

# Dedham Parish Plan



***Your Village – Your Way***  
..putting ideas into actions



*"...Dedham, a place you feel proud to live in"*

*Dedham Resident*

## June 2011

[www.dedhamparishplan.org](http://www.dedhamparishplan.org)

Supported by

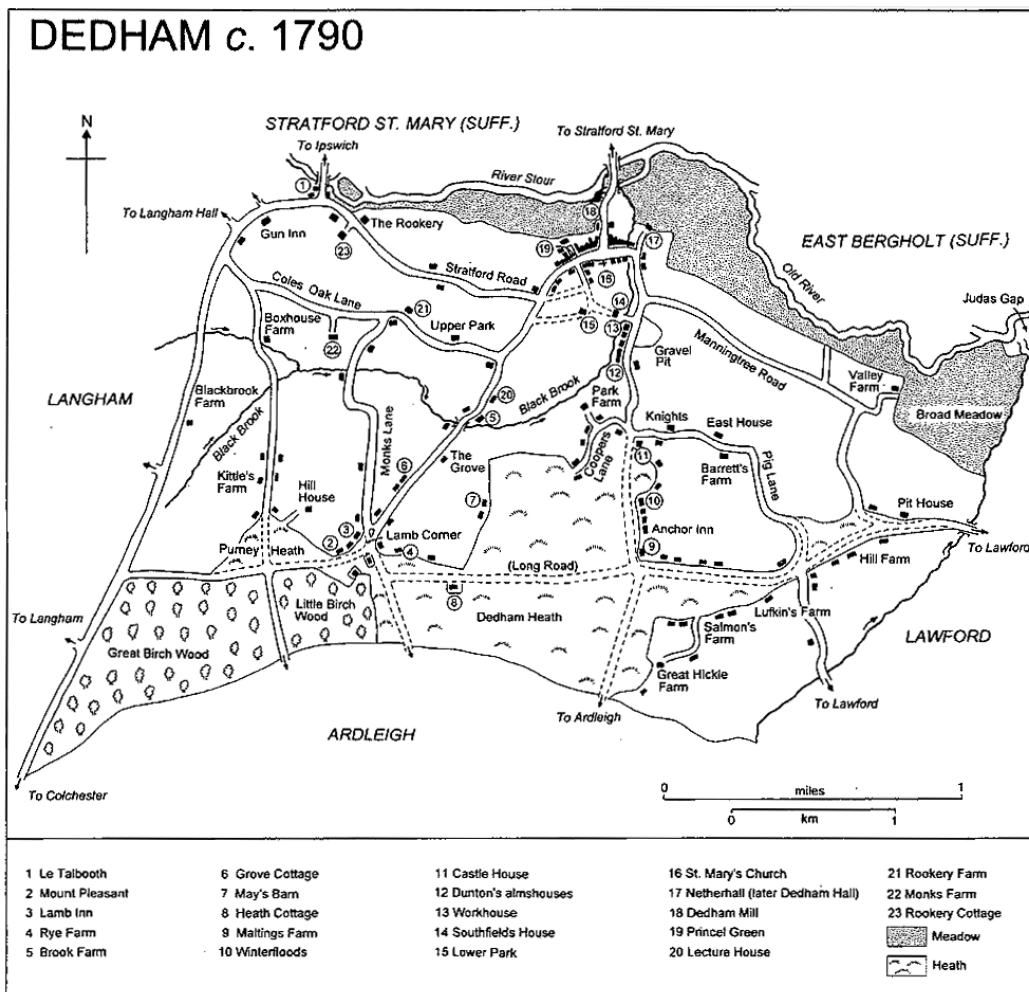




# Contents

FOREWORD .....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	6
LIVING IN DEDHAM .....	7
TRANSPORT .....	8
ROADS & TRAFFIC .....	9
PARKING .....	9
PLANNING .....	10
SAFETY & CRIME .....	11
COMMUNITY DEMOCRACY .....	12
YOUNG PEOPLE .....	13
ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION .....	13
SOCIAL WELLBEING .....	14
PUBLIC SERVICES & AMENITIES .....	16
BUSINESS WELLBEING .....	16
ACTION PLANS .....	18
PLAN PROCESS MILESTONES .....	25
GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	25
OTHER DOCUMENTS .....	25
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	26
USEFUL LINKS .....	26





[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)



Mill Lane Looking South

## Foreword

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity of introducing and commending the Dedham Parish Plan to you. The Plan is the result of a public consultation to identify those issues that the community considers in need of improvement and those that it wants protected. Whilst the general perception within our village was one of satisfaction, there are a number of areas that could be addressed to further enhance living in Dedham. The Plan sets out *Your Village – Your Way* and seeks to put your *Ideas in to Action*.

The consultation process has been run by a Steering Group who have produced this Plan based upon all the responses provided at the public Workshop and in the Questionnaire. Their commitment and contribution in completing this Plan is very much appreciated. The process has received guidance and funding support from the Rural Community Council of Essex and the Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project for which we are especially grateful. Our thanks, of course, also go to the community of Dedham for their contribution through sharing their views.

The Plan sets out to provide practical action points. These may sometimes be within our ability to implement although in some cases it will be in the medium to long-term whilst others will require the involvement of external authorities and could require policy changes. It may also be appropriate to seek the participation of local people to help in progressing some of the actions. We have already seen a few of the earlier action points bear fruit and this encourages the view that the process is working as we hoped.

