the provision of community recycling facilities.**

Health Services

17% of respondents had difficulties in gaining access to a National Health dentist. This is a serious consideration as many of these are elderly, often without their own transport and most in need of medical services. 29% of respondents were aged 65 plus with 15 people registering as permanently sick or disabled.
4.4% registered difficulties in obtaining services from a chemist.
2.1% had difficulties in accessing a doctor.

Issue to be pursued:

- **Liase with health services for better provision of services**
- **Promotion of local voluntary services such as the Warwick Link**

Highways and Transport





59% of respondents were satisfied with the state of the roads and pavements. 76% felt that there were danger spots within the Parish or on the main approach roads. By far the greatest number identified the lack of a pavement on Beach/Station Road as a major issue of concern. Other areas of concern included: speeding traffic on Beach Road and both Station Road Mortehoe and Woolacombe; the blocking of the exit to the Fire Station; the illegal parking of cars in several areas of the Parish causing danger for other users; the congestion caused by the parking of cars for the primary school; the regular flooding at Mullacott;

Issues to be pursued:

- **Continued consultation with the police and County Council about the danger spots and possible remedies**
- **Speed checks and mobile speed patrols**
- **Consultation with Highways regarding the provision of a pavement down Beach Road/Station Road.**
- **Alteration to road markings to ensure free access from the Fire Station.**
- **Pressure on County Council to improve drainage and road at Mullacott.**



Flooding at Mullacott

Parking

The survey was conducted before the introduction of new traffic legislation in Woolacombe in May and the regular presence of a traffic warden from May to September.

There were a high number of comments regarding illegal parking in the Parish. The hot spots included The Esplanade, the Clearways at the Beach entrance and on Chapel Hill and in Woolacombe village centre. There was much criticism of road marking and the state of road signs throughout the Parish.





Woolacombe Village Centre
Combesgate Green





Issues to be pursued:

- **Liase with Highways officers for ways of resolving specific issues**
- **The introduction of all-year traffic restrictions in Barton Road, Woolacombe, The Esplanade and extension to the double yellow lines on Chichester Park.**
- **Improvements to line markings and signs**
- **Extension to 'Pay and Display', residential scheme and other restrictions from Good Friday to 31st October.**
- **Provision of a traffic warden seven days a week during this period.**

Policing



Woolacombe Beat Officer, P.C. Hendry
and Police Community Support Officer, Hannah Mawby

68% of respondents felt that the police were aware of local issues and 17% recorded that crime or disorder had affected them in the past 12 months. 62% felt that crime levels were no higher that those recorded 10 years ago. Most respondents requested the increased presence of police within the community and a higher profile for the dedicated police officers responsible for the Parish.
Issues commonly raised:

1. The resolving of illegal parking throughout the Parish
2. Late night anti-social behaviour and illegal parties
3. Higher police presence sought.
4. Speed control
5. Complaints regarding the police call centre.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Liaise with local police for ways of resolving specific issues and problems in the Parish.**
- **Dedicated traffic warden cover from Good Friday to the 31st October.**
- **Pressure on Police Authority to ensure adequate policing at peak times.**
- **Publicity of local police and services available.**
- **Mobile Speed Control Units**
- **Promotion of Neighbourhood Watch**

Public Transport



Regular buses connect to Ilfracombe throughout the day. There are also services through to Barnstaple. The results of the survey show that a large majority of the parishioners travel to work or study by private transport. 39% of respondents worked within the parish. Regular users of public transport made up only 4.5% of respondents with another 38% relying on those services on a weekly or occasional basis. Bus transport also plays a vital part in transporting visitors to and from the Parish.

