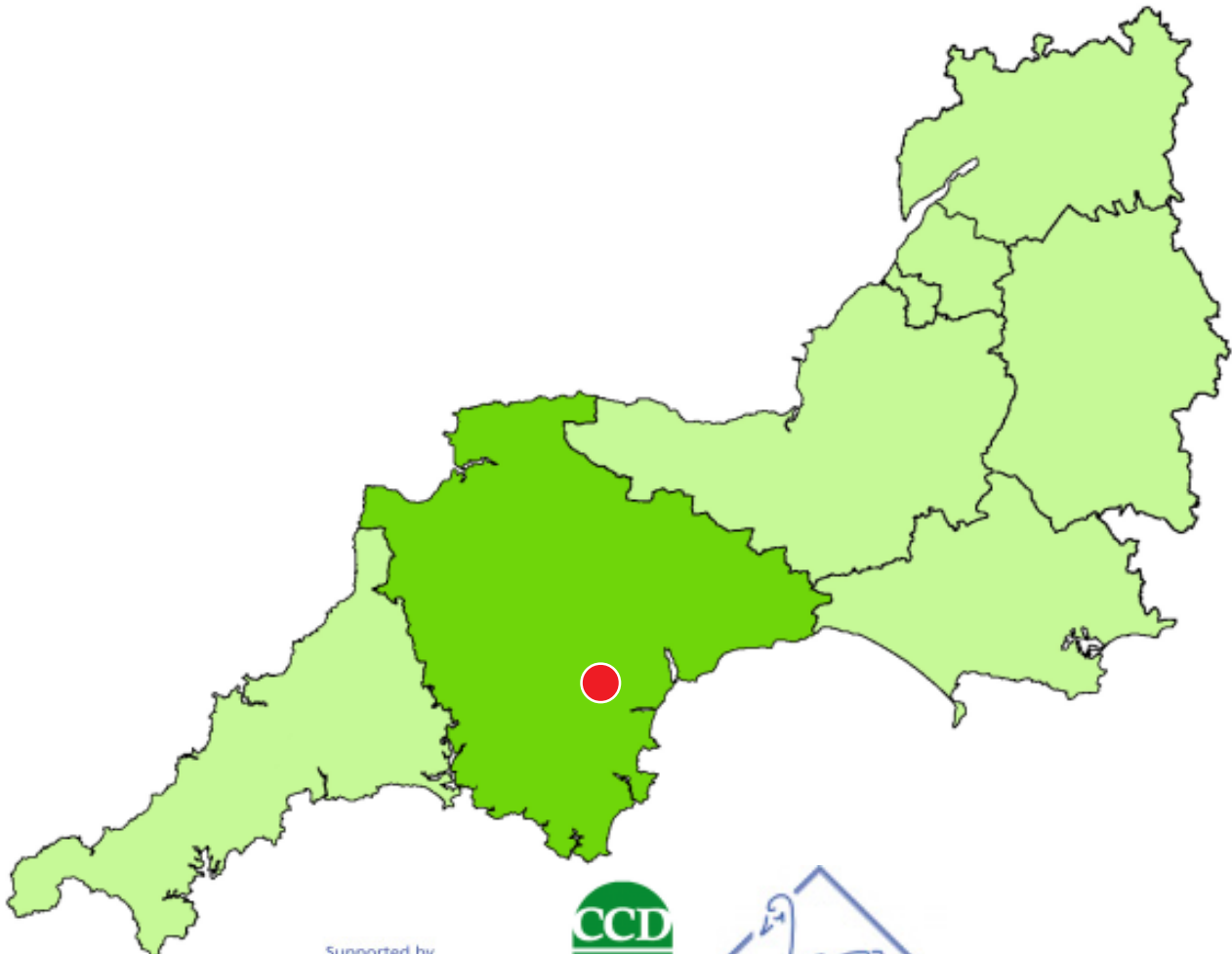


Bovey Tracey Community Plan

Completion Date: 2003



Compiled by Community Council of Devon
In partnership with the South West Acre Network (SWAN)

Bovey Tracey Parish Plan Case Study

Interviewees

Terry Westwood
(Clerk to Bovey Tracey Town Council and member of the Steering Committee)

Background

Bovey Tracey lies within the Teignbridge District of Devon and is located within 6 miles of the market town Newton Abbot. Part of the Parish also within the Dartmoor National Park and is known as a 'gateway town to the moor'. A large part of the parish is a conservation area and the parish is characterised by surrounding high quality landscapes. There are three settlements within the Parish: Bovey Tracey, Heathfield and Brimley and there is a population of approximately 7500 altogether. A large proportion are retired residents. There are a variety of services within the parish (though not evenly distributed between the settlements) This includes: Schools, shops, post offices, banks and pubs. There is also a large proportion of businesses which operate from homes. There is also regular bus services which run to Newton Abbot and Exeter.