The Parish Council commissioned the creation of this Plan and it will now become an integral part of Parish Council meetings and regular updates will be provided as and when specific issues are taken forward.

Your responses have made us fully aware of the issues that are of importance and it will now be for the Parish Council to focus on these and to use our limited human and financial resources in the most effective way towards achieving a successful outcome. You can be assured that the Parish Council is committed to doing all within its powers to see that the Action Plans and your aspirations for Dedham become a reality.

**Roy Laverick**  
**Chairman, Dedham Parish Council**  
June 2011





## Introduction

The Dedham Parish Plan was commissioned by Dedham Parish Council in September 2009 and a Steering Group was formed to undertake the whole process from the public consultation through to production of the Plan itself. The objective was to identify those areas that the community of Dedham felt were important and need to be looked after and those that were in need of some improvement.



The first stage was a Public Workshop in April 2010 at which the key issues were identified in order to construct a subsequent Public Consultation Questionnaire. The Questionnaire was then designed and included a number of sections with specific questions together with an opportunity to make comments. This was distributed for completion in November 2010. All responses were then entered into a database and sorted to provide key statistics and categories of comments from which the content and actions in this Plan have then been created.

The overriding conclusion to be drawn from the whole exercise is that the community is largely very happy with most aspects of life in Dedham. However it identified a number of areas that could benefit from some form of improvement action. The Action Plans (pages 18-24) list the major things that were of concern and indicate prioritisation for taking them forward. There were over 1000 comments given and naturally not all of them can appear in this Plan but they have all been retained and will be available for public viewing and provide further reference material for the Parish Council. Where appropriate, some of the comments will get passed directly to the persons responsible for those particular areas. It should be noted, of course, that whilst all Action Points will get addressed, not all of them may, in these difficult economic times, get achieved in the short term, especially where substantial cost may be involved. Many of the Action Points will require a degree of community participation if they are to be achieved and, as such, villagers may need to be asked to become involved.



The key issues that were identified by the consultation were as much to do with protecting that which is already appreciated and cherished as it was to do with pursuing improvements to areas of concern. The main areas requiring the most attention were Planning, Speeding, Parking, HGV's and Public Transport. Other significant issues included footpaths and public services and amenities. The Dedham Village Design Statement completed in 2006 covers extremely well much of the description of Dedham including history and geology together with the important issue of planning guidelines. Consequently we have not tried to cover these aspects in detail in this Plan although there clearly is concern in this area. Also, although we have sought resident's views on local businesses in Dedham we have not been able to directly address this area with a specific business survey. This could be taken forward separately in the future. There were some important issues where the community was evenly split for and against and these would need to be addressed as separate consultation processes where appropriate.

This Plan will now be adopted by the Parish Council who will commence addressing many of the Action Points. Naturally it will take time to progress all the actions but regular updates will be provided as and when items are achieved.

## Living in Dedham

To establish a true picture of why people like living in Dedham we asked about aspects of life in and around the village. The overriding conclusion was that Dedham residents are very satisfied with most aspects of life in our beautiful village but that some improvements could be made to further enhance village life. There was a strong sense of pride in our village, not just for its beauty, but for the peace and tranquility and the friendliness of the community.

*"Because of the excellent way in which the area is looked after you have a sense of pride living here"*

The most important aspects were considered by the vast majority to be; having the surrounding countryside, river and wildlife, low levels of crime, a clean and healthy environment together with a High Street with a good variety of shops. Clearly these are valued and cherished and every effort should be made to ensure they are managed and maintained well.

Similarly, having access to many footpaths, living in a conservation area and having a free car park were seen as very important. The public amenities available in Dedham including our community facilities such as the Assembly Rooms, Duchy Barn, Sports Pavilion and the Playing Fields are clearly all greatly valued. The CofE Primary School, children's play facilities and pre-school groups,

*"Every time we go to the High Street we meet and greet somebody we know"*



together with St Mary's Church, were considered essential aspects of Dedham village life along with the local pubs and restaurants. The convenience of Dedham's location, with its good access to major roads and nearness to railway connections, was viewed by many as a key consideration for living here. In the busy lives of many Dedham residents', being able to enjoy the surrounding countryside whilst still having easy access to other areas is clearly important.

The village was clearly seen as a friendly place with many comments about how people help each other and how sociable and welcoming most people are, not just in social environments, but also in simply greeting each other in the High Street. The village was felt to have a good community spirit and

*"My roots are here and have good neighbours and friends"*

range of social activities. All of these qualities are a credit to the people of the village but, of course need continual nurturing to ensure they remain such valued aspects of Dedham life.

Dedham does have many older residents who have lived here for a long time and clearly cherish the values of village life. But equally there are a growing number of younger people who feel just as strongly and want to ensure that those same village values they moved here to enjoy, are maintained. Living in Dedham is clearly enjoyed, not just for all the natural beauty and excellent facilities but, just as importantly, for the community spirit and friendliness that exists throughout.

*"An excellent area to raise our child"*

## Transport

Living in a village can present problems for those who do not have their own transport. Dedham is no exception. Many residents, particularly the more elderly, rely on bus services to Colchester and would like, additionally, to get to and from Manningtree in the day time. Some commuters would also like a bus service to Manningtree to tie in with morning and evening peak periods.