36% of respondents said they would use the buses if there were a more frequent/reliable service or cheaper fares. Others suggested improvements in routing, reliability and times of services. There was widespread satisfaction at the introduction of free bus travel for the over 60's. There was also considerable interest in a car share scheme.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Request a review of bus time-table and destinations**
- **Provision of more information and time-tables at each bus stop**
- **Transport needs of children/young people**
- **Provision of an additional bus shelter in Beach Road**
- **Publicity for the voluntary services such as The Warwick Link**
- **Publicise car sharing schemes**

Sports and Leisure Facilities

The residents of the Parish recorded being well served with sport and leisure facilities within the community. The numerous clubs and societies made use of the three community halls, Woolacombe Village Hall, Mortehoe Village Hall and the Methodist Hall in Woolacombe. The two play areas in the two villages and the Meadow Playing Fields provided the sporting venues for other clubs and casual use. The newly completed Multi-Use Games Area offers another venue for community use.

Village Halls





The wide range of activities and societies on offer in the community reflected the diverse range of ages and interest of the participants. The most popular sporting and active activities included Jazzercise, skittles, badminton and dancing. Other popular clubs and societies included the Art Club, Pantomime Society, The Heritage Trust, Residents' Association and the two Women's Institutes. 15 respondents were members of the Woolacombe and Mortehoe Luncheon Club.

47% of respondents requested the provision of additional facilities within the Parish. A number of responses emphasised the importance of the village halls for the provision of community events, arts events and educational classes. There were requests for monthly film shows, whist and bridge sessions, more fitness classes, yoga, indoor bowling, more regular entertainment, more activities for teenagers and elderly residents.

Mobile Library

The mobile library service calls once a week in the Parish. 8% of the respondents made use of library and expressed great support for the service. There was also a call for other County Council mobile services such as the community computer bus.

Churches

72% of respondents registered their support for the three village churches and the Calvary Chapel. Other expressed the importance of the church as a venue for weddings, baptisms and funerals. There was much support and appreciation for the community related activities that took place in the churches, the value of Christian fellowship and seasonal worship.





Children's Play Areas

The majority of those who expressed an opinion thought the facilities adequate. There were however, calls for improvements and modernisation of the equipment in both Mortehoe and Woolacombe play areas.

Surfing Activities and Surf Life Saving

By far the largest demand registered in the responses was for the building of a club-house for the immensely successful surfing clubs in the Parish.




Issues to be Pursued:

- **Additional facilities and access for the disabled and younger children in both play areas.**
- **Promotion of all sporting and educational opportunities available within the Parish.**
- **Possible improvements in the cycle path network.**
- **Promotion of services available e.g. mobile library, the Luncheon Club and the clubs and organisations within the community.**

Meadow Playing Fields

The Sport England Lottery grant awarded three years ago for improvements to the drainage of the pitches has led to a considerable increase in the usage of the area as a whole. Apart from Woolacombe Primary School, two football teams use the pitches for league venues in the winter and, in the summer, an immensely popular local football tournament takes place over many weeks. The sports pavilion plays host to a very successful Family Play Days organisation with membership of over 70 youngsters all making full use of the facilities.

The Meadow also plays host to village events including the 'Fun on the Fields' and seasonal events such as Hallowen and firework celebrations.

Respondents requested improvements at the pavilion and more organised sports activities for teenagers and younger children during the school holidays.

The problem of dog mess in the Meadow in particular on the pitches, provoked many complaints.

Other requests for outdoor facilities included a skateboard park, affordable swimming pool access, affordable tennis facilities, affordable gym facilities, a mountain biking trail, a direct cycle route to link with the Tarka Trail and more dedicated facilities for those with disabilities.





Issues to be Pursued:

- **Improvements to facilities at the Meadow. Possible enlargement of the sports pavilion.**
- **Enforcement of dog-fouling laws in the Meadow and other problem areas.**
- **The sourcing of funding for community facilities and facilitators.**

Natural Environment





97% of those who responded were aware of the Parish's status within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 38% thought that the beaches and the Blue Flag status were the most important environmental assets in the Parish. There was high praise for the National Trust stewardship of the land and general appreciation for the outstanding scenery throughout the Parish. Concerns were raised regarding future development of the area and the protection of the existing landscape.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Publicity of the activities of the Voluntary Marine Conservation Area; R.S.P.B.; the Devon Wildlife Trust; the National Trust Volunteer events and the A.O.N.B. community profiling project.**
- **Promotion of the Parish within the A.O.N.B. and the possible construction of entrance signs to the Parish.**



Footpaths



85% people thought that the paths in the Parish were in a good condition whilst 14% thought otherwise. Certain paths were identified for attention and improvements. The maintenance of County Council paths within the parish came in for particular criticism particularly the maintenance of the cycle path.