What is a Community-Led Plan

A Community Led Plan is a process that underpins a community's vision for itself across all aspects of social, environmental and economic life. It celebrates positive features and activities, highlights community needs and contains a detailed action plan to help the community meet those needs. Community Led Plans are produced by and for communities, based on a detailed survey and consultation which involves the whole community, prompts action and influences others. Good community plans, use the Community-led Planning Toolkit framework, are supported by external facilitators and can demonstrate a robust evaluation process that ensures their quality.

The Process

In 2002 members attended a presentation on Community Planning in Torrington. The idea for Bovey Tracey to do a Plan was fully supported by the Town Council and they proceeded to gain funding from the Countryside Agency to support the Community Planning process, a total of £5,000. They also gained a further £1,200 from the Devon Small Grants Fund. In June a Steering Committee was then established including members from the Town Council

and other member of the community. This included members of the Bovey Tracey Community Forum which was the previous Committee set up to produce a community appraisal in 1999. The Clerk was to coordinate the project. Consultation events began in October of that year and continued onto December. These were a series of public events, meetings and exhibitions to establish the initial perception of the key issues. The main part of the process was the questionnaire. 3,200 were distributed in January and February 2003. A total of 909 were returned giving a 28.4% response rate. An enthusiastic member of the community volunteered to analyse the data received and this established a range of actions to take forward. A draft report was created in August 2003 and after an additional consultation event in September the final report was published in November 2003 and was distributed to all households.

What are your achievements as a community to date, as a result of the Community-Led Plan?

Bovey Tracey Action Plan - Points and Achievements

1) Increase police presence with all areas of the parish, to reduce the threat of crime, vandalism and related incidents°

- CCTV installed in 2004 at a cost of £25,000.
- Park Keeper hired to watch over the parks and fields
- Two PCSO's now in place. They patrol the area and attend public meetings.

2) Improvements to the provision of new footways and cycle routes to create a safe and pleasant environment within all areas of the parish.

- The whole of Bovey Tracey is now linked by footpaths; links to Newton Abbot are still being negotiated.
- Additional street lamps have now been put in place in Cromwell's Way, this was funded by Devon County Community Fund in December 2007.

3) To continue to improve access to recreation and play area opportunities for residents living in the Heathfield district of the parish.

- The Town Council does not own the land at Heathfield. They are in negotiation to take over the ownership of the two play areas owned by TDC. Teignbridge District Council have however improved the site.

4) Improvements to street cleaning, weed control on pavements and dog control in public places.

- Teignbridge District Council now provide street cleaning services everyday within the parish.
- The park keepers manage the park and field areas.

5) To continue to monitor ball clay extraction in the parish

- Bovey Tracey Town Council appeared in the Mineral Extraction Plan from Devon County Council. They were consulted on the issues and had opportunities to feed into the plan.
- The Town Council continues to monitor the plans for possible future extraction of ball clay from a site close to the Town. At present it is not economically viable to extract.

6) Provision of NHS Dentistry services in the parish

- This is no longer an issue within the parish any more.

7) Review traffic issues including parking and speeding

- The Town Council are still working with Teignbridge District Council to increase parking within the parish. Teignbridge have also just increased the parking fees – not good.
- There is no longer an issue with speeding
- The Town Council are looking at plans to work with TESCO to create shared loading bay for coaches and Lorries (1st of it's kind).

8) To encourage the formation of a Business Federation suitable for the needs of its members

- There is a business club in place for the 400 businesses within the parish. The town Council has established itself as a source of support for new businesses or those which are struggling.
- They are in talks to provide 3 starter units at the train station to use for new businesses.

9) Improvements to existing play facilities for the young people of the parish

- the Town Council has improved the 2 existing sites at a cost of £70,000 (with a further £20,000 to be spent in April 2008)
- A skateboard park was suggested but this was a fad and is no longer needed.
- A youth café was formed and a member of the Teenbridge project acts as a Youth Worker with support from the Town Council.

10) To continue to monitor the progress already achieved towards the construction and commissioning of a new multi-purpose community facility.

- Original plans have been dismissed. Now planning to do a land swap with Teignbridge District Council and build a centre on the bottom of Station Road car park. The centre will be home to the council offices, tourist centre, toilets and rooms for community use. These plans will go ahead depending on the construction of the new bridge.

11) To continue to pursue the provision of improved public transport routes and services.

- Overall public transport has improved.
- A new Sunday service has been introduced.

12) To continue to address concerns of the type of housing development in the parish.