### Bus Services

Dedham is currently relatively well served with six return bus services at approximately two hourly intervals during the daytime on Weekdays & Saturdays to Colchester and a separate service in each direction to Colchester & Harwich on Sundays and Bank Holidays. There are currently no other bus services to Manningtree or Ipswich.

*"I would use buses to Manningtree and Colchester if more frequent and convenient"*



Although only a small percentage of those completing the questionnaire said they do use bus services regularly it is clear from the comments made that there is a general desire to use them more often if they were frequent and conveniently timed especially to Colchester. In particular there are also many teenagers who feel fairly isolated because of a lack of convenient buses to Colchester. Suggestions were made that improvements could be achieved by introducing additional

request stops and giving consideration to the direction of some services to enable transport from the village to the Heath. Also, it was felt that increased publicity of timetables through notice boards and possibly the Parish Magazine would be beneficial. Suggestions for services to Manningtree included the need for an appropriately timed direct service to and from the station for commuters.

### The Hopper Bus

The Hopper Bus was re-introduced in 2010 and is operated by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project. This service, which is funded through a lottery grant, will operate in July, August and September in 2011 and 2012. Although it runs hourly from 9am to 5pm on most days it does not realistically represent a long-term solution for those villagers from the public consultation seeking regular bus services to Manningtree town and station. The Hopper Bus is acknowledged by the majority as a great asset to the village and visitors alike enabling many to enjoy the beautiful Dedham Vale area without adding to pollution. It was felt that every effort should be made to encourage and support its continuation if at all possible. Increased usage of the service was seen as the best way to keep it so any opportunity should be taken to promote its existence.



### Community Bus

A few years ago Dedham did own and operate its own Community Bus and although this provided a useful service through volunteer drivers and was often used by the Primary School the cost of insurance and maintenance was too high for it to continue. The public consultation revealed the need from some villagers for consideration of a similar scheme perhaps more realistically by sharing with neighbouring communities.



## Cycling

The value of cycling in a safe and tranquil environment is recognised both at national and local level. Three miles separate Dedham from Manningtree by road – part through quiet and leafy lanes and part on busier roads. Villagers who enjoy cycling favoured the introduction of a recognised route that gave cyclists the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful countryside whilst being afforded adequate protection from traffic.

## Roads & Traffic

With the exception of the centre of the village all our roads are lanes and are rural in nature, with no kerbs or pavements. Many people, including children, do walk and ride on these lanes together with horse riders. Clearly a substantial majority of villagers felt that speeding and the volume of HGVs together with the use of a route as a link from the A12 to the A137 Harwich Road were amongst the most significant issues that need to be addressed to make our roads safer for all to enjoy.

*"There is a real problem where I live, 30 mph means 60 mph to the Grand Prix drivers"*

### Speeding



The speed of traffic is clearly of concern to a great number of people and several roads were specifically mentioned. A number of these were suggested for lower speed limits or traffic calming measures. However, on the specific question of 'providing traffic calming measures in Castle Hill, Crown Street and near the school', approximately half of the villagers were in favour and half against. The majority felt that there is insufficient enforcement of limits, and there were many suggestions for increased enforcement including greater use of the Police and Community Speedwatch. The actions therefore target the complex task of reviewing speed limits and signage; and working with the appropriate authorities to

improve enforcement.

### HGVs

Many villagers were concerned about the volume and size of heavy goods vehicles passing through the village. There was a large majority in favour of investigating if road signs could be erected to restrict HGVs and to advise against following 'Sat Nav' instructions from the A12.



### Roads & Pavements

There was a body of opinion suggesting that road traffic signage around the village was inadequate. A specific area that was mentioned more than others was the lack or condition of certain pavements. Also, a number of comments were made that hedge cutting at road junctions should be better maintained to improve visibility and safety.

## Parking

Dedham has a beautiful and vibrant historic centre and balancing the picturesque perspective with the need for car parking is difficult. There is clearly a fine balance for locals and tourists using both the High Street and Mill Lane Car Park to ensure that everyone's needs are met. Free parking is enjoyed in the Mill Lane car park whilst the High Street is controlled with parking restrictions. Many residents live well outside of the village centre and regularly need parking space to visit the village shops. There was a substantial amount of comment on all areas of parking and this aspect is of great concern to the majority.

## High Street Parking

Whilst it appears that finding a space is not currently a great problem to most villagers they would still like there to be an increase in the availability of spaces. A high proportion of villagers park in the High Street at least once a week, and the majority of these for less



than 30 minutes. Few villagers however seem to use the Mill Lane car park on a regular basis. Opinion on finding a parking space in the High Street was mixed with only a few who park there regularly failing to find a space whereas those who park there infrequently experienced difficulty in finding a space. Suggestions for improvement included additional or time limited spaces in the High Street. It was also suggested that some form of local residents parking scheme could be considered.

## School Parking

It is clear that there is an issue regarding the problems caused near the primary school by drivers at dropping off or picking up times. This problem has existed for many years without resolution and it does appear to be getting worse. There is a growing school population and, with a very successful school, it attracts many children from outside the village. The walking bus does help to an extent but more effective solutions are needed. Although many suggestions have been put forward it is clear that any action to resolve this issue must involve and be driven by all interested parties including the School, parents and residents.

*"School Parking...  
there is an accident  
waiting to happen"*

## Enforcement

It was generally felt that there needs to be greater enforcement of parking restrictions both in the High Street and around the parish. The concerns were mainly, parking beyond time limits, and poor and inconsiderate parking on yellow lines or near junctions.