There were calls for more disabled assess on paths and to viewpoints.
Village Environment – there was support for the cleaning up and improvement to the back lanes in Woolacombe.





Issues to be pursued

- **Review of path network and possible improvements.**
- **Promotion of paths to encourage pedestrians off the roads**
- **Problem of dog fouling and provision of additional bins in certain areas. More warden inspections**
- **More disabled access on popular routes and access to some viewpoints.**
- **Seek ways of improving village environment.**
- **Possible joint initiative between the school, National Trust and Parish Council for a tree planting scheme and the creation of a nature area in the Meadow.**

Leisure and Tourism



A clear majority of respondents cited the importance of the Blue Flag and clean beaches in the Parish as the most important environmental asset.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Promotion of resort.**
- **Investigation into and possible promotion of the Green Business Tourism Scheme and Discover Devon**



Youth

Youth, as opposed to other age groups, is singled out within this plan as they have a particular importance because they represent the future of the community.

Issues to be pursued:

- **Support for youth organisations within the Parish**
- **Setting up of additional youth groups and continued support for existing organisations**
- **The sourcing of possible funding for such organisations.**

MORTEHOE ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2011

PARTNERS: Mortehoe Parish Council; Devon County Council; North Devon District Council: Local Service group; A.O.N.B – North Devon Area of Outstanding Beauty; National Trust;Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Woolacombe Primary School and Busy Bees; Village Hall Committees; W & Mortehoe Residents' Association; Mortehoe Luncheon Club; W.& M Women's Institutes; Woolacombe Surf-Life Saving Club; Woolacombe Tourism Association; Local Businesses and Voluntary Organisations.
Definition of terms: A.S.A.P. = 3 months; Short term = 12 months; Medium term = 3 years; Long term = 5 years

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Priority	Partner	Time-scale	Lead	Resource
1	**EMPLOYMENT** **Improved provision for unemployed, permanently sick/disabled/retired or elderly**	**1. Liaise with relevant authorities** **Encouragement of job shops and local training/education.** **2. Investigate improvements to local transport needs.**	**Medium**	**D.C.C.** **N.D.D.C** **D.C.C. Rural Transport Forum**	**Ongoing** "	**M.P.C.** "	**Gov. Funding and other agencies**
2	**HOUSING** **Affordable housing – endeavour to ensure that the housing needs of the Parish are met.**	**1. Work with partners for the provision of low-cost affordable housing for local people.** **2. Investigate the availability of suitable plots of land suitable for housing.**	**High**	**D.C.C.** **N.D.D.C.** **M.P.C.**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	
3	**COUNCIL SERVICES**	**1. Liaise with N.D.D.C. about possible improvements to existing services including the additional provision of community recycling facilities.**	**High**	**N.D.D.C.**	**A.S.A.P.**	**P.C.**	**N.D.D.C.**

4	**HEALTH SERVICES**	**1. Liaise with health service providers for better health provision.** **2. Promotion of local voluntary services such as the Warwick Link**	**Medium**	**Local Health Service providers**	**A.S.A.P.**	**P.C.**	
5	**HIGHWAYS** **Continued consultation with Police and Highways regarding outstanding issues**	**1. Danger spots and possible remedies.** **2. Speed checks and mobile speed patrols.** **3. Continued consultation with Highways regarding provision of a pavement down Beach/Station Road** **4. Alteration to road markings to ensure free access from Fire Station.** **5. Prevention of flooding at Mullacott.**	**High** **High** **High** **High** **High**	**Police, D.C.C. Highways N.D.D.C. and P.C.** **“**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	
6	**PARKING** **Liaison with County Highways for ways of resolving specific issues.**	**1. Introduction of changes to parking regulations and restrictions in Barton Road, The Esplanade and Chichester Park.** **2. Improvement to line markings and signs.** **3. Extension to existing schemes and ‘Pay and Display’ from Good Friday to 31st October.** **4. Policing and wardening of existing traffic regulations**	**High** **High** **High** **High**	**“**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	

