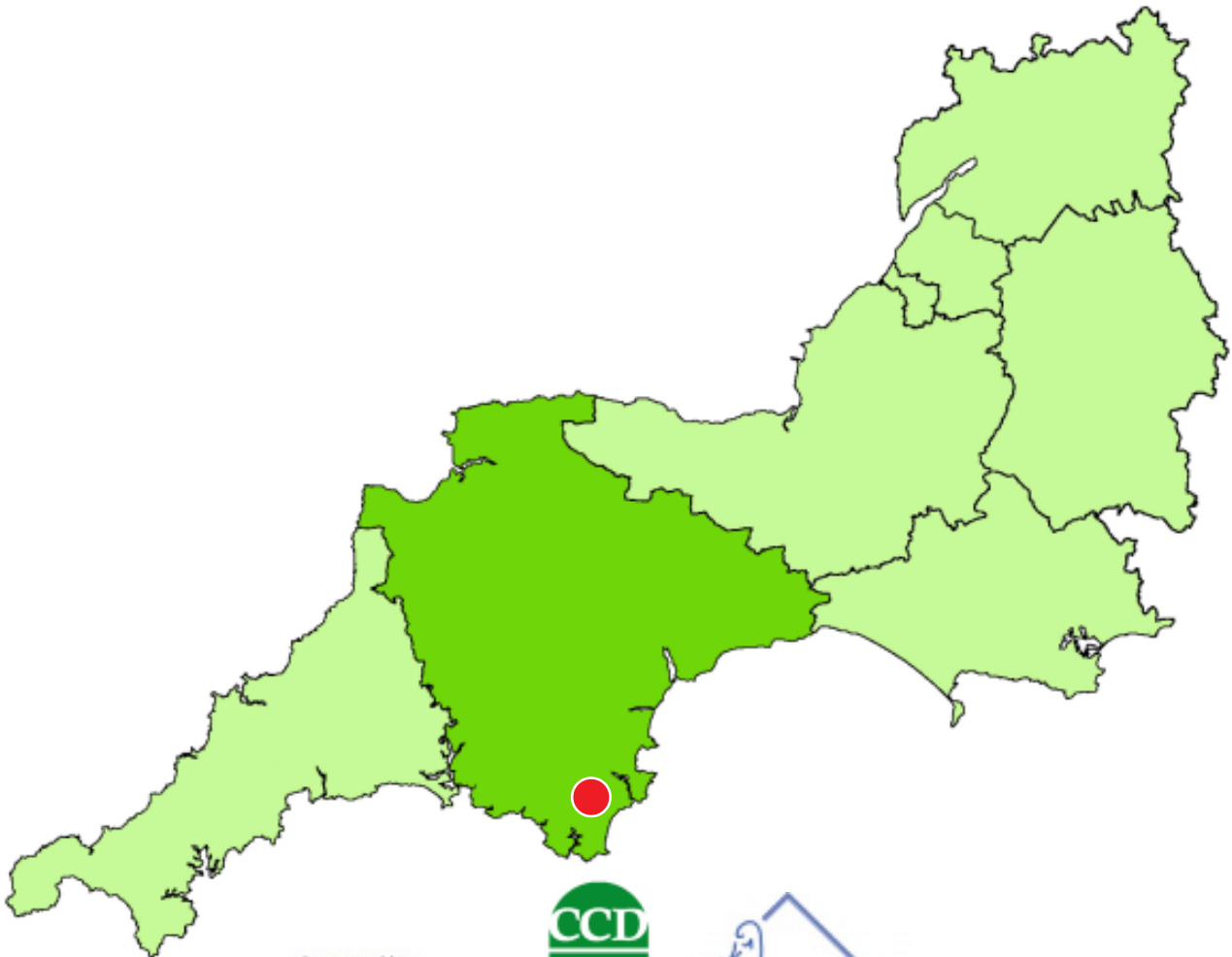


Stokenham Community Plan

Completion Date: 2003



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

Stokenham Parish Plan Case Study

Interviewees

Gill Claydon
(Clerk to Stokenham
Parish Council)

Background

The Parish of Stokenham lies within the South Hams District of Devon and may special designations including: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Area of Great Landscape Value, Coastal Preservation Area, Heritage Coast and Conservations Areas. There are also Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) which form part of the National Nature Reserve at Slapton Ley. There are a number of Villages, Hamlets and settlements in the Parish, the largest being Chillington with 476 households. In total there are 1,100 homes and a population of approximately 1,950 people. There are some services available in the Parish including, a post office, general store, health centre, churches, several public houses, a school and a community hall in Stokenham Village.