## Car Parks

Whilst few villagers seem to use the Mill Lane car park on a regular basis, there was a clear majority in favour of maintaining free parking not just for locals but to encourage tourists to park there. There were also a number of suggestions that additional parking could be sought in the west end of the village centre which of course needs to be balanced with the need to maintain the environmental and historic context of the village.

## Planning

Planning Issues are clearly important to the whole community. In respect of the design aspects of planning the Dedham Village Design Statement completed in 2006 clearly spells out the wishes of the community and every effort has been taken to ensure that that document is taken into account whenever applications are considered. Planning was however, rated as the highest priority for the Parish Council to focus on and there appears to be a perceived gap between what actually happens and the general desires of the community. It should be noted that, although Dedham Parish Council are consulted, Colchester Borough Council remains the final arbiters of all planning decisions.



## **Housing Needs**

There was clearly a need indicated in the public consultation for more affordable homes for younger people as well as suitable properties into which existing residents could downsize to. Smaller homes generally and retirement accommodation were also seen as important. There were a number of comments made that there should be no further planning approvals for conversion of existing retail premises into private accommodation. The Parish Council Planning sub-committee will be made aware of these preferences so that they can take these objectives into account when commenting on planning applications.

## **Character**

Dedham is a beautiful village and an overwhelming majority of residents live here because of its character and want to ensure that it remains that way. Maintaining the character of the village as a whole was therefore seen as important and the majority felt that this aspect of planning was currently being managed well. However, it was felt that there was inadequate control over conversions of small properties into larger ones and there was an opinion that the building of houses in existing gardens needs to be controlled carefully. It was also felt that greater vigilance is required to ensure adherence to the conditions of planning approvals.



## **Listening to Locals**

There were many suggestions made that there should be far greater emphasis on listening to locals and ensuring their views are taken into account. This clearly falls into two parts. Firstly, the giving of those views and secondly, getting CBC to act upon them.

All planning applications are published to the community on the village notice boards, comments sought, and when provided, they are taken into account by the Parish Council. Clearly there is a need to improve public awareness of this process and encourage participation and the Parish Council will be asked to address this aspect in the Action Plan. However, awareness is driven as much by community participation as it is by publicity. It is important therefore that the community in general play an active part to ensure the whole process effectively reflects their views.

It was felt by many that there needs to be greater awareness by Colchester Borough Council of what is in the best interest of the local community, as expressed through the Parish Council and the Village Design Statement, with the maintenance of the character of the village pre-eminent.

*"The planning process should be by the people, for the people"*

## **Safety & Crime**

Dedham is clearly seen as a low crime area and a safe place to live. This was highlighted by many residents as a key benefit to living here. We also enjoy the services of a PCSO who is part funded by the Parish Council with match funding out of Essex Police budgets.

## **How Safe Do We Feel**

The vast majority of villagers indicated that they feel very or quite safe both at home in Dedham and around the village. It was also felt that children were safe in the Play areas. The PCSO has regularly provided statistics at Parish Council meetings confirming the low

levels of crime currently experienced in Dedham. Also, where villagers had had a need to report an incident to the police, nearly 80% of those were satisfied with the police response. Safety is clearly something we all cherish and every effort should be made to ensure that we continue to enjoy the present levels of satisfaction.

### **PCSO**



In 2008 the Parish Council arranged the funding for a dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) to look after the interests of Dedham. Two thirds of those answering felt safer as a result of having a PCSO in the village, but by far the majority of villagers commented that the PCSO should promote his accessibility and that his 'visibility' around the village needed considerable improvement.

*"Have not seen the PCSO for a long time, we assumed that the role no longer existed"*

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

Dedham does have a current Neighbourhood Watch scheme in place and there was clearly a view that this is worthwhile and effective and that every effort should be made to ensure it is maintained. The PCSO is currently engaged in discussions with the local coordinators.

## **Community Democracy**

Local Democracy is a cornerstone of life in places such as Dedham. There has, for many years, been an active Parish Council that deals with everyday aspects on behalf of the community including planning, play areas, public amenities and general community issues. Villagers were asked to identify key areas on which the Parish Council should focus their attention. The suggested areas align strongly with comments and suggestions made in other sections of the Plan, and accordingly priorities and actions have been included in the appropriate sections.



### **Parish Council Meetings**

There was a strong feeling that the Parish Council does effectively manage the interest of the community well. Although by far the majority express interest in Parish Council matters only a small minority had ever attended a Parish Council meeting. It was felt that greater effort should be made to encourage attendance at DPC meetings to ensure that the democratic process is maintained.

### **Parish Council Activities**

The main vehicles for keeping the community aware of Parish Council activities are the Dedham Parish Council website, the Parish Notice Boards, the Community News in the Essex County Standard and the Dedham Parish Magazine. It is important that we continue to utilise and embrace these and any other methods, such as the Internet, for keeping the community informed.

*"The Parish Council team are hardworking and dedicated"*

*"A big thank you to the Councillors who work away on our behalf"*

It was felt by some villagers that there should be more Parish Council led events such as The Workshop day held at The Assembly Rooms to further enhance the democratic process particularly in the light of the Governments desire to promote greater involvement under its Localism Bill. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to encouraging some form of youth involvement in Parish Council activities either by inviting participation or possibly by working directly with youth groups.