7	**<u>POLICING</u>** **Liaison with local police for ways of resolving specific issues.**	**1. Pressure on Police Authority to ensure adequate policing at peak times.** **2. Publicity of local police and services available.** **3. Promotion of local Neighbourhood Watch.**	**High**	**Police Authority**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	
8	**<u>PUBLIC TRANSPORT</u>** **Bus service review of time-tables and destinations.**	**1. Provision of more information and timetables at each bus stop.** **2. Consideration of the needs of children/young people.** **3. Provision of additional bus shelter on Beach Road.** **4. Publicity for voluntary services.** **5. Initiate car sharing scheme**	**Medium**	**D.C.C. and individual bus firms.**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	
9	**SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES** **Play Area Improvements Meadow Pavilion** **Woolacombe Surf Lifesaving Club Support efforts to modernize and utilize village halls**	**1. Additional provision of facilities and access for disabled and younger children to areas.** **2. Improvements to facilities** **3. Support existing groups** **4. Liase with village hall committees and user groups** **5. Promotion of all sporting and educational opportunities in the Parish.**	**High** **High** **High** **Meduim**	**N.D.D.C M.P.C., D.C.C., Primary School, Family Play days, Busy Bees, Sports Clubs, Village Halls Comms.**	**Ongoing** “ “	**M.P.C.**	**Section 137 and Parish Council** **Grant Aid** **Matched Funding** **Grant Aid**

10	**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** **Increase public awareness of the environment.** **Promotion of the Parish within the A.O.N.B. and the possible construction of entrance signs to the Parish** **Improvements to village environment**	1. Publicise the activities of the: Voluntary Marine Conservation Area; R.S.P.B; N.T. volunteer events; Devon Wildlife Trust and A.O.N.B. community projects 2. Liaise with the A.O.N.B. and N.T. 3. Improvements to signs, bins, road markings, and pedestrian areas	**Medium** **Medium** **Medium**	**A.O.N.B, N.T. D.C.C. Voluntary Orgnaisa-tions** **A.O.N.B. National Trust and D.C.C.** **All agencies**	**Ongoing** **“** **“**	**P.C.**	**Grants and D.C.C.** **“**
11	**FOOTPATHS** **Review of path network** **Promotion of paths to encourage pedestrians off the roads.** **Improvements to provide more disabled access** **Dog fouling Problems and provision of additional dog bins** **Seek ways of improving village environment** **Tree Planting Scheme/** Nature Trail	1. Identify authorities and partners involved or responsible 2. Liaise with those responsible. 3. Liaise with those Responsible. 4. More warden patrols/Liaise with those responsible 5.Liase with interested parties. 6. “ “ “	**Medium** **Medium** **Medium** **Medium** **Medium**	**D.C.C. A.O.N.B, N.T. and P.C.** **“** **“** **N.T.: P.C. N.D.D.C.: Parkin Estates School Youth Groups**	**Ongoing**	**P.C.**	**Matched Funding** **Grants and Matched Funding**

12	**<u>TOURISM</u>** **Tourism Development** **Promotion of special events in the Parish**	Investigation into and possible promotion of the Green Tourism Scheme and 'Discover Devon'	**High** **High**	**W & M Tourism Ass. D.C.C. N.D.D.C. and N.T.** **North Devon Arts Festival; Local Groups**	**Ongoing** "	**P.C. And W & M Tourism Ass.**	**Grants And other contribu-tions**
13	**<u>YOUTH</u>** **Support for youth organisations within the Parish** **The setting up of additional youth groups.** **The sourcing of possible funding for organisations**	Liaison with youth groups Liaison with youth groups	**High** **High**	**Youth Groups: Primary School; Ilfracomb College; D.C.C. N.D.D.C and others.** "	**Ongoing**	**P. C. Youth Groups**	**Grants and other contribu-tions**