

Portbury Parish Council



Strategic Objectives of the Parish Plan

Introduction

The Parish of Portbury began the development of a Parish Plan in 2007 and appointed a team to help develop it in 2009. This team is independent of the Council itself and has consulted widely within the village in order to formulate a questionnaire to take the plan forward.

In the early stages of discussion about the plan the Parish Council carried out a number of appraisals of the village to help frame the eventual consultation with residents. This work established a range of strategic objectives which have helped to guide the team formulating the questionnaire. This report outlines those objectives arrived at since 2009 and refers to the other sources of appraisal as appropriate.

Overarching Aim

We want Portbury to continue to be a desirable place to live for all. People should have the certainty that, having chosen to live in the village, they can be assured that the aspects of living in Portbury that are most valued are protected as far as is possible despite the inevitable changes in the world around us.

In order to create a baseline of knowledge to achieve the above the Parish Council has set out a number of strategic objectives below which will help to formulate a Parish Plan. Feedback from residents via a questionnaire will be used to develop a detailed plan.

1. Health and Welfare

Portbury does not enjoy the presence of any Health Services within the village, relying on Health Centres and Dental Practices in Portishead and Pill. Hospital based services are available further afield in Bristol and Clevedon. Social Services are located mainly in Nailsea.

Strategic aims are for the Parish Council to understand the needs of the population of the village and to assess if these needs are being met. There should be no disadvantage to living in Portbury as a result of needing access to Health and Welfare services.

2. Safety and Security

Crime statistics for the Portbury area show a high level of vehicle thefts, in virtually every case occurring at Gordano Services. Portbury village itself suffers mainly from Crime carried out by people from outside the village.

Its connectivity to the M5 being an attraction to those intent upon burglary, which is the main source of problem. Thankfully the level of crime is very low.

Strategic Aims are to reduce the already relatively low incidence of Crime in the form of burglary and to support the community in being aware of other forms of “modern” crime such as internet based fraud.

3. Traffic and Transport

There has an average of 60 accidents per year on Portbury Lane, connecting the village with the B3130, symptomatic of the high speed at which some people drive through the area. Incidents are happily rare in the village itself despite the volume of traffic flowing through during rush hours. The village is rather dominated by parked cars at certain times of day, most recently “car clubbers” using the village as a swap over point and parking area. It is evident from speed checks that a number of cars are driven at inappropriate speeds through the village, some of these drivers live in the village.

There is only one bus service which runs through the village, other services being available on the Portbury Hundred or on the A369 on Martcombe Road.

Strategic Objectives are to control and if possible reduce the various impacts of cars upon street life in the village. Additionally it is important to sustain the current level of bus service and connectivity to other parts of our region.

4. Environment & Planning

A key aspiration is to provide a village environment in which residents of Portbury will be proud and will thus be minded to take care of. We hope that visitors will similarly be impressed by its general appearance and will pass on positive comments to others. To achieve this requires attention to the care of the physical environment and the forgotten corners that can seem uncared for. Our objective is to use Parish resources to supplement those of the statutory authorities in order to add extra features to the village to make it stand out among others.

Preliminary landscape and streetscape assessment concludes that the biggest visual effect on the population of Portbury from potential development arises from activities outside the village. Portbury lies in close proximity to both Portbury Docks and the M5 motorway and these features have the potential to create negative effects on the experience of villagers if development does not consider the character of the Village.

There are only a small number of buildings that exceed 2 storeys in height, most of these being both heritage assets and landmark buildings such as the Church and the Priory, both of which are listed. Where other buildings reach 3 storeys these are set against a hillside backdrop, e.g. the “new” and “old” Mill and the apartments on Brittan Place.

Strategic objectives are to seek to control development within the village to respect the current low level character of the streetscape, and thus to restrict the height of any new building proposed. Views to the North and East of Portbury are already affected by the Docks and distant views of Avonmouth; the objective here is to preserve those landscape views that remain generally unaffected by seeking to restrict the development of tall structures close to, but outside the Village, even in distant views.

5. Education

Education for children up to the age of 11 is provided in the Village by the CEVA School. Thereafter secondary education is provided in either Portishead or Pill. Portbury is endowed with a magnificent asset in the form of the Village Hall and which would provide an excellent venue for a variety of educational offerings.

Whereas the Parish Council cannot directly create opportunities for further education it does aspire to create an environment within which this could happen. This will be achieved principally by working very closely with the Village Hall organisation and supporting, in any way it can, potential educational opportunities that may come about by tapping into resources that may be available at North Somerset Council.

6. Leisure & Recreation

The Parish Council is the tenant of the playing field that lies close to the School and Church and also takes responsibility for the Village Green. This allows the Council to offer the use of the playing fields to Gordano Rugby Club, for their junior teams, in return for assistance with upkeep of the grass.

Strategic objectives are to encourage the use of these facilities by their good upkeep and, where funds allow, their development for a variety of uses.

7. Community Facilities

The main Community Facilities that are available to all are the Village Hall and the Church. Other facilities provide important services, such as the School, but these are separately governed and funded. It is important that

the facilities that are dependant mainly upon money raised within the Village are sustainable in the long term.

Whereas the Parish Council does not have responsibility for the upkeep of the main Community Facilities it will strategically invest its funds where it will do the most good or where this will help to provide “leverage” to secure other funds, e.g. the National Lottery.

8. Representation and consultation

Whereas the Parish Council itself is very busy and involved in the wide variety of issues that potentially affect the Village, there are few people outside the Council itself who desire to play a formal role in support of this work.

The strategic objective of the Parish Council is to find out what residents know about the work of the Council and to fill any gaps in knowledge through wider communication using whatever means it finds is appropriate. In doing this the Parish Council aims to get more residents within the Village to be interested in serving as Councillors.

9. Business & Employment

The main commercial activity that many people will use with any frequency is the Priory Hotel. This provides a source of employment for many younger people within the Village. Gordano Services and Portbury Docks provide close by employment opportunities that are beneficial to the village community. Another source of employment comes from the small, rented industrial units in Priory Farm Industrial Estate. It has been some years since Portbury Stores closed and there is therefore no longer a post office outlet, the nearest being either at Failand, Pill or Portishead.

The strategic objective is to support the businesses that already exist within the village and to provide an environment in which they can expand in synergy with nearby residents. Where new business opportunities arise the Council aims to support them as much as is appropriate whilst also satisfying the other key strategic objectives.

10. The Elderly

Portbury mirrors the general trend in all population centres, in that the age profile of its residents is generally increasing, with a large proportion now being retired.

The strategic aim is to endeavour to be able to support an ageing population so that there is no inherent disadvantage to living in Portbury. This will largely be achieved through success in the other objectives which will emerge in the plan, but specific elements may need to be developed with the elderly in mind.

11. Younger People

The general trend within the population as a whole is that family sizes are reducing and that married couples start families much later. This will have its effect, over time, on the population mix within Portbury.

The strategic objective is to make Portbury an attractive place for a new or growing family to live. This will be achieved largely by the success in other objectives within the emerging plan, but specific elements may need to be developed with younger people in mind.