## Young People

Young people are vital for the sustainability of any village and their needs are just as important as those of the rest of the community. Living in a rural location such as Dedham can restrict the availability of activities and facilities for young people to enjoy. Whilst there are a number of activities that do already take place there were many suggestions that could be considered. There is already a successful Youth Club and pre-school facilities for toddlers but other activities are also sought to improve the overall picture for young people in Dedham.

*"I like Dedham because it is scenic and has sociable people" (aged 10)*

*"I like Playing at Smartys" (Aged 4)*

### Activities

There was a clear demand for additional activities for young people in the village, however, it was suggested that the best way of ensuring that facilities meet the needs of young people is for young people themselves to be involved in the decision making process. How this is achieved is always the most difficult question but opportunities should be taken to encourage the establishing of new clubs and activities for young people as well as better utilising existing ones.



*"There is nowhere for teens to meet after they are too old for the youth club and too young for the pubs"*

### Suggestions

As part of the consultation and in a separate Primary School exercise young people were invited to give their comments on their likes and dislikes of Dedham together with suggestions for improvements. It was clear that there was considerable appreciation of the open space of the countryside and the Playing Fields as well as the local shops. There was a feeling that activities for youths could be improved and that transport (buses) to local towns needs increasing at convenient times.

*"There should be more events not just for the younger children but for the 16+"*

*"Open Spaces good for playing sports in"*

### Playing Fields

Comments made here have indicated a concern about the suitability of the Playing Fields for young people in particular and the whole community in general. Most importantly, anti-social behaviour by other users whilst on the Playing Fields was identified as a cause for concern. This aspect is dealt with under the Public Amenities section.

## Environment & Conservation

Dedham is part of an AONB and is renowned for its beauty and environment that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. It is important for present and future generations that every effort is made to maintain it as such. Environmental & conservation concerns are addressed by a number of local bodies including The Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project. It is clear from the responses given that there is quite a balanced view of present environmental and conservation issues with no single issue where a large majority felt that action is required. Whilst this is gratifying it continues to be essential that vigilance is maintained.

### **Public Footpaths**

Dedham is particularly well endowed with an extensive footpath network, including part of The Essex Way, that attracts tourists and walkers. Footpaths were amongst the main reasons why many people enjoy living here and consequently this is a permanent agenda item for the Parish Council. Although by far the majority of villagers thought that public rights of way were maintained very or fairly well, there were a few suggestions for improvements.



### **Litter**

Dedham is kept comparatively free of litter although there was a feeling that littering was seen as a 'Quite' or 'Very' Significant issue. There was a great deal of gratitude given to those who currently help clear litter from our streets and hedgerows - our 'Litter pickers' as one villager termed them. Suggestions were made that more could be done to discourage the dropping of litter in the first place together with an idea for a community wide event to clear footpaths possibly on a regular basis.

### **Street Lighting**

One area that raises comments on both sides is the issue of Street Lighting. Whilst the comments split approximately 50% in favour and 50% against the provision of street lighting, the majority rated this issue as "Not very significant" or "Not significant at all". Whilst some people are concerned about light pollution others are concerned for the elderly and visually impaired villagers. Clearly there is no defined way forward on this issue and, if to be addressed at all, should be taken forward as a quite separate consultation.

*"Street lighting should be considered"*

*"I am strongly against Street Lighting"*

### **Noise**

The main concerns here are of noise produced during public events, road noise especially from traffic on the A12 and aircraft noise. Suggestions were made for investigations to see if these areas could be improved.

### **Dogs**

There are many responsible dog walkers within the village and a number of strategically placed dog waste bins. However, it was felt that more could be done to ensure that dog owners have their dogs under proper control particularly in public play areas.

## **Social Wellbeing**

The successful functioning of a community embraces not just the events and activities that take place but also the wellbeing and care of the elderly and more isolated members of the community. Dedham currently has quite a number and variety of activities, including clubs and societies, going on. Although most people are happy with the activities and types of social events that take place in the village there were many suggestions and ideas put forward.

## **Social Caring**

Dedham has a significant number of elderly residents and comments were made that suggest that more could be done to help make their lives happier. Care for the housebound and providing visiting and caring services were considered important aspects by a number of villagers.

*"Make life happier for the lonely and aged"*

## **Community Events**

There are many community events (i.e. one off or annual events) already held in Dedham and there was clearly a feeling that the present level was considered adequate. However, 36% of people did think that there could be more and a considerable number of suggestions were put forward covering such areas as social events, fetes, landmark celebrations and markets.

## **Community Activities**

Dedham already has a large assortment of clubs and social groups; however interest in extending the availability of community activities such as clubs, sports and leisure was evenly split. There were many suggestions made as to additional activities that might be beneficial and included all sorts of activities such as dancing, fitness and sporting activities for young people.



## **Community Involvement**

There are already a lot of dedicated people who organise events and activities throughout the year and clearly there will always be those people that are willingly involved. It was felt that if there are to be new events and activities, or indeed even continuance of existing ones, then there needs to be further encouragement for involvement by the community generally. Specific social events or activities should not necessarily be instigated by the Parish Council but would best be organised by those that are interested. The actions in this area in the Plan can only include encouraging the establishing of such a group and supporting it whenever possible.

## **Communication Methods**

With a widely dispersed community good information tools are essential. There were indications that there is not sufficient promotion of events at the moment and that not all methods of communication are adequately used. There are obvious existing methods that can be used (such as notice boards and the Parish Magazine) but there was a general feeling that a Dedham Village website would be beneficial. This is clearly an area that could be addressed and encouraged.