What is a Community-Led Plan

Ideas, concerns and thoughts that are collected through community consultation which are then subjected to a questionnaire that goes to every household to ensure local aspirations. A policy and actions are then drawn together and put to the people so that they are accepted and owned.

The Process

In October 2002, a group of Councillors and volunteers was set up (called the Stokenham Parish Plan Core Group) in order to create a Community Plan for the Parish.

With funding from the Countryside Agency they were able to hold a series of events to ensure that people of all age groups could have their say. Events which took place were as follows:

- *WRVS Luncheon Club in which senior citizens were asked to give Christmas wishes for the parish.*
- *A meeting in the Parish Hall for Local Organisations (this was a facilitated meeting), ideas which sprung up were to be incorporated into the Questionnaire.*
- *Kingsbridge Community College hosted a Youth Forum which 66 youngsters attended.*
- *Business Forum was held over two days.*
- *Road shows in the different settlements of the Parish throughout March 2003, so all parishioners were able to contribute and no*

one feel excluded. This provided a cross section of views from the Parish.

In August 2003 over 1000 questionnaires were hand delivered to every household within the Parish. By mid-September 664 questionnaires had been collected which gave a 60% response rate. It was a long process in collating all the information and took until February 2004 to pull together. A draft version was presented to the Parish Council that month. On the 22nd April 2004 the final version of the Parish Plan was presented at the Annual Parish Meeting at the Parish Hall.

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

Stokenham Parish Plan Achievements

1.1.0 Chillington Centre Development

A draft feasibility study has been published, and outline planning has been approved.

1.2.0 Environment

1.2.1a Footpath from Stokenham

to Torcross A footpath was completed in 2006, with help from Devon County Council, South Hams District Council and Local Landowners the Parish Council received Life into Landscape (AONB) funding to create the new path.

1.2.1 b Footpath Adoption Scheme

This Scheme involves members of the community adopting a footpath and regularly walking along it to see if any maintenance work is required i.e. hedge cutting. The idea is that those volunteers would report back to the Parish Council to inform them of any improvements required.

1.2.2 Dog Fouling *An article highlighting this nuisance was placed in the parish council newsletter advising pet owners of their responsibility and asking other members of the parish to help police this problem. This is an ongoing problem as it is felt that many of the culprits are holiday makers down with their pets that do not return so that follow up prosecution can take place.*

1.2.3 Street Lighting *It was proposed that a survey was carried out to indicate and justify areas for additional lighting. However this resulted in a decision for no more lights.*

1.2.4 Community Composting

South Hams District Council now provide a recycling service so local composting groups were not needed.

1.2.5 Heavy/Large Vehicles It was hoped that the Parish Council would be able to explore ideas to reduce the adverse effect that large vehicles were having on the narrow lanes within the parish, this has not been achieved.

1.2.6 Traffic Speeds The plan showed that certain areas of the community wanted lower speed limits introduced within the parish and a constant speed limit imposed along the A379. A constant speed limit relies on the adjacent parishes.

2.1.0 Community Services

2.1.1 Broadband The Plan indicated that 490 people wanted broadband in the parish, particularly those with businesses. This was achieved in 2005/6. Also, as part of this an Adult Education Course (IT Taster Session) was run through the Village Hall with Funding from the Community Council of Devon. Free internet access was available on a monthly basis for 2 years but due to lack of use (believed to be access to transport) it is now available on request.

2.1.2 Parish Magazine Nearly 700 respondents said that the Parish Magazine 'Stokenham Parish News' was an effective way of being kept informed. No action.

2.1.3 Police There was a need to create more opportunities where the public could meet and communicate with the police. By working with the Police Authority there is now a PCSO at every Parish Meeting and event.

2.2.0 Housing

2.2.1 Affordable Housing This is an ongoing issue within Stokenham. There is currently outline permission for 22 new homes in Chillington (a mix of affordable and private housing).