- The Town Council is involved with the Housing Trust.
- There was an application to build 120 houses are the Cardew Pottery site but this was refused owing to access restrictions. This site was preferred as it was a brown field site. A revised scheme was allowed and the Town Council is negotiating to be part of the Housing Trust being set up for the 40% of affordable homes within the scheme.
- Town Council are still resisting developments on green field sites and are currently looking at a site for 20 units on agricultural land.
- There are no plans at present to do a Housing Needs Survey as they feel they know enough about the needs of the community at present.

13) Develop tourism and promote local produce/local economy.

- The Town Council has taken over the running of the Tourist Information Centre and have created and distributed over leaflet in 300 locations in and out of the parish. The Town Council has contributed £1,800 of towards refurbishment of the Information Centre. Have established new tourist events i.e. Craft fair (3 day event in June), French Market (annual event), farmers markets (weekly).
- The Town makes an effort to be a floral Town in the summer months which is sponsored by the local businesses. This costs the Council £1500 – 2000 each year.

How has the Bovey Tracey Parish Plan helped you to engage with your local authority about services your community needs?

One of the biggest achievements for Bovey Tracey was the formation of the Bovey Tracey Partnership. This is a group of key partners with an interest in the Parish. The members include: Bovey Tracey Town Council, Teignbridge District Council, Devon County Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Teignbridge PCT and the Tourist Information Centre. The aims of the partnership were to progress major projects within the parish (as identified within the Community Plan).

What other projects have you got planned for the future?

As mentioned above a major project progressing in the parish is the construction of a new footpath/cycle bridge across the River Bovey. This is a huge project and involves all members of the Partnership and this bridge will cost over £400,000. This bridge needs to be built as the current bridge has poor pedestrian access and is not very safe to cross. An issue the partnership is facing is the ownership of the land either side of the river and the funding for the project. Plans look set to go ahead now and Teignbridge District Council will be project managing. The construction of a new multi-purpose community facility. This is on-going as plans for the original site have been dismissed. The partnership is now planning to do a land swap with Teignbridge District Council and build a centre on the bottom of Station Road car park. The centre will be home to the council offices, tourist centre, toilets and rooms for community use. These plans will go ahead depending on the construction of the new bridge. Since the Parish Plan, a local climate change group, Bovey Climate Action, has formed. This has already achieved quite a high profile, locally and nationally, and is successfully reaching into many areas of the community to develop initiatives around awareness and mitigation.

Have the actions from the Plan brought any funding into the community e.g. lottery grants, trusts, Village of the Year etc.?

Having prepared a Parish Plan with defined projects has enabled the Town Council to obtain grants and Section 106 agreements of around £100,000 so far. The Town Council is also expecting a further £250,000 from a Section 106 agreement prepared to meet the needs of certain projects yet to be achieved within the Action Plan.

How are you keeping the process alive and advising progress to the community?

The Community Plan acted as a blueprint for the Parish Councils work so projects and actions are ongoing. The Town Council had a small review in 2005 and are planning to repeat the whole process again this year, with new consultation events and questionnaires. The Town council also produces Quality Update (a quarterly newsletter as part of the council's quality status); this keeps the community informed on the progress of the plan. An update on progress is also announced at the Annual Town Meeting each year.

How has this benefited the community?

Prior to the plan there was a divide between the Town Council and its Parishioners. The community believed that decisions happened behind closed doors. There had not been a full election for years! There have now been two with approx. 50% turnout - one of the highest in the District. The Annual Town Meeting also had little/no attendance; their meeting this year had over 100 people. Through achieving quality status the Council has greatly improved it's presence within the community and has gained valuable skills to take projects forward in future.

What lessons have you learned?

Not everything could be achieved immediately within the timescale of the Action Plan. In Bovey Tracey, many major projects identified by the plan are now just starting to come to fruition after five years of being identified as Action Points. **SO YOU HAVE TO BE PATIENT.**

How does the Action Plan link into the Town Council's future business planning?

The Community Plan acts as a framework for the Town Councils work and progress is monitored at Council meetings.

One piece of advice for others

YOU HAVE TO BE PATIENT

Quote

on the Community-Led Planning Process

"Agreed, it was a long process from our Parish Plan meeting in Torrington, to feeling what have we taken on, to the publication of the first Action Plan some 18 months later. We revised it 2005 and are now reviewing it again. But it was definitely worth all the hard work put in by the Steering Group. We found out what residents wanted, their fears, their aspirations and their hopes for the Parish. Having a Parish Plan we were given a defined Blueprint to work to by residents, young and old and I think we have achieved a great deal over the past five years"

Terry Westwood,
Bovey Tracey Town Clerk