*"Improve communication to get people involved"*



The Parish Magazine was seen as an excellent information base for the whole community and it should be supported with the submission to it of information about social events and activities. Whilst the current Vicar is very happy to include articles about village activities when space permits, if it needs to become a wider 'village' magazine then an accord would need to be made with the Vicar about production and funding.

The Community News section of the Essex County Standard is also a useful source of information on village activities and Parish Council matters. Every effort should be made to encourage full use of this communication tool.

## Public Services & Amenities

The availability and quality of public services and amenities is key to the general wellbeing of a community and in Dedham there is clearly a general perception that we are very well served in most areas. Many of these areas are regularly addressed by the Parish Council. It is important to ensure that these standards are maintained, and where possible, improved.

### Public Services

Eight Public Services areas (e.g. refuse collection, street cleaning and toilets) were listed for assessment and all were indicated by at least 75% of villagers as Good or Very Good. There were some comments made in this section about certain aspects (such as footpaths) and these have been added to other sections of this Plan to ensure that they are assessed alongside similar comments.



### Public Amenities

Dedham currently enjoys some excellent facilities for use by the community including The Duchy Barn, Assembly Rooms, the Playing Fields and Pavilion and, of course, the Church. Again from the public consultation there is an overwhelming perception that our public amenities are exactly what people would want them to be. The three areas of public amenities assessed by villagers (sports facilities, playing fields and play areas) achieved a rating of at least 75% as Good or Very Good. There were some aspects, however, where improvements were suggested including an additional play area. Importantly there were considerable comments about the need to ensure that the playing fields remain usable for all and that antisocial behaviour there should be constantly guarded against.

*"Play area is a no-go on Saturday when a football match is in progress because of bad language"*

## Business Wellbeing

Dedham enjoys a thriving local retail environment where there is a reliance on both local trade and visitor business. There has also been the addition of two small business parks. Over the years there have been retail associations created to address the key issues for businesses but currently there is no such formal association. Local Businesses do find the costs of continuing to trade high and every effort should be made to support them whenever possible. This Plan process has only sought the views of villagers and has not directly canvassed the local business as this would need to be taken forward as a separate exercise.

*"All the people running the shops are really friendly, you feel like an individual"*

### Support

The High St. retailers clearly depend on both the visitors to our village and on the local population itself. The analysis of local usage of the shops showed that by far the majority of villagers do use the local shops at least once a week. There was also a very strong opinion that everything should be done to support and help the local retailers.

### Business Costs

Ongoing business costs were clearly recognised as a major factor in the success of local businesses and, wherever possible, it was felt that every effort should be taken to help



them in this respect. This cannot necessarily be achieved through direct support but, whenever possible, indirect support should be considered.

### **Planning**

There was also a general feeling that conversion of existing retail premises into residential is not beneficial to the remaining businesses and efforts were deemed appropriate to try to restrict this through the planning process. However, this approach is now thrown into question with recent government proposals to reduce planning restrictions. This aspect will be addressed in the Planning section of this Plan.

*"Discount cards or local discount day to encourage residents to use local shops"*

### **Local Scheme**

An interesting suggestion that came up a number of times was to introduce some form of Local Loyalty scheme to encourage even greater usage of our High Street retailers. Clearly this is something that would need to be taken forward by the retailers themselves.

### **Retailer Association**

It was also suggested by a number of villagers that the body that previously looked after the interests of the Dedham retailers could be reconstituted. Again this would be something that the retailers themselves would have to take forward if they considered it a worthwhile route for them to pursue.



Action Points		Who Involved	Priority
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
<b>Bus Services</b>			
1	Investigate the possibility of improving services to Manningtree including possibility of diverting 103/104 service and extending the 247 service.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
2	Investigate if it is possible to introduce a service for commuters to Manningtree Station.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
3	Investigate the possibility of Increasing frequency of services to Colchester.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
4	Consider the possibility of improving services around the village including more Request Stops and a service up to The Heath from the village centre.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
5	Publish details of Bus timetables more widely including possibly in the Parish Magazine and on Parish Notice boards.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>The Hopper Bus</b>			
6	Investigate possible extension of the Hopper Bus route so that it benefits more areas around village itself.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
7	Investigate if timings of the Hopper Bus could be adjusted so that it can be used by commuters to Manningtree Station.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
<b>Community Bus</b>			
8	Investigate Community Bus Options including alternatives to actual community bus i.e. possibility of volunteers to take people to Manningtree or possibly encourage local taxi firm to run a minibus on-demand service.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
9	Work with neighbouring communities to see if a Community Bus could be shared.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>Cycle Route to Manningtree</b>			
10	Investigate and report status of any plans for introduction of cycle route to Manningtree.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
11	Investigate 'safe cycle routes' to Manningtree using the existing road network	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med