2.3.0 Leisure, Sports, Amenities and Services

2.3.1 Adult Education/Youth and other Groups The action from the plan was to encourage the formation of new groups. A Youth Group has been established and a History Society has been formed.

3.1.0 Other Community Services

3.1.1 Parish Graveyard In order to extend the existing graveyard there had to be an archaeological dig on the site. This dig discovered the remains of a medieval long house and bronze age ditches which has been of great interest to the History Society. The site has also become a tourist attraction and investigations are ongoing and more historical research being conducted through this around Stokenham. Full reports are available and presentations have been made to the History Society and parish.

3.1.2 Health Provision There was concern expressed for the provision of an NHS Dentist. Although awareness has been made nothing has happened in the parish but NHS is available in the nearest town Kingsbridge, 6 miles away.

3.1.3 Surveys and Guides At the time this plan was produced, surveys of wildlife were considered to be important, as was the need for a village design statement. There is no interest by parishioners in this at the present time.

3.2.0 Jobs and Employment

3.2.1 Business Units In the plan, concern was expressed for the lack of suitable business premises and 69% of respondents wanted industrial units. This is ongoing and the Parish Council are still looking to incorporate these into the development plans for Chillington or perhaps in Stokenham village through the new Local Development Framework.

3.2.2 Business Forum Many of the business owners in the parish now travel to Kingsbridge for a forum of this kind so one was not needed in the parish.

3.2.3 Tourism It has now been established that tourism is important to the parish and the Parish Council have been working hard to promote the parish and keep the tourists there. A comprehensive list of all local businesses i.e. B&B's, shops pubs etc. are displayed on the notice boards around the Parish as well as on the website. The Parish has also has several events which included a food festival (advertising local produce), Stokenham also came 2nd in the Best Local Foods Awards.

Quote

on the Community-Led Planning Process

"It has raised the professionalism of the council by providing a policy and engaged a wide section of the community in a worthwhile and productive project that directly affects their everyday wellbeing."

Gill Claydon,
Clerk to Stokenham
Parish Council

4.1.0 Transport

4.1.1 Parking *The Parish Council has approached South Hams District Councils about the issues with parking fees and car parks in the hope of influencing future strategies. Unfortunately, no changes have been made at present.*

4.1.2 A379 Slapton Sands *This road links Stokenham to adjoining parishes and is a vital communications link. However this road is vulnerable to bad weather and was breached in January 2001 and only given a 5 year temporary reconstruction. The Parish Council, The Slapton Line Defence Group, along with adjoining parishes are continuing to lobby for adequate defences for this important and vital link road.*

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

It has been a baseline for actioning tasks and raised respect for such achievements. The Local Authority are now in discussions with Stokenham Parish with regard to a pilot project to devolve services.

What other projects have you got planned for the future?

Devolved services! The full application for planning permission for the affordable housing is awaited since the outline permission and this is expected in the next month. It is hoped to work with others and continue the permissible footpath in the opposite direction through Chillington and to other parishes. It is hoped that parish council will be able to take over the open spaces maintenance etc. with possible provision of allotments. Another project being considered is interpretation centres at Stokenham and Hallsands to educate the parishioners and encourage tourists to the area.

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

Yes .IT provision funding. Permissive footpath funding. Adult education funding.

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

Newsletters advise constantly of any actions or projects completed. The parish council website is continually updated. Revision and updating of the plan has however been hampered due to people having completed one plan and not wanting to come forward to update and roll over to new projects. This is still being considered

How has this benefited the community?

It raised awareness of the work of the parish council. At the last elections there was a contested election for seats and the local authorities have been aware of the work done and the high response to the questionnaire and thus the representation of the council. The projects that have been run such as adult education and footpath have provided new resources that have been well used.

What lessons have you learned?

Splitting such a large project/task into smaller tasks and approaching people to help is far more likely to glean assistance than just asking people to come on a committee for an unlimited time. People are then also able to offer to help with what skills they recognise they can offer whilst also working alongside others to learn new skills.

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

It has become the baseline policy designed by the community for parish councillors. There when statements are made they are made from the knowledge of fact. It has also set targets that have been reached and thus given councillors confidence and a sense of achievement.

One piece of advice for others

Never undervalue anyone's input as if they are satisfied with what they have helped with or achieved they will act as a contact and ambassador for the community and council.