	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
<b>ROADS &amp; TRAFFIC</b>			
<b>Speeding</b>			
12	Encourage enforcement of Speed Limits more rigorously for both cars and lorries.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
13	Have more speed reminder roundels placed where they would be effective.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
14	Review all speed limits throughout the village to see where speed reductions would be beneficial and facilitate implementation where possible.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
15	Seek increase in the regularity of speed checks (both Speedwatch and Police) at key points around the village.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>Heavy Goods Vehicles</b>			
16	Investigate possibility of Road Signs at the A12 and village entries restricting HGV entry and signs on the A12 advising 'Not to follow Sat Nav'.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
17	Review direction signpost at crossroads and major junctions as not always clear e.g. 'To Manningtree' at Heath Crossroads' to ensure traffic going the most suitable way i.e. up Coggeshall Road.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
18	Encourage greater use of enforcement actions where Vehicle Weight Limits are contravened or where there is inappropriate parking.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>Roads &amp; Pavements</b>			
19	Review effectiveness of road signs and markings e.g. 'Stop' signs at crossroads such as The Heath.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
20	Investigate possibility of improving the pavement between Coopers Lane and Forge St. and providing a walkway between Forge Street and Manningtree Road on east side.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
21	Encourage the cutting of hedges at road junctions to improve visibility and improve road safety.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High

	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
<b>PARKING</b>			
<b>High Street</b>			
22	Research the desirability and viability of short term parking within the High Street.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
23	Have parking bays and restrictions more clearly defined with clearer markings.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
24	Consider Dedham Residents stickers or permits or some sort of local scheme to support locals using the High St.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
<b>School Parking</b>			
25	Encourage all interested parties (e.g. School, parents and residents) to get involved to improve parking, dropping off and picking up at the School.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>Enforcement</b>			
26	Ensure greater control and enforcement over the time restrictions currently in place in the High St. and enforcement over poor parking e.g. double yellow lines, corners and at junctions.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>Car Parks</b>			
27	Ensure the Mill Lane Car Park is kept Free of Charge.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
28	Research the desirability and viability of introducing additional parking facilities at the West End of the village.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
<b>PLANNING</b>			
<b>Housing Needs</b>			
29	Promote affordable housing for the young as a major housing need when considering planning requests.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
30	Promote development of smaller properties e.g. downsizing, retirement and bungalows when considering planning requests.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
31	Discourage the development of large Executive style housing whenever appropriate.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High



	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
<b>Developments</b>			
32	Prevent inappropriate redevelopment of existing gardens into additional properties.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
33	Restrict inappropriate new developments whenever possible to prevent general over development of the Parish.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
34	Restrict inappropriate conversions of smaller properties into larger executive ones.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
35	Discourage change of use planning applications to residential from retail.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
36	Improve vigilance on developments to ensure that developers adhere strictly to planning approval and prevent conditions being breached.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>Listening to Locals</b>			
37	Ensure greater notice of local needs and opinions is taken when considering development applications.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
38	Improve public awareness of planning applications and seek their input e.g. public meeting with CBC planners.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
39	Discourage change of use planning applications to residential from retail.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
40	Promote the existing Village Design Statement to ensure that it is taken into account by CBC when considering applications.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
<b>SAFETY &amp; CRIME</b>			
41	Encourage PCSO to increase his visibility around all areas of the parish and promote his existence and services including providing his contact details	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
42	Support the retention of the services of the PCSO.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
43	Promote and support Neighbourhood Watch schemes.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High

	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
<b>COMMUNITY DEMOCRACY</b>			
44	Seek ways to encourage greater interest in Parish Council activities and promote parishioner attendance at Council meetings to increase the community involvement in the democratic process.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
45	Consider ways of co-opting villagers onto sub committees for focussing on specific issues.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
46	Consider holding more Parish Council led events such as the Workshop Day, public exhibitions and displays of key issues.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
47	Consider possibility of having a youth representative on the Parish Council or hold specific Youth forums.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
48	Focus on the key areas highlighted in the Parish Plan and ensure that issues are addressed and results well communicated back to the parish.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
49	Continue use of the Parish Magazine and the Notice Boards as key methods of keeping the community advised of what's going on.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
50	Consider improvements to the use of the Internet for making Parish Council information more available.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>YOUNG PEOPLE</b>			
51	Encourage greater involvement in the many existing activities that already exist around the village.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
52	Investigate ways of ensuring the Young People of Dedham get involved in local decision making.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
53	Promote the creation of more activities that could be introduced that would involve the Young People of Dedham.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med

	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
<b>ENVIRONMENT &amp; CONSERVATION</b>			
<b>Noise</b>			
54	Investigate if anything can be done about road surface noise, especially from the A12.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
55	Ensure that noise levels are considered before any public event is approved.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>Public Footpaths</b>			
56	Ensure maintenance of countryside footpaths is kept at the present high level as this is an important facility to the community.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
57	Investigate possibility of getting improvements to certain areas of the footpaths that become particularly difficult to negotiate in winter.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>Other</b>			
58	Consider possibility of quarterly rambles around countryside footpaths with objective of clearing litter.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
59	Ensure dog walkers have their dogs under proper control in public places.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
60	Consider increase in availability of dog poo bins.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med
<b>SOCIAL WELLBEING</b>			
61	Investigate if enough is being done to help and support the aged and housebound and identify what further actions could be put in place.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	High
62	Support whenever possible the staging of Social Events e.g. Dances and Music for the whole community.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
63	Investigate the feasibility of reintroducing the full Village Fete and consider other options for fetes and celebrations.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Low
64	Promote the idea of a village Community Social Group and encourage the community to self progress new activities for all e.g. Dancing, Sports, Fitness.	Parish Council + <i>Others to be identified</i>	Med

	Action Points	Who Involved	Priority
65	Consider the creation of a Village website.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	High
66	Investigate methods of publicity e.g. newsletter and internet as well as placing as much information as possible regularly on the Parish Notice boards.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Med
67	Discuss with the editor of the Parish Magazine the possibility that additional information may be generated as a result of some of the Actions	Parish Council + Others to be identified	High
68	Encourage the operation of the Community News entries into the Essex County Standard.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Med
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES &amp; AMENITIES</b>			
69	Ensure Playing Fields remain suitable for all to use and enjoy as a genuine public amenity and free from the bad language on the sports pitches.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Med
70	Investigate the possibility of establishing an additional Play Area in The Meade.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Low
71	Ensure adequate Salt Bins are always available at key points around the village.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Med
<b>BUSINESS &amp; ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>			
72	Encourage the re-establishing of a Dedham Retail association to address the issues of business costs e.g. rents and rates and other issues.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	High
73	Promote to the Association the possibility of a loyalty scheme for locals to increase usage of the Dedham retail outlets.	Parish Council + Others to be identified	Low



## Plan Process Milestones

A calendar of events to get us to this point:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| • Parish Council requested Parish Plan     | August 2009    |
| • Steering Group members sought            | September 2009 |
| • First Steering Group held                | September 2009 |
| • Terms of Reference agreed                | October 2009   |
| • Website established                      | November 2009  |
| • Funding requests to RCCE and DVSVP       | December 2009  |
| • Grant agreed from RCCE                   | January 2010   |
| • RCCE Training Course attended            | January 2010   |
| • Phase1 Grant agreed from DVSVP           | January 2010   |
| • Primary School Logo competition held     | March 2010     |
| • Public Workshop format publicised        | March 2010     |
| • Photo Competition held                   | March 2010     |
| • Public Consultation Workshop Day         | April 2010     |
| • Workshop Day comments analysed           | May 2010       |
| • Consultation Questionnaire Draft created | October 2010   |
| • Consultation Questionnaire distributed   | November 2010  |
| • Primary School Questionnaire completed   | November 2010  |
| • Questionnaire completion deadline        | December 2010  |
| • Analysis of Statistical Data completed   | January 2011   |
| • Analysis of Comments completed           | February 2011  |
| • Additional Grant received from DVSVP     | March 2011     |
| • First draft of Plan Report               | March 2011     |
| • Final version of Plan Report             | May 2011       |
| • Parish Council adopts the Action Plans   | May 2011       |
| • Public Launch of Parish Plan             | June 2011      |



## Glossary of Abbreviations

PPSG	Parish Plan Steering Group
DPC	Dedham Parish Council
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
DVSVP	Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project
DVDS	Dedham Village Design Statement
RCCE	Rural Community Council for Essex
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CofE	Church of England

## Other Documents

All the following documents are currently available on the Parish Plan Website [www.dedhamparishplan.org](http://www.dedhamparishplan.org) :

- Dedham Village Design Statement (published 2006)
- RCCE Guides to completing Parish Plans
- Public Consultation Responses and Comments Summaries
- Summaries of Steering Group Minutes
- Downloadable version of this Parish Plan



## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who have contributed to the Completion of the Plan:

- **The Steering Group** - Alan Stock, Bob Cox, Mark Dempsey & John Osborn  
- *for their commitment to ensuring the successful completion of the whole Project.*
- **Mark Orrin & John Flack** - *for their valuable 9 months on the Steering Group.*
- **Steering Group partners and the many helpers** – *for making the Workshop Day a success.*
- **Hoods Newsagents** - *for acting as the Main Questionnaire Collection Point.*
- **Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project (DVSP)** - *for financial support and encouragement.*
- **Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)** - *for financial support and guidance.*
- **Dedham Parish Magazine** - *for helping us promote the whole process.*
- **All Community Groups** - *that have lent their support to this process.*
- **Reverend Moate & Muniment Society** - *for permission to use their old photos of Dedham.*
- **Dedham C of E School** - *for the design competition at the Workshop Day*
- **All those that attended the Workshop Day** - *and laid the foundation for the Parish Plan*  
*And, of course.....*

### **The whole community of Dedham**

- for their support in giving their views and providing a comprehensive base of information and suggestions for the way ahead for the Parish of Dedham.

## Useful Links

[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)

[www.dedham-assemblyrooms.info](http://www.dedham-assemblyrooms.info)

[www.dedhamcc.co.uk](http://www.dedhamcc.co.uk)

[www.dedham.essex.sch.uk](http://www.dedham.essex.sch.uk)

[www.dedhamoldboysfc.co.uk](http://www.dedhamoldboysfc.co.uk)

[www.dedhamparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.dedhamparishcouncil.org.uk)

[www.dedham-parishchurch.org.uk](http://www.dedham-parishchurch.org.uk)

[www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/essex/dedham](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/essex/dedham)

[www.dedhamvalesociety.org.uk](http://www.dedhamvalesociety.org.uk)

[www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org)

[www.essexrcc.org.uk](http://www.essexrcc.org.uk)

[www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk](http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk)

[www.friendsofdedhamchurch.org.uk](http://www.friendsofdedhamchurch.org.uk)

[www.siralfredmunnings.co.uk](http://www.siralfredmunnings.co.uk)

[www.dedhamplayers.org](http://www.dedhamplayers.org)





Dedham Photo Competition 2010 Finalists



*"Dedham ... with a strong  
community feel, having  
moved in a year ago we feel  
like we have lived here for years"*

*Dedham Resident*

Published June 2011 by  
The Dedham Parish Plan Steering Group  
on behalf of Dedham Parish Council